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**TIME, IDENTITY AND NATION IN GERMAN TRAVEL WRITING ON AFRICA 1848-1914**

**THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**2009**

### *ABSTRACT*

Between 1848 and 1914 a wave of German explorers travelled to Africa, enticed by the promise of geographical, botanical and anthropological discovery. Each *Afrikareisender* composed a narrative account of his German-African encounters and so produced a characteristic mode of travel writing. These works reflect not only the author's experience of their own identity, but also represent Germany's evolving sense of national identity during a period of extensive internal political turmoil which saw the consolidation of the German nation-state in 1871, its emergence as a colonial power in Africa after 1884 and finally left colonial Germany in 1913 on the brink of the First World War.

German-African encounters in nineteenth-century travel narratives are the product of a dialectical combination of influences; firstly a cognitive interest in alternative regions of human experience, a positive, heterophilic desire to appreciate cultural heterogeneity; secondly, the opposite, expansionist, hegemonic aspirations fuelled by growing German nationalism and inter-European rivalry. The chief tool in analysing these conflicting tendencies is the representation of time, for the explorers' ingrained understanding of time, their 'time-set', dominates the structure of these narratives. This 'time-set' informed all theories of historical development, cultural advancement and racial theory with the notion of linear-historicist progress and so set the norm for encountering the other. Hence initially, *Afrikareisende* travel writing projected received and unreflected concepts of western and German self-understanding onto 'Africa'. Yet the move to Africa in fact exposes the fragility of these norms, so that the whole edifice which they support begins to crumble during the explorers' process of narration. The popularisation of evolutionary theory modified later explorers' time-set by opening up the vista of 'deep-time' and an awareness of infinite time-scales that produced huge changes through infinitesimal increments. This, combined with Germany's particular route to nation-statehood, fuelled an interest in the paths of other peoples. *Afrikareisende* travel writing thus ended in a wholly unexpected manner: by projecting *African* otherness onto *German* domestic reality. Oddly, this writing at the same time paradoxically incited a 'new' German nationalism, for evolutionary theory was also employed to propagate concepts of racial hierarchy and cultural superiority. Here, the linear-time-set modulates into the time of Darwinian struggle. A struggle which was epitomised by inter-European national rivalries on African soil. Hence German activities in the late nineteenth-century in Africa not only express internal tensions in Germany at the time, but also, in some sense, express the internal tensions of nineteenth-century Europe. These neglected yet important texts provide insight into Germany's metamorphosis from passive observer of international political developments to self-destructive would-be world power.

***TIME, IDENTITY AND NATION IN GERMAN TRAVEL WRITING ON AFRICA 1848-1914***

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*INTRODUCTION*

Wie viel kann man in der Herrschaft über sich selbst von vielen unzivilisierten Völkern lernen, denen man sich so sehr überlegen glaubt?<sup>1</sup>

Prussian explorer Gustav Nachtigal traversed the Sahara and Sudan 1868-74. This intriguing statement from his account of the journey, refers to his encounter with local tribal leaders and his relationship to his North African, Muslim entourage during his desert crossing in 1869. Nachtigal finds his party in effective captivity, as local leaders refuse to grant permission to cross their territories. His frustration growing and provisions running low, the explorer plans to flee under the cover of darkness. His plans are foiled by his native – and hence subaltern – entourage, no less, who insist on patience and negotiation. Without his entourage, Nachtigal is impotent. Later, the explorer reacts with a volcanic outburst of rage which, on reflection, prompts the above admission; in which Nachtigal questions his received, unreflected concepts of civilised, and so cultural superiority. The emphasis on control in this statement is particularly significant, for German explorers' initial strategy when encountering Africa is one of establishing control – control over their physical passage, over encounters with 'others', over remembered events and over their narration. The concept of control, as the above excerpt indicates, is associated with 'civilised' society. It carries with it connotations of

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<sup>1</sup> Gustav Nachtigal, *Sahara und Sudan: Ergebnisse sechsjähriger Reisen in Afrika*, 3 vols (Berlin: Verlagsgesellschaft M.B.H, 1879-89) I, p. 104.

rationality and progress. Here, Nachtigal realises that loss of control over his traversal is synonymous with loss of self-control. Yet it is, in fact, during such uncontrolled moments that German explorers transcend their limits, acknowledge deficiencies in their pre-conceived understanding of self and consequently, of the other. Nachtigal's reference to self-knowledge indicates a journey of discovery far more profound than mere territorial traversal. That said, in spite of so revealing a comment, and the established role of travel writing as a medium of self-understanding,<sup>2</sup> little attention has been paid to these works and consequently to German self-understanding in the period of both domestic and international turbulent political developments between 1848 and 1914. During this time, a wave of German explorers travelled to Africa, enticed by the promise of geographical, botanical and anthropological discovery.<sup>3</sup> This study will argue that the narration of German-African encounter also tells the story of German self-understanding as it evolved in these repeated encounters with the 'geheimnisvoll' and 'rätselvoll' continent (Nachtigal, I, p. 6).<sup>4</sup>

This investigation will contend that German-African encounters in nineteenth-century travel narratives are the product of a dialectical combination of influences; firstly a cognitive interest in alternative regions of human experience: a positive, heterophilic

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<sup>2</sup> See for example Peter Brenner, *Der Reisebericht in der deutschen Literatur: ein Forschungsüberblick als Vorstudie zu einer Gattungsgeschichte*, 8 vols (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990), I, pp. 15-20. See also Mary-Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 4-7.

<sup>3</sup> The period from 1848 to 1912 saw numerous German expeditions to Africa. The explorers, commonly known by their contemporaries as *Afrikareisende*, composed over one hundred works detailing their expeditions and findings. See Cornelia Essner, *Deutsche Afrikareisende im neunzehnten Jahrhundert: Zur Sozialgeschichte des Reisens* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1985), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> All further citations from this, and the six other works which comprise the corpus of this investigation, will be referenced by the author's name only.

desire to appreciate cultural heterogeneity; secondly, the opposite: expansionist, hegemonic aspirations fuelled by growing German nationalism and inter-European rivalry. It will be argued that the presence of these contradictory tendencies reflects not only the authors' experience of their own identity, but also, on a wider scale, represents Germany's evolving sense of national identity and the nature of German colonial experience. These narratives, let us recall, were written during a period of extensive internal political turmoil which saw the consolidation of the German nation-state in 1871, its emergence as a colonial power in Africa after 1884 and finally left colonial Germany in 1913 on the brink of the World War which destroyed all that had been achieved in the previous forty years. As we shall see, German-African encounters reflect the stations of Germany's tangled path to nation-statehood and change contingently on developments in that process. German explorers of Africa – *Afrikareisende* – produced a characteristic mode of travel writing which initially projected received and unreflected concepts of western and German self-understanding onto 'Africa'. It ended however, in a wholly unexpected manner: by projecting *African* otherness onto *German* domestic reality. Oddly, this writing at the same time paradoxically incited a 'new' German nationalism. Hence German activities in the late nineteenth-century in Africa not only express internal tensions in Germany at the time, but also, in some sense, express the internal tensions of nineteenth-century Europe and so prefigure the First World War. To describe this literary phenomenon, explain its origins and interpret its significance is this dissertation's purpose.

The representation of time is our chief tool in this task, for our explorers' ingrained understanding of time, their 'time-set', dominates the structure of these narratives. Hence 'time' therefore also dominates the representation of otherness. This 'time-set' refers to a set of characteristic, fixed preconceptions relating to the passage of time, its measurement and function in society. The western time-set, as we shall see, presented the major defining criterion of cultural affinity and identity during the first cross-cultural encounters. It informed all theories of historical development, cultural advancement and racial theory with the notion of linear-historicist progress and so set the norm for encountering the other. Thus the time-set aids our explorers in their efforts to control 'the unknown'. It is argued here, however, that the move to Africa in fact exposes the fragility of these norms, so that the whole edifice which they support begins to crumble during our explorers' process of narration. The act of writing otherness thus both changes our explorers and exposes them – consciously and subconsciously – to a wholly unanticipated and uncontrolled, in this sense 'authentic', experience of otherness. In later works, Germany's *Sonderweg* to nation-statehood, combined with Darwinian influences, modifies and extends this 'time-set'. Evolutionary theory opened up the vista of 'deep-time' and an awareness of infinite time-scales that produced huge changes through infinitesimal increments. Germany's particular route to nation-statehood, it will be argued, fuelled an interest in the developmental paths of other peoples. Explorers' encounters with Africa prompt them to reject received, monolithic theories of goal-orientated and white race-centred development, and therefore time, in favour of ateleological change and diversity. That said, in certain cases, explorers employ theories of racial hierarchy and cultural superiority to propagate concepts of linear-progressive



evolution. African encounters are employed to both determine and legitimise the German nation's place at the top of this evolutionary scale, and the necessity to defend this position at all costs. Substantially, the linear-time-set modulates into the time of Darwinian struggle. Germany's time in the evolutionary process has come. Hence these neglected yet important texts provide insight into Germany's metamorphosis from passive observer of international political developments to self-destructive would-be world power.

## CHAPTER I: TIME, THE TRAVEL NARRATIVE AND CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSE

In what follows I argue that German-African literary encounters expose changing notions of German self-understanding and national identity – notions of self which reflect specifically *German*, pluralist traditions. The inspiration for this study arose from my examination of the role of the western time-set as a marker of self-understanding in German travellers' African expeditions during the era prior to German unification.<sup>5</sup> This initial study revealed that German explorers' attempts to impose their time-set onto African otherness ultimately revealed a surprising, unintended, reverse influence of the African on the German. The move to Africa thus disclosed the cognitive limits of the nineteenth-century, western, time-set. Hence German identity appeared indeterminate and therefore susceptible to both conscious and subconscious penetration by African otherness. Yet further questions arose from this finding which could not be addressed in the scope of the initial study: If the authors' depictions of Africa reveal the lability of their self-understanding prior to German unification, what do they tell us about the period afterwards? Does the function of the time-set as a marker of self-identification recede? Does the presence of a territorially-defined national identity after 1871 equal a more determinate identity and so automatic closure to otherness? Do later travel narratives continue to display the particularly German 'heterophilic' tradition of African encounter or a different, more colonially-minded tradition? And if so, what role do these

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<sup>5</sup> Tracey Dawe, *Time and the Other in Late Nineteenth-Century Travel Writing 1848-1871* (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Durham University, 2004) The thematic prevalence of temporal consciousness in contemporary, re-workings of exploration accounts such as Christoph Ransmayr's *Die Schrecken des Eises und der Finsternis* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1987) and fictional journeys such as Sten Nadolny's *Die Entdeckung der Langsamkeit* (Munich: Piper, 1987) prompted my initial interest into the comparative treatment of similar themes in original German travel writing.

travel narratives, the main channel of disseminating German-African experiences to the public mind, play in German colonial discourse and territorial expansion?

The works of seven nineteenth-century German explorers, which span both the earlier and the later decades of *Afrikareisende* exploration, will form the core primary material of analysis. The writers we are thinking of are firstly, Heinrich Barth, a young academic who published two works describing his experiences during African expeditions 1843-44 and 1848-50. Our next author, Gerhard Rohlfs, undertook numerous African expeditions between 1855 and 1888. A prolific and, in his own lifetime, internationally famous writer, Rohlfs's experiences were published in five multi-volume travel narratives. Botanist Georg Schweinfurth composed a two-volume work on his second African expedition to the jungles of Equatorial Africa 1869-71. Physician Gustav Nachtigal published an extensive, three-volume travel narrative detailing his expedition which took him through the Sahara and the Sudan 1868-74. Wilhelm Junker, also a physician, published four works describing his expeditions through Libya, Egypt, Sudan and Equatorial Africa 1875-1886. Zoologist Franz Stuhlmann published two travel narratives, including a 900 page work on his expedition through East and Central Africa 1892-94. Our final author, ethnographer Leo Frobenius, published seven works – a total of 15 volumes – which described his numerous African expeditions between 1896 and 1912. Many of these authors may be unfamiliar, yet as the following quote from

Fontane's *Der Stechlin* demonstrates, they enjoyed tremendous popularity in German society at the time:

Und da ist ein Professor, Kathedersozialist, von dem kein Mensch weiß, ob er die Gesellschaft einrenken oder aus den Fugen bringen will, und führt eine Adlige, mit kurz geschnittenem Haar (die natürlich auch schriftstellert), zur Quadrille. Und dann bewegen sich da noch ein Afrikareisender, ein Architekt und ein Portraitmaler, und wenn sie nach den ersten Tänzen eine Pause machen, dann stellen sie ein lebendes Bild, wo ein Wilddieb von einem Edelmann erschossen wird.<sup>6</sup>

Fontane's portrayal of nineteenth-century bourgeois society indicates the general acclaim and recognition *Afrikareisende* enjoyed as a social genre. Explorers were invited to perform in salons and so mingle with elect society. Their works – the majority of which also appeared in English translation<sup>7</sup> – enjoyed similar popularity in both academic circles and the popular public sphere.<sup>8</sup> In spite of their many publications, however, the relevance of these authors even to the narrower tradition of travel writing has attracted comparatively little interest. This is doubtless in some respects due to a

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<sup>6</sup> Theodor Fontane, *Der Stechlin* in *Werke*, 10 vols (Frankfurt Main: Fischer, 1975), VII, p. 1166.

<sup>7</sup> Barth's, Schweinfurth's, Nachtigal's, Junker's and Frobenius's travel narratives all appeared in English translation. Barth's work was published in English and German simultaneously, Schweinfurth's appeared in English in 1873, one year before the German version in 1874. Other works were translated into English shortly after their original publication in German.

<sup>8</sup> Not only were the works well-received at the time of initial publication, many of them enjoyed a long series of republications. Essner, *Afrikareisende*, p. 185.

cause identified by Peter Brenner when treating *Afrikareisende* travel narratives in a related context:

Eine unmittelbare Verbindung zwischen Reise und Reisebericht im literarischen Sinne besteht bei den wissenschaftlichen Expeditionen nicht; häufig werden die Reiseberichte in nur wissenschaftlicher Abstraktion, oft auch nicht mehr in zusammenhängender Form [...] mitgeteilt. [...] Als literarische Werke kamen sie nicht in den Blick, weil sie keine ästhetischen Ansprüche erhoben.<sup>9</sup>

Yet Brenner's contention is wrong. The travel narratives which he dismisses, are in fact a mix of scientific data, adventure novel and more than respectable literary discourse. In contrast to Brenner's definition, a central theme carried throughout this study is that the *Afrikareisende* travel narratives are constructed pieces of literary writing which attempt to communicate the full richness and complexity of the authors' experiences of African otherness. This, as we shall see, makes manifest an unexpectedly variegated, complex relationship and history of German-African encounter.

## **THE RESEARCH BACKGROUND**

Research into the travel narratives and analysis of cross-cultural encounter are of course to be linked with the European history of colonial expansion and its implicit, culturally

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<sup>9</sup> Brenner, *Der Reisebericht*, VI, pp. 467-8.

Eurocentric mentality. The characteristic asymmetry in the history of travel writing and cross-cultural encounter is emphasised in such invaluable critical works as James Clifford and George E. Marcus's *Writing Culture*<sup>10</sup> Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes*<sup>11</sup> Stephen Greenblatt's *Marvelous Possessions*<sup>12</sup> and Urs Bitterli's , *Die "Wilden" und die "Zivilisierten"*.<sup>13</sup> This asymmetry is given a distinctly temporal reference – and is thus essential to this study – in Johannes Fabian's *Time and the Other*.<sup>14</sup> Fabian addresses the aspect of temporal experience in anthropological studies by investigating nineteenth-century portrayals of cross-cultural encounter as forerunners of a trend he refers to as the 'denial of coevalness' (Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 25). Fabian's interpretation pertains to a systematic classification of foreign cultures, whereby the level of cultural development is equated with a comparable era of western, European history. As this development runs on a linear, historicist scale, the other culture is denied equality of cultural value and thus distanced temporally. Hence the western time-set, Fabian maintains, is an impenetrable barrier which prohibits authentic communication during cross-cultural encounters.<sup>15</sup> The other is effectively infantilised, relegated to previous stages of temporal and therefore cultural progress. Since Fabian defines authentic communication as that which is undertaken on a basis of shared temporal i.e. cultural equality, he argues that the possibility of positive cross-cultural communication is thus precluded.

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<sup>10</sup> James Clifford and George Marcus, eds, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986)

<sup>11</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: the Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991)

<sup>13</sup> Bitterli, Urs , *Die "Wilden" und die "Zivilisierten": Grundzüge einer Geistes- und Kulturgeschichte der europäisch-überseeischen Begegnung* (Munich: Beck, 1991).

<sup>14</sup> Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), pp. 37-69.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 25-37.

Oddly, in the vast amount of scholarly attention that has been paid to colonialism and postcolonial studies, Germany's real, historical involvement as a colonial power has been largely ignored. If mentioned at all in the area of postcolonial study, Germany's colonial history is generally grouped together with the monopoly of Anglo-French experiences which dominate the field. In his landmark work *Orientalism*, Edward Said suggests that German experiences of alterity are the same as those of Britain and France, yet to a lesser degree of intensity due to their shorter history of colonial encounters: 'The French and the British – less so the Germans [...] have a long tradition of what I shall be calling *Orientalism*, a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience'.<sup>16</sup> Said continues to state that 'what German Oriental scholarship did was to refine and elaborate techniques whose application was to texts, myths, ideas and languages almost literally gathered from the Orient by imperial Britain and France'.<sup>17</sup> For him, then, Germany does not have its own autonomous tradition of cultural encounters. As the sub-title of Said's work suggests, and although he admits to a less than thorough treatment of German texts, his theories apply to a discourse defined as *Western* and thus encompass German experiences.

Only in recent years has *German* colonial involvement become the focus of differentiated scholarly attention.<sup>18</sup> Yet Said's statements are even today representative

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<sup>16</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 1995 [1<sup>st</sup> edition 1978]), p.1.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>18</sup> The international Conference *War, Genocide and Memory: German Colonialism and National Identity* held in Sheffield from September 11-13, 2006 highlighted the increasing interest paid to the subject in political, sociological, historical, literary and geographical fields. See Michael Perraudin and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds, *War, Genocide and Memory: German Colonialism and National Identity*, (New York:

of the majority opinion surrounding German experiences of alterity and colonial involvement. Susanne Zantop's *Colonial Fantasies*, whilst pioneering in its focus on German colonialism, uncovers a one-sided German desire for possession of colonial territories in works dating back to the eighteenth century.<sup>19</sup> This, Zantop argues, merely mirrors other nations' colonial endeavours, yet without actual territorial acquisitions. The authors who contribute to the important collection *The Imperialist Imagination: German Colonialism and its Legacy*, make similar claims.<sup>20</sup> Nina Berman, for example, argues that literary orientalism in Karl May's novels evidenced Germany's colonial mind-set independently of actually existing colonies.<sup>21</sup> Both works, whilst marking an important shift in interest towards the history of German attitudes to non-Europeans, underscore an undialectical narrative of 'power and appropriation' in German colonial literature which merely reproduces the standard view unquestioningly.<sup>22</sup> In

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Routledge, 2009). Germany's little-known involvement in the 'scramble for Africa' came to the German public's attention in 2004 at the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Herero-Nama massacre in Namibia, former German South-West Africa. In a carefully worded statement, the German minister for economic development Wieczorek-Zeul acknowledged the atrocities as genocide. She apologised and asked for forgiveness – causing controversy and widespread outcry in Germany, as financial reparations were feared after this 'admission of guilt'.

<sup>19</sup> Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest Family and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (North Carolina: Duke University, 1997)

<sup>20</sup> Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox and Susanne Zantop, eds., *The Imperial Imagination: German Colonialism and its Legacy* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press: 2001 [First Published 1998]), p. 26.

<sup>21</sup> Nina Berman, 'Orientalism, Imperialism and Nationalism: Karl May's *Orientzyklus*' in Friedrichsmeyer, Lennox and Zantop, eds., *The Imperial Imagination*, 51-68, p. 52.

<sup>22</sup> Further notable contributions to the field are Honold and Simons' *Kolonialismus als Kultur* and Birthe Kundrus's *Moderne Imperialisten: Das Kaiserreich im Spiegel seiner Kolonien*. The former is a collection of essays which focuses on the effect of colonial discourse in popular culture, rather than actual encounters themselves. Whilst presenting a more differentiated image of German colonial experience, it does not provide a radical challenge to established theoretical paradigms. Alexander Honold and O. Simons, eds, *Kolonialismus als Kultur: Literatur, Medien, Wissenschaft in der deutschen Gründerzeit des Fremden* (Tübingen: Francke, 2002). Kundrus analyses the image of German South-West Africa in political discourse and the public sphere during the colonial era, then evaluates these images as reflections of German identity. *Moderne Imperialisten* is of particular relevance to this study, as Kundrus also sees close links between German nationalism and the colonial project. She argues that German expansionism was designed to create a sense of national unity and identity which was already well-established in other European nation-states when they acquired their first colonies. Birthe Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten: Das Kaiserreich im Spiegel seiner Kolonien* (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau, 2003). Kundrus's



*Kolonialismus, Eugenik und bürgerliche Gesellschaft in Deutschland 1850-1918*, Pascal Grosse's analysis of German encounters with non-Europeans maintains that nineteenth-century German anthropology presented the origins of biological racism and theories of racial hierarchy, and so was merely the forerunner of National Socialist xenophobic anthropology.<sup>23</sup>

However, other studies – the ones most valuable to our enterprise – present a very different perspective, that of a specifically German, alternative tradition of cross-cultural *encounter* and German colonialism. Taking up Horkheimer and Adorno's concept of the Enlightenment as a dialectical process, Russell Berman's *Enlightenment or Empire: Colonial Discourse in German Culture* suggests the possibility of isolating an emancipatory component in Enlightenment thought which is separate from the subsequent European history of expansion.<sup>24</sup> Opposed to the generalisation of Europe as one colonial power with a shared, homogeneous ideology, Berman investigates differing attitudes to otherness evident amongst European imperial nations. Through his investigation of Georg Forster and Gerhard Rohlfs's travel writing, and Frieda von Bülow's colonial novels, Berman demonstrates Germany's position in Europe as the 'outsider', constantly lagging behind Britain and France in the process of modernisation, in the consolidation of national identity and hence also in the race for territorial expansion. These factors, Berman continues, account for a greater acceptance of

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collection of essays *Phantasiereiche* also focuses on issues of German national identity and encounters with alterity. *Phantasiereiche: Zur Kulturgeschichte Des Deutschen Kolonialismus* (Berlin: Campus, 2003).

<sup>23</sup> Pascal Grosse, *Kolonialismus, Eugenik und bürgerliche Gesellschaft in Deutschland 1850-1918* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2000)

<sup>24</sup> Russell A. Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire: Colonial Discourse in German Culture* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998)

otherness by Germans, whose less than rigid sense of political, and sometimes cultural, national identity allows in principle for greater permeability during cultural encounters. Contrary to many versions of contemporary 'Orientalism', where advance response to alterity is seen as being rigidly structured a priori by occidental paradigms, Berman maintains the existence of 'qualitatively new experiences' in German encounters with foreign cultures. Berman asserts that in spite of differing levels of cultural sophistication, German humanistic interest enables reciprocal comprehension and communication between both parties.<sup>25</sup> He concludes that German heterophilia identifies a potential for universal connection which transcends the cultural dualism propagated by Fabian.<sup>26</sup> This concept of German 'heterophilia' radically opposes the reductive, Foucaultian concept of knowledge-power which is generally accorded to these encounters and brings German travel writing to the forefront of discourse on cross-cultural encounters.<sup>27</sup>

H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl's collection of essays on German anthropology and encounters with non-European cultures during the colonial era makes similar comparisons, and so suggests that Germany's history of cross-cultural encounter presents a counter-trend to that observed in other nations with a longer and more extensive history of colonial involvement.<sup>28</sup> The work is introduced with the following

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<sup>25</sup> V. Agnew presents a more modest, relativised perception of the self-reflexivity attributed to Forster's narrative in contemporary discourse in 'Ethnographic Transgressions and Confessions in Georg Forster's *Voyage Round the World*' in *Schwellen: germanistische Erkundungen einer Metapher* ed. by N. Saul, D. Steuer, F. Möbus, and B. Illner (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999), pp. 305-315.

<sup>26</sup> Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, pp. 21-64.

<sup>27</sup> See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1981), pp. 92-102.

<sup>28</sup> H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl, eds, *Worldly Provincialism: German Anthropology in the Age of Empire* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press: 2006 [First published 2003]), p. 1.

significant statement which isolates a specifically German relationship to cultural difference:

Germany [...] does not fit the paradigmatic trajectory of anthropology's history. On the contrary, it seems to reverse the dominant periodization [...] Nineteenth-century German anthropology was neither characterized by colonial concerns, nor interested in organizing the world's peoples according to evolutionary sequences. Instead, it was a self-consciously liberal endeavour, guided by a broadly humanistic agenda and centred on efforts to document the plurality and specificity of cultures. This liberal humanism stood in marked contrast to Anglo-American and French variants.

(Penny and Bunzl, *Worldly Provincialism*, p. 1)

As the excerpt suggests, the contributors to this volume argue against existing teleologies that locate Germany's involvement in the colonial project as a precursor of National Socialist ideology. Hence the 'counterintuitive' trajectory of German interaction with cultural difference calls for a more 'nuanced' understanding of Germany's development in the last decades of the nineteenth century (Penny and Bunzl, *Worldly Provincialism*, p. 2).

Thus studies on German colonialism and cross-cultural encounter are polarised between two theories: as either a mirror-image of neighbouring colonial nations, differing only in the late acquisition of territorial possessions, or presenting an

alternative discourse of cross-cultural encounter which runs contrary to the European history of colonial conquest. Recent postcolonial readings of Kafka's *In der Strafkolonie*<sup>29</sup> – which generated extensive critical dialogue on Germany's colonial involvement and the role of literature in this process – epitomise this theoretical split.<sup>30</sup> In his article 'Kafka and Postcolonial Critique: *Der Verschollene*, *In der Strafkolonie*, *Beim Bau der chinesischen Mauer*' Rolf J. Goebel agrees with Russell Berman's criticism of the disciplinary hegemony of theories derived from the history of British imperialism, yet he is sceptical of 'Germany's supposedly more flexible notions of cultural Otherness'.<sup>31</sup> He notes that there are no comparable studies of German colonial discourse which equal the 'conceptual breadth and analytic effectiveness' of those proposed by Homi Bhabha and the later Said. Furthermore he rejects the assertion that postcolonial theory is a 'monolithic system foreign to the particularities of German experience' as it has made significant contributions to the theories of cross-cultural communication with which Berman is concerned. He suggests instead that postcolonial theories be employed as heuristic tools with which to illuminate the meaning of German

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<sup>29</sup> Franz Kafka, *In der Strafkolonie* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2004 [1st edn, 1919]). Kafka's text is also of particular relevance to this project due to the figure of the *Reisender*, a scientific explorer sent to observe methods in a penal colony on a nameless island in the tropics.

<sup>30</sup> Axel Hecker and Paul Peters, whilst acknowledging the tale's contribution to postcolonial discourse, see the work as upholding theories of European colonialism as one generalised force. Axel Hecker, *Am Rande des Lesbaren. Dekonstruktive Lektüren zu Franz Kafka: Die Verwandlung, In der Strafkolonie und das Urteil* (Vienna: Passagen, 1998) and Paul Peters, 'Witness to the Execution: Kafka and Colonialism', in *Monatshefte*, IV (2001), 401-425. John Zilcolsky however, analyses the tale as a representation of specifically *German* colonial experiences. He compares the relationship between the old and new 'Kommandanten' in the tale as a depiction of ideological differences in German colonial politics. In 'Kafka's *The Penal Colony*: Reflections of German Colonialism and National Identity', I argue that through the figure of the *Reisender* the tale criticises the particular nature of Germany's colonial involvement and thus reflects on crucial issues affecting German national identity and self-understanding at the beginning of the twentieth-century. In *Reflections: New Directions in Modern Languages and Cultures*, ed. by Sarah Buxton, Laura Campbell, Tracey Dawe and Elise Huguency-Léger (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2008).

<sup>31</sup> Rolf J. Goebel, 'Kafka and Postcolonial Critique: *Der Verschollene*, *In der Strafkolonie*, *Beim Bau der chinesischen Mauer*', in *A Companion to the Works of Franz Kafka*, ed. by James Rolleston (Rochester NY: Camden House, 2002), p. 187.

texts without which their full implication cannot be recognised. The cultural specifics of the texts should however function as ‘factors of resistance against homogenizing or totalizing tendencies in postcolonial theory’.<sup>32</sup> Goebel thus suggests a hermeneutic melting-pot which merely allows for other examples to be added in support of pre-established postcolonial theories. It seems more urgent, particularly with the level of counter-discourse negating the monopoly of Anglo-French experiences – to expand the scope of German colonial discourse and cross-cultural encounter in order to assess its effect on current postcolonial theory, rather than merely attempt to assimilate it into the pre-established norm. To this effect, this study will foreground the specific nature of *German* cross-cultural encounter, its role in the creation of a national identity and its function in German colonial discourse.

Although the theme of cultural mediation – as demonstrated above – is key in German studies, comparatively little research has been done on the relevance of *Afrikareisende* travel narratives to this field. The major – and most recent – critical work to foreground *Afrikareisende* travel narratives is Matthias Fiedler’s *Zwischen Abenteuer, Wissenschaft und Kolonialismus: Der deutsche Afrikadiskurs im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*.<sup>33</sup> Fiedler does point to the unexplored relationship between *Afrikareisende* travel narratives and the German colonial project in current discourse, yet this is the only point of tangency with this current study. Fiedler argues that the narratives are in fact devoid of encounters

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<sup>32</sup> Goebel, ‘Kafka and Postcolonial Critique’, p. 188.

<sup>33</sup> Matthias Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteuer, Wissenschaft und Kolonialismus: Der deutsche Afrikadiskurs im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau, 2005)

with African cultures as such. He maintains that:

Der Begriff ‘Begegnung mit fremden Völkern’ – auf die Repräsentationen dieser Begegnungen in den Texten der Afrikaforschung im 19. Jahrhundert bezogen – [ist ein] Mythos. *Begegnungen* im eigentlichen Sinne [...] gab es auf der Ebene der Repräsentation nur mit den Topoi, Stereotypen und Vorstellungsbilder[n T.D.] über die afrikanischen Menschen und nicht mit den Personen, die man vor Ort traf. (Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteuer*, pp. 167-8).

Fiedler furthermore argues that ethnographic objects are completely absent from Barth’s, Rohlfs’s and Nachtigal’s works, for no individuals ‘der besprochenen Ethnien geraten ins Bild’ (Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteuer*, p. 169). As we shall see, Nachtigal’s narrative presents a very different perspective than that of his predecessors and as such it consequently seems strange to generalise these three works as indicative of one mind-set. Fiedler’s definition of ‘Begegnungen’ is also unclear, for this seems to require ‘unbeteiligte Beobachtung’, yet also eliminate any ‘Form der Distanzierung’ (Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteuer*, p. 170). The explorers are writing from a ‘white’ subject position which thus subverts the true ethnicity of their experience, so much is clear. Yet as the coming analysis will demonstrate, it is through participation and interaction that the ‘distance’ between observer and observed is reduced and hence this subject position

becomes increasingly penetrated by African influences.<sup>34</sup> Fiedler in contrast summarises the works' relevance as follows:

Die kartografische Erschließung und Beschreibung Afrikas sowie die Darstellung der indigenen Bevölkerung im 19. Jahrhundert lassen sich in vielfältiger Weise auf den kolonialen Diskurs in Europa beziehen. Rein praktisch ebneten Afrikaforscher durch ihre Reisen den Weg zur Besitznahme des Kontinents durch die europäischen Mächte. Sie waren allerdings mehr als nur 'Wegbereiter', denn sowohl *in persona* als auch durch ihre Texte beförderten sie dieses Projekt in einem bis heute unterschätzten Maße. (Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteuer*, p. 174)

For Fiedler then, the cartographic information collated by the explorers, together with their unreflected images of European superiority, paved the way for German colonial expansion; and this is their chief significance. Yet Fiedler forms his conclusions on the assumption that the travel narratives function as factual reports only. His undifferentiated analysis generalises the explorers' findings in the same way that he accuses the authors of reinforcing existing stereotypes. This results in a failure to present the travel narratives in all their complexities.

Another major work, Johannes Fabian's *Out of our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa* investigates travel writing's contribution to the image of

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<sup>34</sup> As far as individuality is concerned, we shall see that Fiedler's generalisation does not apply to Nachtigal's work. We shall also see that a 'silence of the text' in relation to 'the other' does not automatically create the explorer's desired image of superiority.

Africa in western discourse and the works' role in the colonial project.<sup>35</sup> Fabian's discussion of German, Belgian, British and Italian travel narratives provides invaluable insight into the function of scientific methods, expedition preparation and the recording of experiences. Yet his analysis of travel writing, to which Fiedler is heavily indebted, focuses on the works as essentially scholarly discourse. Consequently he also forms a rather undifferentiated conclusion: that a direct correlation exists between the images of Africa presented in the works and the land-grabbing acquisition of colonial territories.

Cornelia Essner's *Deutsche Afrikareisende im neunzehnten Jahrhundert: Zur Sozialgeschichte des Reisens* is a comprehensive treatment of *Afrikareisende* narratives and the authors' role in society. Essner compiles a collective biography of the *Afrikareisende* who she defines as a distinct social group. Hence rather than focussing on the authors' compositions, Essner concentrates on the authors and the possible motivations behind their expeditions. Essner provides an invaluable wealth of factual information, yet the work remains descriptive and lacks any real analysis. Jens Kruse, in contrast, compiles a comparative analysis of the images of African others portrayed in travel narratives from German colonies.<sup>36</sup> Kruse concludes that his nine authors display varied images of African others, which he then categorises on a scale of negative, neutral or positive. Whilst Kruse differentiates between the authors' findings, rather than generalising them as representative of one distinct colonial mind-set, he focuses on the works as primarily historical sources and thus fails to examine the works as literary

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<sup>35</sup> Johannes Fabian, *Out of our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000)

<sup>36</sup> Jens Kruse, *Reiseberichte aus den deutschen Kolonien: Das Bild vom 'Eingeborenen' in Reiseberichten der deutschen Kolonialzeit 1884-1918* (Munich and Ravensberg: GRIN, 2005)



creations. His brief analyses and chosen time-scale do not allow for comparisons with earlier, pre-colonial narratives. Hence the conclusion that his material for analysis is a product of German colonial involvement is incorrect, for earlier travel narratives display similar, variegated findings. Christoph Marx also foregrounds the narratives' content in *Völker ohne Schrift und Geschichte. Zur historischen Erfassung des vorkolonialen Schwarzafrikas in der deutschen Forschung des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts*.<sup>37</sup> Marx compares the explorers' findings – which he also views as primarily historical sources – with the level of contemporary ethnographic knowledge. He furthermore attempts to categorise each explorers' relationship to Africa and so gauge his ideological standpoint. Whilst Marx does conclude that the explorers' ethnographic reports display a strikingly humanistic attitude towards non-Europeans,<sup>38</sup> his investigation fails to examine the works as literary creations and so, like Fiedler and Fabian, ultimately presents an undifferentiated analysis. This study in contrast embraces the travel narratives as historiographic-cum-literary works. The analysis of both the narratives' content and its representation will shed light on changing notions of German identity before and during the colonial era, and evaluate how this affected German colonial involvement.

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<sup>37</sup> Christoph Marx, *Völker ohne Schrift und Geschichte. Zur historischen Erfassung des vorkolonialen Schwarzafrikas in der deutschen Forschung des 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1988)

<sup>38</sup> Fiedler dismisses Marx's finding as contributing to the 'Mythos' of humanistic Germans in the colonial context (Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteuer*, p. 86).

## THESIS STRUCTURE AND CHAPTER SYNOPSES

To answer the questions of a specific, German tradition of cross-cultural encounter, which both reflects and influences German national identity and Germany's involvement in the colonial project, this investigation is divided into thematic chapters. Each reconstructs chronologically how the understanding of an issue unfolded, as our explorers struggled to understand both Africa and themselves. Each chapter however has an element of selectivity in that it emphasises chiefly the most relevant of the seven works, which reveals then the most significant aspects of German-African encounter. As the analysis progresses, our attention turns increasingly to later works which capture the prevalence of racial discourse and international politics in the German colonial project.

The analysis begins in Chapter Two with an overview of the relevant concepts of temporal understanding and national identity which form the basis of this investigation. These concepts are then set against the backdrop of Germany's rise to colonial power. Chapter Three focuses formalistically on the travel narrative, as a historiographical-cum-literary work. This chapter demonstrates the works' literary nature by analysing the deep-structural ideological assumptions underlying both their narrative procedures and strategies. Chapter Four, noting how spatial and temporal perception are interlinked as products of specific social norms, analyses how German explorers understand and seek to capture African space in writing. As the domestic situation in Germany changes, so does our explorers' recreation of, and relationship to, African terrain. Chapter Five moves to a different aspect of German-African encounter as our explorers grapple with

received and alternative criteria of cultural progress and so find themselves forced to question their own assumptions. Here, we see an increasing trend of cultural flow from Africa to Germany which coincides with the rise of primitivism in the Modernist and Expressionist movements. The following chapter turns inwards, to analyse and compare explorers' portrayals of African, Islamic and Christian religion. We see a development in our explorers' understanding of ritual and fetishism which moves from dismissal to acknowledgement of human universals. Explorers' portrayals of monotheistic religions however, present a counter-trend. As the scramble for Africa intensifies, so does the question of monotheistic religions as catalysts of cultural development. Unexpectedly, Islam and Christianity become the focus of increasing negativity, yet for differing reasons. Chapter Seven focuses on the theme of race and measures explorers' portrayals of Africans against racial discourse of the time. The question of development and progress is key to German self-understanding at the time, as our explorers attempt to define Germany's place on the evolutionary scale. Our explorers uphold concepts of egalitarian acceptance of human diversity and a belief in ateleological human development, and the opposite, biological racism which consolidates a belief in racial hierarchy and linear-historicist theories of progression. The chapter then examines the function of racial discourse in German colonial debate and evaluates our explorers' contribution to it. The concluding chapter shows how domestic and international politics influenced the literature of African exploration. Here, our explorers' portrayals of European interaction on African soil are analysed against the backdrop of 'new' German nationalism. We shall see how our works reflected concepts of German self-understanding at the time and make a final evaluation of their significance.

## THE TRAVEL NARRATIVES AND THEIR AUTHORS

The *Afrikareisende* travel narratives create an extensive corpus of literature. Each explorer re-evaluates and reinterprets information gleaned from his predecessors to achieve a certain representability for his generation of exploration narratives from 1848-1912. The works which form the corpus of this investigation have been selected from this *macrotext* according to the following criteria: firstly, the authors conform to the stereotypical image of the German academic explorer whose expedition is heavily influenced by ‘scientific’ – scientific – ideology.<sup>39</sup> Secondly, the works are linked by their geographical coverage of Northern, Central and Eastern Africa.

The first exemplary work is Heinrich Barth’s five volume travel narrative *Reisen und Entdeckungen in Nord- und Central Afrika in den Jahren 1849 bis 1855: Tagebuch meiner im Auftrag der Britischen Regierung unternommen Reise*.<sup>40</sup> A young, ambitious geographer, greatly influenced by Hegelian historicism and Humboldt’s

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<sup>39</sup> Shortly before the colonial era and during this time, military figures such as Major Hermann von Wissmann and Capitän Lieutenant Rust composed narrative accounts of their expeditions. These non-academic explorers however make no attempt to incorporate scientific exploration into their works and have therefore been excluded as major works in this investigation. See Hermann von Wissmann, *Unter deutscher Flagge quer durch Afrika von West nach Ost. Von 1880 bis 1883 ausgeführt von Paul Pogge und Herr von Wissmann*, 8<sup>th</sup> edn (Berlin: H. Walther, 1902) and Capitän-Lieutenant Rust, a.D., *Die deutsche Emin Pascha Expedition* (Berlin: Hilliger, 1909). Hans Schomburgk’s *Wild und Wilde im Herzen Afrikas: zwölf Jahre Jagd- und Forschungsreisen* (Berlin: Deutsche Buchgemeinschaft, 1910) was one of the first travel narratives to contain photographic images and was particularly popular at the time of its publication. Schomburgk however also makes little claim to scientific exploration or narrative sophistication. His is a true adventure story, focussing mainly on areas in South Africa which are less relevant to this study. Other works such as *Timbuktu. Reise durch Marokko und den Sudan*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1892) by well-known explorer Oskar Lenz and Rudolph, Slatin Pascha’s, *Feuer und Schwert im Sudan. Meine Kämpfe mit den Derwischen, meine Gefangenschaft und Flucht. 1879-1895* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1896) were discounted as major texts due to the authors’ Austrian descent.

<sup>40</sup> Heinrich Barth, *Reisen und Entdeckungen in Nord- und Central Afrika in den Jahren 1849 bis 1855: Tagebuch meiner im Auftrag der Britischen Regierung unternommen Reise*, 5 vols (Gotha: Perthes, 1857-8)

cosmopolitanism, Barth represents the archetypal scientific traveller against whom future, potential expedition candidates could be, and were, measured. He undertook his African expedition in order to gain the official recognition as a geographer which would qualify him for an academic post in Berlin. A Defender of theories of linear-progressive development, Barth intended to ‘open’ the African continent to the rational, scientific, gaze. Hence his interests lay in the collation and representation of geographical observations. These ranged from detailed descriptions of vegetation and terrain to lists of meteorological measurements and reports on the local inhabitants’ physical appearance and customs. Although a firm believer in the superior talents of German scientists, the only opportunity for Barth to undertake such expeditions was submissively, under the mandate of another nation. Just as Georg Forster voyaged to the South Seas under the protection and supervision of Captain James Cook 1772-75,<sup>41</sup> the two Germans Heinrich Barth and Adolf Overweg accompanied a British expedition, in passive, auxiliary roles under the leadership of British missionary James Richardson. The sudden death of his leader however, a fate shared by Overweg a short time later, altered Barth’s role. Henceforth the task of fulfilling the expedition mandate – a trade agreement with Sheikh Omar, Sultan of Bornu – fell to him. Barth then led the expedition further southwards to fulfil his own desire – to reach the Niger. His achievements were ground-breaking in two senses, firstly proving the capabilities of German explorers as leaders of expeditions rather than mere observers; secondly, his success provided the stimulus which initiated German-led and German-funded expeditions. Out of this small beginning, the web of the collective *Afrikareisende*

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<sup>41</sup> Georg Forster, *Reise nach Tahiti und in die Südsee 1772-1775* (Stuttgart: Thienemann, 1995).

macrotext was spun. All subsequent narratives in some way pay intertextual tribute to Barth.

Gerhard Rohlfs, author of our second exemplary work *Quer durch Afrika. Reise vom Mittelmeer bis zum Tschad-see und zum Golf von Guinea*,<sup>42</sup> was by contrast to Barth, a relatively uneducated young man looking for adventure, fame and fortune, but most of all recognition and respect. One could be forgiven for confusing his biographical details with those of a fictional adventurer along the lines of Poe's Arthur Gordon Pym.<sup>43</sup> His record as an adventurer – during a previous expedition Rohlfs had been stabbed, robbed, and left for dead, yet miraculously survived to tell the tale – had gained him considerable admiration from the general public and was enough to grant him leadership of an expedition to discover and map a route from the North African Coast to the Gulf of Guinea. Rohlfs desperately wanted to undertake such a scientific expedition which would elevate him to the respected status of *Afrikareisender* established by Barth. It is clear that he carried an a priori image of German scientific and cultural superiority to Africa. His narrative is loaded with references which encourage the imposition of German culture – in the form of territorial acquisitions – on African soil. Rohlfs initially followed Barth's steps, and then continued farther southwards into less well-explored

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<sup>42</sup> Gerhard Rohlfs, *Quer durch Afrika. Reise vom Mittelmeer bis zum Tschad-see und zum Golf von Guinea*, 2 vols (Leipzig, Brockhaus, 1875)

<sup>43</sup> Running away from home as a teenager, Rohlfs almost succeeded in stowing away on a Dutch ship bound for the Spice Islands, but was discovered and returned home – only to leave school again a year later and join the army. After two years he began studying medicine – three semesters in total at three different universities – before leaving to rejoin the Austrian army. He deserted in 1855 and joined the French Foreign Legion in North Africa where he worked as a pharmacist and medical officer. After leaving the Foreign Legion he remained in Morocco and became head physician to the Sultan. Poe's fictional character Arthur Gordon Pym, similarly runs away from home as a teenager, to stow-away on board a ship in search of adventure. Unlike Rohlfs, however, his attempt is successful and he remains undiscovered. Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, ed. by J. Gerald Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994)

territories over a period of two years from 1865-7. The Prussian government, no doubt recognising the potential advantage of being the first to discover trade routes over land, sponsored the expedition. August Petermann, editor of the geographical journal *Mitteilungen aus Justus Perthes' geographischer Anstalt* also provided financial aid in return for the first written accounts of the expedition. Rohlfs's successful two-year expedition and its publication in narrative form did gain him the recognition he desired.<sup>44</sup>

Our next explorer, Georg Schweinfurth, left Khartoum in July 1868 and returned in July of 1871. Financed by the renowned *Humboldt Stiftung der Akademie der Wissenschaften*, the botanist Schweinfurth hoped to gain the recognition of the academic sphere from this, his second African expedition. Schweinfurth's work *Im Herzen Afrika*, certainly marks a new departure in the writing of African exploration.<sup>45</sup> In contrast to previous explorers, Schweinfurth's expedition departed from the East and took him through the unmapped, unexplored, dense jungles of Equatorial Africa, rather than the desolating emptiness of the desert. Initially fascinated by (so to speak) non-human otherness, Schweinfurth's 'internal mapping' of African flora and fauna is characterised by lengthy, planned periods of sojourn and a distinct lack of the haste and urgency betrayed by every line of Barth's and Rohlfs's cartographic mandates. During these periods of sojourn however, interaction with the local population was bound to occur, and Schweinfurth's cognitive interest slowly turned to the otherness of the local

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<sup>44</sup> Recognition of his achievements and influence under the title of *Afrikaforscher* is not confined to Rohlfs's contemporaries – the Kulturreferat Bremen-Nord, in conjunction with the Zentrum für Afrika-Studien at the Bremen University, held a 'Gerhard-Rohlfs-Symposium', on the one-hundredth anniversary of his death, 1 June 1996.

<sup>45</sup> Schweinfurth, Georg, *Im Herzen Afrika*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1874)

humans. A committed Darwinist,<sup>46</sup> Schweinfurth's descriptions of African nature as well as African peoples' physiology and anatomy introduce a concept of extended time-scales and alternative theories of evolutionary development which contradict the monolithic theories of one set path for all humanity upheld by his predecessors.

Gustav Nachtigal, author of our next work *Sahara und Sudan: Ergebnisse sechsjähriger Reisen in Afrika 1869-75*, was a German military doctor who came from a modest, conservative background. Plagued by periods of ill-health, Nachtigal left the Prussian army in 1862 and headed for warmer climes. He settled in North Africa and became personal physician to the Bey in Tunis. Nachtigal thus acquired knowledge of Arabic and Muslim customs in the seven years with the Bey, prior to setting out on his first expedition. A chance meeting with Rohlfs in Tunis gained Nachtigal a gift-bearing mandate to the Sultan of Bornu.<sup>47</sup> Nachtigal was to travel from Tripoli to Sheikh Omar's residence in Kuka with gifts from the Prussian monarchy. The gifts were a gesture of thanks for the Sultan's continued hospitality towards German explorers, yet the hope of future trade agreements was, we can assume, an equal motivation. Trade was, after all, the incentive behind Richardson's earlier British expedition to Kuka. It was this expedition which had established initial links between the Sultan and German explorers. Both Rohlfs and Nachtigal later stayed in Barth's former residence, which came to be known by the locals as 'das Christenhaus' (Nachtigal I, p. 134). Yet Nachtigal's gift-bearing task proved to be only the first stage of his six-year expedition through the Sahara and Sudan to Khartoum – Schweinfurth's point of departure. Nachtigal was an

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<sup>46</sup> Essner, *Afrikareisende*, p. 82.

<sup>47</sup> Rohlfs had been given the initial mandate by the Prussian monarchy, yet was more than willing to relinquish this task in favour of more prestigious, geographical mandates.



established professional with no financial worries, which left him free to undertake an expedition prioritising his personal, ‘amateur’ interests. The meticulous notation of his journey, with its prioritisation of cultural anthropology and a genuine interest in Africa for its own sake, appeared in three volumes, the last of which was edited and published posthumously. Nachtigal’s and Schweinfurth’s interest in cultural anthropology signals a shift in cultural flow from their predecessor’s works. Barth and Rohlf’s carried a priori images of German cultural superiority to Africa, which they attempted to uphold – with varying levels of success – at all costs. Nachtigal and Schweinfurth however, mark the beginnings of cultural transfer from Africa to Germany.

Our next work, *Im Sudan: In der libyschen Wüste und an den Quellen des Nil: Reisen 1875-1878* by Dr Wilhelm Junker, presents a further exemplary development in German-African exploration.<sup>48</sup> Junker was the first to encounter, in place of pristine African culture, already fully-fledged structures of cultural domination. Junker’s work thus highlights the dramatic contrast between ‘untouched’ and modernised, mechanised Africa. Significantly, his three-year expedition, which again covered areas already traversed by Nachtigal and Schweinfurth, took place during the transition period between German unification and territorial expansion. His narrative is thus in many ways indicative of conflicting impulses in domestic and international politics at the time. These impulses are mirrored by Junker’s ambiguous attitude towards African culture and European colonial expansion. Uniquely in our corpus, Junker composed the narrative account of his expedition several years after journey’s end. The work is a

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<sup>48</sup> Wilhelm Junker, *Im Sudan: In der libyschen Wüste und an den Quellen des Nil: Reisen 1875-1878* (Leipzig: Fock, 1889), p. 9.

markedly more polished and tendential artefact. The motivation for publishing his experiences at all was to reassert the positive image of an area which had fallen into disrepute after the invasion of the ‘fanatisch’ Mahdi (Junker, p. 9). His passage through the North African desert to the Equatorial jungle links the pre-unification travel narratives in true *Afrikareisende* tradition through intertextual references to all those who had previously covered the terrain. Junker’s meeting with Emin Pascha, arguably one of the most infamous and influential figures in Anglo-German colonial relations, links the pre-colonial and colonial material presented here for analysis.<sup>49</sup>

Franz Stuhlmann’s work *Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika* depicts by contrast Germany’s new role as a colonial power on African soil.<sup>50</sup> A zoologist-cum-military

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<sup>49</sup> Eduard Schnitzer, of German-Jewish descent, entered military service and whilst stationed in Turkey converted to Islam and changed his name to Emin Pascha. On arrival in Africa in 1876 he introduced himself to the British authorities as a German-educated Turk. Emin rose through the ranks to governor of Equatoria and governed the area with great success until the 1885 Mahdi invasion of Egypt and the Sudan crippled British territorial claims. Emin, determined to hold his ground, became completely cut-off from external communication and supply routes. He finally received orders to withdraw from his outpost or expect no assistance from the British. The international press became interested in the fate of this lone European amongst ‘violent native rebels’. Reports incited public pressure from Britain which prompted a reluctant rescue mission headed by Henry Morton Stanley. Official German interest in Emin Pascha was not awakened until a similar public outcry demanded action to rescue the fellow German from the hands of the natives – and the British! The German expedition’s late start doomed it to failure. Stanley reached Emin first with a starving and demoralised entourage. Stanley suspected the governor of conspiracy as his stronghold was curiously untouched by Mahdi troops. Furthermore, Emin’s loyalty to his native entourage appeared unnatural to Stanley. Emin was effectively, unofficially, taken into custody by Stanley who intended to return him to Britain in order to stand trial for treason. The expedition headed south-east towards the coast where Germany succeeded in exerting its new-found political power over its British rivals. The British expedition was forced to cross over into German East-Africa, yet the British did not expect the fledgling empire to take advantage of the territorial upper hand. Stanley was forced to leave Africa without his prize. Emin, still unsure of his fate in German hands, was sent on a mandate back to Equatorial Africa with Stuhlmann to reclaim territory for the German nation. The episode provided material for numerous exploration narratives including Stuhlmann’s and Rust’s works and of course Stanley’s *In Darkest Africa*. These narratives signalled a rise in the military nature of scientific expeditions such as Adolf von Tiedemann’s *Tana-Baringo-Nil. Mit Carl Peters zu Emin Pascha. Von Adolf v. Tiedemann, Major a.D.* (Berlin: C.A. Schetske, 1907). When detailing preparations for these expeditions – by this time an established tradition in *Afrikareisende* narratives – clocks, compasses and scientific equipment, are replaced by a need for weapons.

<sup>50</sup> Franz Stuhlmann, *Mit Emin Pascha ins Herz von Afrika: Ein Reisebericht mit Beiträgen von Emin Pascha* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1894)

officer, Stuhlmann was a coloniser first and a scientist second. In 1888, Stuhlmann had headed for the rich fauna of Madagascar. Whilst on the island, an Arab uprising broke out in the nearby German colony *Deutsch-Ostafrika*. Stuhlmann joined the fight against the ‘insurgents’ as a reserve officer under Hermann von Wissmann. After helping to quash the rebellion, Stuhlmann remained in the colony where, one year later, he was given the mandate to accompany Emin Pascha on his expedition. Stuhlmann’s narrative represents well the combination of politics and science behind African exploration. His two-year expedition from 1890-1892 took him firstly through German territories with the aim of consolidating Germany’s control over *Deutsch-Ostafrika*. The expedition made no secret of its aims to extend German influence into as yet uncolonised territories. Stuhlmann’s monolithic theories of racial hierarchy underpin his Social Darwinist justifications for the spread of German culture onto African soil. Accompanied by Emin Pascha, the German expedition set its sights on territorial acquisitions in Equatorial Africa – the former site of Emin’s stronghold and terrain covered by Schweinfurth and Junker. Yet the expedition’s failure to extend Germany’s sphere of influence in Uganda and reach its goal, the fort of Faschoda, whose potential the Germans were the first to recognise,<sup>51</sup> remained further bugbears in the list of failed opportunities and international humiliation with which pro-colonial German discourse characterised Germany’s involvement in the early stages of the scramble for Africa. A colonial supporter and nationalist, Stuhlmann’s journey through Africa unsurprisingly

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<sup>51</sup> The outpost Faschoda was of particular interest to the Germans who were the first to recognise its logistic potential. Unfortunately Emin was unable to reach it and two years later it became the focal point of the scramble for Africa. See David Levering Lewis, *The Race to Faschoda. European Colonialism and African Resistance in the Scramble for Africa* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987)

upholds the tradition of imposing aprioristic images of German cultural superiority onto African terrain.

Lastly, ethnographer Leo Frobenius composed our final narrative *Und Afrika sprach* during his two-year expedition through Nigeria and Sudan.<sup>52</sup> A coloniser in a foreign colony, Frobenius's ethnographic mandate, sponsored by the Hamburg Museum für Völkerkunde, highlights the continuing, heightened German interest in cultural difference over and above purely expansionist motives. His portrayals of Sudanese culture provide both a link back to the first exploration narratives and epitomise the increasing sophistication and prioritisation of ethnographic observations. Frobenius, significantly, demonstrates the continued influence of German, cultural 'heterophilia' during the German colonial era, for he makes explicit links between the assumed 'primitive' African and the 'modern' German which had been merely suggested by Nachtigal and Schweinfurth. His cognitive interest in the movement of cultures over time refutes concepts of cultural superiority in favour of diversity and variety. His narrative is composed with the intention of bringing a revalorised understanding of African culture to Germany, hence the title Africa 'spoke'. Yet Frobenius's experiences in British-Nigeria prove particularly relevant to understanding Anglo-German relations and international political rivalry on African soil. Hence the work provides the final indicator of German self-understanding shortly before the outbreak of World War One. With these factors in mind, let us now analyse the concepts most relevant to this study.

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<sup>52</sup> Leo Frobenius, *Und Afrika sprach. Bericht über den Verlauf der dritten Reiseperiode der Deutschen innerafrikanischen Forschungs Expedition in den Jahren 1910-1912*, 3 vols (Berlin: [n.pub], 1912).

Jetzt wäre es reine Zeitverschwendung gewesen, noch länger in Rhadames zu bleiben, denn bis zur Wiederankunft Si-Othmans aus Algier mußten im besten Fall mehrere Monate verstreichen. Derselbe hatte mir gegenüber also nach unseren Begriffen sein Wort gebrochen; er selbst freilich, der wie alle seine Landsleute vom Wert der Zeit sich keine Vorstellung machen kann, mochte die Sache leichter nehmen. (Rohlf's, I, p. 97)

After completing the first leg of his journey to the town of Rhadames on the North-Eastern border of the Sahara, Rohlf's, in the above scene, attempts to secure a date and means of departure. The explorer is desperate to end his six-week period of sojourn – Rohlf's had visited Rhadames previously and found the climate particularly insalubrious – and continue his journey southwards to less familiar territories (Rohlf's, I, p. 84). However, Rohlf's's hopes of safe passage with the Tuareg tribal leader Si-Othman and his caravan are dashed. Venting his frustration, Rohlf's significantly employs the concept of *time* not only to accentuate cultural difference, but also to imply that his understanding of time's value is a marker of cultural and intellectual superiority over the Muslim Tuareg. Rohlf's's comments during this scene are exemplary of our earlier explorers' use of temporal concepts to define both themselves and the African other.

This chapter outlines the concepts to be deployed in the thesis and will elaborate firstly the function of temporal concepts as a defining feature of both identity formation and cross-cultural encounter as demonstrated in the above excerpt. Secondly, this

chapter outlines the significance of Germany's *Sonderweg* to national unification and its effects on German national identity after 1871. Finally, we shall examine the particularities of Germany's late entry into the colonial scramble for Africa and the wealth of theories surrounding this course of events. Germany's particular route to industrialisation, nation-state consolidation and colonial power plays a significant role in our explorers' self-understanding when confronted by African alterity. The relevance of travel writing to the consolidation of a national identity, the works' complex function in colonial discourse and their reflection of Germanic self-understanding will become increasingly clear throughout the ensuing chapters.

## TIME AND IDENTITY

This study argues that the role of a characteristic time-set in the German experience of alterity is constitutive, but also dialectic and subversive. As we shall see, the nineteenth-century time-set prevalent in the sphere of western European cultural influence is chiefly constituted by scientific progress and the processes of industrialisation.<sup>53</sup> The registration of time's passage becomes increasingly scientific and mathematically defined in numerical values.<sup>54</sup> Further specific features defining this time-set are a belief in its authority and the necessity of its universal application. All that positively encourages its un-self-critical imposition in areas of cultural difference. As the

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<sup>53</sup> Western culture refers to those areas in the sphere of western European cultural influence, including the United States.

<sup>54</sup> See Helga Novotny, *Eigenzeit: Entstehung und Strukturierung eines Zeitgefühls* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1993), p. 10.

introductory quote demonstrates, time so defined becomes not only an inclusionary, but also an exclusionary device in African exploration. Those adhering to alternative models of temporal structure are portrayed as intellectually and consequently culturally inferior. Levels of cultural sophistication were also, from Voltaire to Hegel, measured on an evolutionary, temporal, linear-progressive scale.

The following episode is taken from a gift-giving encounter between Barth and the leader of the Tebu residing in the province of Kānem in Chad. Barth, now the expedition leader, must request permission to pass through Tebu territories. The excerpt is particularly significant, as here, the clock and its associated mind-set become *the* mark of difference between our first German travellers and Africans:

Er [der Häuptling, T.D.] ließ sich dann mit seinen Gefährten ruhig nieder und fand großes Vergnügen an der Spieldose, welche ich wirklich nebst der Uhr auf meiner ganzen Reise für das geeignetste Instrument fand, um die Eingeborenen von der großen Überlegenheit des europäischen Geistes und der Kunstfertigkeit der Europäer zu überzeugen. (Barth, III, p. 71)

For Barth, the clock represents unquestionably superior technology. During such situations of relative impotence and subordination, the gift of a clock helps the explorer to retain a sense of control by affirming his presumed intellectual superiority. Thus Barth implies that time, and the ability to both measure and control it are distinctly ‘white’ properties. The clock in fact becomes increasingly reserved as a symbol of

*Germanic* identity. In the absence of a fixed national identity, our pre-unification explorers are instead unified by their claims to superior rational, logical and methodological exploration over their European counterparts.<sup>55</sup> Devoid of associated symbols such as a national flag, which other European nations gave as gifts, the clock compensates as a symbolic gift which best represents our early explorers' understanding of the German mind-set.<sup>56</sup>

However, the *German* variation of the western time-set was ambiguous. Aside from Hegelian concepts of linear progression, our explorers were heavily influenced by German pluralist traditions, in particularly the Romantics' alternative philosophy of time and Herder's concepts of cultural diversity which, I argue, were awakened by the move to Africa. The emergence of Darwinian evolutionary theory, combined with Germany's particular route to unification, had a profound effect on our later explorers' concept of time, for evolutionary theory could be deployed to either refute or support existing linear-historicist theories of progress and development. With these factors in mind, let us examine the features of this German time-set.

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<sup>55</sup> Barth's success as sole survivor and ultimate leader of a British expedition underlines this assumption. As we shall see, later references stating German superior access to logic and rationality are used to subvert the authority of British and French colonial projects.

<sup>56</sup> Barth's recommendation of clocks as gifts is upheld by Rohlf's and Nachtigal, yet with less success. Nachtigal's gift from the Prussian monarchy – an ornamental clock, transported thousands of miles through the desert to the Sultan of Bornu – is returned to Berlin still in its box. The clock was intended to function as both a gesture of thanks to the Sultan for his continued hospitality to German travellers. Its decoration however depicted three-dimensional images of the human form and was consequently offensive to Islamic culture. Rather than a symbol of cultural superiority, the clock in this case becomes a mark of German intercultural blindness and German political impotence on the world stage (Nachtigal, I, p. 144).



## THE TIME-SET

What, then, is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks me, I do not know.<sup>57</sup>

As the above quote demonstrates, the concept of time and the problem of its definition have raised questions for centuries. Rather than offering an ontological analysis of time as a philosophical problem, this study focuses on the subjective experience of time. This can be categorised as a form of temporal consciousness which refers to the mode or texture of ordinary experience, particularly the experience of duration. This form of temporal consciousness can be defined as collective time, for it encompasses the general consensus on time-keeping which governs the empirical measurement of passing time and the value of time as it varies from culture to culture. Collective time regulates actions within a specific society and consequently influences cultural norms.<sup>58</sup> The individual experience of duration also falls under the category of the time-set, yet it is by contrast highly subjective and largely dominated by the scientific notion of collective temporal consciousness which prevailed in nineteenth-century Europe. The following analysis highlights the factors contributing to the establishment of ‘normal’ temporal consciousness during this era. These factors determine the time-set of our early *Afrikareisende*.

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<sup>57</sup> Saint Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions* trans. by H. Chadwick, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.167.

<sup>58</sup> See Robert E. Ornstein, *On the Experience of Time* (Colorado: Westview, 1997), pp. 15-20.

## CHRISTIANITY AND TIME IN WESTERN CULTURE

It is impossible to discuss the role of time as defined in western culture without reference to Christianity – Christian teaching being the most significant factor determining man's relationship to time in pre-Enlightenment European society. The Bible closely links history and time, the provisionality of earthly time being the defining characteristic of Christian history. The relationship between both concepts centres around Christ who, in the history which He fulfils and inaugurates at one and the same time, appears at one particular, predestined moment as the fullness of time *and* at the end. This moment occurs in accordance with a plan that God has lain down in advance to be put into effect at the appropriate time. Christ is therefore first and last, both in relation to humankind and in relation to things. He is the end-point and simultaneously the goal of history. History and time itself have both a beginning and an end, which will be the end of the world and will constitute the culminating point of all past history. In the beginning time was set in motion and has been moving forwards irresistibly ever since as a continuous succession of moments occurring on a linear scale. The full manifestation of time is yet to come, as the past appears as a possibility for the future. The future contains the possibility of redemption from past sins, endowing time with the utmost potential as a liberating and progressive force.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> See Germano Pàttaro, 'The Christian Conception of Time', in *Cultures and Time* (Paris: Unesco, 1976), pp. 169-197.

Goal-orientated, linear time gives events their historical significance and structure, and so hinges the course of human history to the birth of Christ. Time is tightly linked by the reference points of beginning, middle and end, which draw it into line and inscribe the course of history in a restricted plane. There is no possibility for repetition as all time is ultimately and irrevocably controlled by the judgement of God, creating an irreversible historical continuum. Yet although dominated by originality and finality, time in Christianity is not freed from a cyclical conception. In the context of the creation and the end of the world, humankind and the world ultimately return back to the Creator and time to eternity. The Christian perception of time thus never fully overcame the cyclical attitude to the passage of time in pagan Europe.<sup>60</sup> Instead, ritual celebrations such as Easter and Christmas, consciously and unconsciously combining events in the life of Christ with pagan celebrations, structured people's lives within the community and reinforced the presence of Christ at regular natural-cyclical intervals. The *Afrikareisende* structure their lives around such ritual celebrations and so reinforce the presence of their culturally-specific Christian norms at regular intervals in Africa.

The processes of modernisation in the post-Enlightenment, western cultural sphere acted as a stimulus to modify this traditional Christian understanding of time.<sup>61</sup> Enlightenment secularisation abolished the origin and the end of Christian time, yet paradoxically strengthened its basic notion of linearity and progress.<sup>62</sup> Thus Christianity nevertheless remained influential to European temporal consciousness. Although not

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<sup>60</sup> Hans Maier, *Die christliche Zeitrechnung*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1991), p.21 and 26.

<sup>61</sup> See Helmut Appel's 'Der physikalische Zeitbegriff im Wandel naturwissenschaftlicher Erkenntnis' in *Zeitkonzeptionen, Zeiterfahrung, Zeitrechnung. Stationen ihres Wandels vom Mittelalter bis zur Moderne*, ed. by Trude Ehlert (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1997), pp. 49-68.

<sup>62</sup> Maier, *Die christliche Zeitrechnung*, pp. 42-3.

devout Christians, our *Afrikareisende* demonstrate the extent to which some Christian temporal concepts are firmly ingrained in European consciousness. Let us now look at a further major factor which contributed to the nineteenth-century time-set: Industrialisation.

### THE COMMODIFICATION OF TIME: INDUSTRIALISATION AND THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY TIME-SET

Capitalistic industrialisation, increased mechanisation, and the use of technology, shaped the general perception of time in nineteenth-century Western Europe.<sup>63</sup> Adam Smith, criticised by Karl Marx for his de-humanisation of the worker, was the first to assert that time is money and that the time-saving division of labour facilitates mass-production.<sup>64</sup> These developments, here termed the commodification of time, can be reconstructed through the greatest new manifestation of industrial technology: the railway. Wolfgang Schivelbusch describes the consequences of rail travel as ‘die Vernichtung von Raum und Zeit’.<sup>65</sup> The mechanisation of transport altered the qualitative perception of duration whilst travelling, by separating the traveller from the terrain traversed.<sup>66</sup> Gradual changes in landscape which differentiated stages of the journey disappeared, as did the traditional, physical experience of travel. All perception

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<sup>63</sup> See Marie-Luise Heuser, ‘Mathematik und Zeit im 19. Jahrhundert’ in *Zeitbegriffe und Zeiterfahrung*, ed. by Hans Michael Baumgartner (Freiburg im Bresgau: Alber, 1994), pp. 95-113, (pp. 95-96) and Appel, ‘Der physikalische Zeitbegriff’.

<sup>64</sup> Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations*, 3 vols ([n.pub], 1789).

<sup>65</sup> Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise: Zur Industrialisierung von Raum und Zeit im 19. Jahrhundert*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Frankfurt a.M: Fischer, 2000), p.16.

<sup>66</sup> See also Alexander Honold, ‘Flüsse, Berge, Eisenbahnen: Szenarien geographischer Bemächtigung’, *Zeitschrift für Germanistik*, ed. by A. Honold and K. Scherpe, Supplement 2 (1999), 149-174.

of effort through self-movement was removed. Pre-industrial modes of transport were subjected to exhaustion by the forces of nature. With the introduction of the railway, nature became subjected to mechanisation. The shape of the landscape was altered to provide linear and level tracks and so ensure the quickest route between two points. Travel became characterised by origin and destination and so eliminated the places in between. Abstract co-ordinates rather than real landscape determined geography. Schivelbusch illustrates the dialectical process which ensued as space was at once apparently enlarged by enabling greater distances to be covered, yet simultaneously reduced by shortening the time taken to traverse it.<sup>67</sup>

The wider-reaching effects on the socio-cultural perception of time initiated by modern technology were extensive. The initial experience of disorientation resulting from the altered mode of perception, gave way to the acceptance of regular, mechanical movement as the 'new nature' or norm.<sup>68</sup> Pre-industrial modes of transport became synonymous with chaos due to their unreliability and therefore irregularity. The popular edition of Barth's narrative emphasises the pre-industrial nature of African travel 'im Sattel'<sup>69</sup> and consequently reinforces stereotypical images of Africa as stagnating in a prior historical era.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Schivelbusch, *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise*, p.37.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p.19.

<sup>69</sup> Heinrich Barth, *Im Sattel durch Nord- und Zentral-Afrika 1849-1855* ed. and rev. by Heinrich Schiffrers (Stuttgart: Thienemann, 2000)

<sup>70</sup> For example, Said's discussion of Egyptian 'backwardness' in Said, *Orientalism*, p. 35.

Mechanisation, demanding frictionless interaction of its individual parts, required the same of its controlling structure. The expansion of the railway necessitated the introduction of standardised time. Railway companies, and not governments, were the first to instate standard time to improve their inefficient time-tabling resulting from localised time-zones.<sup>71</sup> As railways extended over national boundaries, the process repeated itself on a larger scale. The introduction of standard time at the end of the nineteenth century regulated time zones to enable more efficient movement and communication over longer distances. The International Meridian Conference took place in Washington on 22 October 1884, with representatives from twenty-five countries. Delegates established Greenwich as the zero meridian, determined the exact length of the day, divided the earth into twenty-four time zones, each one hour apart, and fixed a precise beginning of the universal day.<sup>72</sup> The world however was slow to adopt this system. In 1891 German lobbyists emphasised the difficulties posed to military co-ordination by the five time zones still in existence in Germany. Time zones were not standardised in Germany until 1893.<sup>73</sup>

Germany's slow route to nation-state consolidation inevitably entailed low levels of national, cultural uniformity and favoured cultural diversity. Consequently, this acceptance of cultural heterogeneity became ingrained in Germanic self-understanding. Yet the ensuing loss of locality initiated by improved transit routes and regulated time-

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<sup>71</sup> Schivelbusch, *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise*, p. 44.

<sup>72</sup> Although all resolutions were passed, the only unanimous decision was to adopt a single prime meridian for all nations. Germany for example, was one of only two nations to abstain from the resolution to adopt a universal day. Germany also abstained from the vote to regulate this day as a mean solar day, beginning at midnight and counted from zero up to twenty-four hours. A copy of the resolutions and the conference notes can be found at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.

<sup>73</sup> Schivelbusch, *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise*, p. 44.

zones altered the definition of *Heimat* so fundamental to Germanic consciousness.<sup>74</sup> Local idiosyncrasies became fewer and applicable to a larger area. The cycle of production and consumption no longer remained in one locality and so the transportation of products over greater distances removed the immediacy of place associated with them. Marx outlined the wider-reaching socio-cultural effects of this phenomenon in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1884*:

The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he produces. The *devaluation* of the human world grows in direct proportion to the *increases in value* of the world of things. Labour not only produces commodities, it also produces itself and the workers as a *commodity* and it does so in the same proportion in which it produces commodities in general.<sup>75</sup>

To recapitulate, as a tool of industrialisation, the railway with its linearity, dynamism, reliance on speed and adherence to standardised, measurable time, symbolises emblematically the introduction of new, industrialised values which moulded nineteenth-century Western Europe's conception of 'collective time'. The pace of life accelerated as the size of measurable units of time decreased and the importance attached to each one increased.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> See Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: the German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp.1-19.

<sup>75</sup> Karl Marx, *The Economical and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1884* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959). No German copy was available at the time of writing.

<sup>76</sup> See Novotny, *Eigenzeit*, p. 18 and Reinhart Koselleck's 'Verzeitlichung des Denkens' in *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1979), p. 34.

Influenced by Enlightenment theory, progress-orientated attitudes towards these forces facilitating what is known as modernity, reduced the importance allocated to the 'time of Christ' in European society.<sup>77</sup> With technology as the intermediary force between mankind and nature, offering greater control over natural surroundings, the need for rational, definable processes prevailed. Ostracised from any spiritual meaning, the collective temporal mind-set developed into a concept of pure, empirical time, and so prioritised an exclusively scientific, or rather, scientistic, model of the world. No longer an abstract entity, time became a valuable, measurable commodity which could be gained, lost, or wasted. Travel became a product, the traveller a package and cultural difference a waste of precious time. Gerhard Rohlfs, as we shall see, could not wait to construct a railway through the otherness of the North-African desert.

#### **THE PHILOSOPHER OF HISTORY: THE HEGELIAN INFLUENCE**

Pre-Darwinian evolutionary theory dominated the discourse of time in the early part of the century, influencing theories of human development and particularly historicism. Our early explorers Barth and Rohlfs demonstrate distinctly Hegelian categories of historicist understanding.<sup>78</sup> Hegel believed that humankind is entirely shaped by history and society. Nations, social systems and living forms become what they are due to progressive transformations realised in time; thus any present contains traces of all that

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<sup>77</sup> See Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983)

<sup>78</sup> Hegelian theory of history was still dominant in the first half of the nineteenth-century yet drastically on the wane in the latter half due to the influence of David Friedrich Strauss, Nietzsche and Darwin.



has gone before. Parallel to the discussion of humankind's increasing control over the environment and distancing from religion as discussed above, such theories gave meaning to life in a world which placed greater importance on humankind's movement in history than on its awaiting eternity.

In accordance with Kant in his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Hegel believed that the influences which shape humankind also shape the way in which he perceives the world – through networks of categories and concepts.<sup>79</sup> Hegel did radically criticise Kant's notion of the concept, as according to Kant, the concepts which we produce through our own thought cannot be true of things in themselves.<sup>80</sup> For Hegel the progression of history aided the understanding of concepts present in more advanced cultures and so allowed the truth to become ever more transparent.<sup>81</sup> The concepts with which humankind understands its environment change with the progression of time, yet the laws of the natural world remain the same. As the world man perceives is unchanging, the paradigms by which it is interpreted and thus *Geist*, or overarching subjectivity, evolve. Humankind is thus self-determining and responsible for its own development. When a stage of full realisation of humankind's self-knowledge of spirit is finally reached, the endpoint of Hegel's historical development is achieved: 'Die Weltgeschichte stellt nun den Stufengang der Entwicklung des Prinzips, dessen Gehalt

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<sup>79</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, [1st edn, 1781] (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1984)

<sup>80</sup> Stephen Houlgate, *Freedom, Truth and History: An Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 5-7.

<sup>81</sup> G.F.W. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, in *Werke*, 20 vols, (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1970), xii:, p. 77.

das Bewußtsein der Freiheit ist, dar'.<sup>82</sup> The society in which Hegel lived had, in his opinion, reached an age of greatest understanding of the 'truth'; a process which had been developing throughout history had reached its culmination. Western, or European culture was, in Hegel's opinion, the most advanced, with the most sophisticated, authoritative access to the truth.<sup>83</sup> With such conclusions it seems legitimate to interpret Hegelian historicism, despite Hegel's Herderian respect for cultural difference and autonomy, as highly Euro- and indeed Germanocentric.

Thus Hegelian theory does not conceive of mere sequences of events as being historical, but rather the conscious changes brought about by humankind's increasing self-realisation and the achievement of goals set during the course of these developments. Humans make history, as they are essentially self-determining. Historical change can only be recognised as such when those it affects are conscious of it. History therefore, is co-defined by the self-conscious process of its narration and transcription:

Die Geschichtsschreiber binden zusammen, was flüchtig vorüberrauscht, und legen es im Tempel der Mnemosyne nieder, zur Unsterblichkeit. Sagen, Volkslieder, Überlieferungen sind von solcher ursprünglichen Geschichte auszuschließen, denn sie sind noch trübe Weisen und daher den Vorstellungen trüber Völker eigen. [...] Der Boden angeschauter oder

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<sup>82</sup> 'Es ist hier nur anzuführen, daß die erste Stufe das schon vorhin angegebene Versenktsein des Geistes in die Natürlichkeit, die zweite das Heraustreten desselben in das Bewußtsein seiner Freiheit ist. [...] Die dritte Stufe ist die Erhebung aus dieser noch besonderen Freiheit in die reine Allgemeinheit derselben, in das Selbstbewußtsein und Selbstgefühl des Wesens der Geistigkeit. Diese Stufen sind die Grundprinzipien des allgemeinen Prozesses' (Hegel, *Philosophie der Geschichte*, p. 77).

<sup>83</sup> Hegel, *Philosophie der Geschichte*, p. 415 and 428.

anschaulicher Wirklichkeit gibt einen festeren Grund als der der Vergänglichkeit, auf dem jene Sagen und Dichtungen gewachsen sind, welche nicht mehr das Historische von Völkern machen, die zu fester Individualität gediehen sind. (Hegel, *Philosophie der Geschichte*, p. 12)

This would suggest that cultures with little or no written historical documentation possess neither official historiography nor history of their own. Writing is the only method of recording history in a finite, material form and for the *Afrikareisende*, the only possible method of conveying their exploration of otherness to those at home. Thus writing becomes at once a main source of cultural affiliation and a marker of that culture's achievement in history.

A further feature which encourages the Eurocentric interpretation of Hegelian historicism is the prerequisite of Christianity. Christianity accorded humankind freedom before God – one of Hegel's parameters for conditions of historical change.<sup>84</sup> This essential recognition of freedom developed into the institutions of the modern state. The modern state thus embodies both Christian claims to universal human freedom with secular claims such as freedom through universal rights. According to Hegel, cultures lacking such a state have been left behind by history. The combination of Christian and secular beliefs also characterised the altered perception of religion in the Post-Enlightenment era. Cultures which evolved from other religions must therefore,

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<sup>84</sup> Houlgate, *Freedom, Truth and History*, p. 18. See also Hegel, *Philosophie der Geschichte*, p. 31.

logically, always remain inferior. Our early explorers, influenced by still-dominant Hegelian theory, encounter Africa with a belief in its historical stagnation.

A civilisation, according to Hegel, is defined by a specific identity, formed by a common character present in such institutions as religion, judicial systems, customs, ethics and developments in science and technology.<sup>85</sup> As the general nature of civilisations differs, so must the concepts by which societies perceive, as they are the direct products of that civilisation. Hegel does not define the progress of civilisations according to racial criteria, but points out that a civilisation cannot be free unless its people are conscious of themselves as free. Although Hegel was profoundly influenced by Herder and consequently sensitive to cultural difference and specificity, those influenced by his philosophy may interpret this assertion as a justification to ‘free’ those other civilisations less self-aware than their own by imposing European cultural norms in the form of colonial expansionism. This would also be reinforced by Hegel’s approval of modernity’s progressive tendencies and technological innovation as the way forward, which appear to legitimise the negation of other cultures’ relevance. So although Hegel recognised flaws in the European use of freedom at the expense of others, a sense of self-assurance as to the state of European universal superiority resulted from his theories. Hegel defends the cunning of reason, as the major author of progressive, linear-historicist occidental time. These concepts will have formed the preconceived images of the other against which the *Afrikareisende* measured their actual experiences of alterity.

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<sup>85</sup> Hegel defines the common identity of civilisations in Hegel, *Philosophie der Geschichte*, p. 72.

However, great historicist systems such as Hegel's seemed to have made their case too well. By demonstrating how the past affected the future to such an extent, the future seemed smothered and pre-determined by a reified past. The burden of history in nineteenth-century Germany triggered reactionary discourse which elevated the status of subjective temporal consciousness and individual influence.<sup>86</sup> Nietzsche's *Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil*,<sup>87</sup> for example, emphasises the importance of existing and living in the present, whilst Freud's investigation into the unconscious time of dreams reveals the non-existence of a theoretical framework, indeed, of time at all, with which to structure these experiences.<sup>88</sup>

## SUBJECTIVE TEMPORAL CONSCIOUSNESS

In contrast to the quantifiable, standard nature of 'collective time', there also exists a form of temporal consciousness which is individually exclusive. This is subjective time and revolves around the personal apprehension of the passage of time and so affects the ordinary experience of duration. Although exclusive to every individual, subjective temporal consciousness is inherently linked to social-cultural factors. It is however a time as flexible as that of dreams; it is reversible and elastic. Conventional logic does not apply to subjective experiences of the passage of time.

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<sup>86</sup> As Dirk Götsche writes in *Zeitreflexion und Zeitkritik im Werk Wilhelm Raabes*, the experience of time became a central theme in literary works throughout the nineteenth century: 'die Auseinandersetzung mit Zeiterfahrung und Zeitgeschichte, mit dem Zeitbewußtsein des einzelnen und mit dem (Zeit-) Geschichtsbewußtsein der Epoche seit dem späteren 18. Jahrhundert [wird] zu einer wesentlichen Problemstellung der Erzählliteratur', in *Zeitreflexion und Zeitkritik im Werk Wilhelm Raabes* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2000), p. 5.

<sup>87</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche *Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben* (Munich: DTV, 1996)

<sup>88</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Die Traumdeutung* (1900), 10<sup>th</sup> edn (Frankfurt a.M: Fischer, 1991)

Extensive discussion of subjective time came to the fore at the end of the nineteenth century as a reaction to the introduction of standardised, measurable time and the ensuing temporalisation of daily life discussed above. The concept of ‘collective time’, widely accepted as a proper marker of duration and succession, was seen by others as a falsification of the truth. Europe had developed a temporal ethnocentrism, equating its temporal norms with civilisatory advancement. Linear, quantifiable time became directly linked to progress as it reflected positive scientific development and therefore an improved standard of living.

The height of belief in technology and progress was also the starting point of conflicting views, expressed by those who were opposed to the idea of a rigid homogeneous time. The next section shows how Bergson’s philosophical exploration of subjective time challenged such overbearing tendencies inherent in ‘collective time’, in an attempt to break free from the domination of world time. He continued the tradition of temporal epiphany, which extends from Plato to early Novalis and Walter Benjamin.<sup>89</sup> This also challenged the attitude towards historicism and the glorification of the past, by suggesting the need to examine the personal past of the individual and its effect on the present. Parallel to subjective time, the personal past is private and varies from individual to individual, in contrast to the historical past which is collective and more homogeneous.

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<sup>89</sup> As Nicholas Saul writes in *Philosophy and German Literature*, Novalis’s *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* takes up the Platonic paradox of temporality, in search of the moment which transcends and totalises time, ‘some higher, transitional zone, a quintessentially Platonic privileged vantage point inside but outside of time’. Nicholas Saul, ‘The pursuit of the subject: literature as critic and perfecter of philosophy 1790-1830’ in *Philosophy and German Literature, 1700-1990*, ed. by Nicholas Saul (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2002), pp. 57-102, (p. 75).

## HENRI BERGSON

The overbearing privileging of ‘commodified time’ which dominated the temporal mind-set in nineteenth-century Europe simultaneously sowed the seeds of opposition. This section illustrates Henri Bergson’s radical challenge to this prevalent discourse. His philosophy is interesting here, insofar as his first work, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*,<sup>90</sup> introduces a criticism of nineteenth-century society, which Bergson connects to its concept of time. Bergson is also particularly significant to our case for, as David Midgley observes in his study of Bergson’s reception in the German-speaking world, Bergson’s early works were heavily indebted to the works of German Darwinists.<sup>91</sup> John Mullarkey points out in his study of Bergson, many of the issues raised in this first work are altered and modified to such a degree in Bergson’s later publications that they conflict with earlier opinions. For example, the dualism with which the psychological experience of time is apparently differentiated from external spatiality in *Time and Free Will* becomes one level of an ontology of duration in Bergson’s later philosophy.<sup>92</sup> However, the point in time at which this first work appears – shortly after the publication of Nachtigal’s travel narrative – provides concrete theoretical evidence of the fragility surrounding the western, official consensus on time. It is argued here that the move to Africa exposes the fragility of these norms, as the whole edifice on which they are formed begins to crumble during our explorers’ process

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<sup>90</sup> Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. by F.L. Pogson (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1910)

<sup>91</sup> See David Midgley, ‘The Reception of Bergson’s “L’évolution créatrice” in the German-Speaking World’ in Nicholas Saul and Simon J. James, eds, *The Fraction of Literature* (Amsterdam: Rudopi, 2009). As a result of his German influences, Bergson’s later works were well-received in Germany.

<sup>92</sup> John Mullarkey, *Bergson and Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 1999), p.5.

of narration. For as we shall see in later chapters, both the act of writing about otherness and the literary forming of the texts change our explorers and ‘open’ them to otherness. The narratives thus implicitly criticise the temporal norms of society even earlier than in Bergson’s works and so pre-empt later critiques of ‘collective time’ in western society.<sup>93</sup>

Let us look at Bergson’s critique more closely. Bergson was a proponent of heterogeneous time. In *Time and Free Will*, he introduces the concept of duration as a non-systematic, heterogeneous, inner, psychological experience, which is however *also* real time. This stands in contrast to the consistent and uniform, external experience of time, which is influenced by the understanding of space outside and surrounding us. According to Bergson, it is this external phenomenon by which we define ourselves and which, due to its unchanging, uncreative nature, enables us to comprehend the interaction of bodies as a tight chain of causality. Duration, according to Bergson is thus commonly confused with what he refers to as extension. This is the empirical division of space, which he defines as a mere rearrangement of the pre-existing. Nineteenth-century conceptuality, so Bergson claims, classifies the mental states of the consciousness in the same way as the placement of objects in space; in quantifiable, separate states. In short, applying spatial categories to the phenomena of consciousness, which does not exist in space, diminishes its qualitative dimensions. Duration is reduced to mere extension.

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<sup>93</sup> Thomas Anz investigates Bergson’s influence on criticism of ‘collective time’ in the ‘literarische Moderne’ in ‘Zeit und Beschleunigung in der literarischen Moderne’ in *Die Wiederentdeckung der Zeit: Reflexionen – Analysen – Konzepte*, ed. by Antje Gimmler, Mike Sandbothe and Walther Ch. Zimmerli (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994), pp. 111-119 (p. 117).



Bergson is particularly relevant to our case as he defies the conception of ‘clock time’ as an accurate representation of duration. This spatialisation of time stands in direct contradiction to his alternative concept of time as a flux, or stream of consciousness, which negates the existence of a pure, absolute present. Bergson negates the value of clock-time by stating that the hand of a clock, for example, only represents one moment with one position, at any given time. The human intellect divides the continuous flow of consciousness into states, which correspond to a position of the hand of the clock. Thus the state of mind appears to be simultaneous with a point in time. Pure duration, however, cannot be seen as a series of discrete states. Instead it is a flow of qualitative transformations, which cannot be mathematically defined. The clock thus reduces to something foreign the autonomous nature of time as a dimension in itself. Bergson however, defines the consciousness of duration as the fourth dimension of existence.<sup>94</sup> As we shall see, this dimension appears to Nachtigal as ‘dream time’, the time of subconscious, instinctual, mental processes, which disregard logic, space and linear time to become a unified, epiphanic experience. In orthodox nineteenth-century opinion, however, instinct was synonymous with ‘pre-modern’ culture and so displayed irrational and unscientific principles. The intellect, which juxtaposes mental states into discrete, separate elements, the basis of Bergson’s idea of homogeneous space, is influenced by the pressure of convention. This is due to the following features:

The intuition of a homogeneous space is already a step towards social life

[...] Our tendency to form a clear picture of this externality of things and the

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<sup>94</sup> A.E. Pilkington, *Bergson and his Influence* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1976), p.3.

homogeneity of their medium is the same as the impulse which leads us to live in common and to speak.<sup>95</sup>

The drive to form communities which uphold our understanding of self, is, according to Bergson, also an inherent need for assimilation. Thus the creation of homogeneous space is based on a sociological phenomenon which desires to make everything the same. This desire is a result of, and is specific to, the mechanised nature of nineteenth-century life. The reduction of heterogeneity, as evident in the above quote, also refers to language as a product of society. This shared means of communication, so Bergson says, concentrates on expressing the collective mode of experience, so as to be understood by all. Consequently, the importance of purely individual experience is diminished. Thus Bergson suggests that his society's structuring of time through spatial categories seems to result from an inherent aversion to difference, a 'reaction against that heterogeneity which is the very ground of our experience' (Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 97). This desire for homogeneity is a deep-structural process which similarly suggests an aversion to heterogeneity. This could be translated into a fear of difference, which would consequently be the driving force behind the wish to assimilate. Therefore, the social part of the subconscious, which according to Bergson, produces the conception of time as modelled on spatial categories, also promotes a fear of otherness. As we shall see, certain explorers do perceive Africa as a threat to western culture, in spite of its apparent superiority. Yet it will also be argued that our German explorers are inherently less averse to cultural difference due to Germany's late unification and consequently the high level of cultural heterogeneity ingrained in their German identity.

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<sup>95</sup> Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 138.

Bergson finally claims that in other societies with alternative social structures ‘space is not so homogeneous [...]. Determinations of space, or directions, do not assume [...] a purely geometrical form’ (Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, p. 96). This, according to him, is a positive aspect of these societies, as it is conducive to the individual experience of consciousness, which is duration. Thus Bergson presents a critical view of his society and promotes alternative forms of knowledge. He therefore stands in direct contrast to the Hegelian promotion of Western European, occidental culture. Our early travel narratives thus reflect situations which support Bergson’s criticism of the nineteenth-century western time-set. The apparent threat posed by cultural difference seems to be well-founded, as in the following chapters, we shall see that it is the “time” of Africa which not only facilitates the individual experience of duration in its own subjects, but ultimately has the power to subvert the homogeneity of the western time-set. Our explorers’ acknowledgement of this factor is enabled by their fluid concept of self- and national understanding.

## **DARWINIAN TIME**

The final step on this continuum of temporal development is the introduction of Darwinian ‘deep time’. Charles Lyell’s proto-Darwinian *Principles of Geology* (1833) developed the comprehension of deep time – evolutionary change and the passage of time documented in layers of rock deposited over billions of years – as a crucial

scientific concept.<sup>96</sup> The passage of Darwinian time introduced an awareness of infinite time-scales that produced huge changes through infinitesimal increments. Darwinian time generated differences that had never existed before, and most importantly, a natural history that had never existed before.<sup>97</sup> Measured in eons, Darwinian time aged the earth by billions of years and so rendered ‘clock-time’ and humanity’s place on this time-scale, irrelevant. As Stephen Jay Gould observes in the following quote, ‘deep time’ shattered notions of mankind’s superiority and control of his natural surroundings which had steadily developed throughout the era of industrialisation and mechanisation:

What could be more comforting, what more convenient for human domination, than the traditional concept of a young earth, ruled by human will within days of its origin. How threatening by contrast, the notion of an almost incomprehensible immensity, with human habitation restricted to a millimicrosecond at the very end.<sup>98</sup>

This new understanding of time’s passage is barely conformable to ordinary experience.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, Lyell described the world of deep time as ‘without vestige of a beginning or an end’.<sup>100</sup> Yet even more unsettling are the questions this time scale raised surrounding established theories of development in the nineteenth century. Like

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<sup>96</sup> Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, 3 vols (London: Murray, 1830-33). The modern, scientific concept of deep time had been developed in the 1700’s by Scottish geologist James Hutton. The term ‘deep time’ was first popularised in 1984 by Henry Gee. See Henry Gee, *Deep Time* (London: Fourth Estate, 2000)

<sup>97</sup> Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 44-6.

<sup>98</sup> Stephen Jay Gould, *Time’s Arrow, Time’s Cycle* (Cambridge MA: Harvard: 1987), p. 2.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Bergson, Darwin believed that nature, politics, sociality and culture change over time and that the past does not determine how the future will unfold.<sup>101</sup> This change is a-teleological and, in contrast to linear-progressive, historicist theory, non-hierarchical. In Darwinian time, the future is open and in no way pre-determined.<sup>102</sup> There is no single, ultimate goal of Darwinian time. Equality lies in the diversity and variety of evolutionary outcomes. Thus Darwinian time questions all those concepts which determine the understanding of commodified time in nineteenth-century western thought.

Darwinian time and associated theories of development were particularly relevant to understanding Germany's 'slow' path to nationhood in comparison to other European nations. For our explorers, Darwinian time raises questions of human diversity, of progress, and most importantly, the future development of the German nation.

## IDENTITY AND NATION

In 1975, Charles Tilly's introductory remarks in his article 'Western State-Making and Theories of Transformation' point to the growing irrelevance of the 'traditional' nation-state and related developmental paradigms in the contemporary world.<sup>103</sup> Due to its constant transformation, the concept of nation, as Hugh Seton-Watson states, defies

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<sup>101</sup> Grosz, *The Nick of Time*, p. 159 and pp. 182-3.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>103</sup> Charles Tilly, 'Western State-Making and Theories of Transformation' in *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, ed. by Charles Tilly (Princeton University Press, Princeton: 1975), pp. 601-635.

‘scientific definition’.<sup>104</sup> In his work *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson states that in spite of the ‘immense influence which nationalism has exerted on the modern world’, there remain difficulties in defining the concepts of nation, nation-state and the phenomenon of nationalism itself.<sup>105</sup> The concept of nation-state employed in this thesis is however concerned with one era in particular. The definition used here is based on Stein Rokkan’s concept of the western nation-state as it existed at the time our travel narratives were composed.<sup>106</sup> Although Rokkan points out widespread variations within the Western European sphere, he identifies four consecutive phases of development which typically constitute the development of the nation-state. Phases one to three are temporally most relevant to our case and explain the differing tempo of Germany’s route to nation-statehood. Firstly the state is created by fixing an administrative centre. Administrative norms penetrate surrounding areas – often accompanied by military force – to consolidate a territory within clearly defined borders. This is typically an era of ‘political, economic and cultural unification at an elite level’ which constitutes initial state-building processes in Western Europe from the High Middle Ages to the French Revolution (Rokkan, ‘Dimensions of State Formation’, p. 572). Phase two focuses on nation-building. In contrast to the state-building of phase one, nation-building is a process which creates cultural borders to the outside world whilst creating inner unity within the state. Nation-building incorporates larger sections of the masses, as processes of cultural and linguistic standardisation then ensue within state territories which

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<sup>104</sup> Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States. An Inquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (Boulder: Westview, 1977), p. 5.

<sup>105</sup> Benedict Anderson *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), p.3.

<sup>106</sup> Stein Rokkan, ‘Dimensions of State Formation and Nation-Building: A Possible Paradigm for Research on Variations Within Europe’ in *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, pp. 562-600.

enhance an understanding of shared norms, beliefs and ultimately belonging amongst the population. These homogenising processes then create the *nation*. The creation of a nation-state is followed by phase three, which involves mass participation in political matters and what Rokkan terms the creation of ‘political citizenship’ (Rokkan, ‘Dimensions of State Formation’, p. 567). Mass participation strengthens and consolidates national institutions which in turn legitimise and reinforce the nation-state. Phase four, the final stage of nation-building, sees the redistribution of resources amongst the population to create ‘social citizenship’ (Rokkan, ‘Dimensions of State Formation’, p. 567). As can be seen by Rokkan’s concept, the nation-state encompasses both political and cultural elements. It is defined by a clear administrative centre, centralised power and centralised institutions within fixed territorial borders and possessing a clearly defined people. The creation and viability of a nation-state in Western Europe is largely synonymous with homogenising processes of both cultural assimilation and unity of purpose.

However, until 1871 the Deutscher Bund and prior to that the states of Holy Roman Empire, were a diffuse collection of individual, self-sufficient state-nations<sup>107</sup> lacking centralised institutions and strong, central political power.<sup>108</sup> Rokkan points to geopolitical factors as strong variables which explain the different tempo surrounding the creation of Western European nation-states (Rokkan, ‘Dimensions of State Formation’, p. 576). The distance from the established Central European trading-belt for

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<sup>107</sup> For a definition of state-nation in comparison to nation-state see Friedrich Meinecke, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1963), pp. 10-36.

<sup>108</sup> See David Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1780-1918* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

example, aided the creation of homogeneous nations due to less cultural intermixing. Similarly, cities within this trading area were well-established, individual administrative centres and thus immune to penetration by centralising forces. Germany of course lay directly within this central trading area. As a consequence, Germany's long-standing diverse and pluralist structure designated it outsider status amongst the leading European nation-state neighbours.<sup>109</sup> The German Reich's late consolidation as a nation-state in comparison to these neighbours meant that an acceptance of diversity and cultural heterogeneity was as much a part of Germanic self-understanding as a belief in science and linear progress. Our explorers were doubtless influenced by Herderian, pluralist notions of cultural anthropology, Goethe and Novalis's cosmopolitanism and Alexander von Humboldt's humanism, as much as by Hegelian historicist theory.

## **HERDER AND NATIONHOOD**

Herder's pluralist concepts of nation and nationhood, although not contemporary with our explorers, were extremely influential to their Germanic understanding of national belonging. Herder's culturally heterogeneous, Germanic self-understanding developed into theories of national belonging which as we shall see, diverge greatly from theories of homogenisation and fixed territorial borders. At the time when Herder composed his theories, Germany was virtually a political desert. The empire which existed more or

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<sup>109</sup> Rokkan points to geopolitical factors as strong variables explaining the different tempo surrounding the creation of Western European nation-states. The distance from the established Central-European trading-belt for example, aided the creation of homogenous nations due to less cultural intermixing. Similarly, cities within this trading area were well-established, individual administrative centres and thus immune to penetration by centralising powers.



less in name only, was a collection of princely states which offered no scope for collective political activity. Politics was tantamount to personal rule by the princes, as there was certainly no parliamentary activity to speak of. Herder's concept of nationhood was consequently influenced by a strong sense of pluralist diversity and rejection of absolute, centralised power.<sup>110</sup> Herder emphatically insisted upon the uniqueness, incommensurability and most importantly equality of national cultures.<sup>111</sup> According to Herder, shared language was the catalyst for recognising and expressing collective national culture.<sup>112</sup>

Yet as Barnard states in *Herder on Nationality, Humanity and History*, there is more to Herder's concept of national belonging than a simple equation with shared language.<sup>113</sup> Most relevant to our discussion of Germanic self-understanding is Herder's contention that national belonging is not the same as membership of a nation-state. For Herder, the national consciousness of being a German was not synonymous with being a citizen of Prussia. Yet his contemporary Rousseau for example, viewed external statehood and nationhood as synonymous entities. As we saw above, the nation-state was generally viewed as consistent with high levels of cultural assimilation and unity of purpose. Again, Rousseau, for example, insisted on a unity of general will as a prerequisite for nationhood, which consequently demanded the elimination of divergent

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<sup>110</sup> See F.M. Barnard, *Herder on Social and Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

<sup>111</sup> F.M. Barnard, *Herder on Nationality, Humanity and History* (Montreal: McGill-Queens, 2003), p. 6. See also Penny and Bunzl, *Wordly Provincialism*, p. 11. Just as Herder negated the existence of a master culture, Goethe's *Weltliteratur* negated the presence of a master literature.

<sup>112</sup> J.G. Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*, ed. by B. Suphan, 33 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877-1913) I, p. 147-148.

<sup>113</sup> Barnard, *Herder on Nationality*, p. 38.

positions.<sup>114</sup> Herder in contrast could not accept that national belonging was concomitant with subordination of partial concerns to an overriding reason of state. He cited Hebrew society as an example of successful pluralist structure, for its division into diverse institutional and tribal entities did not detract from Israel's understanding of itself as one people.<sup>115</sup> He strongly rejected the need for cultural assimilation as distinct nationalities, he stated, could again be subdivided into more diverse cultural groupings.<sup>116</sup> A doctrine of reciprocal *Zusammenwirken* within and between these specific groups ensured the existence of the nation, for it was a consciousness of having ways of seeing and feeling in common that made people think of themselves as belonging.<sup>117</sup> The nation it would seem, was envisioned as a composite of self-sustaining groups and associations, and not as a substantive body comprising individually atomised citizens.<sup>118</sup>

Although guided by a pluralist model which denied the need for permanent central authority, Herder did not view nationhood as apolitical. He merely attempted to redefine the nature of politics.<sup>119</sup> In direct contradiction to Rousseau, Herder favoured the idea of

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<sup>114</sup> J.J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. by M. Cranston (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1968), Book II, Chapter VIII. See also Barnard, *Herder on Social and Political Culture*, pp. 23-26.

<sup>115</sup> Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. X, p. 139 and vol. XVII, p. 285.

<sup>116</sup> See Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder* (London: Hogarth, 1976) and John H. Zammito, *Kant, Herder: The Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago, 2002)

<sup>117</sup> Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. XVIII, pp. 300-302.

<sup>118</sup> Herder's critical response to the homogenising tendencies of Enlightenment philosophers negated the view of all cultures progressing along a set path toward civilisation. Instead Herder propagated historical specificity and cultural incommensurability within a cosmopolitan framework that accepted the basic unity of mankind, but saw it expressed in difference rather than sameness. The inherent contradictions of *Afrikareisende* travel are partly expressed in the conflicting methodological and ideological approaches to science. The explorers view science as *the* symbol of cultural progression and development on a linear-historicist scale. Ordering and categorising development in stages of civilised development enables the classification of cultures. However their methods are based on collecting; amassing different objects which support the concept of cultural diversity and diffusion rather than rigid classification.

<sup>119</sup> See Barnard, *Herder on Social and Political Culture*, p. 48.

political culture emerging from national culture, rather than being created and imposed by an external law-giver.<sup>120</sup> He wished to replace existing centralised states in which people were forced into submission under one sceptre, with his concept of the nation-state as one people with its own national character. This in a sense is a non-state insofar as Herder thought it able to dispense with a central focus of power.<sup>121</sup> The development of national culture and national belonging were prerequisites for such a political culture. Both combined constituted nationhood proper. Legal traditions stemming from shared national customs and established standards of reciprocity were sufficient methods of integration once a nation had attained political maturity. Herder, unlike many of his contemporaries, did not see a sharp distinction between political society and diverse communities of unmediated fellowship, for as we have seen, he failed to see a potential threat to national unity in the existence of plural groups. His concept of informal *Zusammenwirken* by multiple agents constitutes a consensus which was inherently more compatible with Germany's plural diversity than formal agreements based on unitary will.

Heirs of Herder and Hegel as they are, this broad understanding of nationality and culture formed our early explorers in particular, in their qualitative experiences of Africa.

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<sup>120</sup> Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Book II, Chapter 7.

<sup>121</sup> Herder, *Sämmtliche Werke*, vol. XIII, p. 384-5.

## NATIONAL UNIFICATION AND COLONIAL EXPANSION

Germany's *Sonderweg* meant that historically it was an outsider state in Western Europe.<sup>122</sup> Not only were centralised political power and institutions late developments in comparison to neighbouring states, industrialisation was also regionally concentrated and relatively late to take hold.<sup>123</sup> Although German industry boomed after 1873, agriculture was still of relatively great importance.<sup>124</sup> The German Reich remained a predominantly agrarian nation until 1890.<sup>125</sup> Concomitantly, levels of cultural diversity and local idiosyncrasies remained for much longer than in other European nations.

Although such an outsider status presents our explorers with certain elements of affinity to African others and pride in the attainment of German *Kultur*, it also generated a conflicting desire for assimilation with neighbouring nation-states.<sup>126</sup> British international political power and prestige were directly linked to a strong national identity and consequently national self-confidence. As we shall see in later chapters, the increased European presence on African soil strengthened German national inferiority complexes as other nations – Britain in particular – appeared strikingly self-confident and willing to both defend and extend their national interests on African soil at all costs.<sup>127</sup> The unification of the German Reich, although lacking in cultural unity, finally enabled the creation of centralised power and institutions which paved the way for

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<sup>122</sup> Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 810-11

<sup>123</sup> Blackbourn states that industrialisation only started to take hold in the 1850s. See Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth-Century*, pp. 189-190.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 188.

<sup>125</sup> Davies, *Europe*, pp. 810-11.

<sup>126</sup> See Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten*, p 7.

<sup>127</sup> Zammito notes a history of German inferiority dating back to Herder. See Zammito, *Kant, Herder*, p. 155.

expansion into foreign territories. Friedrich Fabri's essay *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?* (1879) brought the 'Colonialfrage' to the forefront of public and political debate.<sup>128</sup> Fabri's essay outlines three possible types of colony – agricultural, trade and penal – as essential for the German nation's survival (Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?*, p. 28). These colonies, so Fabri maintains, would cure Germany's current ills: emigration and economic downturn. The essay was intended to refute widespread anti-colonial sentiment in both the public and political sphere (Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?*, p. 58). Fabri's pleas were successful in so far as a long, emotionally-charged debate followed which epitomised the conflicting aspects of German self-understanding. As Kundrus observes, 'stand für die einen die nationale Ehre auf dem Spiel, wenn gerade das Volk der Dichter und Denker, die Kulturnation schlechthin, nicht mitmache beim großen Zivilisierungsprojekt, so fürchteten andere, daß gerade dieser idealistischer Nimbus als "Volk der Dichter und Träumer" dem deutschen Kolonialerwerb entgegenstehe' (Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten*, p. 8). Caught between ideas of preserving internal and external cultural diversity and attaining international recognition, territorial expansion won the struggle as apparently the only way for the Reich to 'catch up' with its European neighbours.

Germany's first colonial territories were formed independently of government by ardent nationalist entrepreneurs Carl Lüderitz and Carl Peters. Lüderitz's 1883 symbolic colonisation of a small, barren area of 'no-man's land' on the South-West coast of Africa was seen by many nationalists, including Gerhard Rohlfs, as the key to consolidating both

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<sup>128</sup> Friedrich Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?* (Gotha: Perthes, 1879), p. iii.

German national unity and pride.<sup>129</sup> Forming trade organisations based on the British model of colonisation, Carl Peters ‘purchased’ land from local tribal leaders on the East African coast in 1884.<sup>130</sup> Although his actions caused widespread outrage amongst political opposition and the general public, Peters’s Deutsch-Ostafrika, like Lüderitz’s Deutsch-Südwestafrika, became official protectorates of the German Reich.<sup>131</sup> Bismarck intended the areas to be governed by trading conglomerates in order to limit the Reich’s financial and legislative responsibilities. In attempt to both learn and differentiate itself from its colonial rivals, German territorial expansion was undertaken under the banner of ‘liberal, humanist expansion’.<sup>132</sup> Our German explorers constantly associate British colonial policy with brutality and chaos. German protectorates in contrast were intended to preserve local cultural heterogeneity whilst strengthening Germany’s international reputation and creating increased *Lebensraum*.<sup>133</sup> This conflicting mix of interests directly reflects the paradoxical aspects of German national identity mentioned above. Unsurprisingly, it proved impossible to unite these conflicting ideologies in practice. Local uprisings and infighting between investors soon necessitated military intervention and the protectorates became fully-fledged colonies.

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<sup>129</sup> Gerhard Rohlfs, *Angra Pequena. Die erste deutsche Kolonie in Afrika* (Bielefeld and Leipzig: Belhagen & Klasing, 1884), p. 5.

<sup>130</sup> See Arne Perras, *Carl Peters and German Imperialism 1856-1918: A Political Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2004), pp. 57-58.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>132</sup> See Horst Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, 4th edn (Paderborn, Munich, Vienna and Zurich: UTB, 2000), p. 32.

<sup>133</sup> ‘Lebensraumpolitik’ was popularised by Hans Grimm’s political articles on South Africa from 1910 and became widely used after the publication of his novel *Volk ohne Raum* in 1926. Although now a loaded term commonly associated with National Socialist ideals of ‘Lebensraum im Osten’, Grimm’s work propagated racist, colonial ideals of ‘a place in the sun’. Hans Grimm, *Volk ohne Raum* (Munich: Langen, 1926).

By the time Germany became a colonial power, communication networks and the media were well-established, enjoying a widespread reception. Consequently, news of colonial wars and the massacre of local populations quickly spread and caused massive disillusion with the colonial project. Rather than unite Germany, colonial policy created massive divisions. Opposition leader August Bebel criticised German actions against the Herero and Nama tribes in Deutsch-Südwestafrika as ‘bloßes Niedermetzeln’.<sup>134</sup>

### **GERMAN EXPANSIONIST MOTIVES**

The devastating effects of colonial wars to national economies and the illusions of economic gain from foreign territories were well-established facts. These factors, combined with a mentality of openness to cultural difference, beg the question as to why the Reich embarked on territorial expansion at all. Hence the German Reich’s motives for colonial expansion were not only much-debated at the time, but remain today a focus of intense academic interest.

As Horst Gründer states in his widely recognised study of German colonies; ‘Daß [...] das Deutsche Reich [...] sich diesem epochalen Expansionsprozeß hätte entziehen können und innerhalb Europas [...] koloniale Abstinenz üben können, erscheint für den Historiker ebensowenig schlüssig wie für die überwiegende Mehrzahl der Zeitgenossen

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<sup>134</sup> Bebel criticised the history of the German colonial empire as being written in ‘blood and tears’. See Perras, *Carl Peters*, p. 216.

denkbar oder vernunftgerecht'.<sup>135</sup> Wehler's study of the German Empire (1985) was the first in-depth study of colonial policy under Bismarck since Hagen's monograph of 1923.<sup>136</sup> Wehler employs the term 'social imperialism' to describe Germany's expansionist projects. His theory suggests that by contrast German colonial expansion merely aimed to 'legitimise the status quo' by diverting reform attempts abroad. These reform attempts manifested themselves in 'the emancipatory forces of liberalism and the socialist workers' movement which endangered the prevailing system'.<sup>137</sup> This technique, according to Wehler, aimed at maintaining the pre-existing social and political power structures of the Greater Prussian Empire whilst simultaneously defending the educated middle and industrial classes from the rising proletariat. A domestic economic crisis would be avoided by a counter-cyclical economic strategy which would offset economic depression by creating African markets for German produce. Wehler states that 'social imperialism' promised either real financial gains from overseas which could be exploited for the purposes of domestic politics, or at least the appearance of activity. Even if no more than an illusion of success, foreign trading activity for its own sake could provide ideological satisfaction in terms of national prestige. Thus, states Wehler: 'social imperialism' became the driving force of German colonial expansion. It was an ideology of integration which could be deliberately applied from above to combat the antagonisms of German class society.

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<sup>135</sup> Horst Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, p.21.

<sup>136</sup> Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire 1871-1918* (Oxford: Berg, 1985). M. von Hagen, *Bismarck's Kolonialpolitik* (Stuttgart: [n.p.], 1923)

<sup>137</sup> Wehler, *The German Empire*, p.173.



However, as nineteenth-century colonial discourse suggests, imperialism and its manifestation in colonial expansion served to divide rather than unite the German nation. As Perras points out in his biography of Carl Peters: ‘colonies provided a welcome weapon for Social Democrats, Left Liberals, and at times the Centre Party, to use to attack the government’ (Perras, *Carl Peters*, p.3). August Bebel for example, leader of the Social Democratic opposition, led attacks on colonial violence which caused havoc in the Reichstag. His much-publicised speech on the March 13, 1896 led to Carl Peters’s public demise and the foreign minister’s resignation.<sup>138</sup> Bebel’s denunciation of the Herero campaign of 1904 as mere butchery popularised the image of the ‘Nilpferdpeitsche’ which became a symbol of anti-colonial sentiment.<sup>139</sup> Wehler’s economic arguments have also been criticised, as such a sophisticated ‘counter-cyclical’ theory was a product of the twentieth century, unknown to the economists of the Bismarck period. Not only this, evidence suggests that German industrialists and economists had no great expectations of an African market.<sup>140</sup>

Another more recent theory put forward by Riehl suggests that Bismarck ultimately sought to create a rift between Germany and Britain to avoid any possible partnership between the future heir to the throne Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm and his liberal

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<sup>138</sup> Perras, *Carl Peters*, p. 216.

<sup>139</sup> August Bebel employed the whip to demonstrate German colonial violence against Africans. The symbol was satirised in the periodical *Simplicimus* as an ironic reference to the apparent superiority of German settlers.

<sup>140</sup> Leading economist Paul Rohrbach, for example, recognised the impossibility of creating African markets for German exports and vice versa. The suggestion of reliance on other nations for *Kolonialwaren* in pro-colonial discourse was intended to mobilise national rivalries rather than represent a real economic possibility.

British connections.<sup>141</sup> Colonial policy, Riehl states, would create an unbridgeable divide between German and British relations which would loosen potential ties between both nations, particularly as Friedrich Wilhelm's wife was daughter of the British Queen. Bismarck's life-work and future position would be endangered by a new English-dominated era.

This theory, however, also appears flawed when we take into account the fact that Germany's colonial expansion could only take place if sanctioned by the British – a fact of which Bismarck was well aware.<sup>142</sup> At the time when Germany acquired South-West Africa, Britain was in a relatively weak political position due to the crisis in Egypt and dispute with Russia over Afghanistan.<sup>143</sup> In exchange for Bismarck's support in the international debt commission to settle Egypt's financial crisis, the British accepted Germany's colonial aims.<sup>144</sup> As Perras convincingly argues, Germany's role as a colonial power was thus not deliberately intended to cause Anglo-German tension.<sup>145</sup> In fact, Bismarck steered clear of spheres of British colonial interest,<sup>146</sup> instead using the Berlin conference of 1884-85 to 'endorse Germany's advance into the rank of a world

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<sup>141</sup> A.T.G. Riehl, *Der Tanz um den Äquator. Bismarcks antienglische Kolonialpolitik und die Erwartung des Thronwechsels in Deutschland 1883 bis 1885* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1993), p. 778.

<sup>142</sup> In response to Peters's 'purchase' of African territories, Herbert von Bismarck, close political advisor to the chancellor, is recorded as saying 'What is meant by acquisition? A piece of paper with some negro crosses at the bottom? Securing it requires agreement with England' in Perras, *Carl Peters*, p. 63.

<sup>143</sup> See Woodruff D. Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1978) and G.H. Gann, and Peter Duigan, *The Rulers of German Africa 1884-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1977)

<sup>144</sup> See Perras, *Carl Peters*, p.4.

<sup>145</sup> Germany's unification and industrialisation signalled a shift in the balance of power within Europe. No longer an insignificant bystander, Germany had 'caught up' with its European neighbours and was now a global player. The Berlin conference of November 1884 to February 1885 to divide Africa, demonstrated Germany's new role in international politics. Now a colonial power, Germany took active part in the conference in which representatives from fourteen nations convened in Berlin to haggle over control of Africa's interior.

<sup>146</sup> For example Bismarck's claims to St. Lucia Bay and Zanzibar which were consequently relinquished.

(i.e. colonial) power' (Perras, *Carl Peters*, p. 5). As Perras has also pointed out, there was no concrete evidence to suggest that Friedrich Wilhelm would adopt a principally liberal stance and even if so, Bismarck was certainly flexible – as his cooperation with the National Liberals in the Reichstag demonstrated.<sup>147</sup>

Part of the answer to the question of German colonial expansion may well lie not in political texts of the time, but in literary portrayals of African experiences. The lack of scholarly attention paid to the travel narrative would suggest why this motivation has remained relatively unexplored. As Perras also recognises through his study of Carl Peters's narrative works, a growing nationalism in literary works both influenced and was influenced by political discourse in nineteenth-century Germany. Information gleaned from travel writing, as well as the explorers themselves, became increasingly influential in political circles. This, in turn, is mirrored by our explorers' increasing interest in the German and European political landscape. For the strength of pro-colonial discourse and its distinctly nationalist agenda exerted far more pressure than Wehler's theory allows.<sup>148</sup> As one of the most well-known colonial agitators Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden remarked, an overseas empire was the key to consolidating and expanding German nationality. Furthermore, he stated, national pride and national self-confidence were the seeds of national growth. They could only thrive in competition with other states i.e. in a Social Darwinist struggle for survival.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Perras, *Carl Peters*, p. 6.

<sup>148</sup> It is no coincidence that Bismarck, in spite of his refusal to embark on expansionist projects, suddenly altered course shortly before the 1884 elections. Public nationalist sentiment mobilised by the press and pan-German groups also succeeded in pressurising Bismarck's government into funding the Emin Pascha rescue operation.

<sup>149</sup> Wilhelm Hübbe-Schleiden, *Deutsche Colonisation* (Hamburg: Friederichsen, 1881), pp. 3-4.

Issues of national identity become increasingly relevant in our travel narratives and consequently shed light on this much-debated issue. The portrayal of European interaction on African soil in our works demonstrates that long-standing national inferiority complexes and rivalry particularly with the British, fuelled the sense of nationalism inherent in German pro-colonial discourse. Travel narratives documented this discussion and so reflect the inner tensions in Germanic self-understanding. So in contrast to the direct correlation made by Fiedler between the image of both Africa and Africans in the travel narrative and German colonial expansion, I argue that these images display a differentiated and often heterophilic attitude towards otherness. It is in fact the literary representation of European others on African soil that fuels the expansionist drive. With this in mind, let us analyse the works themselves.

Our explorers each significantly built on – verified, contradicted, corrected and extended – their predecessors’ knowledge of Africa, so that their individual works are actually interwoven to form a macrotext stretching across generations. This corpus of material obviously documents Germanic-African encounter throughout a turbulent political era both in Europe and on the African continent. Yet, as we saw in the previous chapter, these works have often been misconstrued as devoid of either ethnographic value or literary substance and so have been largely neglected by higher scholarly criticism. This chapter focuses for the first time emphatically on the form of the travel narrative as a self-consciously designed, historiographical-cum-literary work. It will analyse the aprioristic literary techniques deployed and comment on them. This will reveal that the process of writing itself and the textualisation of experiences can reflect ongoing changes in our explorers’ self-understanding. These texts – in spite of their public claim to factual service – are self-conscious artefacts. They create a platform on which the explorers as implicit authors construct an image of self and other. Hence they also reflect the changing nature of German society and identity.

**NARRATIVE INFLUENCES**

Before analysing the specific techniques deployed by our explorers, let us briefly outline the works’ place in the extensive history of travel writing, for the *Afrikareisende*

belonged of course to a long tradition of explorers whose quasi-canonical works were influential to the production and reception of their travel narratives. As Mary Louise Pratt states in her discussion of the La Condamine scientific expedition, the latter half of the eighteenth century gave rise to a 'new orientation toward exploring and documenting continental interiors, in contrast to the maritime paradigm that had held center stage for three hundred years'.<sup>150</sup> Consequently, the nature of 'contact zones' changed, as the constant accumulation of information created a prior knowledge of alterity.<sup>151</sup> As their cognitive interest became increasingly scientific our earlier explorers Barth and Rohlfs in particular, consciously distance themselves from emotionalised and aestheticised tales of wonder and marvel related in such well-known, early travel accounts as Christopher Columbus's log book. As Stephen Greenblatt discusses in his examination of Columbus's journals, early first encounters between peoples and cultures typically narrated a reciprocal sense of wonder and marvel (Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, p. 78). Greenblatt suggests that Columbus's language functions 'strategically as a redemptive, aestheticizing supplement to a deeply flawed legal ritual of appropriation'. However, a 'continuous experience of marvel continually reminds us that our grasp of the world is incomplete' (Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, p. 24). In our first explorers' works, the empirical, rational nature of observations purposely relegates expressions of wonder and marvel to the cognitive domain of the uninformed other.

Yet there is a German counter-tradition to this trend which will have been influential to the subjective, emotion-centred, descriptive elements in *Afrikareisende* travel

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<sup>150</sup> Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 23.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

narratives: Georg Forster's travel account from 1775. Forster not only recreated the emotional experience of travel, he also prioritised distinctly humanist, ethnographic description over empirical data and so created three-dimensional portrayals of indigenous peoples. Berman employs a typical encounter from this narrative as an example of Enlightenment optimism and humanistic experience of alterity (Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, pp. 21-64). This particular event takes place six months into Forster's voyage. After four months at sea with no sight of land, Cook's ship, the *Resolution*, anchors on a small island off Dusky Bay on the Southern coast of New Zealand. The local inhabitants, not the explorers, establish initial oral contact, yet communication proves less than successful due to an impregnable language barrier. The following scene depicts a culmination of communicative attempts between the Europeans and the Islanders:

Der Mann sah uns bei der Abfahrt ernsthaft und aufmerksam nach, die jüngere Frau jedoch, die während unserer Anwesenheit in einem fort geplaudert hatte, fing jetzt an zu tanzen und fuhr fort, ebenso laut zu sein wie vorher. Unsere Seeleute erlaubten sich deshalb einige grobe Einfälle auf Kosten des weiblichen Geschlechts, wir aber fanden durch ihr Betragen die Bemerkung bestätigt, daß die Natur dem Manne nicht nur eine Gespielin gegeben, seine Sorgen und Mühseligkeiten zu erleichtern, sondern daß sie dieser auch die Begierde eingepflanzt habe, vermitteltst eines höheren Grades von Lebhaftigkeit und Gesprächigkeit zu gefallen. (Forster, *Reise nach Tahiti*, p. 67)

Here, one of the islanders complements unsuccessful spoken language with dance. Although Forster's description is tinged with negative, patriarchal undertones, he nevertheless describes this act as a demonstration of the locals' belief in the overriding universal nature of human communication and a fundamental openness to otherness. Forster shares both this desire to communicate and a collective understanding of body-language as a communicative tool (Forster, *Reise nach Tahiti*, p. 67). Forster's humanistic approach to otherness prompts reciprocal recognition of universal human sensibility.<sup>152</sup>

Stylistically and ideologically, our works follow another Germanic tradition. Mary Louise Pratt remarks that 'descriptions of flora and fauna were not themselves new to travel writing. On the contrary, they had been conventional components of travel books since at least the sixteenth century. However, they were typically structured as appendices or formal digressions from the narrative' (Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 27). Yet Alexander von Humboldt's eloquent combinations of narrative and number which characterised his renowned geographical translations into language, signified the travel account's increasing sophistication.<sup>153</sup> As the following excerpt from Barth's

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<sup>152</sup> The encounter can be, and was, interpreted differently, notably in Cook's account. As Berman states, Cook implies the woman's inherent irrationality as she continues to talk despite the language barrier, Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, p. 38. The sailors provide another indirect interpretation of events, which is simultaneously degraded by their raucous behaviour. Hence the encounter signifies many divergent levels of experience and interpretation which cannot all be attributed to knowledge-power discourse.

<sup>153</sup> Alexander von Humboldt, *Amerikanische Reise 1799-1804* (Stuttgart: Thienemann, 1985). The first version appeared in the *Relation Historique*, 3 vols (Paris: [n.p.] 1814, 1815, 1825). A German-language edition was published at a later date under the title *Alexander von Humboldt's Reise in die Äequinoctial-Gegenden des neuen Continents*, ed. by Hermann Hauff, 4 vols (Stuttgart: J.F.Cotta, 1859 and 1860). Barth's Expedition diaries also appeared in English first, before their partial publication in *Justus Perthes' Geographische Mittheilungen*. The fact that the work did not appear in German until a later date mirrors Germany's position within Europe. Although German scientists were respected, other powerful European neighbours had the means to fund expeditions and consequently benefit from German research.



introduction shows, Humboldt's works set the standard for all Germanic travel accounts to come:

Anspruchslos lege ich meinem Bericht dem Publikum vor, mir selbst bewusst, wie weit er hinter dem hehren Vorbilde zurückbleiben muss, welches der gegenwärtige Nestor der Wissenschaft, Herr Baron von Humboldt, jedem Reisenden gesteckt hat. Aber wo ist ein Zweiter, der alle jene Eigenschaften in sich vereinigte? Man darf jedoch nicht vergessen, dass dieser große Mann zuerst die einzelnen Ergebnisse und Erscheinungen seiner Reise bearbeitete und so erst im Verlauf vieler Jahre zu jenem kosmischen Bilde erhob. (Barth, I, p. x)

Here, Barth's self-deprecating reference to his predecessor emphasises both the extent of Humboldt's influence and the impossible, yet desirable task of emulating his achievements. Humboldt undertook his expedition using private funding and with purely scholarly motivations. In spite of Barth's own scholarly intentions, he was however taking part in a British expedition which made no attempt to disguise its expansionist motives. Barth was under extreme pressure from his sponsors to gain knowledge of Africa which could present a possible advantage in the colonial scramble. Barth's remarks are tinged with regret as the increasing inseparability of politics and exploration marks the new era of travel writing and the disappearance of such a 'kosmisches

Bilde'.<sup>154</sup> Yet *Afrikareisende* still included a mélange of factual reporting, subjective description and narrative passages in an attempt to address the many levels of interest which influenced the production of their works. In contrast to Pratt's statement, this required certain levels of narrative synthesis which Berman characterises as 'descriptive geography' (Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, p. 80). Hence the *Afrikareisende* travel narratives were subject to a multitude of diverse influences which shaped their composition: an increasing scientific prevalence combined with humanistic traditions and narrative eloquence. Each work in the *Afrikareisende* corpus reveals a different balance of these interests. This in turn reflects not only the diversity and variety of their compositions, but also their mind-set.

## NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

This section focuses on the literary, novelistic techniques employed by explorers to establish and reinforce their views. The narrative strategy of our writers is control – control of experienced and remembered events either by the person experiencing them at the time, or by that same person through the ordering and censoring process of narration. The first wave of pre-unification explorers, Barth, Rohlf, Nachtigal and Schweinfurth, reveal notions of identity and cultural belonging which are dominated to a great extent by the ambiguous German time-set. The second wave of post-unification explorers is more confident of its national identity and political purpose, so although the travel

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<sup>154</sup> Barth did emulate his idol somewhat and expand his initial reports into a five-volume work on his expedition. This version was unfortunately only possible due to Barth's inability to attain an academic post.

narratives treat the same subject matter – journeys of exploration through Africa – the encounters are very differently valued. In what follows, we will examine how the shift of narrative situation and narrative structuring affect these varying representations. This section will analyse a selection of the most relevant examples from our corpus.

## THE NARRATIVE SITUATION

The narrative structure is a vehicle which links form and content and so facilitates the communication of ideas between the author and reader. Franz K. Stanzel describes the narrator-figure in his standard work the *Theorie des Erzählens*, as the major influence for mediating characteristically the presentation of novelistic content.<sup>155</sup> Although our explorers ostensibly seek to present a purely factual account, the following analysis demonstrates the presence of literary elements. Let us begin with the narrative situation.

The travel narrative's autobiographical basis implies a narrative situation such as that elaborated by Stanzel's definition of a 'quasi-autobiographischer Ich-Erzähler'.<sup>156</sup> Let us analyse the defining features of this narrative situation and how they are employed in the travel narrative. Firstly, Stanzel discusses the criterion of 'Ich mit Leib'. This he defines as an autobiographical narrator who is presented to the reader as an experiencing 'I'. The bodily existence of this narrator is an integral part of his identity. Secondly, the

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<sup>155</sup> Franz K. Stanzel, *Theorie des Erzählens*, [1979] 7<sup>th</sup> edn (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), p. 24.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., pp. 124-6.

figures of narrator and chief protagonist are at one level one and the same. Contrary to other types of narrative, this means that there is no confusion between the identity of the narrator and the author. In the case of the travel narrative we can, and must, therefore assume that the opinions expressed by the experiencing narrator-figure are those of the explorer. Although the narratives thus seem to present an ideal platform for the explorers to create and maintain their desired self-image, the narrator figure's inherent subjectivity diminishes his scholarly authority. Yet objectivity was expected, even in those disciplines that are now called social sciences. As the following extract demonstrates, the act of observation was, according to the anthropological methodology of the day, governed by the same scientific principles, regardless of the subject:

In Bezug auf naturwissenschaftliche Thatsachen muss er [der Reisende T.D.] sich hüten vor Fehlern der sinnlichen Beobachtung, vorgefassten Meinung und Systemgeist. Handelt es sich aber um soziale Facta, so muss er gänzlich vorurtheilsfrei an die selben herantreten; dann ist er vielleicht zu einem Urtheil eher befähigt als die Bewohner des Landes selber; nicht interessiert in der Sache wird er sie besser zu beurtheilen vermögen.<sup>157</sup>

Rohlf's certainly does not qualify as an ideal candidate, yet neither does Nachtigal, for he takes a genuine interest in the fate of the people and country he resides in. The explorers' narrative presence apparently automatically disqualifies them from the required objectivity. Our early authors, however, imply their inherent authority over

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<sup>157</sup> D. Kaltbrunner and E. Kollbrunner, eds, *Der Beobachter. Allgemeine Anleitung zu Beobachtungun über Land und Leute für Touristen, Excursionisten und Forschungsreisende* (Bern:[n.pub.],1888), p. 7.

narrated events through their belief in the irrefutable logic of the western time-set, which they embody. Yet nevertheless, paradoxically, Rohlf's implicit narrative presence is still technically no more authoritative than that found in exotic adventure novels – a genre which does not complement Rohlf's cartographic mandate and scientific cognitive interest.<sup>158</sup> Karl May's novel *Der Mahdi* 1885 provides an excellent corroborative example.<sup>159</sup> May's exotic adventure novel, the second in a trilogy, in contrast to Rohlf's work, is aimed at a younger readership with the express purpose of entertaining them. The main protagonist, known as the German 'Effendi', continues his crusade against Muslim slave traders in Africa, in particular his arch enemy Ibn Asl. Suspense, excitement, drama and a sense of the exotic are the key elements in the story.<sup>160</sup> Like Rohlf's portrayal, May's novel is intended to be realistic. The reader however is forced to suspend disbelief as the almost superhuman hero defeats his enemy at every turn. Although seemingly espousing quite different narrative intentions from those of Rohlf, May's novel similarly propagates an idealised image of German, Christocentric cultural superiority over African Muslim culture.<sup>161</sup> The purpose of May's novel is to create an image of Africa as a massive expanse of seemingly

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<sup>158</sup> The credibility of Rohlf's narrator persona technically differs very little from the completely fictional 'Ich' and 'auktorial' narrator personae in Stanzel's *Theorie des Erzählens*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>159</sup> Karl May, *Der Mahdi* in *Gesammelte Werke*, 86 vols, [1st edn, 1885] (Bamberg: Karl May Verlag, 1992). This novel has been chosen as the fictional protagonist bears extensive parallels to both Heinrich Barth and Gerhard Rohlf. The travel narratives were widely available and doubtlessly provided enough material with which to recreate the authenticity of first-hand experience. As Nina Berman discusses, the protagonists in May's works are intended to reflect a level of autobiographical experience. Following the tradition established by other exotic novels such as *Insel Felsenburg* and *Robinson Crusoe*, the works pretend to be historically true, Berman, 'Orientalism, Imperialism, and Nationalism', pp. 56-57. Yet May had never set foot on African soil when he composed these works – a fact which was not publicised at the time. The combination of fact and fiction in Rohlf's narrative, despite his claim to pure, un-edited documentation, may have paradoxically been reproduced as factual reference in later works of fiction such as May's *Der Mahdi*.

<sup>160</sup> Berman, 'Orientalism, Imperialism, and Nationalism', p. 55.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 60-1. Berman points out that May's protagonists assume an informed air of authority concerning their knowledge of Islam, which they use as a tool to highlight the locals' religious infidelities and ignorance of their own religion's teachings.

unpopulated space. Africa can then function as a canvas on which to project an escapist, idealistic fantasy of German culture.<sup>162</sup> This certainly appears no different from Rohlf's portrayal of an African void in need of European cultural enlightenment. In order to differentiate himself from exotic fiction, Rohlf must deploy alternative narrative techniques, for his self-image rests on the authority of his scientific, rational approach to conquering the African unknown.

The 'pre-emptive ending' is a typical feature of the 'quasi-autobiographischer Ich-Erzähler' which provides our explorers with the means to differentiate their works from the adventure novel. The outcome of the story is usually narrated in the opening chapter, which then frames the remaining narrative. Logically, the narrator has to survive the end so that he can tell the story, yet this technique also results in a certain lack of suspense and excitement. The reader is focussed on events during the story rather than the overall outcome. This is particularly desirable for the explorer who wishes to distance himself from 'unscientific' tales of adventure such as May's 'trivial literature'.<sup>163</sup>

A further criterion defining the 'quasi-autobiographischer Erzähler' is the relationship between 'erlebendes' and 'erzählendes Ich'. The narration is generally characterised by

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<sup>162</sup> Wolfgang Reif defines this form of exoticism as 'libertinistisch', a longing for open spaces in which the unhindered development 'aller physischen und psychischen Bedürfnisse' can take place. Reif differentiates between 'libertinistisch' and 'primitivistisch' exoticism, the latter referring to a longing for the return to naturalness and simplicity. Wolfgang Reif, *Zivilisationsflucht und literarische Wunschräume: Der exotistische Roman im ersten Viertel des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzlersche and Carl Ernst Poeschel, 1975), p. 22.

<sup>163</sup> Hugh Ridley's discussion of May's novels exposes a radical element behind its somewhat dismissive classification. Citing Ernst Bloch's re-evaluation of the works in the 1930's, Ridley argues that as well as propagating myths of empire, they also 'involved a conscious rejection of the existing power-structures within Europe: a rejection which stopped short of revolutionary change'. Hugh Ridley, *Images of Imperial Rule* (London and Canberra: Croom Helm, 1983), p. 30.

an equal balance of both elements, except during moments of tension, whereby the ‘experiencing self’ typically becomes increasingly dominant. This increases the immediacy of experience as the presence of the ‘narrating self’ – which in principle structures and controls events – diminishes. The relationship between the ‘experiencing’ and the ‘narrating self’ is particularly interesting as it enables explorers to reinforce a sense of control over their unpredictable encounters. In their descriptions, Rohlfs and Nachtigal both deploy characteristically different versions of the ‘narrating’ and ‘experiencing self’. Let us firstly examine the balance of both elements in Rohlfs’s work.

The ‘narrating self’ dominates Rohlfs’s portrayal of events. The choice of narrative situation enables Rohlfs to emphasise, indeed dramatise, his sovereign control over the presentation of events. This simultaneously enhances his desired self-image as a dynamic, rational, scientifically-minded, pristine example of German culture. The other becomes a tool, or an occasion, with which to create such an image. By conquering alien terrain as quickly as possible, Rohlfs attempts to demonstrate his mastery of otherness. The following excerpt is taken from the latter half of his journey. Rohlfs is on the move with his entourage and guide Mohammed Gatroni, heading southwards from Kuka in the Nigerian province of Bornu, to the town of Uandala, which lies south of Lake Chad: ‘Um 6 Uhr passirten wir das Dorf Kornáua, um 7 Uhr die Felder von Komalúa, ½ Stunde später Rilkáku’ (Rohlfs, II, p. 17). Here, Rohlfs portrays movement through foreign space as an almost mechanised consumption of terrain and so reduces it – almost like a train – to an empty homogeneity. The favouring of a pared-down diegetic

inventory of minimal, simple verbs and proper nouns, with little supplementary description or expression of subjective response, stresses the depersonalized, objective, factual nature of the account (and the experience). The 'wir', rather than emphasizing collective experience, here eliminates all personal emotion and sentiment. The 'narrating-self' eliminates any sense of the incommensurably exotic and functions as a useful tool with which to convey control over African alterity. This control also prioritises sober, rather than emotional, and hence 'scientific' observations, and thus seemingly increases Rohlfs's objectivity. In contrast, the 'experiencing self' rarely dominates events in Rohlfs's narrative. If at all, the 'experiencing self' comes to the fore during periods of sojourn which are concomitant with Rohlfs's relative lack of control over events. For example, during Rohlfs's stay in Rhadames – a town he describes as 'eng', 'dumpf' and 'finster' – Rohlfs becomes critically ill (Rohlfs, I, p. 85). The experience is described as follows:

Ich erkrankte ernstlich und schwebte einige Tage in wirklicher Lebensgefahr. Fortwährende heftige Blutentleerungen aus dem Darm schwächten mich derart, dass ich an meinem Aufkommen verzweifelte. An Essen durfte ich gar nicht denken, ebensowenig wagte ich es meinen Durst zu stillen. Strengste Enthaltbarkeit und grosse Gaben von Opium brachten endlich zwar die entsetzliche Darmblutung zum Stillstand, aber durch die lange Gewöhnung an den Genuss von Opiaten war meinem Körper dies Narcoticum unentbehrlich geworden [...] und ich musste daher immer von



neuem mich in jenen halbtaumeligen, keineswegs angenehmen Zustand versetzen. (Rohlf's, I, p. 88)

This excerpt demonstrates a significant shift from the portrayal of movement described above. Firstly, the 'ich' narrative presence emphasises Rohlf's personal, subjective experience. The use of verbs is comparatively extensive and, unlike Rohlf's portrayal of transit, qualified with adverbs 'ernstlich' and 'wirklich'. The verbs 'erkranken', 'schweben', 'schwächen' and 'verzweifeln' suggest uncertainty, vulnerability and loss of control over events. Yet even though the 'experiencing self' is more dominant in this descriptive passage – we are told that his bleeding is 'entsetzlich', his delirium 'keineswegs angenehm' and 'halbtaumelig' – Rohlf nevertheless devotes more attention to his symptoms, rather than his physical sensations. The entire episode of 'near-death' is confined to one paragraph. Hence the reader is unsure for just how long Rohlf was incapacitated. At the end of this paragraph, Rohlf immediately returns to his analytic portrayal of the population and makes no further reference to his illness. Whilst the 'experiencing self' emerges minimally to suggest vulnerability, the episode is still very much controlled by the implicit 'narrating self'. In fact, we can assume that this short excerpt is designed intentionally to highlight Rohlf's iron constitution and sovereignty, even over uncontrollable bouts of physical weakness caused by illness. Let us compare Rohlf's balance of 'narrating' and 'experiencing self' with Nachtigal's narrative.

The following excerpt describes the initial stages of Nachtigal's desert traversal – along the same route as Rohlfs – yet the images could not differ more:

Nichts, woran sich das Auge haften konnte, auch nicht die leiseste Spur vom Leben, ein vollständiges Bild der Leere und Unendlichkeit. Nirgends fühlt sich der Mensch so klein und verloren, und doch wieder nirgends so stark und gehoben, als im Kampfe mit dieser hilflosen Verlassenheit, im leblosen, scheinbar unbegrenztem Raume. Wüstenreisen machen den Menschen ernst und nachdenklich. (Nachtigal, I, p. 19)

Using loosely-structured sentences, Nachtigal focuses on the intensity of the landscape before moving to the emotional turmoil initiated by these impressive surroundings. Reduced but also enhanced by his surroundings, Nachtigal not only emphasises the physical struggle, but also the mental exhaustion caused by his desert traversal. The dominant 'experiencing self' is made present by the non-verbal focus of the language and 'grabbing' impressions. These are then foregrounded, timelessly, to suggest challenges on all levels, rather than a feeling of control. Thus in contrast to Rohlfs, Nachtigal thrives on the intensity of emotion-centred descriptions which are more akin to literary exoticism than scientific exploration. Yet as we shall see, Nachtigal's openness to the physical and emotional experience of African travel aids his recognition of universal humanity both in his entourage and with the Africans he encounters. Nachtigal's and Rohlfs's portrayals of desert traversal thus provide interesting

comparisons, for Nachtigal's initial sense of pre-conceived western superiority quickly recedes as he is confronted with the enormity of desert terrain.

After comparing Rohlfs's and Nachtigal's use of narrative situation, it is clear that our explorers do deploy literary techniques which enhance their personal perception of events and so also their constructed identity. Rohlfs's strategic attempt to control both his surroundings and their presentation in narrative form indicates his underlying insecurities and fragile notion of belonging. At the outset of his journey, travelling by sea to Tripoli, Rohlfs describes his arrival in Africa as a paradoxical feeling of returning home:

Mit wie frohen Gefühlen landet der Afrikareisende, nachdem er die Fluten des Mittelmeeres durchfurcht, auf dem afrikanischen Continent, den er während der Dauer seiner Reisen gewissermassen als seine Heimat betrachtet! Hier hofft er der geographischen Kenntniss neue Länder, neue Gebirge, Flüsse und Seen zu erschließen, hier hofft er neue Völker zu finden mit andern Sitten, anderer Religion. Afrika ist in der That das Dorado des Reisenden. (Rohlfs, I, pp. 4-5)

Rohlfs is seemingly aware of the contradictory nature of self-understanding implied by his remarks – Africa being at once homely and welcoming, suggesting familiarity – whilst at the same time typifying the 'unknown' by offering a wealth of factors to discover and bring home. The reference to a 'Dorado' is reminiscent of voyages of

discovery to the ‘New World’, notably implying the greed associated with Spanish imperialism.<sup>164</sup> This duality of Rohlf’s narrator-figure is found throughout the narrative.

This remark may suggest a certain level of intercultural competence akin to Berman’s Germanic heterophilia. In the previous chapter, the changing nature of *Heimat* was discussed in relation to the processes of industrialisation and modernisation which diminished local differences and propagated assimilation. Rohlf’s reference suggests recognition of some relation between pre-modern Africa and his German home. As we have seen, Germany displayed low levels of cultural – political – uniformity and was decidedly less consolidated as a nation-state than its European counterparts. Germany’s *Sonderweg* to modernisation designated it a role as ‘outsider’ amongst the leading Western European nation-states. Rohlf thus seems unconsciously to feel akin to Africa as his fragmented Germanic identity enables him to feel at home elsewhere. However, this subsequent observation by Rohlf undermines that: ‘Gefahren drohen ja nur von einer Seite, von den Menschen [...] wie schwer ist es hier den Freund vom Feinde zu unterscheiden’ (Rohlf, I, p. 5). This threat, Rohlf asserts, can only be overcome by an inner quality possessed solely by the European: ‘unparteiische Selbstkenntnis’, which is thus the ideal pre-requisite for the successful *Afrikareisender* (Rohlf, I, p. 5).<sup>165</sup> Unbiased self-understanding encourages alternative forms of knowledge and enables self-criticism. Rohlf however has an a priori notion of self as culturally and

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<sup>164</sup> See Greenblatt’s discussion of Columbus’s colonial experience in *Marvelous Possessions*. Urs Bitterli also documents the inequality of colonial experience in *Die “Wilden” und die “Zivilisierten”*.

<sup>165</sup> In his discussion of Rohlf in *Enlightenment or Empire*, Berman alludes to these remarks as indicative of Rohlf’s intention of a voyage of internal as well as external discovery (p. 86). Yet Rohlf understands unbiased self-knowledge as something which one possesses ‘von Haus aus’, i.e. it is present from the beginning and thus not an effect of contact with alterity (Rohlf, I, p. 5).

intellectually superior to the African other. His move to Africa is intended to uphold and reinforce this self-understanding. His consciousness is thus unwilling to experience otherness except through some radical deconstruction of that subjectivity. As his use of the narrative situation demonstrates, Rohlf's is intent on maintaining his preconceived notion of self at all costs.

Nachtigal in contrast does exhibit Berman's concept of Germanic heterophilia. Nachtigal employs his non-nationalist, fluid notion of identity to experience his surroundings openly. His openness to cultural difference is mirrored by his conscious use of the 'experiencing self'. A lack of restrictive structures such as the 'narrating self' enables greater insight into foreign cultures. Let us look at further narrative techniques which the writers employ to portray their experiences in a way conducive to their relevant mind-set.

## **THE NARRATIVE MACROSTRUCTURE**

This category will elaborate narrative strategy further. Firstly it will compare our works' narrative structure with the actual pattern of events recorded during our explorers' journeys. Secondly it will focus on variations in the 'story' of African travel by comparing opening and closing episodes, whilst also highlighting the significance of shorter journeys embedded within the narrative. These comparisons will demonstrate that the narrative representations of the journey are manipulated both structurally and

semantically to both prioritise and radiate significance over certain stages or events, which best represent each explorer's mind-set. Let us first look at the narrated journey routes and their symbolic connotations before focusing on how these journeys are represented in the following section.

Barth's account begins with his journey from Paris and his arrival on the African continent in the winter of 1849. From here he begins preparations for his journey to Tripoli, the official starting point of his expedition. Barth's expedition leaves Tripoli on 30 March 1850. He spends one year accompanying Dr. Richardson before separating from the other Europeans in January 1851. Shortly after this separation, Richardson dies. Barth then travels as sole European to the city of Kuka where he arrives on 2 April 1851. Based in Kuka, Barth then undertakes five excursions over a period of two years. The fifth and final excursion from Kuka takes Barth to Timbuktu. Caught up in internal political turmoil, Barth is involuntarily kept a full year longer than intended. Free to leave at last, Barth travels back to Kuka before returning to Tripoli, five years and five months after the expedition began.

Barth's journey, from Tripoli to Timbuktu, then back again, comprises several shorter journeys. The first is marked by the journey from Paris, moving from civilisation in Europe, through foreign terrain, then back to Tripoli – the European imposition of civilisation on the African continent. On arriving in Kuka during the second stage of his journey, Barth sets up residence in spacious yet sparse living-quarters allocated to him by the Sheikh. Barth returns to this residence after each excursion, thus also creating a

version of European culture from which he constantly moves, encountering areas of apparent cultural inferiority, to return each time to his symbolic representation of cultural affiliation. The increments of cultural alienation are reversed, palindromically, to signify the end of the journey, as Barth returns to Tripoli, his first point of re-entry into civilisation, before arriving at his final destination in London to report his expedition findings to its British sponsors. The journey thus becomes a semantic representation of the western time-set. Its overall linear chronology, with a definable beginning and end, is punctuated by smaller, recurrent events and so mirrors the combination of linear and cyclical experiences of time which structure European temporal understanding.

Rohlf's expedition begins textually in Tripoli, which he leaves on 20 May 1865. Rohlf initially travels south before undertaking a short excursion southwest to Rhadames. He returns along the same route to continue his journey southwards. Rohlf arrives in Mursuk, a city in the Sultanate of Fesan, where he spends four months. Leaving on 25 March 1866, Rohlf travels a further four months before arriving in Kuka. Following Barth's example, Kuka also becomes Rohlf's base. Rohlf takes up residence in the same quarters used by Barth and remains there for five months. During this time he undertakes an excursion to Uandala where he meets the resident Sultan. From Kuka, Rohlf continues his journey southwards to the Gulf of Guinea, arriving at his destination, Lagos, on 27 May 1867, almost two years to the day after his departure in Tripoli.

Rohlfs moves from the culture of Europe, to culture within the nature of Africa in Tripoli. As his expedition departs from Tripoli, Rohlfs emphasises the western culture he is leaving behind by telling us that; ‘fern durch den Palmenwald [tönten] Melodien aus der “Weissen Dame” zu mir herüber’ (Rohlfs, I, p. 26). Rohlfs then traverses increasingly ‘primitive’, areas of wild nature which epitomise his stereotypical image of Africa as the ‘dunkle Kontinent’. His journey from Rhadames, linear in its course, is interrupted by two periods of extended residence at places from which he undertakes short excursions. Both points of sojourn are marked by symbolic acts of imposition which highlight Rohlfs’s contradictory assertion of Africa as a home from home. As the travel accounts of conquistadors reveal, the performative illocution, naming, is the first stage of possession.<sup>166</sup> It is also the first step to mapping unknown territory. Names enable coordinates and measurements between places. Although unable to appropriate African territory, the naming of a ‘rescued’ slave ‘Noël’ provides Rohlfs with a further opportunity to impose the western time-set onto Africa. The christening symbolises a new beginning for Noël whose life will now follow a linear-progressive western time-scale, for Noël returns to Prussia with Rohlfs and resides at court. Naming simultaneously erases all traces of the boy’s African past. Like the Christian celebration after which he is named, Noël is a constant reiteration of the western time-set and its attempted imposition onto Africa. During the second period of extended sojourn, Rohlfs

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<sup>166</sup> ‘The founding action of Christian imperialism is a christening. Such a christening entails the cancellation of the native name – the erasure of the alien, perhaps demonic, identity – and hence a kind of making new; it is at once an exorcism, an appropriation, and a gift’ (Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, p. 83). Greenblatt points out that naming is simultaneously an essential act of legal possession and an imposition of Christian narrative. Naming is associated with the giving of a gift which again reflects the giver’s superior knowledge. The giver is believed to have superior insight into the true nature of the being to be named, Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, p. 82. Fabian makes similar comparisons to the practice of naming geographical features. ‘Practices of naming places resembled those of erecting monuments. Both were modes of inscribing European presence as a way of creating an instant historical past, one that would eventually serve to legitimize colonial presence’ (Fabian, *Out of our Minds*, pp. 199-200).



hoists his 'bremer Flagge' on to the roof of his Kuka residence (Rohlf's, I, p. 311). This gesture reminds us of the ceremony surrounding territorial conquests,<sup>167</sup> yet the absence of a *national* flag is particularly telling. During his meeting with the resident Sultan, cited below, Rohlf's is reminded that his German home is relatively unknown in Africa. Thus in spite of his achievements, he wields little influence in Africa in comparison to his British counterparts. Hence this flag-raising ceremony is also an act of defiance:

So verbreitet die bremer Flagge auf allen Meeren und so bekannt der Name Hanseaten bei den Handelsbetreibenden Völkern ist: im Innern Afrikas weiss man begreiflicherweise nichts von einem Staate Bremen. [...] Nemsä (Deutschland, aber eigentlich Österreich), ist übrigens den Centralafrikanern gleichfalls unbekannt. (Rohlf's, I, p. 305)

Hence Rohlf's's residence in Kuka becomes a flag-bearing ship with which to carry and spread the German name throughout Africa.<sup>168</sup> Navigational ability also led to the discovery of the 'New World' and territorial conquest. Rohlf's does not openly state his imperial desires in his narrative, yet both acts – naming and flag-raising – seem to forecast German territorial appropriation. The flag – here a sign of bravado concealing relative impotence – becomes an increasingly important symbol of German identity in our later works.

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<sup>167</sup> Stuhlmann's later narrative contains numerous instances of flag-raising ceremonies to consolidate and celebrate the acquisition of territories.

<sup>168</sup> As we shall see in the following chapter, explorers Barth and Rohlf's often employ imagery to liken their desert expeditions to western navigational triumphs.

Rohlf's emerges at the end of his journey to unmistakably welcoming images of European culture. An 'aus Eisen gebautem Missionshaus' and 'eine blonde, in Seide gekleidete Dame' who is reading aloud out from the Bible to a group of African children (Rohlf's, II, p. 270). After travelling through darkness, Rohlf's is rewarded with an idealised version of European culture. Again he is greeted by the 'Weisse Dame', yet this time the mere musical accompaniment has become reality. The images of cultural superiority thus gain in strength from beginning to end. They are designed to encourage epistemological possession of the possible sites of colonial expansion in his geographical descriptions.<sup>169</sup> Although Helke Kammerer-Grothaus fails to make a connection between these images which frame Rohlf's narrative, she identifies in her article 'Reisen in Verkleidung', that the romance of this final scene, which radiates light over the darkness of Africa, is another of Rohlf's many uses of disguise – this time to mask his less respectable agenda.<sup>170</sup>

Schweinfurth's work demonstrates the travel narratives' increasing complexity and sophistication. His story begins in July 1868 on the journey from Alexandria to Khartoum. Reaching Khartoum on 1 November 1868, Schweinfurth sets out on his expedition, heading south-west on a well-established trading route to the African interior. He reaches an established settlement, known as a Seriba, which he makes his base for several months whilst undertaking ethnographic and botanic studies. Schweinfurth then continues on a more or less direct route southwards, heading for the

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<sup>169</sup> Again Rohlf's fails to distance himself from exotic novels, for the scene demonstrates significant parallels to May's literary creation of mythicised Germanic superiority.

<sup>170</sup> Helke Kammerer-Grothaus, 'Reisen in Verkleidung' in Helfensteller, ed., *Gerhard Rohlf's Symposium*, pp. 69-73.

residence of Sultan Munza. En route he undertakes a three-month excursion eastwards through the Mittoo territories. On 29 January 1870 Schweinfurth continues southwards and reaches Sultan Munza's palace in March 1870. After a period of residence at the Sultan's court, Schweinfurth heads north to explore the rainforest and mountainous regions in another series of shorter excursions. His plan is then to return south for further exploration, yet on 1 December 1870 a catastrophic fire destroys his provisions. Schweinfurth is forced to head north-west, circling the dense jungle regions of the Bongo before retracing his original route back to Khartoum where he arrives on 21 July 1871.

The first part of Schweinfurth's route, until he reaches the African interior, mirrors the dynamic linearity of his predecessors Barth and Rohlfs. After Schweinfurth's first period of extended residence in the Dyor territories his route becomes intricate, complex and surprisingly difficult to follow on a map. Unlike his predecessors, Schweinfurth is not under pressure to traverse a particular route as quickly as possible. The lack of temporal references in the narrative makes gauging distances between points impossible and thus renders mapping more or less obsolete. Instead, Schweinfurth's relative freedom to undertake voluntary periods of sojourn and deviations highlights a shift towards in-depth ethnographic information of the African interior. As the journey progresses, Schweinfurth becomes increasingly submerged in dark, jungle terrain. This suggests that our later explorers demonstrate increasing self-confidence in their ability to encounter and reside amongst African alterity. If we compare Rohlfs's passage, it is evident that he paradoxically intends to traverse African terrain with as little exposure to African alterity as possible. Rohlfs's fragile notion of self, we infer, cannot withstand

extensive contact with alternative mind-sets. Schweinfurth however encounters highly populated jungle terrain. Although at first also certain of his European superiority, his initial period of residence brings him in close and intensive contact with the local population, which ultimately alters his a priori perception. Schweinfurth employs Darwinian anthropological categories to gauge the cultural trajectory of human evolution and soon becomes convinced of the complexities governing human development. Rather than a simplistic, linear developmental process, Schweinfurth points out the effects of the environment on human evolutionary adaptation. Schweinfurth notes each tribe's ability to exist in harmony with the harsh climate whereas he is more susceptible to disease and exhaustion. He thus concludes that there are many diverse levels of evolutionary perfection. The intricate collection of loops and branch-like ramifications which make up Schweinfurth's route-map, mirror his acknowledgement of the complexities of human development. Like his predecessors, his route, and its representation in narrative form, becomes a physical embodiment of his mind-set. In this case Schweinfurth's slow and painstaking progression through dark, dense jungle symbolises a Darwinian struggle for survival and the increasing irrelevance of 'clock-time' as a marker of progression. Schweinfurth does not emerge from this struggle until his passage through jungle territory ends. Yet significantly, this is not the end of Schweinfurth's narrated journey.

He continues to Khartoum, where his arrival signifies enlightenment of a different kind. Schweinfurth becomes aware of the drastic political events – the Franco-Prussian war and the proclamation of a united German Empire – which occurred during his

absence. Anxious to hear all of the details, Schweinfurth mourns the lack of interest accorded to Germany by the European population in Khartoum. Unable to glean any further information, Schweinfurth must wait until his return to Germany. So whilst Schweinfurth's narrative provides us with great insight into Central African cultures, he marks the closure of his text with a more foreboding image. He implies Germany's relative political obscurity on the world stage and consequently a growing disillusionment with fellow Europeans. German unification, in contrast, brings the hope of long-awaited international political stature. Significantly, Schweinfurth's final image overshadows his earlier acceptance of alternative mind-sets and theories of cultural development. He thus ominously forecasts events to come, for national image becomes crucial to our later explorers' interaction with Europeans on African soil. The 'civilising' mission of earlier works – implied by Rohlf's 'Weisse Dame' – becomes increasingly marginalised and our works foreground the spread of European political differences on to African soil.

Nachtigal's narrative, as we have seen, also presents a stark contrast to his predecessors' works. Nachtigal's expedition leaves from Tripoli on 16 February 1869. He heads straight for Mursuk, arriving exactly one month later. After residing for two months, Nachtigal undertakes an excursion to Bardai, returning ten months later along the same route. Travelling southwards, Nachtigal makes for Kuka, by this time a familiar site for *Afrikareisende*. After fulfilling the expedition's initial objective, Nachtigal upholds *Afrikareisende* traditional practice and, once more using the city as a point of reference, embarks on the first of two shorter expeditions. The first lasts eleven

months, the second one year. Each time, Nachtigal returns to Kuka along the same route by which he had left, thus passing each point twice per journey. The final stage of the expedition is marked by a change of direction. Travelling eastwards through Darfur to Wadai, Nachtigal twice interrupts the course of his journey in order to undertake further, shorter excursions of one and one and a half months respectively. Thus departing from Abeshr for the third and final time, Nachtigal travels to Egypt, arriving in Kordofan on 6 August 1874 where his journey officially ends.

This journey covers a far greater area than Barth's and Rohlfs's expeditions. Although Nachtigal initially traverses the same territories as his predecessors, his route is notably far more complex. Its overall structure is neither cyclical, nor completely linear. Rohlfs adheres to one main direction, travelling from north to south with only two interruptions. Nachtigal doubles-back on himself during the shorter excursions – as does Barth on his journeys from Kuka – before altering his course to arrive in Egypt, yet not at any notable geographic point or cultural landmark. In fact, Nachtigal describes the objective on the last day of travel as the arrival at a country residence near to an 'unscheinbarer Hügel' (Nachtigal, II, p. 393). There is no sense of monumental symbolism here. Before reaching the house, Nachtigal is however, met by the Egyptian Governor-General's envoy Ismâ'il Pâschâ who is residing in the house by coincidence. A Greek scientist Dr. Giorgi who is accompanying the Governor-General's expedition arrives soon after to greet Nachtigal.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Dr. Giorgi, a sanitary inspector, does not seem out of place on Ismâ'il Pâschâ's military expedition, as the borders between politics and science, or knowledge and power, become increasingly indefinable.

In contrast to Rohlf's home-coming, Nachtigal's reaction to this re-introduction to European civilisation is one of disorientation and bewilderment. Nachtigal does not move comfortably through the stages of re-culturation. Feeling immediately at ease with the Governor, they converse automatically in Arabic. When addressed by Dr. Giorgi in French, Nachtigal is unable to reply. Italian also proves unsuccessful. Only when Giorgi switches to Arabic is Nachtigal finally able to communicate. Nachtigal is quickly informed of the political developments in Europe since his departure, to which he pays great attention, yet remarks: 'das [...] was mir augenblicklich am nächsten lag, daß Ismâ'il Pâschâ den Befehl habe, auf dem direkten Weg [...] in Dar-Fur einzumarschieren' (Nachtigal III, p. 394). The journey is thus in one sense cyclical, as it returns to its opening topic concerning Nachtigal's awareness of the current *African* turbulent political situation, and motive for his departure (Nachtigal I, p. 6). Nachtigal has moved from one area of turmoil to another, yet in keeping with the sympathetic nature of his narrative, the presiding situation in Africa is presented as a reflection of similar political strife in Europe. Hence unlike Barth's welcome return to civilised European culture and Rohlf's dualistic images of European civilisation radiating over Africa's cultural darkness, Nachtigal's 'Wiedereintritt in die zivilisierte Welt' is characterised by recognition of human universals (Nachtigal, III, p. 394). Nachtigal erodes his predecessors' unreflected images of absolute difference. The symbols which attract Nachtigal's attention as differentiating western from African culture are merely decorative – namely coloured lanterns, cutlery and waiters in uniform. Nachtigal's introductory images of romance and adventure thus diverge from the true nature of narrated events. He combines the human universals – of which he was constantly

reminded throughout his journey – with varying levels of cultural sophistication. The final images of European political turmoil mirror those in Schweinfurth's narrative and are a premonition of events to come in later works.

Our final example epitomises such developments in the post-unification narrative. Frobenius's monumental three-volume work describes his two-year expedition from 1910-1912 to North-West and Central Africa. The story begins a decade earlier with a German-African encounter in Hamburg. This encounter prompts Frobenius to prepare an expedition to Nigeria. Ten years later he is on Nigerian soil in the British administrative centre of Ibadan. Frobenius resides in the town for an extensive period, gathering information and collecting artefacts. From here he makes a short journey south to the holy city of Ife. After a successful period of ethnographic study he is arrested by British officials and held captive for over a month whilst he and his party stand trial for stealing artefacts. After his release Frobenius returns to the North. The story then moves to Central Africa. The second leg of Frobenius's expedition is devoted to an in-depth study of Sudan beginning in Motwa on 14 January 1911. After residing for one month Frobenius travels along the old caravan route to the capital Bida and from there to the Hausa and Nupe regions. Frobenius returns to Bida to prepare the third leg of his expedition which is devoted entirely to Ethiopian study. The party leaves the city on 18 April 1911, headed westwards away from the interior to Lokoja where Frobenius acquires further provisions. Strategically, Lokoja presents an ideal opportunity for Frobenius's party to travel by water back to the interior. Frobenius also states that he desires a change of scenery before returning to the interior for an extended period. The



party then doubles back on itself, heading from Lokoja along the Benué River to Ide in the northern territories of German-controlled Cameroon. Frobenius resides for a short period, studying the Tschamba, a tribe of Ethiopian descent which had migrated westwards.<sup>172</sup> Surprisingly, Frobenius then makes a short trip back to Europe in order to bring his collection of artefacts to safety before proceeding further. Frobenius travels to Genoa, stays for three days, then heads straight back to Africa to meet up with the rest of his party who had meanwhile travelled on foot. The party travels down the Nile to the northern regions of Ethiopia where Frobenius continues his ethnographic studies amongst the Shillook, Mondu and Nuba tribes. The journey ends with Frobenius's appraisal of Ethiopian culture and a message to potential colonising nations to respect these people as bearers of an 'eminent alten, klaren, tiefsinnigen und doch dabei schlichten und verehrungswürdigen Kultur' (Frobenius III, p. 508).

Frobenius's narrative demonstrates a clear move away from our first works. Frobenius's short re-entry into European culture remains uneventful and at the end of his expedition, irrelevant to his findings. As this short trip demonstrates, routes through the interior and between the African and European continent were now well-established. In contrast to earlier narratives, the foregrounding of acquisition and analysis of ethnographic information renders the narration of physical travel more or less redundant. As with Schweinfurth, traversal is merely a means with which to reach points of extended sojourn. Thus the information collated is far more extensive and in-depth than in earlier works. Frobenius's narrative instead tells of a different kind of journey – one

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<sup>172</sup> Frobenius defines 'Ethiopian' as a cultural rather than a geographical concept.

of self-discovery and knowledge. Frobenius is our only ethnographically-trained explorer, yet his opening chapters demonstrate his initial negativity towards African culture. As Frobenius delves further into the depths of African ethnographic study, a process of insight ensues. He distances himself from his original ignorance and devotes the rest of his work to bringing the same level of enlightenment back to Europe through a revalorised image of African culture.<sup>173</sup> Movement in Frobenius's work thus focuses on the movement of peoples and cultures over time and the effects of intercultural and racial mixing, whilst simultaneously highlighting his journey from intellectual blindness to insight. Hence the time-scales relevant to Frobenius's cognitive interest are far more extensive than, for example, Rohlf's division of his African experience into days, hours and minutes. Frobenius focuses on minute changes in cultural development over thousands of years. Hence clock-time is irrelevant, and as such rarely features in Frobenius's extensive and detailed work. The passage of time is instead gauged by changes in human behaviour. Thus particular attention is given to alternative, African concepts of preserving and narrating history which enabled Frobenius to access his new-found insight.

Significantly, Frobenius also ends his work with reference to European politics. His final remarks highlight the changes in both European-African relations and Germany's

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<sup>173</sup> Frobenius is greatly influenced by his contemporary and one of the most eminent ethnographers of the time, Adolf Bastian. Bastian is mentioned in the introduction to Frobenius's narrative as a specialist on North-West and Central Africa after his earlier expeditions as a 'travelling ethnographer'. Adolf Bastian, *Die deutsche Expedition der Loango-Küste: nebst älteren Nachrichten über die zu erforschenden Länder*, 2 vols (Jena: Costenoble, 1874 and 1875). Bastian's research 'vigorously opposed any and all developmental theories. Instead of the creation of evolutionary hierarchies [...] advocated large-scale research that would chart the specificities of all the world's peoples, followed, in turn, by a determination of those aspects of life that were truly universal' (Penny and Bunzl, *Worldly Provincialism*, p. 11).

international status since our first works. Rather than an image of emerging from darkness into the light of European civilisation at the end of his expedition, Frobenius's positive images of African culture are contrasted with the spectre of colonial expansion (Frobenius III, p. 508). Frobenius warns that this dark force threatens to wipe out the cultural variety celebrated throughout the narrative. Yet Frobenius does not oppose colonial expansion as such. He suggests a form of territorial expansion which is to be undertaken by a certain type of colonising nation. As we shall see, the attributes required by this colonising nation mirror those described as specifically German throughout his narrative. Frobenius's incarceration by the British prompts this positive attitude towards *German* territorial expansion, for this would diminish Britain's apparent world domination.

These comparisons demonstrate that although the stories are all essentially journeys of discovery through Africa and back – the actual pattern of narrated events presents differentiated results. Barth's journey becomes a semantic representation of the western time-set. Its goal-orientated linear chronology is punctuated by smaller, regenerative episodes, during which Barth overcomes African climatic and cultural alterity to progress from a passive observer to a successful expedition leader. The narrative portrayal of his journey thus itself propagates a Hegelian notion of linear-progressive development and ultimately the triumph of Germanic, scientific rationality. The linearity of Rohlf's journey suggests unstoppable progress and dynamism; a concept which is mirrored by his references to the unstoppable spread of 'superior' western, Germanic culture onto African soil. Schweinfurth's and Nachtigal's journeys are more complex in

structure and presentation. This mirrors their mind-set which diverges from notions of monolithic, one-way, linear progress and hierarchical stages of development. Nachtigal concentrates on a universal culture whereas Schweinfurth focuses on the diversity of human existence. Frobenius focuses on a journey of enlightenment in which physical movement is secondary. From his narrative alone, it would be impossible to construct an externalised map of his expedition. His journey is an inner one, he moves from cultural ignorance to a revalorised image of African culture. From these findings it could be hypothesised that the more intricate physical routes provide the greatest insight into African culture, for they are less restricted: these explorers do not adhere to the rigid structures of the western time-set. They are seemingly unconcerned with integrating Africa into a pre-existing structure of western knowledge. As the analysis progresses we shall determine whether this hypothesis applies.

### **THE NARRATIVE MICROSTRUCTURE**

After examining the differences evident in our explorer's narrated routes and the outcome of their narrating 'stories', this section now moves to formal narrative analysis. Focusing mainly on works before 1871 – these works evince the most rigorous, strategic narrative structuring – the analysis will concentrate on the temporal alterations which the narratives may have undergone. This will be expressed through the relationship between the *Erzählzeit* – or 'narrative time' – and the *erzählte Zeit* – or 'narrated

time'.<sup>174</sup> 'Narrative time' refers to the time taken to narrate events whereas 'narrated time' refers to the actual chronology of events in the story, or in this case our explorers' journeys. This comparison will intensify the contrasts between our narratives by highlighting the diverse implementation of certain pre-unification explorers' cognitive interest – time – in its narrative function. Firstly, the overall chronology of the expedition will be compared to the structure of the chapters. The analysis will then move to the function of 'narrative' and 'narrated time' in the composition of individual chapters and finally to individual events. This formalistic approach will demonstrate that our works are formed by narrative structural energies. As we shall see, certain explorers, as implicit authors, play on the western conception of time they share with the reader as a means of conferring connotative significance on certain parts of their journey. Our explorers, as we shall see, deploy 'narrative time' and 'narrated time' to differentiate between transit and stasis, for despite their claims to dynamic, unhindered traversal, the expeditions were characterised by extensive periods of motionlessness. Those explorers who dwell, both physically and in narrative, are most open to alterity, for these moments afford periods of reflection, and openness to outside influences.

Let us begin with Rohlf's narrative, which epitomises the antithesis of such narrative 'dwelling'. In Rohlf's two-volume work the chapters follow the main, linear passage through Africa. Each describes a stage of the journey or contains a description of the

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<sup>174</sup> See Günther Müller, *Morphologische Poetik: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Tübingen: 1968), pp. 269-286. Müller defines *Erzählzeit*, as the time taken to narrate events. This he measures in pages, thus creating a tendentially spatial phenomenon. *Erzählte Zeit* refers to the straightforward chronology of events in the story, which can be measured in years, months, days, hours etc. Eberhard Lämmert also gives an in depth analysis of the relationship between both criteria in *Bauformen des Erzählens*, 6<sup>th</sup> edn (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1975, [1955]).

people and area in which Rohlfs is currently residing. There are thirty-six chapters in total, seventeen in the first volume and nineteen in the second. The first volume narrates the first six months of the expedition, or approximately twenty-five percent of the total 'narrative time'. During this period, Rohlfs undertakes two excursions, three periods of extended sojourn and traverses the Sahara desert. The second volume depicts a comparatively large amount of 'narrated time' – one and a half years – within a shorter 'narrative time'. During this part of his journey, Rohlfs undertakes only one excursion and one period of extended sojourn. Rohlfs departs from Kuka on 13 December 1867, travelling more or less unhindered until he reaches the town of Keffi Adb-es-Senga on 19 February 1867. Illness forces Rohlfs to reside in the town for longer than expected. The period of unhindered transit – two months and one week of 'narrated time' – is mirrored by a fixed pattern of six short chapters which vary little in length. They each begin with a reference to the date and time, prioritise transit and contain a period of 'narrated time' of between seven and ten days. The period of enforced sojourn in Keffi Adb-es-Senga marks a break in this pattern. We are not told the date on which Rohlfs finally departs. In fact, there are no references to date until three chapters later when Rohlfs begins the final stages of his journey on the river Béné (Rohlfs, II, p. 227). This, clearly intentional, narrative structuring leads to the following conclusions; Rohlfs extends the 'narrative time' in the first volume in order to emphasise those elements which hinder his desired dynamic, linear passage: sojourn, deviations and desert traversal. In the second volume, the short chapters and numerous references to date and time create an impression of increased tempo. Rohlfs defines a successful expedition as speedy, unhindered transit which is also equated with mastery of resistant African

terrain. As the periods of transit in the second volume are narrated with rigorous control, this could be interpreted as an intentional implication of Rohlfs's ever-increasing confidence, control and mastery of African alterity. Overall, periods of transit are granted more narrative space than periods of residence and therefore privileged. Thus Rohlfs presents extensive, rather than intensive information.

The chapters' internal structure also distinguishes between motion and motionlessness. The passages devoted to transit follow a fixed, coherent pattern. They alternate between notation of distance covered and details of setting-up camp. This information is then interspersed with brief descriptions of the surrounding terrain and any anecdotes depicting incidents with indigenous peoples, including members of Rohlfs's entourage. Camp itself is referred to only very briefly, mostly as an opportunity to write the expedition journal. All attention is directed toward movement and so adds to the increased narrative tempo during periods of transit.

Rohlfs's descriptions of the places in which he resides also follow a pattern. Rohlfs describes the same factors each time, beginning with the architectural lay out, type of housing and rough estimate of the population. He then describes the vegetation, wildlife and physical geography of the surrounding area before moving on to discuss the inhabitants' appearance, dress and customs. These he uses as indicators of cultural value, with which the Africans are judged on an aesthetic scale of more, or less,

physically-appealing by reference to European standards.<sup>175</sup> Rohlfs then finishes with reference to the incessant protocol of gift-giving exchanges with local potentates.

A closer examination of Rohlfs's employment of dates to structure the contents of each chapter strengthens and clarifies the connotative temporal undertones derived from the above examples. Whilst moving through foreign terrain, Rohlfs employs the western understanding of empirical time as a means of orientation. The meticulous notation of date and time, included in the description of transit, enables Rohlfs to measure both the speed and distance of his passage and translate these into indications of progress. Periods of sojourn, however, contain significantly few specific references to date. This obviously intentional differentiation decelerates the narrative, thus reflecting Rohlfs's boredom when stationary.<sup>176</sup> Rohlfs's periods of sojourn are all undertaken in populated areas. Time does not seem to pass in these pre-structured African spaces. They become sites of cognitive darkness and disorientation. The narrow, labyrinth-like, gloomy alleyways of Rhadames (Rohlfs, I, p. 85) and the flooded streets of Uándala (Rohlfs, II, p. 58) defy orientation. When stationary, Rohlfs becomes lost in these timeless voids. Whilst residing in Mursuk – the place in which he spends the lengthiest period of sojourn – Rohlfs adheres to a strict routine to compensate for the seeming lack of orientation, progress and variety which would make each day distinguishable from the

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<sup>175</sup> This tradition became widespread in the eighteenth century due to Christoph Meiner's (1785) theories which linked differences in external appearance to differences in moral values. He propagated notions of unaesthetic African physical appearance and so claimed European superiority over African cultures. See Christoph Meiner, *Grundriß der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Göttingen, [n.pub], 1785), p. 67 ff.

<sup>176</sup> For example, Rohlfs's description of the 'langweilig' town of Misda (Rohlfs, I, p. 108) and his 'einförmiges Leben' in Mursuk (Rohlfs, I, p. 176)



next. He describes part of his routine as follows:

Ich begab mich um 4 Uhr zu der im lebhaftesten Theil des Dendal gelegenen  
Polizeiveranda und schaute dem Treiben des Marktes zu. Hier tauschten  
Fesaner, Tuareg und Tebu Erzeugnisse des Sudan: Elfenbein,  
Straussenfedern, Rhinoceroshörner, mit Bewohnern der Oasen von Rhat,  
Rhadames, Djalo, Tuat und Talifet gegen europäische Waren aus'. (Rohlfs,  
I, p. 176)

Again radiating significance over events, Rohlfs looks down on the chaotic movement of the marketplace with a sense of removed superiority. The marketplace below him is the antithesis of his rational, structured routine. He does not partake in the action, he watches and judges from a distance. Here, Rohlfs overcomes otherness with his mechanical narrative form, which in turn is cognate with his western, German self.

Rohlfs is the explorer with the greatest attachment to the western time-set. It therefore plays the most significant role as both an incessant feature of the narrative, but also of the narrative process. Rohlfs subjects unknown space to strict European norms by temporalising it – making the great expanses empirically measurable in time-units. However, Rohlfs's purely mathematical understanding of time has alienated him from other possible means of structuring it. His need for empirically-measurable time-units to structure his periods of stasis thus also subjects him to their control.

Schweinfurth's narrative in contrast breaks from the incessant adherence to date and time present in Rohlf's work. The 'narrative time' is divided equally between two volumes, each containing twelve chapters and varying little in length. The introductory chapter functions as a re-introduction to African culture and terrain as Schweinfurth travels from Alexandria to Khartoum. The journey, although taking over six months, is narrated in one chapter. The next chapter signifies a short re-entry into European culture amongst the British in Khartoum before Schweinfurth finally sets out on his journey south towards the interior. This period of three months is again narrated in one chapter. The following transit to the Seriba narrates a passage of two months in two chapters. Schweinfurth obviously privileges the events during this period by awarding them more 'narrative time'. Contrary to expectations, very little 'narrative time' in these two chapters is devoted to actual transit. Instead Schweinfurth includes an elaborate excursus on the Dinka tribe. The few sparse references to date and time given in the first few chapters become increasingly rare. They appear, if at all, towards the end of each chapter. As expected, this relationship between 'narrative time' and 'narrated time' prioritises ethnographic information and periods of sojourn.

Schweinfurth finally arrives at the Seriba on 30 March 1869. This residence belongs to local potentate Ghatta. It marks Schweinfurth's entry into Central Africa and the beginning of a difficult phase of the journey. Schweinfurth takes up semi-permanent residence in a collection of huts. Rather than accepting the pre-existing way of life, however, Schweinfurth symbolically takes possession of African terrain by creating a garden 'à la Européenne' (Schweinfurth, I, p. 213). Not only does this provide

Schweinfurth with a sense of *Heimat*, he intends to demonstrate to the local inhabitants the potential productivity of their own soil. Like his predecessors, this base is intended as a symbol of familiarity to which he can return after each short excursion. Schweinfurth devotes four chapters to his seven-month period of sojourn. These chapters are devoted to descriptions of surrounding tribes, in particular the Bongo. Interestingly, after the initial planting of the garden, no further references are made to its existence, as Schweinfurth becomes increasingly consumed by the local way of life. The chapters are notably devoid of temporal references, indicating their relative unimportance. When Schweinfurth does decide to leave, the chapter is interspersed with dates, yet the narrated events are not in chronological order. Transit thus seems to signify a return to European modes of structuring time which have become unfamiliar during the period of sojourn. Hence unlike Rohlf's, Schweinfurth's sudden inclusion of dates suggests disorientation and confusion.

The period of transit after the Seriba takes the form of two cyclical routes, both undertaken anti-clockwise and narrated in one single chapter. Although the excursions take three months' 'narrated time', they are accorded relatively little 'narrative time'. These relations present a direct contrast to Rohlf's work, both in the narrative presentation and structuring of routes. The final three chapters in the first volume narrate the two months' relatively straight-forward journey south towards Munza's residence. Although it would appear that Schweinfurth suddenly devotes more 'narrative time' to periods of transit, yet again these chapters prioritise descriptions of local inhabitants

rather than the geographical route taken. Schweinfurth reaches his destination at the end of the first volume, yet this event is also temporally unmarked.

The ensuing four chapters devote extensive ‘narrative time’ to the period of residence at Munza’s court. Schweinfurth resides in the palace grounds from where he makes several short excursions. During this period Schweinfurth encounters ‘mythical’ Pygmy tribes (Schweinfurth, II, p. 130). His excitement at uncovering elements of truth behind ancient myths is enhanced by the two chapters of ‘narrative time’ devoted to the event. The sudden reference to date at the beginning of the following chapter signals transit. Surprisingly only three weeks of ‘narrated time’ have passed in Munza’s territories in comparison to the four chapters of ‘narrative time’. In contrast to Rohlf’s, the absence of temporal references during periods of sojourn implies a sense of freedom rather than forced confinement.

Schweinfurth is reluctant to break off his exploration, hoping to have ventured even further south. He decides to return south again at a later date with a smaller party. This eagerness is enhanced by the relative dynamism with which he undertakes the next series of three small excursions. However, 1 December 1870 is highlighted as the worst day in Schweinfurth’s life. On returning to Nyoly in the north and preparing to divide his party and head southwards again, Schweinfurth’s camp is struck by a disastrous fire. The loss of his collections and means to return south proves to be unbearable. The final chapters are tinged with hostility as Schweinfurth attributes the fire to local ignorance. He travels north, past the Seriba where he resided originally and encircles the Golo

region to the west. This extensive journey, which lasts several months, is given but one chapter of 'narrative time'. As Schweinfurth moves closer to Khartoum the temporal references increase and indicate the re-installation of the western mind-set. Slightly disillusioned with the final stages of his journey and devoid of most of his collections, he reaches the end of his passage. Let us look at the relationship between 'narrative'- and 'narrated time' in Nachtigal's work which provides an interesting comparison to the above discussion.

Nachtigal's narrative is divided into three volumes, each one narrating a thematic stage of the journey. The first volume covers one and a half years of 'narrated time' and is devoted to the expedition's original objective: the presentation of gifts to the Sultan of Bornu. The second volume concentrates on the experiences in Kuka and the excursions undertaken during this two-year period of 'narrated time'. The third, edited and published posthumously, narrates the last period of residence in Kuka before undertaking the final stages of the journey, a 'narrated time' of one and a half years.

The chapters in the first two volumes vary considerably in length. For example, of the three chapters comprising the first volume, the introductory chapter consumes approximately fifty percent of the total 'narrative time' (pp. 5-84). The following two chapters approximately twenty (pp. 85-114), and thirty-percent (pp. 115-153) respectively. This unequal division corresponds to an equal division of 'narrated time'—six months per chapter. The large temporal divisions form a loose structure by which the mass of diverse observations can be ordered. This is matched by the very general

chapter-headings, which refer to the main geographical point reached during the journey. This also suggests that each important stage of the expedition was attained every six months and so reflects the regular punctuation of a linear course with meaningful events. Thus, Nachtigal's journey and its narration seem patterned on western linear progression. That is unexpected, considering the explorer's generally hostile attitude to this process which will become increasingly evident as the investigation progresses.

The third volume, however, presents a completely different structure. There are sixteen chapters in total, divided thematically. This is more suggestive of editorial preferences, rather than a sudden change in mentality. As the work in this volume was published posthumously, it is impossible to derive semantic meaning from the discussion of the chapter divisions and their chronology, as it is uncertain whether they conform to Nachtigal's original intentions. However, the structure of the final volume does accentuate a different aspect of 'narrative' and 'narrated time' present in all three volumes; the provision of 'narrative time' accorded to different themes. These themes are differentiated under the same categories as those evident in Rohlf's works; transit, sojourn and informative excursus. The excursi in the final volume comprise forty-five percent of 'narrative time', the remaining fifty-five percent is divided almost equally between sojourn and transit.<sup>177</sup> The excursi relate to information collated during periods of sojourn, which demonstrates a prioritisation of motionlessness over movement – a direct opposition to Rohlf's narrative and a clear correlation with Schweinfurth's. Another interesting aspect is the general lack of reference to dates in Nachtigal's

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<sup>177</sup> There are eight chapters containing excursi which comprises 181 pages, four chapters and 108 pages to transit, six chapters and 110 pages to sojourn.

narrative. As in Schweinfurth's work, certain stages of the expedition contain no such references at all, which means that it is impossible to gauge the speed of Nachtigal's traversal. The empirical measurement of time thus becomes a secondary feature in both works. Let us compare these findings with a post-unification work, for, as stated in Chapter I, due to the presence of a territorially-defined national identity and Germany's route to unification, time as a feature of self-understanding and identification alters in later works.

Frobenius pays relatively little attention to transit. He is also the explorer who provides the most in-depth insight into African culture. Each volume of the three volume work is devoted to an area of 'kulturgeographischen Forschung' (Frobenius, I, p. 3). As we have seen this focuses on the movement of peoples and mixing of cultures, rather than Frobenius's physical journey itself. As we can expect, the majority of the work thus narrates periods of sojourn. Yet during these periods Frobenius still undertakes a journey. Each chapter narrates the process of uncovering new, smaller pieces of knowledge about the relevant area or culture, slowly building an in-depth insight into African cultural history. Taking the first volume as an example, the opening chapter 'Das Rätsel eines Erdteiles' details ten years of discourse on African history which influenced Frobenius's ethnographic studies prior to his enlightening African encounter in Hamburg. The second chapter is the only chapter in the volume which devotes 'narrative time' to transit. Describing the journey from Bremen to Lagos and Ibadan, Frobenius notes the dates of arrival and departure. Frobenius's short stay in Lagos highlights the paradoxes of the existing colonial regime. The following chapter

again signifies a journey; 'Vom Ritualmord zur Erkenntnis'. Frobenius describes his encounter with the Ogboni, a mason-like organisation and the ensuing insight he gains into the Yoruba religion and its main deity 'Schango' the god of thunder. The fourth chapter entitled 'Zur heiligen Stadt' suggests further transit, yet the physical journey to Ife, which took several days, is allocated only half a page of 'narrative time'. The remainder of the chapter describes the process of collating information and artefacts from the local population and trying to build-up an understanding of the religion. In the next chapter 'In die Tiefe', Frobenius delves into the depths of the Yoruba religion, as an amazing archaeological find – an ancient, beautifully sculpted, bronze head depicting Yoruba deity of the seas Olokun – provides him with the key to understanding religious celebrations (Frobenius, I, p. 97).

The following chapters however present a deliberate break from the overall structure. For they detail the party's incarceration, trial and the ensuing consequences. The break in narrative structure mirrors the break in Frobenius's journey of ethnographic discovery. From Frobenius's arrival in Ibadan until this point there are no temporal references. Yet now they become increasingly important as Frobenius highlights the length of his incarceration – four weeks in total – and the detrimental consequences of the episode which effected his party for the following year. Most interestingly Frobenius, who immerses himself in African rituals and cultures (and so renders the western calendar obsolete), deliberately employs a specific Christian celebration in order to emphasise British barbarity. His incarceration occurs over the Christmas period. His celebrations are thus unduly sparse and his captors appear all the more uncivilised.



The trial itself is awarded extensive 'narrative time', as each day is described in detail in order to increase the episode's monotony. These two chapters present the only obvious narrative distortion of events through the intense control over 'narrative'- and 'narrated time'. Interestingly, they also coincide with Frobenius's relative closure towards other cultures. In this case negativity is directed towards the British, rather than indigenous Africans. Although Frobenius returns to his journeys of discovery and his familiar narrative structure, this inter-European tension remains a feature of his expedition and eventually his self-presentation. For as we shall see in later chapters, it is not only a revalorised image of African culture with which Frobenius returns to Africa, but also a strongly nationalistic and aggressive image of German national identity.

The discussion of the elastic relation of 'narrative' and 'narrated time' reflects a scale of authorial control which ranges from Rohlf's mathematical meticulousness to Nachtigal's comparative discursiveness. Narrative control is, it has been argued, a consequence of the extent to which the western time-set influences the explorer's perception of events and thus the image of alterity he intends to present. The greater the level of control evident in the narrative structure, the more detrimental to the unbiased judgement of alterity. Experimental narrative form, in contrast, signals openness to difference. Those who dwell in narrative question their unreflected concepts. These findings also correspond to the above hypothesis that the more intricate and complex the route, the more insight gained and again, the more open the explorer to cultural difference. Frobenius's narrative presents an interesting comparison, for unlike his predecessors discussed here, his German identity is rooted within fixed national borders.

Yet the function of the western time-set as a signifier of drastic authorial control and closure to cultural difference is still evident in Frobenius's work. He manipulates the relations between 'narrated' and 'narrative' time to enhance his negative portrayal. Frobenius however introduces a new element previously alien to his predecessors. As shall become increasingly clear throughout the coming chapters, Frobenius's temporary closure to cultural difference is matched with a rise in nationalist sentiment.

The analysis of literary techniques in this chapter emphasises above all the level of authorial influence in the portrayal of seemingly factual occurrences. We have seen how the narrative situation presents the explorer with an opportunity to imply a self-image conducive to the effects he wishes to attain. We have also seen how the privileging of events through unequal divisions of 'narrative' and 'narrated time' manipulates the reader's judgement. After highlighting specific analytical tools which demonstrate that the works are self-consciously constructed and thus can – and should to a material extent – be classed as literary, the next chapters will highlight and focus on events themselves as we elaborate the complexities of the evolving nature of Germanic-African encounter. The macrotext of *Afrikareisende* narratives tells the story of African as well as German self-discovery.

Ich werde diese Nacht nie vergessen, die Nacht welche das neue Jahr 1850 anfang. [...] Es war eine finstere, überaus kalte Nacht. [...] Als der feierliche Beginn des neuen Jahres da war, machten Overweg und ich halt, begrüßten das neue Jahr mit Begeisterung und wünschten uns, uns gegenseitig die Hände schüttelnd, glücklichen Erfolg auf unserer gefährlichen Laufbahn. (Barth, I, p.3)

As this excerpt demonstrates, Barth's first moments on African soil are spent incorporating his surroundings into Christocentric time-scales. Imposing the western time-set and its associated values of linear progress and logical thinking onto Africa is concomitant with control over this challenging alien terrain. Yet, as this chapter will demonstrate, African terrain unexpectedly exposes some explorers' cognitive limits and awakens in others an alternative interest in a romantic and irrational dream-time. African space however also becomes 'Germanicised' as both part of German colonial history and a void on which to project and consolidate an idealised version of German national identity.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Kundrus observes that Deutsch-Südwestafrika, the first German colony, was a site of reflexive national identification. This territory was to be a settlement colony, a second, utopian version of the German nation: 'Im Vorhaben, Deutsch-Südwestafrika 'deutsch' zu machen, die 'deutsche Kultur' dort aufzubauen, konstruierten die Kolonialräsionierenden einen wesentlichen Teil ihrer nationalen Identität' (Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten*, p. 10). I argue that both the narration of explorers' passage through African terrain and the recreation of the terrain itself in narrative form expose concepts of German self-understanding from fragmented and fluid to coherently nationalistic.

Until now our focus has been on the literary devices deployed to mediate German-African encounters. This chapter now moves to the encounters themselves and focuses on a particular dimension of German-African cultural encounter – one that occurs when German travellers encounter foreign *terrain*. Both their passage through it and their sojourn within it expose contrasting temporal and narrative ideologies. As Helga Novotny states, spatial perception is directly linked to our understanding of time.<sup>179</sup> African space in our narratives is experienced as the essence of a culture without linear time. It is at once welcoming and controllable, but also suffocating, immeasurable and threatening. Bergson's theory becomes increasingly relevant to our discussion as it not only interlinks both spatial and temporal perceptions, but also defines them as products of social norms.<sup>180</sup> This chapter tells the story of how German *Afrikareisende* attempt to capture African space in words.<sup>181</sup> The analysis will progress chronologically, treating extraordinary resonant images of mountains, deserts, floods, skies, storm and fire from each of our main works, and so chart our writers' changing influences and changing identities throughout these repeated encounters with African climatic and territorial otherness.

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<sup>179</sup> Novotny, *Eigenzeit*, p. 18. Appel also notes that time and space are 'inhärent miteinander verknüpft'. 'Der physikalische Zeitbegriff', p. 50. See also K. Mainzer, 'Philosophie und Geschichte von Raum und Zeit', in *Philosophie und Geschichte der Raum-Zeit*, ed. by J. Audretsch and K. Mainzer (Mannheim: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1994), p. 11.

<sup>180</sup> See Chapter II, pp. 55-8.

<sup>181</sup> On spatial discourse and colonialism see John Noyes, *Colonial Space: Spatiality in the Discourse of German South West Africa 1884-1915* (Chur: Harwood, 1992)

## COLONIAL FANTASIES: NAVIGATION, TECHNOLOGY AND PIERCING THE VEIL

‘Landscape and violence are one. It is an accursed land’<sup>182</sup>

As the above quotation demonstrates, Hugh Ridley defines the ‘archetypal’ image of African landscape in exotic, colonial fiction as typically wild, barren and destructive. Our first authors, however, employ cognitive metaphors or analogies from the area of technology – the means to master nature – such as the railway and maritime navigation, to inscribe German cultural superiority and ideological possession of African space. The familiar image of the ‘oriental veil’ shrouds their African landscape in secrecy, as it awaits, yet also resists, penetration by the German representatives of rationality and scientific progress.<sup>183</sup> Dualistic images of darkness and light, employed to describe African landscapes, similarly imply pre-industrial, pre-‘enlightenment’ levels of development. Thus both authors attempt to familiarise African space by mediating it through a series of analogies, images and measurements from their own and their readers’ mind-sets. Barth and Rohlf s see Africa as an ideal site upon which to consolidate both a pre-conceived sense of their own individual identity and an a priori understanding of what it means to be German. Yet as the following analysis

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<sup>182</sup> Ridley, *Images of Imperial Rule*, p. 70.

<sup>183</sup> Veil imagery enjoys a long tradition as a symbol of oriental mystique. Goethe’s *Westöstlicher Diwan* (1819), Hugo’s *Les Orientales* (1829) and Friederich von Bodenstedt’s *Lieder des Mirza-schaffy* (1851) employ the veil to romanticise the Orient as a place of hidden beauty and secrecy, at once welcoming yet also resisting discovery. Rohlf s mentions that his acquaintance Bodenstedt would have been entranced by the celebrations honouring the Prophet’s birthday in Rhadames (Rohlf s, I, p. 45). Friederich von Bodenstedt, *Die Lieder des Mirza-schaffy* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1851), Victor Hugo, *Les Orientales* (Paris: [n.pub], 1952) J.W. Goethe, *Westöstlicher Diwan* in *Werke*, ed. by Emil Staiger, 40 vols (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1977). On Goethe’s Orientalism see Todd Kontje, *German Orientalisms* (Michigan: University of Michigan, 2004), pp. 118-133. Similar imagery is still employed in contemporary texts to describe German images of Africa in the nineteenth-century. See Josef Imre Demhardt, *Die Entschleierung Afrikas. Deutsche Kartenbeiträge von August Petermann bis zum Kolonialkartographischen Institut* (Gotha:[n.pub], 2000).

demonstrates, in spite of their initial intentions, these explorers generally fail to impose pre-existing concepts of Germanic superiority onto African terrain. Significantly, during such moments, Ridley's stereotypical images of wild, destructive landscapes come to the fore and present a break or shift in narrative pattern. Here, the explorers lose control and track of time. It will be argued that our authors' failed attempts to familiarise and thus intellectually control African space unintentionally reveal the fragility of their individual identity, and German identity in general.

This section will analyse those images deployed by Barth and Rohlfs to familiarise African space. Let us begin with Rohlfs's analogies to the railway – the epitome of the western time-set and its associated concepts of linear, dynamic progress. In the very first stages of his expedition, two days after his departure from Tripoli, Rohlfs encounters the Ghorian Mountains, an area of inhospitable and difficult terrain, in the middle of which lies the Hammada, a plateau covered with sharp-edged stones. It takes Rohlfs three weeks to traverse the mountainous region and eight days alone to cross the Hammada. This first period of transit – and test of Rohlfs's skill as expedition leader – is granted an unsurprisingly large amount of narrative time.<sup>184</sup> On arriving at the foot of the mountains, Rohlfs tells us that they have picturesque forms, are covered by the most beautiful green groves of palm, olive, orange and fig trees, and so uplift the traveller after his monotonous passage through desert terrain (Rohlfs, I, p. 32). Yet this short passage is the only 'narrative time' that Rohlfs devotes to the appearance of his surroundings. From here on the mountains become a site of conquest. Rohlfs's passage

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<sup>184</sup> Rohlfs devotes one chapter to this stage of the journey, a total of thirty-seven pages (Rohlfs, I, p. 29-66).

through them is recreated with his typical mechanical, narrative style and so suggests unhindered passage; ‘von 9 Uhr früh bis 3 ½ Uhr Nachmittags gielten wir. Um 5 Uhr war der Sru Atua erreicht, durch den wir um 7 Uhr in die Tiefebene Atua gelangten’ (Rohlf’s I, p. 54). The scenery, if mentioned at all, is relegated to purely geographical denotations such as the following:

Wir zogen in der Richtung von 225° den Uadi el-Cheil entlang aufwärts und drangen mit ihm in das steinige Gebirge ein, in dem er entspringt und durch zahlreiche Thäler und Schluchten aus Süden und Norden Zuflüsse erhält; der hauptsächlichste kommt von Südwesten. Die Wände dieser Thäler, aus Sandstein und kalk bestehend, erheben sich senkrecht zur durchschnittlichen Höhe von 100-150’ (Rohlf’s I, p. 56).

Rohlf’s use of unqualified proper nouns and lack of descriptive elements signal the prioritisation of the controlling narrating self. Nature – the Uadi – has provided a route through this difficult territory. Now it is time for technology to take over. Traversing a linear route through African space would pave the way for an actual railway. Rohlf’s later published an essay ‘Eine Eisenbahn nach Zentralafrika’ which confirms that this was his ulterior motive.<sup>185</sup> His essay includes detailed plans for a railway along the same route travelled by his expedition. The Ghorian Mountains and the Hammada, so Rohlf’s tells us in his article, pose the only territorial obstacles to the railway project. Yet Rohlf’s concludes that the many valleys and gorges he observed during his expedition could be

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<sup>185</sup> Gerhard Rohlf’s, ‘Eine Eisenbahn nach Zentralafrika’ in *Mittheilungen aus Justus Perthes’ geographischer Anstalt* (Gotha: Justus Perthes, 1877) Vol. 23, Sonderheft, pp. 45-53.

appropriated to create a suitable route (Rohlf's, 'Eine Eisenbahn nach Zentralafrika', p. 51). In the following excerpt, Rohlf's tells us how, after overcoming these obstacles, the remaining landscape would succumb to his project:

Wir haben den 25° N. Br. überschritten, und nur noch 10 Breitengrade trennen uns vom gelobten Lande. Und ganz unter gleich günstigen Bedingungen dringen wir weiter nach dem Süden, ohne je mit Dünen zu kämpfen zu haben, und finden nur im Tümmo- oder War-Gebirge eine Erhöhung, welche aber keineswegs solche Steilheiten zeigt wie das Ghorian-Gebirge, und südlich von den Tümmo-Bergen legen wir ohne Hindernisse die Schienen nach Kauar und durch die Oase hindurch bis fast zum 18° N. Br. (Rohlf's, 'Eine Eisenbahn nach Zentralafrika', p. 54)

The narration – here describing the construction of a railway – demonstrates obvious parallels to Rohlf's descriptions of his own movement. Identical images of 'dringen' describe feminised African landscape as it submits to the unstoppable force of technology. Rohlf's – the pioneer of German culture – employs the same narrative situation 'wir' to both engage and include his reader in this extension of German culture onto 'uncivilised' Africa (Rohlf's, 'Eine Eisenbahn nach Zentralafrika', p. 45). Africa – not only an 'El Dorado', but now 'das gelobte Land' – is again reduced to a list of names. The only difference between this image of transit and those in Rohlf's travel narrative is the increased narrative tempo. Here, Rohlf's reduces the entire route taken by his expedition to a narrative time of one paragraph.



Rohlf's was aware of the success with which the railroad had 'opened' the huge North American land masses to European influence. He tells us that 'Die Vereinigten Staaten haben in dieser Beziehung gezeigt und bewiesen, was man mittelst der Bahnen für die Erschliessung eines Landes thun kann' (Rohlf's, 'Eine Eisenbahn nach Zentralafrika', p. 46).<sup>186</sup> An African railway would lock Africa both geographically and ideologically into the western mind-set. The assimilating properties and loss of localisation associated with the spread of modernisation would reduce the element of human otherness. Rohlf's thus epitomises Bergson's criticism of western temporal and spatial perceptions discussed in Chapter II. As we saw, Bergson defined spatial perception in western culture as systematic, unified and mathematically quantifiable – something mirrored precisely by Rohlf's gaze on African space as linear, measurable routes. Western spatial perception, so Bergson continues, is geometric and artificial.<sup>187</sup> Such attempts to transform space reflect an aversion and fear of otherness. So far, Rohlf's betrays these traits. Let us look at further attempts to impose the western mind-set onto African space.

The lists of temporal reference points and coordinates to which Rohlf's reduces African space not only mirror the movement of the railway and its pioneering achievements,

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<sup>186</sup> Max Weber describes the effects of the American railway as the origin of American culture. 'Die amerikanische Cultur began das mit dem Eisenbahnwesen, was die europäische mit ihm vollendete; vor dem einfachen Fußpfade, vor der Saumtierstraße streckte sich die Eisenbahn in die wilde Savanne und in den Urwald. In Europa hat das Eisenbahnwesen Verkehre zu vermitteln, in Amerika zu schaffen' (Schivelbusch, *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise*, p. 84). Rohlf's plans – however much they echoed the successful Europeanization of North America through the expansion of the railway – were not taken seriously. Nor for that matter was Rohlf's report of a basin in the Sahara desert which he suggested should be flooded to create an inland reservoir and fertile land. Gerhard Rohlf's, *Kufra. Reise von Tripolis nach der Oase Kufra* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1881), p. 124.

<sup>187</sup> Nietzsche echoes similar criticism of western 'scientized' nature: 'Auch die Logik beruht auf Voraussetzungen, denen nichts in der wirklichen Welt entspricht, zum Beispiel auf der Voraussetzung der Gleichheit von Dingen, der Identität desselben Dings in verschiedenen Punkten der Zeit [...] Ebenso steht es mit der Mathematik, welche Gewiß nicht entstanden wäre, wenn man von Anfang an gewußt hätte, daß es in der Natur keine exakt gerade Linie, keinen wirklichen Kreis, kein absolutes Größenmaß gebe'. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1993), p. 80.

they also create an analogy to the ship's log and the nature of early navigational exploration, which was of course in principle made possible by the invention of the chronometer.<sup>188</sup> Barth and Rohlfs also notably employ imagery – in this case maritime references – to create recognisable images and connotations for their European readership. European consciousness immediately associates navigational exploration with mastery of waters.<sup>189</sup> Control over waters was the gateway to early colonial expansion. After mastering oceans and mapping the coastline, the desert and internal stretches of water remained a challenge to African expansion. The desert, 'Wüstenmeer' (Barth, I, p. 157), is to be traversed using 'Wüstenschiffe' (Barth, I, p. 145). Rohlfs is like the 'Kapitän eines Segelschiffes' on the unpredictable and unreliable ocean, headed for unimaginable discoveries and conquests (Rohlfs, I, p. 6). On leaving Tripoli Rohlfs tell us; 'Der Wind bläst günstig! konnte ich wie der den Hafen verlassende Schiffer ausrufen' (Rohlfs, I, p. 29). Such imagery intentionally links the explorers' expeditions to momentous voyages of discovery to the 'new world' and the spread of European civilisation. Rohlfs intends to equal such ground-breaking cartographic achievements by mapping direct routes across Africa's surface. Barth, and his companion Overweg, for their part, not only 'navigate' through the vast expanse of desert, they set their sights on exploring inland stretches of water. Water of course, like the railway, presents a future channel of communication. The explorers transport a boat – in several pieces – across

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<sup>188</sup> The chronometer, invented by John Harrison in 1735, enabled precise time-measurement and hence the means of measuring longitude.

<sup>189</sup> As Pratt observes, maritime exploration stood in stark contrast to the later orientation toward documenting continental interiors. The paradigmatic shift to interior exploration 'had significant consequences for travel writing, demanding and giving rise to new forms of European knowledge and self-knowledge, new models for European contact beyond its borders' (Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, pp. 23-4). Maritime exploration soon became synonymous with pre-industrial, unsophisticated exploration. Rohlfs's and Barth's comparisons between their traversal and the European history of superior control of the seas is however intended to imply qualitatively superior, cultural control over desert terrain.

thousands of miles of desert terrain in order to explore Lake Chad. Barth tells us that this ‘ungeheure, seichte Lache’, this ‘Sumpf von gewaltiger Ausdehnung’, with ‘ewig wandelbare Ufer’ and ‘feindliche Stämme’ inhabiting the surrounding area, almost defies exploration (Barth, I, p. 15). Barth sets himself a further goal – to reach and explore the Niger. For these explorers, documenting African terrain is an opportunity to affirm both their own scholarly worth and the status of Germany’s scientists.

Confident in the authority of his knowledge, Barth departs on his journey with a sense of only moderate challenge. His logical approach to the African unknown fills him with an a priori belief in his ability to rationalise and de-mystify his surroundings. Initially, Barth’s desert is filled with unrecorded information which demands to be registered and categorised in rational, coherent, archivable form. As he passes through desert and mountainous regions in the first stages of his journey, he continuously recreates a visual and physical image of his surroundings. He describes the mountainous terrain as ‘Wände von schwarzem Sandstein’ and contrasting ‘weisse Sandhügel’, whilst underfoot, ‘rauhe, felsenharte, den Boden bedeckende Salzkruste’ covers the ‘schwarze, kahle Thalsohle’. Hollows in the mountainsides are ‘geschmückt’ with clusters of palm trees (Barth, I, p. 152-8). These images are complemented with information regarding the area’s climatic particularities. For example ‘der kühle Ostwind’ which refreshes during the early hours, typically changes to a southerly wind as the day progresses and becomes ‘höchst unbehaglich’ (Barth, I, p. 161). We are also given exact notations of distance, time, height above sea-level and temperature. The landscape is qualified on a less-than-scientific scale of more or less ‘freundlich’, depending on the amount and

diversity of vegetation (Barth, I, p. 153). ‘Talha’ trees, for example, are particularly inviting, as their large branches provide welcome shade under which Barth enjoys moments of contemplation after his discovery of cave markings (Barth, I, p. 218) and before his first lone excursion (Barth, I, p. 229). Yet these initial, comparatively rich portrayals, coupled with the references to maritime navigation cited above, cease when Barth realises that Africa transcends the horizon of his apparently sovereign European intellect.

This realisation occurs four months into the journey. The expedition has encountered no major challenges and is making steady progress southwards. After residing in the town of Mursuk, the party is again in transit across desert terrain when Barth is suddenly presented with a welcome opportunity for adventure. Barth learns of ‘Schloss Idnien’, which the entourage claim is inhabited by ‘böse Geister’ (Barth, I, p. 228). The explorer, his curiosity aroused by ‘wunderbare Berichte’, and determined to uncover the truth behind them, decides to take a short excursion to the castle (Barth, I, p. 228). He is forced to undertake the journey alone. The Muslim entourage, insisting the adventure is ‘gotteslästerlich’, refuse to accompany him and Overweg is weakened by illness (Barth, I, p. 228). Less than two hours into his excursion, the landscape suddenly presents unprecedented challenges. Barth underestimates the distance to the castle, for hidden from view behind the sand dunes are vertiginous, cliff-like masses of rock, numerous gorges and deep crevasses. ‘Unbefriedigt, erschöpft und ängstlich’, Barth’s barren surroundings now become ‘ein wildes Meer herabgefallener Felsmassen’ (Barth, I, p. 232). The explorer becomes increasingly disorientated by the midday heat and

unnavigable terrain. His loss of control over his movement through the desert is concomitant with the rise of emotion-centred description and the prioritisation of the experiencing self. The landscape seems to conspire against him, the ‘eigenthümliche, wildzerrissene Berghöhe’ appears to change shape from one moment to the next and the sand dunes drain the explorer’s energy (Barth, I, p. 233). Barth’s desert, no longer filled with uncollated data, instead becomes filled with ghosts and spirits who lead lonely travellers astray (Barth, I, p. 234). The landscape is no longer merely personified as ‘unfreundlich’; it takes on the uncanny, supernatural qualities with which the entourage described the castle. After a desperate night alone, sunrise promises yet more ‘Furcht und Schrecken’ as the ‘steigende Hitze’ becomes increasingly ‘unerträglich’ (Barth, I, p. 236). Barth is finally rescued by one of the guides, sent to find him. The experience leaves Barth with a lasting impression of insecurity. From this point onwards, Barth’s desert becomes dark, barren and eerie. It is a site of latent danger (Barth, I, p. 335-7). It provides numerous welcoming hiding places and a cloak of darkness for thieves and plunderers to carry out attacks on Barth’s party (Barth, I, p. 339).

These encounters demonstrate that the surrounding landscape exerts a surprisingly powerful, suggestive influence over Barth’s state of mind, which affects the qualitative portrayal of events in a manner less conducive to his academic objective. Whilst the ‘Meereswüste’ presents Barth with an unprecedented challenge, the explorer’s arrival at the Niger, cited below, provides a welcome opportunity to regain control over African landscape. After being robbed twice and held against his will for one year in the town of Bagirmi, Barth receives word that his companion and close friend Overweg has died.

Barth, now the sole European survivor, thus undertakes his symbolic excursion to the Niger – his goal and the climax of his journey – under the most extreme strain:

So war endlich der berühmte Strom erreicht, der den Europäern seit der Eröffnung der afrikanischen Geographie mystisch vor Augen und Sinnen schwebende Niger. Ruhig glitt er von NNO nach SSW dahin, mit einer mäßigen Bewegung von ungefähr drei Meilen in der Stunde, seine Breite betrug hier nur etwa 1000 Schritt. Er ist vom felsigen Ufer eingeschlossen, das im Allgemeinen eine Höhe von 20 bis 30 Fuß hat. (Barth, IV, p. 335)

Taking the first steps towards intellectual possession, Barth records the river's properties and so converts the 'mystisch' into the Foucauldian language of 'knowledge-power'. Although a great mystery, there is room for neither wonder nor marvel in this description. Instead, Barth's rationalising portrayal is a step towards overcoming a tradition of fluvial myth which, as Schama states in *Landscape and Memory*, permeated European consciousness long before Barth's reference to African geography.<sup>190</sup> The Nile promised the greatest prestige to the nation who uncovered its source.<sup>191</sup> Control over waters once more becomes associated with imperial desire as the discovery of the elusive Nile source promised imperial power comparable to ancient Egyptian

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<sup>190</sup> Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004) pp. 245-255.

<sup>191</sup> The question of the Nile source prompted several well-publicised British expeditions such as Sir Richard Burton's failed attempt in 1854, narrated in his account *First Footsteps in East Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1966 [1860]). Speke finally discovered the Nile source in July 1862. John Hanning Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (New York: Dover, 1996 [1868]). German expeditions to the area were still popular even after the elusive myth had been uncovered. Apart from Junker's expedition, see also Ernst Marno, *Reisen im Gebiete des Blauen und Weissen Nil, im ägyptischen Sudan und den angrenzenden Negerländern in den Jahren 1869 bis 1873* (Vienna: Gerold, 1874).

civilisation.<sup>192</sup> Barth demonstrates German exploratory superiority by uncovering and de-mystifying one of the fluvial mysteries constraining the horizons of European knowledge. Yet demystifying the Niger, whilst intended to imply control, paradoxically affirms the status of mysticism as an inescapable part of Barth's 'enlightened' culture. The Rhine of course enjoyed a certain mystic quality in German consciousness which was re-awakened in the early decades of the nineteenth century. It was a symbol, a pulsating, life-giving source that connected *Heimat* on both sides of its banks, and not, as the French viewed it, as a natural border between both nations.<sup>193</sup> African rivers enjoy the same connotations; their intellectual possession legitimises Germany's place in Africa and consequently strengthens its international status. These factors function reflexively, to reinvigorate notions of collective self-belief and pride within Germany itself.

Barth's Niger-encounter simultaneously imposes the western time-set onto African space. He converts its rhythmic movement into temporal measurements. The western fluvial image, so Schama argues, is dominated by an understanding of rivers flowing from source to mouth and so mirroring the passage of time from beginning to end. Rivers combine this linearity of time with the regenerating cycles of life and so reflect western conceptions of time's passage – and also the pattern of events in Barth's

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<sup>192</sup> Schama argues that rivers symbolise lines of power over the course of history, epitomised by the Romans who turned waterways into transport routes, straightening their course and maximising their potential by constructing aqueducts. He expands on the connection made by Marx between 'hydraulic societies' and absolutism, concluding that the resulting control over water legitimised the omnipotence of tyrannies, Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, p. 260. On the persistence of the Pharaonic dream in western consciousness see also Jean Kerisel, *The Nile and its Masters: Past, Present, Future*, trans. by Philip Cockle (Rotterdam: Balkema, 2001), pp. 91-120.

<sup>193</sup> See Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, p. 363, and pp. 265-6. Here Schama observes that 'Father Rhine' was openly accorded mystical status – able to cleanse the soul and wash away misfortunes – until the late middle ages, at least.

journey. Barth's most triumphant encounters with landscape – his first desert experience and reaching the river Niger – are loaded with significant references to the western time-set and western ideology as part of the strategy to control African terrain. When Barth succumbs to the effects of African terrain – lost and disorientated in the desert – he also loses track of time. He describes his experiences as irrational, unstructured, 'wahnsinnige Träumerei' (Barth, I, p. 236). These moments of unstructured, uncontrolled, and so qualitatively 'new' encounters with African terrain demonstrate the fragility of the German self in its role as the defender of the cunning of reason and scientific rationality.

Rohlfs's landscapes continue this tendency. Let us look at two further images, the veiled landscape and the darkness of the 'unknown', which reveal still more about our first explorers' self-understanding. The images imply control over the unknown, yet in reality, Rohlfs's passage through Africa was conducted with anything but mechanical precision. The use of factual descriptions to demystify the strange betrays a strategy of narrative deception which disguises the reality of his journey. As the following excerpt demonstrates, Rohlfs's landscapes reveal far more than he intended. At the outset of his expedition, having just left Tripoli, Rohlfs tells us:

Man hat hier in nächster Nähe von Tripolis ein echtes afrikanisches Bild vor sich: schlanke immergrüne Palmen, Orangen- und Olivenbäume mit saftigem Blätterschmuck, unmittelbar daneben aber die öde Sanddüne, und alles überwölbt von einem trübblauen Himmel. In Nordafrika ist der Himmel



beständig in graue Schleier gehüllt; der klare und tiefblaue Himmel des europäischen Südens zeigt sich erst wieder in der Region der Haufenwolken, d.h. in Zentralafrika während der Regenzeit. (Rohlf's, I, p.39)

Rohlf's's first impressions of Africa on leaving the European enclave in Tripoli are loaded with dualistic categories of comparison. The sensual image of the slim and ever-young palms with their juicy fruit and decorative foliage suggests that Africa is a paradise or an idyll. Yet we find this emblematic description placed directly beside a picture of the sterile void.<sup>194</sup> The sky, to which Europeans in primitive times traditionally look for guidance, we find concealed in North-African Islamic territories. The only hope of finding clarity to match that of the European south – the home of philosophy, after all – seems to lie at the other side of the desert in Central Africa. Hence Rohlf's's North-African landscape signifies deception, at first presenting a welcoming image, only to be destroyed by disappointing results on closer scrutiny. The reference to 'blue skies' paradoxically inverts the conventional relations of *Heimat* and the exotic in nineteenth-century German culture, for the comparison seems to acknowledge a connection between Rohlf's's European home and Africa. Yet it becomes increasingly clear that Rohlf's views Africa as a site of absolute difference. The connection between the blue skies of Africa and Europe seems to imply that Central Africa presents a more promising site for territorial expansion. Yet Rohlf's's shrouded North-African skies also recreate familiar images of a passive Orient which both awaits and resists penetration and control. Hence rather than suggesting a source of

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<sup>194</sup> Ridley remarks that Hans Grimm's African landscapes are similarly dualistic. The images of African paradise in his colonial novels represent 'Grimm's enthusiasm for settlement' more than 'his love for the scenery' (Ridley, *Images of Imperial Rule*, p. 68).

enlightenment and knowledge, Central Africa merely seems to pose less of a threat – both to possible territorial expansion and to Rohlfs’s survival. It is no coincidence that Rohlfs’s skies become clearer in those territories where Islamic influence is weaker. Rohlfs tells us that the only threat to the western traveller in Islamic North Africa manifests itself in human form (Rohlfs, I, p. 5). Christians, Rohlfs maintains, must fear for their lives when traversing territories inhabited by ‘fanatische Bevölkerungen’ (Rohlfs, I, p. 108). As a result, not only the North-African skies were veiled, Rohlfs too adopted a veil of his identity.

Rohlfs traverses North Africa disguised as an Arab Muslim and so continues a tradition of ‘cultural disguise’ displayed by such figures as Lord Byron, Sir Richard Burton and T.E. Lawrence, all of whom adopted non-European dress in order to immerse themselves in foreign culture. Yet, as Nina Berman has remarked in ‘Orientalism, Imperialism and Nationalism’, the use of disguise raises questions about the wearer’s own identity.<sup>195</sup> Whilst disguise can function as a strategic device with which to penetrate foreign culture, there remains the possibility that the wearer is truly ‘going native’.<sup>196</sup> Rohlfs certainly displays an ambiguous attitude towards his external appearance; He employs veil imagery to imply indigenous inscrutability, yet the veil is simultaneously his camouflage and hence his means of survival; Although willing to

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<sup>195</sup> Berman also discusses parallels between Karl May’s own ambiguous use of cultural disguise as a form of escapism, ‘orientophilia’, yet also protean omnipotence, which is mirrored by his fictional protagonists. Nina Berman, ‘Orientalism, Imperialism and Nationalism’, pp. 57-59.

<sup>196</sup> This was a very real concern, as our analysis of Franz Stuhlmann’s narrative will demonstrate. Emin Pascha ‘went native’, converted to Islam and married an African. Although a useful contact, his motives and allegiance were constantly questioned.

deceive by resorting to disguise, Rohlfs views others' deceit as a base, culturally inherent characteristic (Rohlfs, I, p. 5.)

The explorer tells us that he was advised against wearing a disguise (Rohlfs, I, p. 3). Barth, namely, feared that news of Rohlfs's earlier uses of disguise in North Africa may have spread and so put him in great danger. Rohlfs rejects Barth's suggestion to adopt a safer, alternative route. Instead he tells us that he visited many mosques in Rhadames disguised as a Muslim and not once was his identity questioned (Rohlfs, I, p. 4). He later devotes merely two sentences of narrative space to these mosques and summarises them as possessing no particular architectural value (Rohlfs, I, p. 83). We get the impression that Rohlfs is not particularly interested in the mosques themselves, nor the practices that take place there. Instead he relishes his ability to enter them unhindered. Hence he imagines European consciousness to possess a kind of absolute protean power thanks to its presumed superiority. He can pass as one of the 'locals', but they cannot pass as a European.<sup>197</sup>

Yet, as we saw above, in spite of the disguise's apparent protean power, the 'veiled skies' of northern Africa still appear threatening.<sup>198</sup> Rohlfs's disguise is after all tantamount to mimicry, for it is based solely on external appearance. He thus,

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<sup>197</sup> As stated in the previous chapter, May's fictional protagonists draw close parallels to Rohlfs. The 'Effendi' in *Der Mahdi* also disguises himself as an Arab Muslim with a similar air of Protean sophistication.

<sup>198</sup> It is particularly telling that none of Rohlfs's fellow *Afrikareisende* felt the need to travel through the same area in disguise. Rohlfs's disguise is cognate with the insecurity of his self-understanding. Rohlfs needed to overcome his own ingrained feelings of inferiority resulting from repeated academic failure and inability to fit into pre-existing social categories. See Wolfgang Genshorek, *Im Alleingang durch die Wüste: Das Forscherleben des Gerhard Rohlfs* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1982), p.10. Interestingly, Byron and Burton, named above as fellow followers of 'cultural disguise', were at the time, centre of discussions surrounding their ambiguous sexuality.

unwittingly, reverses the typical presentation of the ‘other’ in colonial narrative, which sees mimicry generally reserved for the local ‘colonised’ population.<sup>199</sup> As Homi Bhabha argues, behind the mask there is no authentic self and identity needs to be redefined.<sup>200</sup> Rohlfs fails to realise that, rather than merely protecting his true identity and facilitating topological penetration, this disguise also forces him to experience cultural difference, even at a superficial level. The veil paradoxically exposes his relative subordination. If Rohlfs wielded more power he would be able to appear as himself. Hence in reality the disguise does little to protect him from alterity, but rather questions Rohlfs’s proclaimed ‘Selbsterkenntnis’ (Rohlfs, I, p. 5). In fact, it is the ‘veil’ of ‘oriental’ mystique which remains the most potent and impenetrable cultural symbol, as it shields both Northern Africans from Rohlfs’s cultural penetration and Rohlfs from possible death. As we shall see, when Rohlfs is finally able to remove his disguise, the results are far from his expectations.

Ultimately, Rohlfs is observing those masked from behind the ‘Maske eines Muselmans’ (Rohlfs, I, p. 108). Clear vision cannot occur until the mask is removed i.e. on leaving the Islamic areas of the North for the symbolically clear skies of Central Africa or Europe. On returning from his excursion to Rhadames, Rohlfs departs from the city of Misda which borders on the Sahara desert. The Sahara presents a site of relief, freedom and familiarity, as Rohlfs, ‘uplifted’, is finally able to remove his

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<sup>199</sup> On the history of mimicry in colonial discourse see Homi Bhabha, ‘Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse’ in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 85-92. Incapable of comprehending the colonisers’ behaviour, the colonized merely mimic the European. Yet as we shall see in Frobenius’s work, mimicry on behalf of the colonised population soon becomes subversive as it borders on mockery.

<sup>200</sup> See Homi Bhabha, ‘Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817’ in *The Location of Culture*, pp. 102-22.

‘disguise’ and metamorphose back to his western, German self (Rohlf, I, p. 108). However, as the following excerpt demonstrates, the symbolic reinstallation of western culture is quickly overwhelmed by a sudden sand-storm, which obscures the clear blue Central African sky, and against which Rohlf is utterly powerless:

Die Sonne erschien als ein glutroter Feuerball; eine unheimliche Schwüle durchzitterte die wellenschlagende Luft, dennoch herrschte vollkommene Windstille, aber eine pechschwarze, majestätisch sich heranwühlende Wolke ließ keinen Zweifel, daß in kurzer Zeit der Orkan über uns losbrechen würde. Immer röter wurde die Sonne, immer drückender die Hitze, das Atmen war fast unmöglich in der heißen, trockenen Luft. Jetzt kam das Gespenst herangebraust. Ohne Kommando machten unsere Kamele kehrt, damit der Sturm ihnen den scharfen, die Haut zerschneidenden Sand nicht in die Augen wehte, ohne Kommando knieten sie nieder. Völlige Dunkelheit umhüllte uns; der mehrere Hundert Fuß hoch aufgewirbelte Staub verdunkelte die Sonne wie bei einer Sonnenfinsternis. (Rohlf, I, pp. 115-6)

At first glance, this episode may seem like a mere constructed piece of stereotypical exoticism rather than a genuine expression of terror and experience of African otherness.<sup>201</sup> This could be a further gambit of the narrating self – resembling his portrait of incapacity in Rhadames – deployed to underline the extent of hardships the explorer successfully masters. Yet the episode goes beyond a mere stereotypical representation and deserves a more detailed examination, for it presents a distinctive

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<sup>201</sup> See Ridley, *Images of Imperial Rule*, p. 70.

rupture in Rohlfs's otherwise tightly controlled, rigid narrative structure which typically signifies his movement through African space. Rohlfs's portrayals of movement are generally concomitant with implications of sovereignty over the unknown. This episode, dominated by the 'experiencing self', stands in stark contrast. Here the large number of compounds and lack of finite verbs increases the extract's complexity, originality and evocative power. Clouds of whirling dust and sand subject the explorer to temporary blindness. He is swallowed by the landscape and plunged into sudden darkness. Images of unstoppable submersion are narrated with an uncharacteristic intensity and immediacy that appeals to all the senses. The personified hurricane's majesty induces feelings of awe, yet its rolling, cylindrical movements and pitch-black, impenetrable colour are directly opposed to everything Rohlfs associates with his linear-progressive, 'enlightened', western mind-set. Unable to portray the phenomenon in familiar terms the storm, now personified as a 'Gespenst', depicts the realms of the supernatural. The desert's alienating silence seems to increase and so enhances the feeling of dread and foreboding as the party await the approaching hurricane. Silence is indicative of lack of movement, disorientation and ultimately death. Loss of direction is the most fearsome of threats as it would, with great certainty, prove fatal. This fear is combined with a sense of disbelief as Rohlfs repeats that his camels act 'ohne Kommando'. These symbols of nature, over which Rohlfs assumes he has control, suddenly become autonomous. The images of fire and darkness which follow are on an apocalyptic scale.<sup>202</sup> The sun is completely consumed by darkness as the anticipatory silence is broken by the rush of wind. Rohlfs can neither prevent nor flee from the disorientating, nightmarish

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<sup>202</sup> Again, Ridley notes that Biblical images are part of stereotypical portrayals of African landscape in exotic literature. Ridley, *Images of Imperial Rule*, pp. 70-71.

occurrence. The familiar is overturned by the combined forces of nature, as terrain and climate seize all power and control from human influence. This is not a mere narrative ploy, it is an epiphany of African otherness which even the narrating self must respect.

After the storm has passed, Rohlf's notes that the whole episode lasted barely more than twenty minutes. Yet during the storm he was unable to read his watch and keep time and therefore completely lost track of it – and everything else. The storm thus becomes a threshold experience which is induced when the familiar rhythm of western time and space are neither definable nor recognisable and are instead replaced by another temporality. In this case it is the natural rhythm of the storm. Its circular movement equates alternative temporal consciousness with non-linearity. Rohlf's is unable to enclose alterity in western temporal structures. Although Rohlf's does not further contemplate this event as a monumental or enlightening experience, he has been unavoidably and unexpectedly exposed to a qualitatively new experience. Rohlf's aprioristic belief in the superior western mind-set and its ability to control African alterity have – if only momentarily – been overturned. This process is mirrored by the momentary rupture of rigid narrative control.

So far, we have seen that Barth and Rohlf's describe African landscape with an air of confidence and authority and so imply their mastery of terrain. Both writers consciously employ 'scientific' and literary methods in order to familiarise African space and impose their cultural norms onto it. Yet in spite of their efforts to the contrary, African otherness – in the form of territorial and climatic forces – penetrates the writers' a priori

concepts of presumed authority and control. The authors are forced to narrate their experiences in unfamiliar terms; the experiencing self uncharacteristically dominates narration and so focuses on emotion-centred, subjective portrayals; the landscape becomes personified – both writers resort to images from the realms of the supernatural as their experiences extend beyond the constraints of their knowledge. The loss of physical control is concomitant with losing track of time; Barth is ‘besinnungslos’ consumed by ‘eine Art wahnsinniger Träumerei’ which defies any form of temporal structure (Barth, I, p. 236); Rohlf’s is consumed by the storm’s cyclical temporality. The explorers do not reflect on their experiences, yet Barth’s landscape, initially a site on which to affirm his cultural superiority, subsequently conspires against him (Barth, I, p. 335). It affords shelter to those who wish to harm him (Barth I, p. 337) and destroys any rare moments of uplifting reinvigoration; Barth witnesses the regeneration of a barren valley ‘mit fast kindischer Freude’ (Barth, I, p. 356) as the rains finally come. Less than a day later, the valley is destroyed and the expedition in grave danger as this regeneration turns into a flood of ‘biblical proportions’ (Barth I, p. 336). Barth only regains control over African space in the latter stages of his journey which is signalled by his triumphant arrival at the Niger. Rohlf’s is even more determined to avoid contact with alterity. The storm episode is the only moment which prioritises the experiencing self. Instead we have minimal references to surroundings in favour of a recuperation of African space in the mechanical, narrative form conducive to Rohlf’s desired railway; a railway which would eliminate all contact with alterity – both human and territorial. Yet there are explorers who consciously accept the penetration of otherness and reject pre-formed concepts of self and other in favour of openness to alternative experiences. On



this note, let us examine portrayals of African landscapes in the works of Nachtigal and Schweinfurth.

#### **‘DEEP-TIME’ AND SUBJECTIVE DREAM-TIME: SUBMERSION AND ENLIGHTENMENT**

As we saw in Chapter II, there is another side to the German time-set apart from a belief in the scientized, rational, progress-orientated, linear passage of time. In certain cases, our explorers’ move to Africa distances them from the Bergsonian pressures of convention which govern their perception of time. Their encounters with African space – terrain, landscapes, climatic adversity – signal a shift away from the western time-set and occasion explorations into subjective temporal consciousness which even pre-empt later, revolutionary critique.

Schweinfurth’s mandate was to reach the largely uncharted and unexplored equatorial jungles of Central Africa, thus in contrast to his predecessors, his experience of African landscape is largely undertaken in dense jungle terrain rather than sparse desert landscape. An experienced and recognised botanist, Schweinfurth was the ideal candidate for this expedition. His introductory chapters are brimming with expectation of the new types of ‘mysteriös’ flora and fauna he hopes to discover in jungle territories; ‘die frischen Felder der botanischen Forschung’ are consequently ‘unwiderstehliche Objekte’ of his desire (Schweinfurth, I, p. 3). Schweinfurth’s jungle is alive, lush and vital. He is intent on reaching vegetation, for his botanical knowledge fills him with self-

confidence. The jungle, rather than inducing fear, entices the explorer. In spite of certain new species he may encounter, he is so to speak on familiar territory amongst plant life. He can apply the same rules of classification to all specimens and incorporate them into his corpus of knowledge. Botanical science, so Schweinfurth argues, can open up the darkness of the jungle – the ‘jungfäulich’ and ‘ungeöffnet’ soil of knowledge – which at once seems to protect and nurture infinite plant-life in the shade of its trees, whilst resisting penetration and swallowing knowledge in its impenetrable depths (Schweinfurth, I, p. 3).<sup>203</sup>

Yet it is not just Schweinfurth’s botanical fore-knowledge that diminishes his fear of the unknown. Schweinfurth is not spending the majority of his time in distinctly non-European, alienating, desert terrain. He is bound for dense jungles and forests – tree landscapes which enjoy particularly positive imagery in Germanic tradition. Schama, in *Landscape and Memory*, discusses the relevance of tree and forest symbolism to Germanic national identity; ‘German woods were not simply an economic resource: they were in some mysteriously indeterminate way an essential element of the national character; they were as [nineteenth century sociologist] Riehl put it, “what made

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<sup>203</sup> Wilhelm Jensen’s exotic novella *Unter heißerer Sonne* [1<sup>st</sup> edn, 1869] (Berlin, Vienna: Ullstein, [n.date]) provides an interesting, fictional comparison to Schweinfurth’s jungle encounter. As Nicholas Saul writes in *Gypsies and Orientalism in German Literature and Anthropology of the Long Nineteenth Century* (Legenda: Oxford, 2007), Jensen’s protagonist Woldmann also a German botanist, views the Venezuelan jungle as both an inviting yet threatening epitome of a Darwinian struggle for existence. As we shall see, the jungle does not appear threatening to Schweinfurth until the final stages of his journey. Yet Schweinfurth’s sudden shift from botanic to human subjects is distinctly influenced by Darwinian categories of evolutionary development, in particular the effect of the environment on human development. Thomas Mann’s portrayal of Venice in ‘Der Tod in Venedig’, in contrast, with its swamp-like, oppressive, close atmosphere seems to swallow Aschenbach, making movement painstakingly difficult. Thomas Mann, ‘Der Tod in Venedig’, in *Der Tod in Venedig und andere Erzählungen* (Frankfurt Main: Fischer, 1996 [1<sup>st</sup> edn, 1912]), pp. 7-89 (pp. 42-43). Aschenbach swims against a current of people. His movement through the tumults of people in the crowded streets mirrors Schweinfurth’s slow passage through equatorial jungles. Both protagonists’ experiences of alien space represent a struggle with pre-existing beliefs and social norms. In Schweinfurth’s case it is literally also a struggle for survival.

Germany German” (Schama, *Landscape and Memory* p. 116). The role of forest landscapes of course plays an integral part in the Hermann legend – the founding image of Germanic identity. Hermann returned to his Germanic tribal roots to lead a rebellion against the mighty Roman Empire in the Teutoburg Forest in 9 A.D.<sup>204</sup> So rather than an unchanging, borderless expanse of desert, Schweinfurth is heading for the embodiment of power and strength with unstoppable dynamism.

The explorer’s eagerness spurs him on to cover the first stage of the journey – through desert terrain – as swiftly as possible. The wide, seemingly unchanging expanses of desert and steppe during the first stage of his journey provide little comfort to the traveller. Schweinfurth finds a sense of solace in contemplating the solitary stone blocks he encounters, an activity which – although travelling in silence – he seems to share with his entourage; ‘Aus der öden Steppe schwarzer Steine steigt ein einsamer Granitblock empor [...] Ein Wegweiser, von weitem erkennbar und nach der ermüdenden Wüstenreise vom Auge des erschöpften Reisenden dankbar begrüßt’ (Schweinfurth, I, pp. 37-8). The desert, devoid of vegetation, has a draining effect on the explorer – and all others who cross this territory. Schweinfurth carries on to tell us that: ‘der Fuß des Blockes ist schmal und offensichtlich im Laufe der Zeit von Wind und Sand abgeschliffen worden’ (Schweinfurth, I, pp. 37-8). This reference to geological time indicates the influence of natural time-scales and the natural passage of time as integral to Schweinfurth’s Darwinian mind-set. This was the era of ‘deep-time’, after all. Schweinfurth’s image of Africa is one of nature as an arena of constant, yet exceedingly slow, change over periods of time unimaginable to his predecessors.

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<sup>204</sup> See Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, pp. 86-7

Schweinfurth's passage, as expected, alters drastically on reaching the Dyoor regions which border on jungle territory. His first impression of local dwellings and use of space is of 'wirre Knäuel' (thus typical of his dismissive attitude to all things human in Africa (Schweinfurth, I, p. 175)). As we saw in the previous chapter, Schweinfurth's routes through the Dyoor territories could similarly be described as 'wirre Knäuel'. The entourage – consisting of hired human porters and a few donkeys – makes only painstakingly slow progress through the dense, dark vegetation (Schweinfurth, I, p. 185). Even during daylight hours dense vegetation masks most natural light. Trees have to be cut back to allow any kind of passage whatsoever (Schweinfurth, I, p. 186). Their cumbersome movements and slow passage mirror the incessant struggle for survival in this inhospitable terrain.

Yet Schweinfurth's intricate route through African space enjoys an unexpected, reflexive function. The dense jungle happens to be the first largely populated area of Central Africa explored by an *Afrikareisender*. At every step he comes into contact with tribes and villages and in order to reach the densest jungle regions and find new plant species, Schweinfurth must rely on local residents' geographical knowledge. In spite of his botanical knowledge, Schweinfurth was completely unaware of the large population inhabiting the region. Operating with received concepts, he is unprepared for African anthropology. The explorer is, for once, disorientated – and hence open to African otherness. It is this unexpected human influence that enables Schweinfurth to discover significant features of *African* geography which had been inaccessible to his predecessors. The explorer discovers that the location of villages changes according to

natural cycles. Approximately three-year cycles dictate movement between locations, as this is the length of time required for the soil to regenerate. Schweinfurth realises that not only agricultural cycles undermine western modes of mapping African space. Villages are often named after the current tribal leader, which logically cannot be a thing of permanence; when the leader dies the village acquires the successor's name. Consequently, numerous cartographic errors had been made by Schweinfurth's predecessors who marked villages on maps with fixed coordinates. Hence Schweinfurth discovers that African space defies attempts to lock it into western categories of understanding.<sup>205</sup>

Furthermore, the explorer is presented with human 'specimens' on which to test his belief in Darwinist, evolutionary theory. Schweinfurth's 'ancient' jungle is a multitude of interconnected biological organisms whose creation dates back billions of years. Their diverse paths of development do not fit in with monolithic theories of one-way, linear development. As we shall see in Chapter VI, Schweinfurth's contact with African people not only complicates the linear route of his expedition, it questions issues of linear, one-way *human* development propagated by his predecessors, in favour of similar human variety and diversity.

Yet the further Schweinfurth travels, the larger his collection of artefacts and wealth of findings gets, the greater his fears of fire breaking out in his Seriba becomes. He is less worried about loss of human life than his gear. This nightmare becomes reality when his

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<sup>205</sup> Emin Pascha requests Schweinfurth's maps of the area and remarks on his discoveries in Emin Pascha, *Gefährvolle Entdeckungsreisen in Zentralafrika 1876-1892* (Stuttgart: Erdmann, 1983), p. 65.

sleep is interrupted by screams of ‘*poddu, poddu* (d.h. Feuer)’ (Schweinfurth, II, p. 307). His camp, provisions, collections and, most importantly, his diaries, are completely destroyed. Still in a state of shock, Schweinfurth describes the scene of devastation as follows:

Einen merkwürdigen Anblick gewährte die Landschaft in der Frühe des folgenden Tages, denn nicht allein die Brandstätte selbst, sondern auch die ganze flache Gegend erschloss sich jetzt nach erfolgter Einäscherung der Steppen und Sirchfelder weithin den Blicken. Aus der von freudigem Grün ewig strotzenden Tropenwelt glaubte man sich inmitten der düsteren Wintereinöde des Nordens versetzt. Schneeeweisse Aschenfelder bedeckten den Boden, abwechselnd mit den halbverbrannten Kohlenschollen, wie auf einem Moorgrunde der schmelzende Schnee mit aufgeworfenen Torfhügeln. Der auf dem Boden lagernde Rauch, welcher einem dichten Nebel gleich die Landschaft verhüllte, dazu die nach dem Brande mit ihrem dürren Astwerk wie verzweifelt die Arme zum Himmel emporstreckenden Bäume, vervollständigten neben den weissen Aschenfeldern den Vergleich mit einer nordischen Winterlandschaft. (Schweinfurth, II, pp. 311-12)

Schweinfurth is unprepared for the desolation which greets him on awakening. The personified tropical jungle which mirrored his feelings of joy, exhilaration and vitality whilst exploring, now mirrors his sense of loss. Within minutes Schweinfurth’s African landscape – the ancient, ‘ewig’ green *Urwald*, the product of millennia – is reduced to

ashes. The strange ‘Anblick’ and sudden appearance of views across the surrounding terrain are recreated with rambling, ranging sentences which mirror the explorer’s disorientation. His confusion is highlighted by both the familiarity, yet strangeness of the scene. The experiencing self struggles to evaluate events: the winter-like landscape reminds Schweinfurth of his northern *Heimat*, yet it is distinctly out of place in his new-found jungle home. The dense fog which shrouds the landscape creates a surreal, dreamlike effect. Like Hans Castorp’s ‘snow dream’ in Thomas Mann’s *Der Zauberberg* (1924), these wintry images mark Schweinfurth’s awakening.<sup>206</sup> Yet this time it is the re-emergence from his acceptance of an alternative, dream-like experience of African travel to an increasingly rational, logical portrayal. The empty, bleak landscape reflects the explorer’s inner change – a sudden loss of purpose. He cannot overcome the loss of his diaries and collections. The elaborate metaphor of personified trees mirrors his forlorn and desperate state of mind as he acknowledges a strange inner affinity to these former symbols of strength. Schweinfurth had connected with African nature as a mirror of the vital force of life. Yet at this moment of disappointment, both Africa and the northern *Heimat* become interchangeable, and both signal alienation.<sup>207</sup> Schweinfurth must acknowledge that the fire destroyed his African idyll and any hope of exploration to other areas. Unlike his predecessors, the prospect of returning home is

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<sup>206</sup> Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberberg*, 16<sup>th</sup> edn, [1st edn, 1924] (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2004), pp. 641-682. As we shall see, the ‘snow dream’ becomes particularly significant to the following discussion of Nachtigal’s African experience.

<sup>207</sup> Schweinfurth mirrors Raabe’s reflexive deconstruction of *Heimat* in the exotic novel *Abu Telfan*. Raabe’s nightmarish image of the African ‘other’, rather than providing a counter-image to western culture, actually highlights its similarities. The ‘exotic’ Raabe presents is paradoxically *heimisch*; it is where we are now, in us all. Wilhelm Raabe, *Abu Telfan oder Die Heimkehr vom Mondgebirge* (Berlin and Hamburg: Deutsche Buchgemeinschaft, [n.date])

associated with darkness and emptiness – as unwelcoming as the barren landscape before him.

After the fire incident, the remainder of Schweinfurth's expedition is significantly coupled with references to the western time-set. Along with his botanic specimens and ethnographic collections, Schweinfurth loses his 'unentbehrliche Taschenuhren und Kompass' (Schweinfurth, I, p. 319). Until this point, the instruments have merited little attention, yet now they are gone Schweinfurth maintains that without them 'ist das Betreten des Unbekannten völlig zwecklos' (Schweinfurth, II, p. 319). As mentioned above, it seems highly unlikely that Schweinfurth put these navigational aids to much use as his route through jungle territories appears to follow random directions. Temporal measurements are also distinctly lacking from the narrative, apart from the occasional mention of the date at specific key moments, for example the date of the fire which took place on 1 December. The absence of temporal references could be explained by the destruction of Schweinfurth's records, yet unlike Barth and Rohlfs, Schweinfurth makes almost no references to gauging time. For his predecessors, this is a dominant feature of both the journey and the narrative process. In Schweinfurth's case, it is only when he is disillusioned by his African experience – intentionally closed to human contact and distanced from nature – and unable to measure time according to the western time-set that it increases in importance. Schweinfurth devotes extensive narrative space to mourning the loss of his watch. He tells us it is irreplaceable in Northern Africa as Muslims only have standing clocks, if at all. Schweinfurth tells us that when outdoors, Muslims rely on the sun to tell the time of day. He implies that the use of watches to



measure smaller subdivisions of time is more or less superfluous, for the daily perception of time in Islamic culture is structured solely around the call to prayer, which punctuates each day at five regular intervals. Time in Islamic culture is thus a far more religious and physical experience than mechanised western time. Schweinfurth's Nubian guides we discover, have no hours as divisions of time. They too look to the sky to gauge the time of day. In spite of his negativity, Schweinfurth is moved to acknowledge the practicality of such methods and the existence of an alternative time-set. The watch and the western time-set it represents are not 'unentbehrlich'. They are fallible and irrelevant in comparison.

Schweinfurth combines indigenous methods of time-keeping and counting his steps as a means of both cartography and self-orientation for the remainder of his journey. Counting steps gives Schweinfurth some semblance of personal control over his traversal. He would otherwise feel completely reliant on his entourage – which he is in reality, yet cannot openly admit. Schweinfurth compares his human paces to other methods of measuring such as 'Kamelstunden' employed by his predecessors (Schweinfurth, II, p. 320). Schweinfurth later found his steps to be the decidedly more accurate method as they rarely varied in length. Again these alternative cartographic methods reinforce the irrelevance of clocks and compasses as navigational aids. It seems unimaginable that Schweinfurth could spend the remaining part of his journey absorbed in such a repetitive, menial task. Constantly counting his steps renders any other kind of interaction impossible. The process completely isolates him from his entourage, which ultimately is the desired effect. The fire 'Unglück' and ensuing 'Verzweiflung' are

alleviated by this ‘mühevolle Methode’ which proves to be Schweinfurth’s ‘Rettungsanker’ (Schweinfurth, II, pp. 315-17). Schweinfurth expresses his resentment and increasing distance towards his entourage during the last stages of his expedition with maritime analogies similar to those deployed by Barth and Rohlf. In the following excerpt, a disconsolate Schweinfurth has just begun his forced return north – and home – after the fire:

Ich kam mir vor wie ein Schiff, das zwar noch seefest, in allen seinen Fugen nur noch den Hafen glücklich wiedergewinnen konnte, wenn es zuvor alle Ladung über Bord geworfen. Ein Schwärmer für Natur und Wildniss war ich ausgezogen, ein Schwärmer wäre ich heimgekehrt, es bedurfte erst des Feuers, um mir die Schwingen zu kappen. Jetzt stand ich hilflos da auf der nackten, ungastlichen Erde von Afrika, ohne Mittel im Kampfe gegen eine Welt physischer und moralischer Hindernisse; an die Stelle der Begeisterung aber trat die Geduld, welche jedes Unglück bemeistert. (Schweinfurth, II, p. 317)

In place of cumbersome movement, submerged in the depths of the jungle in a Darwinian struggle for survival, Schweinfurth’s analogies to movement along the water’s surface consolidate his return to western consciousness. Schweinfurth’s African landscape has changed dramatically from a site of bountiful botanical discoveries to a void of nature. In spite of his negativity towards the end of the narrative, Schweinfurth’s encounters with African landscapes coincide with a distancing of his language from

temporal structures and rigid time-keeping. For Schweinfurth, nature provides symbols of time's passage which reject the relevance of 'clock-time'. Let us compare this portrayal with Schweinfurth's contemporary, Nachtigal.

Both Nachtigal and Schweinfurth were unaware of each other's findings until their return. Their expeditions took place shortly before and during German unification. They remained unaware of the political situation at home until they had completed their journeys. Like Barth and Rohlfs, Nachtigal begins his journey confident of his western, Germanic mind-set. He had however spent a certain amount of time residing in Tunis before embarking on his expedition and was therefore more familiar with North African culture than his predecessors. Yet Nachtigal begins his narrative portrayal of Africa using Eurocentric remarks reminiscent of Rohlfs. Deploying the familiar dualistic images of unpredictability, danger and mystery, Nachtigal sets the scene for a paradigmatic encounter with pre-formed images of alterity; Africa is 'geheimnisvoll', 'verhängnisvoll' and a 'rätselvolle Sphinx' (Nachtigal, I, p. 6).

Echoing his predecessors' experiences, Nachtigal's initial encounter with desert terrain proves to be a significant moment in his journey. It is marked by an emphatic night-time silence. But rather than inducing the fear we saw in Rohlfs's encounter, the uncanny desert stillness heightens Nachtigal's sense of solitude by driving him inward to contemplate the nature of his journey, his past and his future. Nachtigal does not require a monumental external event such as Rohlfs's sandstorm to prompt inner

exploration. In his reverie he tells us:

Bilder der Vergangenheit verschmolzen mit denen der Gegenwart, die norddeutsche Heimat mit der afrikanischen Küste des Mittelmeeres. Das mächtige Karthago, das römische Afrika, die Reiche Cyrenaica, Türken und Christen, Neger und Vandalen, Araber und Garamanten, Berber und alte Ägypter tummelten sich in meinem träumenden Gehirne. Ich entrollte die wechsellvollen Geschicke dieser Länder und gedachte der Zeit, wo ich auf den pedantischen Schulbänken so oft gewünscht hätte, lieber dieselbe mit allen ihren schreckensreichen Ereignissen zu durchleben, als ihre zahllosen Daten meinem rebellischen Gedächtnisse aufzuzwingen. Die Bilder wurden allmählich unklar und verwirrten sich mehr und mehr, bis endlich gegen Morgen ein tiefer Schlaf sie auflöste. (Nachtigal, I, p.12)

This dream prepares Nachtigal for his journey by symbolically collapsing the western structures of time and space which govern the pre-formed interpretation of information. He rejects them as inappropriate, distorted categories. His dream creates a fantastic synthesis of temporal and spatial realms, and so blurs the border between self and other. Separated geographically and culturally, both his German home and Africa can share the chaotic, illogical patterns of his imagination and subconscious. African landscape induces the irrational, yet it is internal and inherent to all humans. The timelessness of dreams is universal. Nachtigal's longing for Africa is a longing for the freedom denied by the obscurity of abstract data, actually imposed on him since the 'pedantische

Schulbänke' of his childhood. Nachtigal's desert landscape is not a site on which to affirm his superiority, it awakens a desire for unconstrained thought.

As we saw in Chapter II, the individual, subjective experience of time was generally underprivileged in nineteenth-century western epistemology. As part of his rejection of orthodox thought, Nachtigal identifies the dream as the adequate mode to recreate his experiences of African space. The Romantics – epitomised by Novalis's dream of the blue flower in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802) – see the dream as a privileged site of self-knowledge beyond everyday time.<sup>208</sup> The dream becomes a state of ultimate awareness which conveys an element of inner experience and an awakening of higher senses – a temporal epiphany. Nachtigal's dream-like state unifies apparent tensions to create a synthesis of awareness that marks a new beginning on what is not only an outward but also an inner journey of self-discovery. This reassertion of Germanic Romantic tradition also pre-empts later modernist dream-time explorations such as Hans Castorp's 'Schnee' episode in Thomas Mann's novel of development *Der Zauberberg* (1924).<sup>209</sup> Here the maturing Castorp's immersion into dream-time also begins with a short sequence initiated by the surroundings: the desolate 'schneeverwüstete' Mountains (Mann, *Der Zauberberg*, p. 647). Castorp, watching the silent, snow-covered 'wattiges Nichts' of the Swiss Alps before him, slowly moves from reality to dream as 'alles verschwamm mehr und mehr', to mark the stage between waking and sleeping (Mann, *Der Zauberberg*, p. 645). This short day-dream introduces Castorp's wish for 'eine inniger-freiere Berührung' with the mountains, with which he otherwise barely comes

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<sup>208</sup> Frederick Hiebel, *Novalis* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina, 1954), pp.101-104.

<sup>209</sup> Mann, *Der Zauberberg*, pp. 641-682.

into contact (Mann, *Der Zauberberg*, p. 647). Castorp is an even less likely candidate for such adventure than Nachtigal, yet the surrounding landscape offers an ideal 'Schauplatz für das Austragen seiner Gedankenkomplexe', for which Castorp requires solitude (Mann, *Der Zauberberg*, p. 653). Paralleling Nachtigal's experiences, this initial dream-like state also ends in a deep sleep, yet this dream-sequence marks neither the height of Nachtigal's nor Castorp's awakening. Nachtigal's initial reverie marks the beginning of a growing realisation that the dream is a place of privileged insight and an element of intercultural cognition. This realisation grows as the dream pattern is repeated with greater intensity a short time later.

Only four months into the expedition, Nachtigal's party loses its way whilst travelling through desert terrain to Tibesti. Mistaking the route, local guide Kolokomi takes the party on a long detour which leaves water-rations dangerously low. On finally reaching a well, desperation ensues as it is found to be dried-up. Beginning to lose consciousness, Nachtigal resigns himself to certain death and finds himself again in a significant reverie:

Allmählich wurden diese Gedanken zu unbestimmten Empfindungen, verwischten sich in Träumereien, in denen ich meine Umgebung sah, ohne in ihr zu leben; in denen Bilder aus meiner Vergangenheit, mit den Erlebnissen der Gegenwart verschmolzen, und ich mir nicht mehr klar bewußt war, ob ich in der fernen Heimat, ob am Fuße eines Felsens in der Sahara weilte. Zuweilen ward ich noch aufgerüttelt aus meinem

Traumleben, wenn stechende Sonnenstrahlen mein Gesicht trafen oder Sa'ad in neu erwachender Glaubensglut seine Gebete innig murmelte. Doch bald schwand alles Gegenwart und Vergangenheit, die drohende Todesgefahr und die nie ganz ersterbende Hoffnung, und ein Zustand umfing mich, von dem ich nicht weiß, ob er ein vollkommener Schlummer oder die beginnende Bewußtlosigkeit eines nahen Unterganges war. Ich weiß nicht, wie lange dieser, ich kann nicht sagen, qualvolle Zustand dauerte, in dem meine Sinnesorgane Eindrücke von außen aufnahmen, ohne daß diese zu richtigem Bewußtsein gelangten. (Nachtigal, I, p. 60)

The looming threat of death increases this second dream-like sequence's intensity. Although we know that Nachtigal will survive, there is a sense of exhilaration and excitement as he is pulled between the poles of life and death on an intense journey that requires no physical movement. The narrative situation favours the experiencing self as the most appropriate method of recreating this unfamiliar state in narrative; loosely structured, ranging prose and a minimal deployment of finite verbs mirror the 'blurring' and 'drifting' sensations as Nachtigal is drawn into his reverie. The situation is so unfamiliar that it defies definition – it thus becomes a site of cognitive privilege, a new, heightened form of awareness unlike any other Nachtigal has ever experienced. Nachtigal learns to embrace this indefinable state as a lesson of his African encounter, mediated by African terrain.

Castorp's journey follows a similar pattern. His next dream-state, induced by a snowstorm and the ensuing disorientation, is also marked by a longer, more intense episode. Like Nachtigal, the series of images combine real memories with nightmarish visions to diffuse the notion of past and future. For both, the dream thus totalises time and brings enlightenment. Castorp, aware that the images are part of a dream, analyses and interprets them whilst still in a dream-state. The reductive, 'phenomenological' process required to reach inner clarity only lasts a few minutes of empirical time, yet on awakening, Castorp feels completely changed. Nachtigal's African inner-journey also penetrates his mind-set and leaves an indelible imprint on his psyche. For although he is brought back to reality shortly afterwards by members of his entourage who bring life-saving water, the same evening Nachtigal, whilst contemplating the shadowy outlines of distant rock-formations, *willingly* allows the landscape to draw him back into his new-found form of consciousness: 'eine lebhafte Einbildungskraft, besonders bei der zauberischen Abendbeleuchtung, konnte sich beim Anblick dieser gigantischen Bauten der Natur in den wundersamsten Träumen ergehen und die seltsamsten Bilder schaffen' (Nachtigal, I, p. 64). Barth's rocks were dark and threatening, Nachtigal's are strange, yet wondrous and somehow welcoming. Nachtigal's inner journey has now reached a stage of development which no longer perceives the dream as a cognitive waste product. Nachtigal's words remind us of Ofterdingen's 'wunderliche Träume' in which 'die Gedanken seiner Seele' flow together.<sup>210</sup> Now aware of the heightened sensory experience induced by the dream-like state, Nachtigal accepts the sensation as a superior way to access and experience the otherness of African landscape. He learns that the dream-state frees him from the constraints of the western time-set and its 'zahllose

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<sup>210</sup> Novalis, *Werke* (Munich: Hanser, 1981), p. 325.



Daten' (Nachtigal I, p. 12). Nachtigal welcomes osmosis with Africa as the fluidity of his dream experiences are cognate with a feeling of unrestricted freedom. Without a rigid, pre-conceived concept of self, Nachtigal is free to experience fully a spirit of place, encountered.

Unlike Rohlf's aversion to otherness which is conveyed through his analogies to darkness and mysticism, Nachtigal's immersion in dream-like states of subconscious awareness paradoxically attain a sense of enlightenment and understanding.<sup>211</sup> He recognises that his pre-conceived ideas of superiority are insufficient to master African terrain and thus gradually accepts alien influences. As the following excerpt demonstrates, when freed from the rigidity of the western time-set, Nachtigal can engage with the landscape:

Die echten der Wüstensöhne, die Tuarik und die Tebu, welche ihr ganzes Leben in diesem einsamen Kampfe gegen den weiten, wüsten Raum verbringen, haben ein fast finsternes Aussehen, zu dem keine harmlose Heiterkeit mehr zu passen scheint. (Nachtigal, I, p. 19)

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<sup>211</sup> Thomas Mann's fictional explorations of dream and travel in *Der Tod in Venedig* are reminiscent of Nachtigal's portrayals. Aschenbach's journey to Venice is described as follows: 'Unter der breiten Kuppel des Himmels dehnte sich rings die ungeheure Scheibe des öden Meeres; aber im leeren, ungegliederten Raume fehlt unserem Sinn auch das Maß der Zeit, und wir dämmern im Ungemessenen. Schattenhaft sonderbare Gestalten [...] gingen mit unbestimmten Gebärden, mit verwirrten Traumworten durch den Geist des Ruhenden, und er schlief ein'. As in Nachtigal's work, water here signals unfamiliarity rather than conquest and power. Nachtigal's arrival at Lake Chad is one of disappointment and alienation. The sea in Mann's work induces a sense of unfamiliarity, 'eine träumerische Entfremdung, eine Einstellung der Welt ins Sonderbare um sich zu greifen' yet the journey also signals self-reflection (Mann, 'Der Tod in Venedig', pp. 23-4).

As the excerpt demonstrates, Nachtigal's aesthetic perception appears to be the gateway to alien culture.<sup>212</sup> The landscape becomes a common cultural bond for those who inhabit it. He learns that terrain appropriates man, its extreme manifestations mark the individual's character. The desert inhabitants' weathered features testify to both internal and external adaptation. Hence their features are both a symbol of African nature and testimony to its monumental strength. Their faces mirror the spirit of place. The excerpt suggests that the experience of travel through the geographical void teaches Nachtigal a higher, universal and sublime truth about the nullity of things human.

Submersion into dream-time, distanced from pre-existing, artificial concepts enables a greater understanding of African landscape. Mapping the surface is a superficial, insufficient method of recreating the African experience. Nachtigal's fluid sense of self, unconstrained by artificial, geographical concepts of national belonging and far from the constraints of mechanised society, ultimately enables surprising levels of openness to cultural difference. His interest in, and admiration of, the African way of life was unexpected at a time when colonial possession motivated almost all European exploration of Africa. Schweinfurth's focus on nature as a vital force of change evinces alternative concepts of development and progress which – as shall become increasingly clear in the following chapters – he applies to human existence. The success of earlier explorations gives both explorers a certain level of confidence in their abilities. This, combined with a gradual revalorisation of Germanic pluralist and humanistic traditions,

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<sup>212</sup> This theory contradicts Fiedler's argument that Barth, Rohlf's and Nachtigal 'die [afrikanischen] Menschen innerhalb oder als Teil der Landschaft beschreiben' and thus reduce the significance of human presence as a feature of their works (Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteuer*, p. 164). While this may apply to Nachtigal's predecessors, his description of faces suggests a profound interest in human otherness and admiration for those who can exist in such harsh conditions.

encourages the acceptance of variegated experiences and eventually facilitates more cultural exchange than cultural imposition.

The portrayals of African landscapes in pre-unification narratives thus reflect a journey in self-understanding which moves from attempts to familiarise and so master difference, to an acceptance of otherness. Associations with the western time-set signal restriction and closure. Those who dismiss pre-formed categories of analysis accept the fluidity and plurality of their own and thus Germanic identity. It would be expected then, that the presence of a unified, territorially definable German national identity would alter the fluidity and plurality of this Germanic identity and prove detrimental to the experience of cultural difference. Shortly after both Schweinfurth and Nachtigal returned from their expeditions, structures were set in place which enabled the new German Reich to participate in the colonial ‘scramble for Africa’. The nascent acceptance of the old tradition of a fluid and permeable Germanic identity was thus challenged by new realities: territorial expansion, inter-European rivalry and the rise of German nationalism. The following section examines explorers’ recreations of African space against the backdrop of these developments.

### **COLONIAL REALITIES: (RE)STRUCTURING AFRICAN SPACE**

Social norms unconsciously dictate even spatial and temporal perceptions. Domestic political factors and the European race for African territories affect our explorers’ mind-

sets and consequently their narrative representations of African space. In October 1875, after unification and before the German Reich embarked on its colonial ventures, Dr. Wilhelm Junker – of German and Russian descent – undertook an expedition through the Libyan Desert and areas of Egypt and Northern Sudan which were under British control at the time. This period of domestic political transition meant that, for the first time, colonial expansion – and long-desired international political stature – was a very real possibility. Yet at this late stage in European colonial history, our authors were well aware that one culture's expansion inevitably meant the destruction of another. Junker's gaze on African space is consequently affected by his awareness of its future potential to the Reich, yet also by his desire to preserve its majestic, pristine, 'untouched' authenticity. Hence he stands on the threshold, torn between images of a mechanised, 'German' Africa, and the boundless, unstructured spaces of African dream-time. For Stuhlmann however, African territorial possessions are a reality. African space is a site on which to consolidate notions of German identity, an identity defined by access to reason, rationality, logic and order. These 'superior' intellectual qualities both enable and legitimise *German* territorial possession. Hence African landscapes reinforce unreflected images of cultural superiority and hierarchy. Frobenius's African landscape however signals alienation and disillusionment. He experiences colonised African space as an odd hybrid of western and African structures which at once disguise, yet also reveal the true apathetic nature of colonial practice. Here, African space is neither truly western nor authentically African. Unsettled by this realisation, Frobenius's narration is driven by a desire to preserve the vitality which he sees as untouched, uncolonised

Africa. With these factors in mind, let us see how changes in Germany's domestic political situation affect Junker's African landscapes.

The following excerpt describes Junker's initial impressions of desert terrain as he travels by camel from Alexandria to the Libyan Desert on the first leg of his expedition:

Die feierliche Majestät der Wüste bannt jeden Laut; über der schier endlos sich ausdehnenden, rotgelben Fläche liegt die von der Mittagssonne erhitzte, zitternde und spiegelnde Luft, deren beängstigendem Drucke zu entgehen, das Auge vergeblich nach dem kleinsten, schattigsten Plätzchen ausspäht. Lebhafter als das Meer macht die Wüste den Eindruck eines endlosen Raumes von einer Großartigkeit, die träumerisch anregend, Andacht erweckend wirkt. (Junker, p. 45)

Junker's initial impressions of the desert display an interesting combination of Rohlf's pompous style with Nachtigal's dreaminess. The long, complex and elaborate sentences prioritise emotion-centred description over factual representation. He recreates the sights, sounds and physical sensations of his alien environment; the never-ending expanse of sand which seems to swallow all sound and movement is contrasted with the hot, vibrating, oppressive air. The desert's majesty decentres the author. It's sublimity evokes 'Andacht', a secularised, Romantic notion of devotion. Yet the experiencing narrator recalls his impressions in the third person and so distances himself from any true interaction with this majestic landscape. Such ambiguity becomes symptomatic of

Junker's narrative. Here, there is no clear indication that now colonial expansion is within reach of the German nation and that African landscape is merely a site for possible German territorial expansion. Yet neither does Junker suggest a further intensification of Nachtigal's African dream-experiences.

During this first part of the journey, Junker is guided along ancient caravan trading routes mapped solely into local memory and oral culture. After a few days' travelling, Junker is struck by a sight which surpasses his somewhat conventional celebration of the desert's natural majesty quoted above. The presence of a Bedouin caravan moving silently and gracefully through the desert prompts him to stop and stare in wonder. He is awestruck by the Bedouins' 'aristokratische Schönheit' (Junker, p. 46). Admiring the aesthetic, 'romantische Schönheit' of the caravan's movements, Junker notes how the Bedouins move in concord with each other and with the terrain as they follow tracks through the desert invisible to the explorer (Junker, p. 48). These invisible tracks have been reinforced over time through constant traversal and oral repetition. Junker recognises that the ingrained, cyclical, nomadic movement is a physical embodiment of Bedouin cultural history and testimony to human resilience. Constant travel on these 'routes' reiterates and strengthens the presence of this oral history, which gradually, corporeally, becomes inscribed into the African mind and the African terrain. Later in his narrative, Junker cannot conceal his admiration for this Bedouin culture that has remained intact and relatively unchanged since the depictions in The Old Testament (Junker, p. 135).

This aesthetic sensitivity to, and esteem of, the Bedouin way of life stands in stark contrast to the next stage of Junker's journey. He fulfils Rohlf's dream of a mechanised Africa by undertaking part of his journey on the newly-opened Medina-Cairo-Suez railway. Junker boards the British feat of engineering which had finally managed to impose western culture on the 'dark continent' and 'eilte einem lang ersehnten Ziele, neuen großen Eindrücken entgegen' (Junker, p. 50). This, the first stage of the journey from Medina to Cairo, is recreated in a narrative time of one sentence. This reflection of both Schivelbusch's 'Vernichtung von Raum und Zeit' (Schivelbusch, *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise*, p. 16) and Rohlf's 'Eisenbahn nach Zentralafrika' (1877) is remarkably devoid of references to the physical, sensory experience of his journey. The same is true of Junker's journey to Suez, narrated as follows: 'ein Eisenbahnzug brachte uns nach Suez' (Junker, p. 53). Again, the railway journey eliminates the traditional, spatiotemporal experience of travel. Rail travel is distinguished solely by points of arrival and departure, whereas Junker's desert experience awakens the senses. Nevertheless, we still gain the impression that Junker is exhilarated by the speed with which he hurries towards the 'Unbekannte'. He does not mourn the elimination of contact with the Bedouin culture he so admires which is an inevitable consequence of his desert-by-rail experience (Junker, p. 46). Instead, the railway has familiarised this part of the African interior, so now Junker must travel further to reach the 'unbekannte' terrain he desires.

Junker's ambiguous portrayals of African landscape thus refute the hypothesis that German unification is cognate with closure towards cultural difference.<sup>213</sup> His work instead highlights the inner conflicts that come to be paradigmatic in post-unification works. On the one hand, our explorers continue the German, heterophilic tradition of cultural appreciation. Yet on the other hand Junker names such lines of communication as the railway – which opens Africa to trade, yet eliminates intercultural contact – as one of the most admirable British achievements (Junker, p. V). Junker implies his desire to be part of the nation which employs such feats of engineering that re-open Africa to western culture after the 'fanatisch' Mahdi invasion (Junker, p. VI). The foreword to Junker's narrative is dedicated to the achievements of colonial governor Gordon Pascha. Hence Junker suggests a hidden desire to emulate the successes of neighbouring powers such as Britain. Let us compare this rendition of African landscape with that of German coloniser 'in fact' Franz Stuhlmann.

Zoologist Franz Stuhlmann travelled through Deutsch Ost-Afrika in 1890 as a coloniser first and a scientist second. His mission was to consolidate German control of the territories which had been appropriated by colonial entrepreneur Carl Peters six years earlier. Reports made by earlier travellers to the protectorate, such as Captain Rust, stated that the territory belonged to the German Reich in name only. Rust's passage through German territory, which took place shortly after the protectorate was founded, was still marked by meetings with local potentates during which he had to

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<sup>213</sup> Penny and Bunzl note that 'Germany had a cosmopolitan tradition it could build on, it was itself a young nation-state. Together, these factors meant that German ethnologists and anthropologists were, at least initially, less committed to the advancement of a national community' (Penny and Bunzl, *Worldly Provincialism*, p. 15).



bargain for permission to cross territories. German colonialism existed merely on paper, defined by borders which were only adhered to by Europeans. Rust's assessment of German presence on African territory is one of chaos. His portrayal of events in Witu epitomises the situation throughout the protectorate. The province of Witu had been brought under German protection in 1885 by the Denhardt brothers.<sup>214</sup> Another group of German traders purchased land from local rival potentates and created the Witu-Gesellschaft.<sup>215</sup> Rivalries developed between the two European factions who each claimed their own African supporters. Rust tells us that 'Es erneuerte sich im Lande die alte "querelle d'allemand", und wenn die Geschichte ein richtiger Lehrmeister ist, so wird sich ein Dritter daraus Vortheil ziehen' (Rust, *Emin Pascha Expedition*, p. 39). Rust demonstrates great foresight, as the British soon take advantage of the situation.

Stuhlmann undertook his expedition three years after Rust. His intention was to reinforce German possession within the protectorate by supplementing the merely cartographic power, and marking the territory with concrete symbols of German power:

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<sup>214</sup> See Carl Peters, *Wie Deutsch-Ostafrika entstand. Ein persönlicher Bericht des Gründers* (Leipzig: Koehler & Voigtländer, 1940), pp. 46-48.

<sup>215</sup> As Rust states in his narrative, the first German trading companies to establish themselves felt the brunt of local retaliation. Such consequences were also feared for his small party; 'Selbst einem Großen Theil der Herren der ostafrikanischen Gesellschaft schien jeder Elan für das Unternehmen Abhanden gekommen. Die Rückschläge und Ereignisse des Aufstandes im deutschen Schutzgebiet waren in noch zu frischer Erinnerung; man wußte nicht wie die Zukunft sich gestalten würde. Man sah schwarz' (Rust, *Emin Pascha Expedition*, p. 18). Furthermore, Rust reported violent conflicts in the northern area of the protectorate which were preventing Hermann von Wissmann continuing his expedition as planned. Wissmann was seen as a colonial hero in Germany, yet reports of his 'scorched earth' policy were slow to filter through to the public. The rebels he was fighting in Bagamayo eventually capitulated, yet Wissmann's policy had caused thousands of deaths through starvation. His actions received criticism in pro-colonial circles as the death of locals meant a lack of human manpower for German companies in the territories. Wissmann still remains a controversial figure. The '68 student movement demanded the removal of Wissmann's statue from outside Hamburg University's main building. Students claimed that Wissmann promoted the fascist ideologies which they were fighting and recognised as still rife in the German political system. The students eventually managed to tear down the statue and the event was retold in Uwe Timm's *Heißer Sommer* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1975). The statue was again displayed for a short time in Hamburg in 2006 yet removed due to lack of an appropriate location.

German forts flying German flags, inhabited by German soldiers, in German uniform. He therefore encounters African terrain equipped with those visual, material symbols of German *national* identity which had eluded his predecessors. His narrative is also the first to link a sense of self explicitly to belonging to the German nation-state, a state within fixed borders and possessing centralised institutions. This Stuhlmann defines through his German flag, German military uniform, rank and honours.<sup>216</sup> The hired entourage are also given uniforms which, like Stuhlmann, they wear every day as a constant reminder of ‘belonging’ to the German nation. Symbols of national belonging, coupled with a belief in order, time-keeping and routine, are propagated as the key to a successful expedition. Unsurprisingly, these features are cognate with closure to cultural difference. The journey is interrupted regularly to partake in military drills and training exercises – again imposing a Germanic mind-set onto the passage. The party’s actual movement through space is undertaken in ‘Gänseschritt’ – which Stuhlmann remarks is logical and therefore typically Germanic. Hence Stuhlmann becomes the first to ‘Germanicise’ existing African structures. Walking in line – imitating the age-old passage of caravans we saw in Junker’s narrative – suddenly becomes a German military trait.

Stuhlmann’s consolidation of German territorial conquest begins early on in his narrative. Every piece of land he traverses is somehow familiar to him – it is already

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<sup>216</sup> As Kafka’s officer admits, uniforms are impractical and unsuitable for tropical climates, ‘aber sie bedeuten die Heimat: wir wollen die Heimat nicht verlieren’ (Kafka, *Strafkolonie*, p. 32). They are a symbol of belonging and thus differentiation from not only the African ‘other’, but also other European nations. Peter Brenner discusses the symbolic of uniforms as a German cultural export, transplanted onto foreign soil in ‘Schwierige Reisen: Wandlungen des Reiseberichts in Deutschland 1918-1945’ in *Reisekultur in Deutschland: Von der Weimarer republik bis zum ‘Dritten Reich’*, ed. by Peter Brenner (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997), 127-177, p. 129.

embedded in German history as a site of violent encounter between Africans and German troops. These acts of violence are converted into both geographical and historical military landmarks and so emphasise German ideological and physical possession. Whilst moving from the coast to the interior, Stuhlmann describes the scenery as follows: ‘Während der Niederwerfung des Aufstandes der Küstenstämme hatte Major von Wissmann hier an der Kingani-Fähre auf dem rechten Flusssufer einen kleinen befestigten Posten aus Balkenwerk und Wellblech erbauen lassen’ (Stuhlmann, p. 14). This typical sketch gives no further information regarding the nature of the landscape. Instead Stuhlmann focuses on the site’s importance to the German colonial project – Wissmann’s landmark symbolises Germany’s violent appropriation of African terrain and thus its rise to the ranks of world power. Here Deutsch-Ostafrika is merely a site on which to project an image of German identity to the world and home.

Stuhlmann punctuates his journey at regular intervals with further such symbolic reiterations of German territorial possession. He constructs forts and crowns these symbolic points of German power with the German flag. This demonstrates a significant increase in German power and influence since Rohlf’s ‘bremer Flagge’ episode in Kuka. Rust, however, recognises the idiocy of this nationalistic symbol which again is only recognised by Europeans. He notes, ‘wie trügerisch es ist, dem [the symbolic flag-raising] großen Werth beizulegen’ (Rust, *Emin Pascha Expedition*, p. 116). Stuhlmann becomes the first explorer to erect permanent structures on African territory and leave Germans behind to inhabit them. The forts are sustained by agricultural produce which also transforms the surrounding area into regimented rows of crops. Africans are hired

to cultivate the land and so are tied to one place. Any traditional, nomadic movement such as that described by Schweinfurth, is restricted.

Forts are not the only sites on which the German flag is hoisted. Stuhlmann's expedition is punctuated by symbolic references to the German flag and consequently German national identity. Flag-bearers mark the beginning and end of the caravan whilst moving through African/German territory. As the party begins its passage through African terrain Stuhlmann shouts: 'voran die schwarz-weiss-rothe Flagge' (Stuhlmann, p. 15). Each military drill is enclosed within flag-hoisting ceremonies. Ceremonies consolidating territorial possession are also marked with flag-raising rituals: 'Die Verhandlungen mit den Arabern kamen indessen zu einem befriedigenden Abschluss, und am 27. Mai hisste Lieutenant Langheld unter dem Gewehrshut und Hurrah unserer Soldaten die deutsche Flagge' (Stuhlmann, p. 30). Most symbolic of all is the transition from clock-giving to flag-giving as 'gifts' to local potentates. Still in German territory, Stuhlmann is concerned that certain 'kriegerische', anti-German Waganda tribes are gaining influence in the protectorate. Those local leaders who swear German allegiance are 'rewarded' with a flag (Stuhlmann, p. 124). The explorer implies that the flag is understood and recognised not just by Germans, but also by local inhabitants. As the following quotation demonstrates, the success of the mission through German territories is measured by the presence of these flags: 'erhebend war dabei für uns die Thatsache, dass die deutsche Flagge überall, wo sie sich zeigte, von den Waganda beider Parteien in gleicher Weise geachtet wurde' (Stuhlmann, p. 206). For Stuhlmann the flag obviously signifies power and belonging. For the Africans it means submission and abjection. It is

the material expression of difference between coloniser and colonised which Stuhlmann is trying to enforce. The clock had symbolised western, German superior knowledge and craftsmanship to earlier travellers. Now the need for such symbols of cultural superiority as clocks recedes in favour of specifically nationalistic representations of belonging such as the flag. The national flag represents a fixed, territorially-definable sense of identity and belonging to a nation-state, it is also historical, defined by a teleological sense of mission. All this was previously alien to our *Afrikareisende*. For Stuhlmann, this identity encompasses a belief in scientific rationality, the cunning of reason and linear-progressive time, yet it is even less permeable and flexible than earlier non-nationalistic notions of self constructed around the western time-set. Stuhlmann's identity hinges on this German flag, which, to him, is a concrete symbol of all that is German. African terrain presents him with the opportunity to fly this flag. The more often it is seen, the more 'true' the idea of a German national identity becomes. African space, for Stuhlmann, is merely an opportunity with which to create a national identity.

Yet as we have seen, the trajectory of development evident in our explorers' encounters with African terrain does not merely equate the emergence of the German nation-state with closure towards otherness. Nor, surprisingly, does Germany's emergence as a colonial power automatically mean the disappearance of cultural heterophilia.<sup>217</sup> Frobenius, for example encounters fully-fledged, foreign, colonial structures as a member of a colonising nation. At the time of his expedition in 1910, German colonies were firmly established. Frobenius's expedition mandate prioritises

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<sup>217</sup> As Penny and Bunzl also observe, there is no clear trajectory of development between German nineteenth-century anthropology and Germany's move to territorial expansion. Penny and Bunzl, *Worldly Provincialism*, p. 25.

ethnographic research and devotes little attention to African terrain and landscape. Unlike Stuhlmann's expedition, Frobenius's African journey has no connection to possible German expansion.<sup>218</sup> The expedition mandate takes Frobenius to British-ruled territories and requires extensive periods of sojourn in British colonial enclaves. Frobenius feels particularly alienated from his European 'neighbours' as his presence is seen as more of a threat than part of a shared European quest for scientific knowledge. The onset of this alienation is reflected in one of Frobenius's few portrayals of African terrain. The explorer spends several months in the administrative centre of British Nigeria, Ibadan, which is formed around an African town. New, European structures stand next to dilapidated African houses, and so apparently consolidate the image of superior European power and ability. For Frobenius however, the hybrid extension of pre-structured space mirrors the paradoxes of European colonial practice. The new structures, like the apparent control which the local government wields over the population, are mere façades, for behind them no real social infrastructure exists. The local inhabitants follow their own cultural practices as before, attending church merely to appease the colonial hierarchy (Frobenius, I, p. 38 and 62). The colonial police force wields neither power nor authority over the local population. The colonial authorities are however well aware of this fact and are satisfied with the mere appearance of control over the population. Rather than induce a sense of familiarity, the enclave becomes a strange, hybrid place. Frobenius chooses to reside in the African quarter, which seems less deceptive than its Europeanised annexation.

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<sup>218</sup> Jürgen Zwernemann discusses Frobenius's expedition mandate and sponsors in "Leo Frobenius und das Hamburgische Museum für Völkerkunde" in *Mitteilungen aus dem Museum für Völkerkunde Hamburg*, 17 (1987), pp 111-127.

The portrayals of African space – terrain, climate, vegetation – discussed in this chapter both reflect and influence the explorers’ notions of self-understanding. In pre-unification works, this understanding is on the one hand heavily influenced by mechanised, industrialised nineteenth-century western society and the ensuing concept of linear-progressive time produced by social norms. Our first travellers Barth and Rohlfs attempt to transform African territory into a list of empirically quantifiable time-units and analogies understandable to the western mind-set. African landscapes are sites of ideological conquest. Mastering them is equated with cultural superiority. Their successful passage through African terrain would finally place Germany within the long-standing European tradition of exploration and discovery. Yet African space exposes the cognitive limits of the explorers’ mind-sets. The explorers are unable to enclose Africa within familiar categories. African terrain thus becomes a threat. Ultimately Barth and Rohlfs dialectically expose the intransitivity of the time-set on which their sense of identity rests. Those who followed acknowledged the complexities of African terrain. Intent on rendering the reality of African space rather than a mere list of measurements Nachtigal finds himself forced to modify his existing mind-set. We see a reinstallation of German, romantic, dreamtime consciousness, which had become marginalised in western epistemology. The timeless, illogical fluidity of dreams is cognate with openness to African alterity, for it undermines Eurocentric, culturally exclusive concepts of linear progress and logical thinking. The pluralistic, undefined nature of Germanic identity enables such explorations. Schweinfurth’s African jungle landscape – the symbol of vitality – is an arena of constant change and struggle against nature’s forces. It is the product of millions of years of evolution. Schweinfurth’s jungle

is a life-giving, yet also life-draining source. It can turn his scientific gaze towards an acceptance of human cultural diversity, yet it can also strip him of this openness. In post-unification works the concept of 'Germanness' is less fluid, for the German nation can now be territorially-defined within fixed borders. As Junker's post-unification narrative demonstrates, unification and the spread of colonialism in Africa affect explorers' relationships to African landscape. Junker's desert landscapes are indicative of the variegated and even conflicting impressions which come to characterise post-unification narratives. He expresses both the Germanic desire for cultural diversity, yet also the underlying realisation that colonial expansion and the international political power it brings with it, are now a very real possibility for the newly consolidated Reich. Stuhlmann's narrative demonstrates that African landscape becomes a fitting canvas on which to paint an image of German national identity, both within Germany itself and more widely to other European nations. As Frobenius demonstrates, Germany's rise to colonial power is still marked by long-standing pluralist ideologies. The coming chapters will demonstrate that German national identity and a new-found German nationalism become increasingly dominant features of African exploration. Yet even here, counter-currents flow.



Aus Steinen und Erzen, aus Fleisch und Blut, sprudelte denn eine Kunde nach der anderen aus immer weiterer Tiefe empor, bis wir hinabsteigen konnten in die Mysterien einer erstaunlich weit zurückliegenden Vergangenheit (Frobenius, I, p. 26).<sup>219</sup>

The above excerpt, taken from Frobenius's opening chapter, describes the author's discovery of terracotta busts during his expedition through the North-West African area of Ilife. The busts, whose 'edle Züge' emanate 'erhabene Ruhe' (Frobenius, I, p. 6), are statues of a forgotten realm of 'königliche Gottheiten' and pre-date the arrival of Islam in Africa (Frobenius, I, p. 7). The excerpt is significant on two levels. Firstly the find refutes widespread scholarly opinion which, as Frobenius tells us, had claimed that pre-Islamic 'Black' Africa was 'geschichtslos', for it possessed neither artefacts, nor monuments, nor written testimonies to 'civilisation' which pre-dated Islamic influence (Frobenius, I, p. 2). Secondly, Frobenius's reference to 'Fleisch und Blut' reveals his anti-Hegelian, alternative impression of history and its preservation, for the explorer tells us that African history exists amongst its 'tropische Blätter', and not in the conventional written texts of world history (Frobenius, I, p. 3). And so, it is his aim to bring a revalorised image of African history to western culture (Frobenius, I, p. 3). Yet this aim represents one extreme end of the scale. After focusing on our explorers' experiences of African space, this chapter will examine their differentiated reactions to

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<sup>219</sup> Penny notes Adolf Bastian's method of collecting material objects as the new 'texts of human history' (Penny and Bunzl, *Worldly Provincialism*, p. 13).

forms of cultural expression and historical testimony, and what this reveals about their own understanding of their culture's place in history and its development.

Our explorers are confronted with monuments of stone, rock carvings, written documents, oral historiography and folklore. These primal signifiers of cultural expression of course also contain a development and a history. Explorers such as Heinrich Barth, being greatly influenced by Hegelian theories of historical awareness, make qualitative judgements on the *Geist* of African cultures and level of African 'civilised' advancement based on the nature of cultural expression. Barth equates levels of cultural expression with the ladder of European development. Writing, for our explorers, represents the highest level of historical awareness and consequently human progress. Hence, where there are few or no written records, certain travellers express the widespread opinion cited above: the culture is devoid of history. Yet when confronted by both familiar cultural testaments to history and unfamiliar cultural expressions, our explorers find their attempts to lock Africa into a Eurocentric narrative of assumed superior cultural advancement unexpectedly challenged.

This chapter examines our explorers' experiences in two stages, firstly, their encounters with monuments of stone; cave markings, Roman monuments and Egyptian obelisks, and secondly with both written and oral forms of preserving history; African documentation of Sudanese history, oral renditions of monarchical genealogy, European written accounts of Ugandan history, Bedouin oral mapping and Yoruba folktales. These encounters paradoxically undermine writing as the sole indicator of progress. These

findings will test Russell Berman's, and our, hypothesis that due to the specific nature of Germanic pluralist influences and *Sonderweg* to unification, German history of cross-cultural encounter is different from that of other European nations and consequently,<sup>220</sup> the grand narrative of German-Africa encounter runs counter to the grand narrative of European colonial expansion.<sup>221</sup>

### **MAN-MADE TESTIMONIES: AFRICAN MONUMENTS BETWEEN NATURE, CULTURE AND COLONIES**

This section analyses those cultural expressions our explorers encounter which are signified by monumental stone. Barth and Rohlfs, it will be argued, interpret monuments to signify the marker of absolute difference between their own and African culture: African cultural history, they maintain, is barbaric. Their efforts will be compared with similar portrayals in Junker's and Frobenius's works. These later encounters with African cultural history, in contrast, are marked by a search for the authentic. Junker and Frobenius reflect an interest in diverse cultural histories conditioned by Germany's own chequered *Sonderweg* to national unification.<sup>222</sup> We will, however also see implications of German cultural superiority and latent references to German expansion in these later works. It will be argued that these seemingly contradictory viewpoints are indicative of

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<sup>220</sup> This refutes Zantop's and Fiedler's views, which normalise German experiences of cultural difference as mirroring the path of other European colonial powers, yet merely without actual colonial possessions.

<sup>221</sup> Such findings would also differentiate comments made by scholars who hold that the nineteenth-century provides a clear anticipation of the aggressive xenophobia developed in Germany under National Socialism. As suggested for example by Zantop in *Colonial Fantasies*, p. 16 and Grosse in *Kolonialismus, Eugenik und bürgerliche Gesellschaft*.

<sup>222</sup> Penny and Bunzl, *Worldly Provincialism*, p. 11.

German national self-understanding at the time. These encounters, as we shall see, demonstrate that African influences penetrate and modify our explorers' self-understanding. Overall, our explorers present a differentiated and varied understanding of African and German history.

Whilst traversing the Tassili der Adjer mountain range which runs along the Algerian-Libyan border, Heinrich Barth unexpectedly discovers testimonies to an ancient past which catalyse the development of Saharan archaeology and ethnography. Whilst passing through the strangely intriguing mountain landscape, Barth's party decides to set up camp in a small niche between rock-faces which provides natural protection from the elements. Barth remarks that this natural hide-away also happens to be 'ein überaus günstiger Ort, um eine interessante oder bedeutsame Tatsache zu verewigen' (Barth, I, p. 210). By this he means the nearby blocks of sandstone he discovers which are inscribed with 'Zeichnungen der verschiedensten Gegenstände' (Barth I, p. 210). Fascinated by these figures he describes as 'eigenthümlich', 'merkwürdig' and 'sonderbar', Barth devotes two pages of narrative time to his description of one particular image. The image depicts three figures, two of which appear to be humans with either animal heads or masks. One 'halbmenschliche Figur' has bull-like horns, and carries a bow and arrow (Barth, I, p. 212). The other animal head, which Barth cannot identify, reminds him of the Egyptian Ibis. This second figure is carrying a bow, yet no arrows. The 'Halbmenschen' appear to be fighting. The third figure depicts 'eine Art Rindvieh'' (Barth, I, p. 211). After this initial description, Barth attempts to analyse the images' meaning (Barth, I, p. 211). The following excerpt describes his first steps

towards solving this intriguing puzzle. In a Hegelian move, he begins by gauging the period of history and consequently 'cultural advancement' to which the rock carvings correspond:

Sicherlich konnte ein Barbar, welcher nie Gegenstände der Kunst gesehen noch seine Hand darin versucht hatte, nicht mit solcher Festigkeit die Linien eingraben und allen Figuren jene leichte und natürliche Gestaltung geben, welche sie bei aller ihrer Wunderlichkeit zeigen; eine solche Festigkeit und Gewandtheit aber zeigt sich in einer anderen Darstellung in noch höherem Grade. Dass diese Darstellungen nicht von einem Römer herrühren, scheint mir klar, trotzdem dass diese Nation ihre Herrschaft wenigstens für einige Zeit bis nach Garama oder Djerma ausgedehnt hatte. Gewiss konnte sie von da aus leicht Sendboten bis zu diesem Punkte und noch weiter schicken. Aber diese Skulpturen haben durchaus nichts von römischem Charakter. Meine Ansicht ist, dass diese Arbeit, wiewohl sie durch einige Umstände an ägyptische Kunst erinnert, ebenso wenig den Ägyptern zugeschrieben werden darf, sondern als Darstellung eines mythologischen Gegenstandes der Eingeborenen dieses Landes selbst von jemandem ausgeführt wurde, welcher in enger Beziehung zu den weiter vorgeschrittenen Völkern an der Küste stand. (Barth, I, p. 212)

Barth is primarily concerned with temporalising and historicising his discovery. In an informative and authoritative tone, he tells us that the markings are an intentional

testimony to a way of life and are consequently an example of historical self-awareness. Yet the explorer seems surprised to discover any reference to African cultural development which extends beyond the 'barbaric', for his judgement of the existing state of civilised advancement places the indigenous population on a par with the culture in existence at the time of the carvings' creation. The answer, according to Barth, can only lie in the sculptor's contact with more advanced, external influences. For, although Barth tells us that the images offer 'Zeugnis von ganz anderen Lebensverhältnissen [...], als wir gegenwärtig in diesen Ländern gewahren' (Barth, I, p. 215), he is referring to climatic, and not cultural development. The rock-carvings show fertile land, rich vegetation and varied wildlife – a complete contrast to the existing scenery. Camels are nowhere to be found and instead numerous images depict oxen as 'beasts of burden' (Barth, I, p. 215). The move from oxen to camel seems to be the most significant historical development, and so aids Barth's historicising attempts. He tells us that contrary to popular belief, camels were only introduced to Africa during the 'Ptolemaic era' (Barth, I, p. 216). According to Barth's descriptions, it would seem that the North African nomads' 'täglicher Begleiter' and the less fertile land provide the only evidence of change since the markings were made (Barth, I, p. 215).

As the above excerpt demonstrates, Barth employs recognisably Hegelian categories of art which reflect a familiar tendency to systematise developmental, historical processes. As Houlgate emphasises, Hegel's conceptions of the aesthetic ideal are 'not just historical distinctions, but also systematic differences in the way aesthetic form and

content can be related' (Houlgate, *Freedom, Truth and History*, p. 231).<sup>223</sup> A sequence of temporally definable progress materialises as an inherent logic behind each stage of cultural development is expressed. Recognition of this logic provides the necessary component for transcendence to the next, higher stage of civilised advancement.<sup>224</sup> 'Symbols' in a narrow sense, according to Hegel, are the origin of art.<sup>225</sup> They are the preconditions of a later stage of artistic development which carries greater human and spiritual meaning as well as unity of concept and form. Although Hegel confines 'symbolic' art to early stages of artistic expression, symbolic features can still appear at various times in history. Those cultures which have reached 'higher' stages of artistic development (i.e. Hegel's own contemporary European culture), should consequently be able to interpret these previous levels of art and give greater meaning to such enigmatic representations in terms of unfolding the total narrative of Hegelian world history. Hegel sees 'symbolic' works of art as 'tasks'. Their external appearance is not aesthetically pleasing, yet they contain a 'challenge' to go beyond this external appearance and uncover their meaning, which must be something more 'profound' than the images themselves (Hegel, *Ästhetik*, I, p. 400). Although less expressive of *Geist* and so less culturally sophisticated, Hegel also suggests that 'symbolic' art presents the first attempts to unify content and form and thus understand and express one's self and one's

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<sup>223</sup> Fabian discusses Hegelian symbolic theory as a precursor of modern anthropological inquiries into symbolic interpretation as 'remote expressions of culture' (Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 126). According to Fabian, Hegel 'summarized many of the assumptions' made by anthropologists, for 'in Hegel's case it is quite clear that he proposes a theory of the symbolic as a (part of a) theory of history. As such it is a theory about Time, one that "temporalizes" relations between western and non-western cultures by placing the latter in the time of origins [...] one cannot help but suspect that the symbolic continues to serve as a time-distancing device' (Fabian, *Time and the Other*, p. 129).

<sup>224</sup> Fabian discusses the Hegelian categories of art in relation to definitions of cultural development in non-Western cultures, *Time and the Other*, pp. 125-131.

<sup>225</sup> G.F.W. Hegel, *Werke*, 20 vols, (Frankfurt a.M: Suhrkamp, 1970), xiii: *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* II, p.13.

surroundings. Although these productions may be those of peoples in their ‘childhood’, their search for more essential content and expression should not be dismissed as ‘childish’. For according to Hegel, without this key stage further development is impossible. Thus although seemingly opposed to the ideals of romantic art which is free from the constraints of natural forms and aesthetic conventions, the ‘Oriental’ otherness of symbolic interpretation is simultaneously its precursor (Hegel, *Ästhetik*, I, p. 393).

Initially, Barth seems to revel in the ‘challenge’ of giving meaning to these expressions of primitive *Geist*. Yet Barth is unable to decipher the images’ meaning (Barth, I, p. 217). Barth tells us that ‘eine andere Skulptur, ebenfalls sehr merkwürdig und vielleicht noch merkwürdiger, war ich nicht im Stande zu verstehen’ (Barth, I, p. 217). Hence he decides to omit an image from his investigation (Barth, I, p. 217). Barth becomes increasingly derogatory and dismissive as he fails to attain deeper insight into the rock carvings’ meanings and the period of their creation.<sup>226</sup> His attitude towards the written inscriptions surrounding the images indicates his growing frustration. The ‘sehr schlecht und nachlässig geschriebene Inschriften’ – which were apparently added after the original images and thus demonstrate clear cultural progression – become mere ‘Gekritzeln’ (Barth, I, p. 217). Although Barth then tells us that these scribbles are actually part of the ‘Tefīnagh’ alphabet and contain examples of previously unknown letters, he does not count them among the area’s ‘interessantere Gegenstände’, i.e. the images that he feels able to interpret to some degree (Barth, I, p.217).

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<sup>226</sup> Fiedler claims that: ‘Zusammenfassend lässt sich sagen, dass bei den anthropologischen Beschreibungen der Reisenden sich ein Bild der Superiorität des europäischen Reisenden herauskristallisiert’ (Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteuer*, p. 170). Apart from the fact that this statement presents a generalised and undifferentiated view of *Afrikareisende* narratives, the episode described above demonstrates that the image desired by the explorer is not necessarily the image recreated in his work.



Barth wishes to ‘temporalise’ African culture, yet he cannot equate the images with an era of European history and so confine African culture to a distant past. These testimonies to African cultural sophistication are thus unsettling as they do not fit into Barth’s preformed images of African cultural development. Let us compare his analysis of cave inscriptions with Frobenius’s – the explorer who desires to bring African culture to Germany.

Frobenius’s later interpretation of the same images is as dismissive of Barth’s earlier interpretative attempts as Barth finally is of the inscriptions themselves.<sup>227</sup> Frobenius undertook a short excursion through the mountain regions during his Algerian expedition of 1894 with the express purpose of analysing the engravings originally discovered by his predecessor. He then composed a short work on his findings as a companion to his expedition narrative. The work begins with a geographical description of the surrounding territories, and then moves to detailed descriptions and analyses of four areas containing cave markings. The first is that discovered by Barth. Frobenius begins by telling us ‘die ganze Anlage macht einen Eindruck einer wohldurchgeführten Ordnung. Wie es sich mit der sorgfältigen Ausnutzung verwendbarer Flächen verhält, so auch mit der Gesamtbeschaffenheit dieser Stelle’ (Frobenius, *Ekade*, p. 18). Frobenius then moves to the image of the three figures which Barth attempted to interpret. The image of the three figures, which Barth ‘vermochte nicht zu entziffern’ prove to be ‘in emsiger Kohabitation begriffene Menschenpaare’, a motif which is repeated throughout the engravings (Frobenius, *Ekade*, p. 19). Frobenius continues his analysis of the

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<sup>227</sup> Leo Frobenius, *Ekade Etabe: die Felsbilder Fezzans; Ergebnisse der DIAFE X (X. Deutsche Innerafrikanische Forschungsexpedition) nach Tripolitanien und Ost-Algier* (Leipzig: Harrasowitz, 1937).

‘deutlich erkennbarer Kultplatz’, near to which a circle of horizontally-placed stones was discovered, which ‘Barth’s Augen entgingen’ (Frobenius, *Ekade*, p.19). The stones are perfectly horizontal and deliberately placed in order to catch ‘the morning sun’s first rays’ (Frobenius, *Ekade*, p. 19). The ‘sinnvolle Zusammengehörigkeit’ of the images and positioning of the stones means that the area is consequently ‘kaum anders als wesentlicher Zubehör zu einer geschlossenen Tempelanlage’ (Frobenius, *Ekade*, p. 19). Frobenius’s following remark leaves us in no doubt that he finds Barth’s analysis lacking in hermeneutic thoroughness. He implies that there is no excuse for failing to interpret these cultural artefacts; ‘dieser Eindruck entsteht nicht nur bei der Betrachtung mancher deutlich werdender Verbundenheiten, sondern er wird eigentlich aus jeder Einzeldarstellung wie aus der Übersicht über das Ganze gewonnen’ (Frobenius, *Ekade*, p. 19). Frobenius’s following analysis of the same area leaves us with a greater impression of the engravings’ cultural importance than Barth’s increasingly dismissive portrayal:

Keine einzige der Darstellungen aus alter Zeit weist nur die geringste Spur einer Spielerei auf. Mit Sorgfalt sind die 1-2,5 cm breiten und halb so tiefen Linien in die harten Felswände zuerst gehämmert, dann ausgeschliffen. Eine solche Ausführung muß sehr mühevoll gewesen sein. Allein mit ihren eminenten Ausmaßen stehen diese Werke gewissermaßen wie Giganten den wenigen kümmerlichen Figürchen gegenüber, die die Einführer des Kameles stellenweise sich gemüßigt sahen, dazwischen zu ‘schaben’ oder zu ‘pickeln’. Der Unterschied zwischen den vielen prähistorisch-

archäologischen und den wenigen historischen Bildern ist so groß, daß jede Verwechslung ausgeschlossen bleibt. Ihrer Technik nach sind die alten Bilder zunächst stets in Konturen mit Pickellinien entworfen und dann in Rillung ausgeschliffen. Die Bilder älterer Zeit zeigen einfache Muldung, die der späteren und virtuoson Periode Dreieckschnitt. Bei älteren Werken tritt Reliefkonturenbildung verhältnismäßig häufig auf. Geschabte Flächen sind selten, häufiger dagegen steht leichte, durch Polieren entstandene Modellierung fest; es ist aber wohl anzunehmen, daß eine Oberflächenbehandlung für Aufnahme von Farbe stattgefunden hat. (Frobenius, *Ekade*, p. 20)

Frobenius's time-scale contradicts Barth's analysis. The area appears to be a collective historical testimony, expanded over generations. According to Barth's time-scale, the camel was brought to Africa during – and we can assume *by* – the Ptolemaic dynasty around 323-285 B.C. Both explorers agree that the first engravings occurred before this time. Yet Frobenius also remarks on additions made by those who introduced the camel – i.e. the Ptolemaics. The particular image which Barth omitted from his analysis depicts humans riding camels. It was obviously created at a later date, yet is of a lesser standard than the earlier images (Frobenius, *Ekade*, p. 18). While Barth immediately attributes signs of 'civilised advancement' evident in the engravings to external influences, Frobenius remarks on the effect of these external influences as synonymous with *inferior* additions. Hence he refutes popular opinion that external cultural influences provide the only catalyst for African cultural development. As his *Felsbild* analysis

suggests, external cultural influences merely mask the true authenticity of African local culture. It is the revalorisation of this vital essence which Frobenius desires and which links his work to reassertions of the so-called ‘primitive’ and ‘irrational’ as expressions of authenticity in the Modernist and Expressionist movements.<sup>228</sup>

Ethnographic displays in museums were an integral part of this revalorisation in Germany.<sup>229</sup> Art historian Carl Einstein’s famous treatise *Negerplastik* (1915)<sup>230</sup> was inspired by his visits to the *Museum für Völkerkunde* in Berlin where Frobenius’s Olokun head and other artefacts from his travels were displayed.<sup>231</sup> Einstein’s book was the first to examine the aesthetic and exotic power of African sculpture. He saw African sculpture as the carrier of metaphysical and magical properties which were enhanced by their lack of naturalism. Einstein was particularly entranced by the ‘Zeitlosigkeit’ of African sculpture, for it seemed to absorb all sense of movement, and so distance, between the creator and the creation (Einstein, *Negerplastik*, p. 13). The Olokun certainly has a powerful effect on Frobenius<sup>232</sup> – he is almost frozen in awe as he

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<sup>228</sup> Picasso’s *Demoiselles d’Avignon* (1907), for example reflects artistic explorations into ‘primitive’ art which were taking place around the time of Frobenius’s expedition.

<sup>229</sup> See Rose Carol Washton-Long, ed., *German Expressionism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1995), p. 116. The *Brücke* and *Blaue Reiter* artists similarly engaged with ‘primitive art’ through ethnographic displays. See Robert Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1986). Penny notes that the prevalence of *Völkerschauen* in the early decades of the twentieth century popularised African culture in such as it made ‘exhibits’ more accessible to the general public. These ‘travelling shows’ were not ‘static displays’ and often consisted of exotic ‘entertainers’ designed to ‘titillate’. He notes however that they conveyed ‘common images of non-Europeans that competed with the knowledge ethnologists produced and hoped to transmit’, in Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture. Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2002), p. 212.

<sup>230</sup> Carl Einstein, *Negerplastik* (Leipzig: Verlag der Weissen Bücher, 1915) Einstein is well-known for his links to the Expressionist movement.

<sup>231</sup> See Haberland, *Leo Frobenius*, p. 78.

<sup>232</sup> Frobenius is cited by Robert Goldwater in *Primitivism in Modern Art* as the main ethnographic voice in early twentieth-century Germany to encourage the aesthetic appreciation of primitive art in *Primitivism in Modern Art*, pp. 29-30.

admires this majestic object (Frobenius, I, p. 97).<sup>233</sup> In his later essay on African art, *Das unbekannte Afrika* (1923), Frobenius makes an explicit connection between primitive and modern art. He tells us this is ‘die Wiederentdeckung der ältesten, einfachsten Verbindungen, eine Rückkehr zum Natürlichen. Moderne Kunst sehnt sich nach solcher Vereinfachung’.<sup>234</sup> He tells us that the true greatness of African art is the unfailing ability to conceive of style (Frobenius, *Das unbekannte Afrika*, p. 140). This revalorisation of African tribal art and ‘primitivism’ was of course simultaneously a critique of contemporary German culture and the imperialist drive which was destined to destroy all traces of African culture.<sup>235</sup> This perspective on African cultural expressions demonstrates a dramatic shift away from Barth’s Hegelian mind-set.

After examining these encounters with African cultural expressions, let us look at our explorers’ encounters with more familiar cultural artefacts. Barth provides a particularly interesting comparison, for during the first stages of his journey he is confronted with Roman monumental stones which testify to the lost presence and power of this past civilisation. The area between Tunis and the Hammada plateau in the Ghorian Mountains is scattered with the ruins of Roman forts and monuments. Shortly before reaching the Hammada, two months into his expedition, Barth encounters a particularly significant Roman monument. After marking its coordinates, taking its exact

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<sup>233</sup> Schweinfurth’s experience of African art prompted him to publish a treatise *Artes Africanæ* (1875). The treatise, which appeared shortly after his travel narrative, is appreciative and enthusiastic of African art, yet confines itself to the study two-dimensional works. Georg Schweinfurth, *Artes Africanæ* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1875).

<sup>234</sup> Leo Frobenius, *Das unbekannte Afrika* (Munich: Beck, 1923), p. 4.

<sup>235</sup> Penny observes a sense of urgency to ‘salvage’ the last traces of ‘natural peoples’ before they were consumed by the force of colonisation, hence also industrialisation and assimilation (Penny, *Objects of Culture*, p. 39).

measurements and sketching it, Barth tells us:

Es ist eben nicht zu verwundern, dass die fast jeder Kunstthätigkeit unfähigen Bewohner dieser Gegenden so hoch emporstrebende und reichgeschmückte Grabmäler der Vorzeit als Götterbilder oder Kultusstätten der Heiden betrachten und sie 'ssanem' nennen. Ich selbst, als ich einsam und allein in diesem breiten, verödeten Tale, das gegen Ost von der großartigen Wand des Plateaus überragt wird, diesem wunderbaren, reich geschmückten und in seiner Schlankheit wie von Genien getragenen Denkmale gegenüberstand, fühlte ich mich von einem gewissen unheimlichen Gefühle ergriffen. Wiederholt, während ich seinen kunstvollen Zierrat in meinem Skizzenbuch zu entwerfen suchte, sah ich mich gezwungen, einzuhalten und mich bedächtig nach allen Seiten umzusehen. Aber kein menschliches Wesen ließ sich blicken, ja, nicht einmal ein lebendes Wesen überhaupt. Und für wen baute der Römer hier sein kunstreiches Denkmal? Konnte er ahnen, dass es nach so vielen Jahrhunderten von einem Nachkommen jener Germanen, die er verachtete wie die Garamanten, der gebildeten Welt zur Bewunderung wieder vorgeführt werden möchte? (Barth, I, p. 127)

The appropriation of stone in order to create attestations to a past which Barth considers part of his own *western* cultural development presents interesting material for comparison with his *Felsbild* analysis. Here, Barth favours monumental, dramatic

language over factual representation to capture this encounter with familiar cultural heritage. His long, extensive and descriptive sentences recapture his wonder at this creation. The genius of its creators stands against the locals' artistic incompetence and ignorance. Even the 'großartige Wand' of the plateau is dwarfed by the greatness of this man-made creation. This monumental stone initiates contemplation – the 'lone' explorer (Barth is actually with his entourage) was never more aware of his place in history – an exclusive history inaccessible by the locals. The numerous references to 'Ich' and 'mich' imply that the monument stands alone in a vast wilderness of misunderstanding as if waiting to be acknowledged by Barth himself - the representative of the 'culturally advanced'. Just as the erection of monuments creates historical awareness, Barth sees his narrative as testimony to his culture's historical awareness and justification of its presence on the African continent.

The ruined structures are the only evidence of bygone civilisations; the only lasting marker of their dominant, yet transitory power. The Germans, so Barth suggests, have come a long way – they have now surpassed the once almighty Roman Empire. His presence on African soil suggests future *German* empire. Africa, however, does not seem to have progressed much at all. The only visible sign of time's passage is the monuments' weathering. Eroded by the elements, they have stood the test of time – but not in their original form. Only with modification by environmental forces have they survived. They hold meaning to those privileged to decipher their cultural significance, a priori, but in fact the monuments have become something else. Barth betrays that the monuments have only survived in so far as they have been appropriated by African

terrain. The writing on the monuments' surfaces has been eroded by persistent sandstorms. They may, originally, have symbolised nature's subjection to mankind's will, but they are no longer symbols of territorial conquest; instead they signify Africa's victory over their original form and the slow passage of natural, geological time we saw in the previous chapter.

Rohlf's, for his part, is fascinated by a stone pyramid which he encounters on the edge of the Sahara. Echoing Barth's comments, Rohlf's tells us that his entourage can tell him nothing about the monument except that it was built by 'Heiden' (Rohlf's, I, p. 113). On closer inspection, Rohlf's tells us that the pyramid is unmistakably Roman. It is thirty-two feet high and constructed using two tiers of stone blocks. Surrounding it are the ruins of Corinthian Pillars and one side of the monument is decorated with images of a spear-carrying, antelope-chasing rider. Rohlf's concludes that the pyramid must mark the 'Grabmal eines berühmten Nimrods' (Rohlf's, I, p. 113). This discovery proves to be a welcome reminder of western culture after the explorer's constant confrontation with Islamic culture until this point in the expedition. Unsurprisingly, the presence of this monument presents Rohlf's with an opportunity to express his Eurocentric attitude towards African culture: 'Sollte es nicht eine Aufgabe unserer Zeit sein, solche künstlerisch wertvollen Denkmäler des Altertums, die Zeugen vergangener Größe, vor dem gänzlichen Untergang zu retten?' (Rohlf's, I, p. 114). Rohlf's suggests transporting the monuments to Europe where they can be 'properly' appreciated.<sup>236</sup> The local population, so Rohlf's claims, has no connection to or understanding of the monuments – thus Africa is again excluded from any shared cultural heritage. In Europe monuments

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<sup>236</sup> See Penny, *Objects of Culture*, on the German tradition of collecting African artefacts.



signify the passage of time, in Africa they have no such significance except when viewed by Europeans. Rohlf's solution is simply to transport these monuments to a more suitable setting. His suggestion implies European culture's duty to own the past, add new interpretation and ultimately control the interpretation of history.

These examinations of familiar historical testimonies were undertaken by the two explorers most intent on consolidating pre-existing ideas of their own individual and collective German identities. Barth's encounters with African and western monuments highlight his attempts to carry a sense of cultural superiority to Africa and to incorporate the 'dark continent' into preformed concepts. Yet rather than disqualifying African culture from western historical narrative, the *Felsbilder* achieve the opposite: they demonstrate a universal human need to express and understand one's surroundings. Barth is unable to acknowledge this connection openly, yet we sense his unease as his a priori beliefs are undermined: he is unable to confine Africa to a previous era of European history and so cultural development. Rohlf, unsurprisingly, employs his experience as a means to affirm his superior knowledge and so emphasise differences between himself and African 'others'. These 'others' are relegated to the realms of the uneducated, for they have neither sense nor understanding of history. Cultural testimonies, in the form of Roman monuments, are 'wasted' on them. Let us look at Junker's encounter with monumental stone to interpret what it tells us about his image of Africa and therefore also Germany.

Junker narrates a similar experience to that of his predecessors, yet this time the monument in question is the Egyptian obelisk in Alexandria, the ‘welt-berühmt’ Cleopatra’s Needle (Junker, p.6). Alexandria is Junker’s first port of call on the African continent. His description of the needle comes after his first few days’ residency in the city whilst further preparations are being made for his departure to the interior. Junker firstly demystifies the ‘historische Legende’ surrounding the monument, stating that contrary to popular belief it had little to do with the intrigues between Cleopatra, Caesar and Anthony (Junker p. 6). Instead, the explorer informs us that in 22 B.C. a ‘Präfekt Barbarus’ was responsible for transporting and raising the monument which had been designed by the architect Pontius. As Junker points out, ‘der Einbildungskraft und märchenwebenden Phantasie der späteren Jahrhunderte genügten zwei unbedeutende Namen nicht’ (Junker p. 6). As Junker’s sober, factual description demonstrates, his generation is in contrast responsible for uncovering the reality behind such ‘fairy tales’. So far the encounter reminds us of Barth’s ‘scientific’ appropriation and demystification of the Niger. Yet immediately following this factual exposition Junker becomes passionate, as he discusses the fate of the other two Egyptian obelisks. The following excerpt describes this surprising change in attitude:

Der eine der Obelisk, der seit langem niedergesunken in Schutt und Schlamm lag, wurde nach England, der zweite, der 22 Meter hoch, ein echtes Wahrzeichen von Ägyptens erster Handelsstadt bildete, bei dessen Anblick die Jahrtausende alten Erinnerungen der entschwundenen Hieroglyphenzeit lebend wurden, nach Amerika geführt, wo sie nichts zu

thun haben, wo sie so wenig hingehören, als ein Rentier nach Centralafrika. Wie würden sich wohl die altägyptischen Könige gewundert haben, welche ihre Namensringe in den Rosengranit einmeißeln ließen, wenn sie es hätten sehen und wissen können, welch merkwürdige Species von Erdensöhnen an den Zeugen ihrer, der Pharaonen, Götter ehrenden Pietät sich herumtreiben werden, die modernen Yankees! (Junker, p. 6)

Junker's reaction is ambiguous on many levels. The narrative style does however present the reader with an unambiguous contrast to the prior knowledgeable, if somewhat dry, description of the obelisk itself. The monuments' histories may be shrouded in misconceptions yet this, according to Junker, presents far less historical sacrilege than transporting them to completely unrelated, unmajestic sites. In apparent opposition to Rohlf's, Junker strongly criticises the monuments' new location. New York, in particular, receives scathing references to the lack of historical understanding and reverence it will receive from its new observers in Central Park. As Junker's criticism is mainly directed towards the 'Yankees', it appears that the obelisk in London is less offensive. Is this due to the greater cultural and historical appreciation present on European soil or merely the fact that the New York obelisk is the more intricate and so interesting testimony to Egyptian civilisation, craftsmanship and culture, even more so than its London and Alexandrian counterparts? Junker spends little time describing the appearance of the obelisk standing before him in Alexandria, yet he also remarks that his general lack of 'Bewunderung' is due to the fact that he is 'kein Neuling' in Alexandria (Junker, p. 5). Judging by Junker's passionate description of the numerous

hieroglyphics on the New York monument – “Horus, der tapfere Stier, der Geliebte des Rā, der König beider Lande, Usorma Sotep-en- Rā, Herr der Götterverehrung, wie sein Vater Ptah, “Sohn der Sonne”, unter welchem Titel sich der stolze Ramses der Große sich verewigen ließ’ (Junker, p. 6) – it indeed appears to possess greater cultural and historical significance than its other counterparts. Again, those images carved by an apparently ‘primitive’, African hand seem to have been far more successfully preserved than the *western*, Roman attempts. Junker’s attitude, whilst being derogatory towards Americans, does suggest a greater sense of outrage at the removal of such an exemplary artefact from its historical roots. He unmistakably, and most importantly, questions Rohlfs’s assumption that western knowledge is firstly a priori capable of successfully re-interpreting history and secondly a priori entitled to such attempts. He also refutes Barth’s and Rohlfs’s assumption that Africans are incapable of acknowledging historical significance.

Thus encounters with man-made monuments – cultural expressions of historical awareness – are significant moments in the explorers’ narratives. Whereas Barth again inadvertently refutes the preconceived ideas of western, German cultural superiority he seems determined to uphold, Frobenius’s and Junker’s portrayals of African monumental stone suggest a greater appreciation of non-western expressions of historical awareness. They go beyond a linear-progressive categorisation of historical awareness and civilised advancement to demonstrate a more varied and universal understanding of historical awareness. This undermines Barth’s and Rohlfs’s Hegelian belief in their ability to successfully re-interpret history and a priori entitlement to do so.

Junker certainly presents a more diversified attitude towards historical understanding than Barth and Rohlf, yet his somewhat ambiguous descriptions mean that he has a foot in both camps; signs of cultural heterophilia are coupled with references to western, German cultural superiority. It could be argued that such ambiguous attitudes mirror the uncertainty of Germany's political development at the time. Critics have suggested that this turbulent period triggered a wave of anthropological and ethnographical discourse in Germany centring on the development and progression of different cultures in an attempt to understand Germany's own particular path to unification.<sup>237</sup> Our findings so far suggest that German unification fuels an interest in the history and paths of other cultures. The long tradition of interest in cultural variety and acceptance of cultural difference was firmly ingrained in German consciousness. Yet new political powers and increased leverage on the international stage meant that territorial expansion was becoming a real possibility. Junker's narrative reflects the tension between two seemingly opposed images of Africa and thus also two conflicting images of German self-understanding. Frobenius's analysis demonstrates that German colonial activities did not erase the interest in, and appreciation of, cultural difference. Frobenius demonstrates an acceptance of African influences in our explorers' self-understanding. This brings us to the following section which examines alternative modes of preserving and acknowledging history over and above written documentation.

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<sup>237</sup> Penny and Bunzl, *Worldly Provincialism*, pp. 8-20.

## WRITING HISTORY

Our explorers' encounters with both written and oral historiography demonstrate fluctuations in the flow of knowledge from Germany to Africa. These fluctuations are concomitant with varying levels of openness to cultural difference. Several travellers take it upon themselves to compose brief histories of African peoples by piecing together information they glean from often very brief encounters with indigenous Africans. These explorers suggest that the absence of *written* historical documentation sets African culture in a 'timeless' state, devoid of history. Sometimes, however, the Hegelian framework which supports this relegation of the African word is dislodged, and consequences ensue for the explorers' self-consciousness.

Barth, we know, is a key proponent of this Hegelian view. Yet this attitude is challenged when, in the latter stages of his expedition and only 150 kilometres away from reaching his goal, the Niger, Barth is forced to undertake a frustrating period of unexpected sojourn in the town of Gándō, residence of the ruler of the Western Pullo region. The unfortunate event however proves integral to Barth's expedition when a local 'Gelehrter' presents him with *written* documentation of local historical events. (Barth, IV, p. 202). He immediately sets about analysing the material which he describes as follows:

Nun brachte ich drei oder vier Tage höchst angenehm mit dem Ausziehen wichtigerer historischer Daten dieses Werkes zu, das mir eine ganz neue

Einsicht in die geschichtliche Entwicklung der Landschaften am mittleren Laufe des Niger, denen ich meine Schritte zuwandte, eröffnete und ein höchst lebendiges Interesse erregte. Denn es entwickelte vor meinen Augen in klaren und scharfen Umrissen die frühere Macht des Sonrhay-Reiches, von der ich kaum die leiseste Ahnung gehabt, und ich bedauerte nichts mehr, als das ich nicht Zeit genug hatte, das Ganze zu kopieren, indem ich nur eben die mir in geographischer und historischer Beziehung am wichtigsten scheinenden Abschnitte ohne Rücksicht auf den äußeren Zusammenhang ausziehen konnte. (Barth, IV, pp. 202)

The tone of this excerpt recreates Barth's evident excitement and enthusiasm. The verbs 'eröffnen' and 'erregen' suggest a certain dynamic which is combined with 'lebendiges Interesse' to create a sense of movement as Barth progresses through this mass of documentation on a journey of knowledge. This material should surely have facilitated Barth's premise to uncover historical connections. Yet the discovery again confuses Barth's linear, one-way concept of civilised and thus historical development. The existence of these documents should testify to stages of advanced cultural development, yet this is not mentioned at all. Instead, Barth's desire to leave the town as soon as possible means that he does not have time to copy out the entire document. He makes extracts according to what *he* feels is most important and creates a narrative silence around others (we remember that he omitted a 'Felsbild' from his narrative due to his

failure to interpret it). Barth therefore removes all authenticity from the document and instead transfers a highly subjective account to the archives of European knowledge.<sup>238</sup>

Barth is also pleasantly surprised by another ‘gelehrter Mann’ the town of Sókoto, a short distance from Gándō. Barth is filled with anticipation as he hopes to gain some ‘historische Belehrung’ about this largely unexplored area (Barth, IV, p. 184). To his surprise he receives the information he requires orally, for the ‘gelehrter Mustapha’ is able to recite the entire history of the ruling dynasty year by year from memory: the information is ‘wenige data’, yet he acknowledges it as ‘der höchsten Bedeutung’ (IV, p. 185). Barth’s encounters with African scholars thus demonstrate that writing is not *the* key to cultural status. They in fact betray a gradual subversion of the stages of cultural development which he believes culminate in the advanced status of western culture. Let us examine Rohlfs’s experiences of historical preservation.

Rohlfs by contrast maintains that North-African Bedouin culture is devoid of all forms of historiography. As James Clifford discusses in *Writing Culture*, writing creates boundaries of temporal and spatial distance from behind which ‘the other’ can be observed without the observer being seen, thus enabling him to exert control through description.<sup>239</sup> This can be observed in one of Rohlfs’s numerous descriptions of tribal ‘theatricality’. The ‘others’ play out their daily routine which Rohlfs witnesses from a privileged standpoint (Rohlfs, I, p. 115). Distance thus becomes a requirement of

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<sup>238</sup> In later editions of his work Barth includes a footnote stating; ‘Es sind dies die Auszüge, die Herr Ralfs mit großem Geschick im Bande der Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft (nebst einigen Anmerkungen von mir und ihm) in einer Übersetzung herausgegeben hat’ (Barth, *Im Sattel*, p. 277).

<sup>239</sup> Clifford and Marcus, *Writing Culture*, p. 12.



scientific objectivity and it is created by defining cultures in ‘temporally distinct, yet locatable places’ (Clifford and Marcus, *Writing Culture*, p. 101). At the time when European society existed in a comparable state, written records were also few. ‘Going back’ to Africa presents *Afrikareisende* with an opportunity to fill in this gap. In the following excerpt, Rohlfs attempts to do just that. Rohlfs, approximately half-way through his journey and nearing the end of the Sahara, is enjoying a period of uninterrupted transit. Filled with self-confidence, Rohlfs reaches the borders of Kauar, a region inhabited by the Tebu people whom he describes as follows:

Das Wohngebiet der heutigen Tebu liegt südlich von Fesan, nördlich vom Tschad See, östlich von Kauar einschliesslich dieser Oase, und westlich von der sogenannten Libyischen Wüste. Ob sie auch die Oase Kufra, welche seit einigen Jahren wieder bewohnt ist, innehaben, konnte bis jetzt nicht constatirt werden, wie sich überhaupt sichere Kenntniss des Landes nur durch eigene Anschauung europäischer Reisender gewinnen lässt, denn die Eingeborenen begegnen allen Erkundigungen mit zurückhaltendem Mistrauen. Zudem haben die Tebu viel weniger Sinn für Geographie wie die Araber und Berber: sie wissen viele Berge nicht zu benennen, welche sie jahraus jahrein mit ihren Karawanen passiren; und geben selbst Thälern und Ebenen, Bergen und Uadi in ihrer nächsten Umgebung keinen bestimmten Namen. Noch schwieriger ist es, über die früheren Wohnsitze der Tebu-Stämme etwas zu ermitteln, da sie keinerlei historische Überlieferungen, weder schriftliche noch mündliche, besitzen. (Rohlfs, I, p. 256)

This dry, dismissive tone demonstrates Rohlfs's aprioristic imposition of the German known on the African unknown, and his unwillingness to acknowledge any alternative structuring of time and space. Rohlfs merely – strategically – describes Africa using pre-existing, western geographical categories. He portrays Africa in this sense as a void, lacking both geographic and historical reference points. He implies that the ability to access and archive these reference points is a purely European property. Yet Rohlfs's lack of receptiveness to alternative cultures both emphasises his intellectual abstract superiority and exposes his own cognitive limits, for he also tells us that the Tebu travel exactly the same routes each year. The Tebu must, therefore in fact possess some effective geographical knowledge and sovereignty over their world; it is merely inscrutable to Rohlfs. Thus Rohlfs's dry narrative makes present something – a manifestation of unintelligible otherness – and so inadvertently actually generates a sense of *wonder* in his reader – a subliminal, yet real sense that there is more to the African mind than has met the narrator's eye, and this, despite the writer's evident care in composing the scene.<sup>240</sup>

Rohlfs furthermore implies that missing historical information means the Tebu tribe does not possess a history until the Europeans create one.<sup>241</sup> Hence he categorises Africa as pure nature, devoid of history in the *Hegelian* sense and most significantly, opposed to, or behind, European culture. European culture in contrast is rooted in self-

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<sup>240</sup> As we saw in the previous chapter, Rohlfs's scientific narrative is consciously composed to eliminate a sense of wonder, as was found, for example, in early travel accounts.

<sup>241</sup> Clifford and Marcus also point out the effects of early anthropological investigations which assume a certain 'intrinsic authority' through the written word as a mouthpiece for 'others defined as unable to speak for themselves ('primitive', 'pre-literate', 'without history')' (Clifford and Marcus, *Writing Culture*, p. 10).

consciously historical, written foundations and so possesses a story with direction and goal. Rohlf's emphasis on 'jahrein jahraus' suggests unchanging, cyclical repetition. Yet paradoxically it is through this reference to cyclical repetition that Rohlf unwittingly as he conceals, also reveals still more this time – the presence of an *African* mode of historical record. There was, and is, an *oral* 'historiography'. Rohlf intentionally distances himself from pre-modern, 'irrational' expressions of wonder and amazement and consequently achieves little insight into African culture.

Junker marks a further stage in this process. His narrative portrayal of African and European history marks a new era of description which is developed even further by his successor Frobenius. Unlike his predecessors, who favour brief, intertextual references to other travel narratives to imply their knowledgeability, Junker quotes passages from the corpus of western literature written about the area which he feels aptly describes his thoughts. He thus sets Africa initially within a western historical framework of knowledge and understanding and so reaffirms the pre-existing, Eurocentric relationship of centre and periphery, progress and stagnation.<sup>242</sup> Junker praises Africa as a 'Wunderland ältester Gesittung', and cites a passage from Homer's *Odyssey* which springs to his mind at the beginning of his own odyssey (Junker, p. 4). In comparison to Nachtigal who – as we saw in the previous chapter – consciously rejects existing historical accounts as inadequate indicators of African experience, Junker continues the European historical narrative. Following this reference is Junker's initial portrayal of Alexandria, which again sets Africa in a western historical framework. He quotes a

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<sup>242</sup> Pratt notes that interior exploration created a new 'planetary consciousness' which placed Europe at the centre of the world (Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 14).

scene from the distinguished publisher Bogumil Goltz's travel narrative, as the most accurate reflection of his own experience:

Den Eindruck, den Alexandrien [...] auf den frisch aus Europa angelangten Neuling macht, schildert Bogumil Golz höchst ergötzlich und in der Lokalfarbe sehr richtig, wie folgt: 'Diese arabischen Proletarier, mit nackten, gelb- oder schwarzbraunen Armen und Beinen, in schmutzig weißen oder blauen ärmellosen Hemden, mit schmutzigen Turbanen oder roten Troddelmützen auf den Köpfen, diese Mahagonigesichter und Gliedmaßen in allen Farbenabstufungen bis zum blitzenden Kohlschwarz des Negers, diese hastige, massenhafte und allgemeine Eselreiterei von Halbnackten und dann wieder von Honoratioren mit Prachtgewändern in Gold und Seide; von deutschen Handwerksleuten in deutscher Blau, von italienischen oder englischen Lions; jene mit modernen Fracks und den feinsten Pariser Hüten, diese mit breitrandigen, weißen Filzbedeckungen und mit allerlei Phantasiekleidagen kostumierte: dieses fragmentarische, grelle, kunterbunte, hastende Menschenwirrsal, durchschnitten von langen Zügen melancholisch brüllender, Speichel schleudender, mit Palmseilen gekoppelter, hintereinander darauf lostappende Wüstenkamele. Diese erste Schmeckprobe von einem in alte und neue Wunder gehüllten Heiden-Weltteile benahm mir Adepten dergestalt den Kopf, daß ich instinktmäßig nach der Taschenuhr griff, ob sie nicht zugleich mit meiner armen

eingescherten Christenseele vor Verwunderung stehen geblieben wäre’.

(Junker, p.5)<sup>243</sup>

On the one hand the excerpt Junker chooses recreates the vibrancy and bustle of the port; people from every walk of life mingle together to create an exciting, multicultural atmosphere; sound, smell and colour greet and excite all the senses. Yet the colours employed reflect the author’s culturally exclusive, dualistic categories of interpretation. Those associated with ‘Araber’ and ‘Neger’ are typically dark and dirty. Their garments are torn and untidy – and so reflect their ‘heathen’ souls. Those few Arab dignitaries dressed in silk and gold are lost amongst the swarming masses. The Europeans of course present a stark contrast with their orderly and – even if somewhat inappropriate – fine dress. In spite of the energy created by the constant movement of the scene, there appears to be neither control nor order to the proceedings. Even the camels are more orderly than the locals, as their procession cuts through the tumultuous mass of bodies. Repeated references to movement as hasty, disorganised and disorderly removes all sense of dynamic. The overall impression given by the author is not one of trade and prosperity but of chaos. The author’s mere presence at the scene reduces his civilised, Christian soul to ashes – a striking effect when taken into account that he has barely set foot on this ‘Heiden Weltteil’. The dualism and sense of absolute difference is crowned by notions of returning to the past, as time in Africa seems to stand still. The watch – the symbol of western progress and believed cultural superiority – is the author’s means of orientation. Not only does he gauge the passage of time with it – he also uses it to gauge

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<sup>243</sup> The excerpt is taken from Bogumil Goltz’s travel account *Ein Kleinstädter in Ägypten* (Berlin: [n.p.] 1853)

other cultures' level of progress. The author and thus also Junker, reduce Africa to a state of absolute otherness, not just visually, but also temporally.

Yet as Junker's ambiguous description of Egyptian monuments suggests, his attitude to African otherness is neither simplistic nor dualistic. On reaching the desert shortly after his sojourn in Alexandria, Junker hears a Bedouin, 'den der Reiz solch schöner Nacht, so oft er sie auch erlebt, nicht gleichgültig läßt' singing a song of 'sentimentale Freude' (Junker, p. 29). Moved by the scene which excites the imagination Junker quotes an 'arabischer Dichter' to reflect his sentiments on this occasion (Junker, p. 29). The inclusion of this poem suddenly encompasses alternative cultural, narrative traditions. Junker is the first *Afrikareisender* to do this and thus give 'the other' a voice and history. Junker begins to appreciate the voice of the other and consequently the value of oral culture, for it is the same culture which, through constant repetition, passes on the knowledge of ancient caravan routes through the desert. An oral testimony to history, these lines across the sand are invisible to those reliant on maps and written documents.<sup>244</sup> As Nachtigal recognised, the faces of the Bedouin are testimony to their history as they carry with them every desert crossing and thus every reiteration of their history. The movement of the sand may be transient and soon cover their footprints, yet the lines in the Bedouins' faces deepen with every desert traversal. Junker's connection to Nachtigal and Frobenius, the most culturally open of our *Afrikareisende* stands in contrast to his dualistic reinforcement of cultural stereotypes. His narration often

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<sup>244</sup>Junker's encounter with Bedouin tribes is reminiscent of Chatwin's Songlines – orientation through oral tradition passed on through generations in; Bruce Chatwin, *The Songlines* (New York: Penguin, 1987).

alternates between two poles, as if attempting to disguise his admiration for a culture fallen into disrepute after the Mahdi invasion prevented colonial expansion in the area.

Our next explorer, Stuhlmann, the most culturally inflexible of our travellers, demonstrates a strengthening of such linear-historicist attitudes evinced by Rohlf's and exhibits paternalistic notions of 'helping' those African cultures. Still in their 'childhood', Africans, so Stuhlmann maintains, are incapable of understanding themselves – as if the German could thus help African cultures to attain the next level of civilised advancement.<sup>245</sup> After travelling through German territories, Stuhlmann's party reaches the as yet uncolonised, and so promising, Uganda. Before recalling his experiences in the territory, Stuhlmann devotes a chapter of narrative time to factual excursus and so showcases his knowledge of Ugandan climatic, territorial and agricultural factors. As the following quotation demonstrates, the first step towards territorial conquest is collating information and then converting it into familiar, western concepts. Stuhlmann proceeds to 're-construct' Ugandan history according to western, German standards, i.e. complete with the Ugandan monarchy's family tree and the duration of each period of rule:

Ugánda ist eins der wenigen Länder Afrikas, das eine Geschichte hat, allerdings eine in ihren Anfängen ziemlich sagenhafte. Da schriftliche Aufzeichnungen nicht vorhanden sind, muss man sich mit den theils ausgeschmückten, theils durch mündliche Weiterverbreitung entstellten

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<sup>245</sup> Fiedler also sees *Erziehen* echoed in coloniser Wissmann's German-African encounters. The Baschilange people for example, are named 'Kinder des Hanfes' (Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteuer*, p. 167).

Überlieferungen zufrieden stellen. Im Folgenden sei ein kurzer Überblick des Wichtigsten gegeben, von dem, was ich entweder selbst erfuhr oder aus den Werken von Mackay, Stanley, Wilson, Felkin, Asche und Anderen entnehmen konnte. (Stuhlmann, p. 191).

Stuhlmann suggests that Uganda possesses a history as such, for events can be equated with specific dates. More significant however is the implication that European presence in Uganda has already created a corpus of written material on past events which can be defined as history. The majority of Stuhlmann's sources are western, subjective interpretations undertaken by explorers like himself who were not historians. In spite of the glaring subjectivity present in many historical accounts, including the travel narratives, the fact that they are written down and thus preserved gives them an aura of authority as uncontested, objective truth. Stuhlmann thus epitomises Greenblatt's discussion of writing and the written word as sources of European inflated self-confidence in their ability to communicate and represent reality.<sup>246</sup> As Greenblatt's analysis of Christopher Columbus's log book demonstrates, the ability to transcribe events gives Columbus a sense of innate authority, yet in reality he by no means possesses superior access to cross-cultural understanding (Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, p. 90). Writing is merely a culturally exclusive, effective form of possession, for even the information gathered during cross-cultural encounter is only accessible to one of the cultures portrayed. Not only does Stuhlmann have the power to recreate African history, he also has the means to transfer this history as a written medium to a mass readership. Just as Stuhlmann had access to other historical

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<sup>246</sup> Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, p. 12.



interpretations through writing and the mass-medium of print, so his work will become a mark of authority for others and incorporated into western ‘understanding’ and reinterpretation of Uganda.

Stuhlmann is also our only explorer with the means to take actual, rather than ideological, possession of African territories, and he does so, significantly, through the written word. The tradition of formal treaties and contracts between coloniser and colonised had been part of the grand colonial narrative since Columbus’s account of territorial conquest on the island of San Salvador in 1492.<sup>247</sup> Carl Peters’s colonising mission to East Africa four centuries later brought the German Reich into this narrative.<sup>248</sup> His possessions were acquired and verified by written treaties between himself as a representative of the German Reich, and local tribal leaders.<sup>249</sup> Stuhlmann renewed these treaties and took possession of further territories such as Tabora, a well-established Arab trading enclave. As Greenblatt points out, the true extent of territorial possession held within such documents was only fully realised when read by European powers. The formal act of possession and its recording in written form ‘although apparently directed toward the natives, has its full meaning then in relation to other European powers when they come to learn of the discovery’ (Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, p. 60). This act of written possession marks the beginning of inter-

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<sup>247</sup> *Select Documents Illustrating the Four Voyages of Columbus*, trans. and ed. by Cecil Jane, 2 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1930) I, p. 2.

<sup>248</sup> Carl Peters, describes his actions in *Wie Deutsch-Ostafrika entstand. Ein persönlicher Bericht des Gründers* (Leipzig: Koehler & Voigtländer, 1940). See also Perras, *Carl Peters*, pp. 57-9.

<sup>249</sup> As Perras writes, opposition members in the German Reichstag criticised the nature of these treaties as criminal and illegal, as the documents were firstly in German and thus undecipherable for the Africans and secondly, employed European legal terms such as *Deutsches Staatsrecht* and concepts of state sovereignty which were completely foreign to African territorial understanding. Perras, *Carl Peters*, pp. 56-7.

European narratives on foreign soil and consequently the imposition of European history which determines both the course and documentation of 'native' history.

However, our last author Frobenius is the explorer most open to the achievements of oral culture. Leo Frobenius composed his work with the intention of dismissing once and for all the misconception that Africa is devoid of history. To do this, he had to refute the assumption that oral culture **is** an inferior means of preserving and expressing history. In his introduction he astutely points out the widespread belief that written historiography is the only method of gauging history acknowledged by his own culture so that writing appears to enjoy an inherent authority:

Es musste unbedingt eine Zeit kommen, in der die historische Menschheit die Räume aufzusuchen begann, die das Menschengeschlecht einst vor der Schrift und jenseits der schreibkundigen Menschen besiedelt hatte. Und mit jenem gewaltigen Willen, der von dem ersten Beginn der Natur an herrschte, forderten sie auch hier nach Licht. Hier, wo die leuchtende Kraft der Schrift versagte, der die Leute auch heute noch so gern allein Glaubwürdigkeit beimessen möchten, da die Menschen, schwach wie sie sind, nur schwer begreifen können, daß ein historisches Bewußtsein in der Menschheit stärker gewesen sein kann vor der Schrift als mit ihr. (Frobenius I, p. XXIII)

The reference to 'historische Menschheit' reverberates with ironical undertones as Frobenius immediately proceeds to refute this western self-belief. Deploying

monumental, dramatic language reminiscent of Barth's Roman-monument encounter, Frobenius asserts that historical awareness can be, on the contrary, stronger before the existence of the written word than with it. It is a powerful force which drives all humans to understand their surroundings. The following chapters in Frobenius's work tell the story of his journey to this realisation.

Frobenius's first chapter opens with a scene of first encounter which alters his pre-existing perception of African historical awareness. Interestingly this occurred before he set foot in Africa, as the meeting takes place on German soil. Colonial and trading expansion since the composition of our first narrative had drastically altered the nature and location of 'contact zones'.<sup>250</sup> Frobenius's initial contact with Africans takes place at Hamburg's port. He offers African sailors, in particular those from the Congo, remuneration in return for information concerning burial rites in their cultures. Frobenius meets 'John' first, a 'Musterstück' who speaks English (Frobenius, I, p. 5). This, however, does not equal cultural equality. Frobenius's narration reinforces the imperial narrative of naming and possessing objects.<sup>251</sup> He does not credit John with any

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<sup>250</sup> Pratt employs the term 'contact zones' in *Imperial Eyes*, p. 6.

<sup>251</sup> See Chapter III, p. 95 on the practice of naming. Fabian employs an example from one of Frobenius's earlier travel narratives to illustrate the European practice of naming and appropriation. During the expedition which took place from 1906-1907, Frobenius encounters a waterfall which he names after Ferdinand von Richthofen, one of the German Society's directors. Fabian states that Frobenius mentions the African practice of naming rivers, and changing their names to commemorate those who found death in their waters. Yet Frobenius decides not to name this river after 'irgendein Eingeborener' (Fabian, *Out of our Minds*, p. 200). Fabian employs this episode as an example of outright imperialist mentality and total disregard for local culture. As we know, Frobenius acknowledges that he was not fully aware of Africa's cultural richness and variety until completing his later expedition. Yet the episode is not as straightforward as Fabian's analysis suggests. Firstly, if Frobenius were in total disregard of local culture, he would not bother to justify his decision. Secondly, Frobenius gives important insight into African culture by telling us that the names of rivers are not a thing of permanence – this parallels Schweinfurth's realisation concerning the names and location of African villages. For we are told that Frobenius's predecessors, explorers Pogge and Wissmann, cited two different names for the same waterfall yet failed to make the connection between this differentiation. Thirdly, Frobenius's comment 'irgendein

British qualities. John appears to have no deeper connection or understanding of British culture and thus remains a comic figure. Frobenius assumes the role of culturally superior coloniser. He immediately rejects any notion of equality or possible reduction of cultural difference with derogatory comments about the level of John's language skills. Frobenius must at first lower his standard of English in order to communicate. During this initial conversation, however, he gains vital information about other African Sailors. Three are from Lagos whereas the fourth comes from Loango in the Congo. Filled with anticipation, Frobenius 'auf den Schwingen der Wissenschaft' proceeds to question James, who turns out to be a French-speaking Catholic: 'James wiederholte nach jeder Frage, die ich in wissenschaftlichen Dingen an ihn richtete: "very old – très vieux – very old – très vieux" [...] ob ich über das Königreich Loango, den Amerikaner Stanley, die Kunst des Bogenschiessens oder Sambi, den lieben Gott sprach' (Frobenius, I, p. 6). Here, Frobenius attempts to reinforce the ultimate level of ignorance, as James apparently has no concept of his culture's history, or even the concept of history.

Frobenius spends three days questioning James. He attributes his lack of replies to misunderstanding of the entire concept and therefore its evident absence in his culture. As Frobenius is leaving John tells him; 'In my country is every old time man big stone' (Frobenius, I, p. 7). A baffled Frobenius politely notes the names of places in which John states he will find large sculptures which tell the phases of Lagos's history. Ten years after the event, Frobenius finally succeeds in collecting enough funds to investigate the sites, which to his surprise, prove to be accurate. Frobenius describes his

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Eingeborener' is ambiguous. He is not necessarily claiming that 'natives' are unworthy namesakes. For geographical landmarks, anywhere, are unlikely to be named after 'just any' body.

monumental discovery in the opening quotation to this chapter. This early, unexpected find altered Frobenius's attitude and determined his actions during this, his next expedition. He self-critically refers to his lack of insight and pre-formed judgements whilst collating ethnographic information. Frobenius particularly criticises the western understanding of historically valid material, for John's initial oral reports and folktales from the areas he named ultimately led to the discovery of ancient civilisations and religious practises. Frobenius thus grants the 'other voice' greater authority and with it more narrative space, as he includes African folktales, songs and poetry in his narrative, hence the title *Und Afrika sprach*. Frobenius unmistakably revalidates a Herderian appreciation of oral culture as a marker of a people's cultural and historical heritage, for language, according to Herder, is the living expression of historical traditions.<sup>252</sup> Like Herder, Frobenius mourns the widespread dismissal of folklore, myth and folksong as 'irrational', primitive expressions of culture, often confined to early stages of a people's development.<sup>253</sup> Frobenius's appreciation of oral traditions is one of the major features which enable him to attain levels of cultural insight previously unattainable by his predecessors. Nachtigal's dream-time revalorised the Romantic temporal epiphany and pre-empted later explorations such as Castorp's snow-dreams in Mann's *Zauberberg*. Frobenius's appreciation of oral tradition strengthens the links between his work and the Modernist and Expressionist movements.

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<sup>252</sup> Herder, *Werke*, V, pp. 117-136.

<sup>253</sup> See Zammito, *Kant, Herder*, p. 155.

Frobenius is intent on refuting misconceptions resulting from cultural ignorance, and so attempts to enlighten fellow Europeans with proof that Africa, although lacking in written historical records, certainly does possess a rich and diverse history:

Ich habe [...] ein anderes historisches Baumaterial geschildert und erwähnt, das als ein viel gewaltigeres Monument der Vergangenheit in die Jetztzeit hineinreicht, denn Pyramiden, und Erz und Stein und Schrift, das ist das Gedächtnis der Menschen, die noch nicht die Schrift kennen, oder die noch nicht durch allzu intensive Ausnutzung des Schreibens diese Gedächtnisarchive zerstört haben. (Frobenius, I, p. 26)

As this excerpt demonstrates, Frobenius takes Nachtigal's rejection of western, German history as an inadequate means of understanding Africa one step further. He continues to deconstruct the Foucaultian knowledge-power narrative by proclaiming the superiority of oral history over the apparently more culturally advanced, written documentation of events. In contrast to Hegelian concepts of historical awareness and cultural progress, writing, according to Frobenius, does not merely distort or alter the representation of historical events, it completely destroys the true nature of historical self-awareness inherent to all humans. Attempts to temporalise cultures on a scale of greater or lesser civilised development mask this inter-cultural connection. Frobenius supports his claim to universal, humanistic historical awareness by comparing situations in which western

folklore, long dismissed as unfounded myth, actually led to important archaeological discoveries:

Auch an den Meeresgestaden Nordeuropas trifft der Wanderer hier und da kleine Hügel und landschaftliche Unebenheiten, von denen die naiven Bewohner des Landes ebenso mit Ehrfurcht sprechen wie die Bauern des Nigerstromes von den ihren. Die nordischen Bauern erzählen, es sei da und da ein König mit Wagen unter die Erde gefahren. [...] Der Glaube des Bauern war kein Aberglaube gewesen; das Grab eines Altherrlichen, Hochedlen war zutage gelegt, ein kleiner Wagen daneben gefunden worden. Das Beispiel hat sich wiederholt. An zwei Jahrtausende lang hatte die Erinnerung sich im Kopfe des Bauern erhalten. Kriegstürme und wilde Zeiten waren darüber hingebraust, und in langen Perioden lieblichen Friedens hatten die Hacken Jahr aus und Jahr ein ihre Furchen darüber gezogen, und schwere Kornähren darüber gewiegt. Generationen über Generationen waren über sie hinweggegangen, die Kunst der Schrift war aufgenommen, und unendliche Mengen beschreibender Chroniken waren in den benachbarten Städten geschrieben, gedruckt, verkommen und verschollen. Mancher mit Schrift bemeißelte Grabstein war auch auf jüngerem Kirchhof inzwischen von Efeu zersprengt und vernichtet. Aber das Wissen im Kopfe der Menschheit war geblieben, fast zwei Jahrtausende lang. (Frobenius, I, pp. 26)

This dramatic excerpt is both stylistically and thematically significant. Stylistically, Frobenius incorporates and re-evaluates a variety of *Afrikareisende* narrative traditions to demonstrate a clear development in narrative sophistication. The rhythmic repetitions ‘Jahr ein Jahr aus’, ‘Generation über Generation’ recreate movement in language. Yet unlike Rohlf’s movement, this is a slow, gradual, cyclical process, which defines history as the passing of *natural* time. Human, *written*, historiography is comparatively short, it is ‘geschrieben; gedruckt, verkommen und verschollen’. This rhythmic language reminds us of Rohlf’s recreation of movement through African space. Yet here, of course, Frobenius deploys such language to overturn notions of assumed superiority carried to Africa by his predecessors. The excerpt also echoes Nachtigal’s initial dream-sequence, for here too language is deployed to eliminate geographical and cultural distance between the west and Africa. Thematically, the excerpt brings us back to Junker and Nachtigal’s Bedouins. True historical awareness, according to Frobenius, is also that which is carried in the human mind by those closest to the natural rhythms of their surroundings. Yet Frobenius takes this one step further. This time Frobenius’s insight is coupled with an intercultural comparison which demonstrates his claim’s universal, humanistic nature. The cyclical corn harvest preserves the subject of local folklore; a folklore which becomes evermore ingrained into local memory and culture with each passing year and each repetition. This process is slow and invisible to the human eye – just like the natural processes of erosion. This of course reminds us of Schweinfurth’s erosion and the slow, gradual passage of geological time. The quotation brings thus also brings us back to the eroded lettering on Roman monuments in Northern Africa – the work of the same forces of nature which in contrast aid the preservation of



oral culture. Nature protected and nurtured Nordic as well as Bedouin myth, whilst it modified and even destroyed traces of written documentation.<sup>254</sup> Frobenius's ivy strangles and silences the written word which enjoys such authority in western historical narrative.

Our last work thus signals a complete reversal of the 'time-set' as an indicator of western superiority and cultural control. Instead we see a move to *natural* history and a sense of larger time-scales as indicators of time's passage reinforced. We saw the beginnings of this recognition in Nachtigal and Junker's perceptions of faces and eroded landscapes and in Schweinfurth's jungle. Hence the passage of time is embodied within natural monuments – faces, eroded rocks, even ancient forests. This move is concomitant with the rise of primitivism within the Modernist and Expressionist movements in Germany and the revalorisation of African culture as a vital and essential force. An interest in the paths of other cultures was similarly triggered by the spread of Darwinian evolutionary theory and Germany's own unification.

Our explorers' encounters' with historical testimonies thus demonstrate fluctuations in the flow of knowledge from Germany to Africa, which was unprecedented in this era of European territorial expansion. The first pre-unification explorers intended to make their mark in German history by locking Africa ideologically into the sphere of Germanic influence. They attempt to impose Hegelian linear-progressive historical concepts onto

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<sup>254</sup> In his later work on African culture, *Paideuma* (1921), Frobenius remarks that 'Als merkwürdigste an diesen Afrika erscheint mir immer wieder, dass sein inneres uns so verwandt ist'. Leo Frobenius, *Paideuma* (Munich: Beck, 1921), p. 90. He claims that only *Parsifal* and the Niger-land folklore epics conceive of the fate-conquering individual, *Paideuma*, pp. 94-6.

African historical artefacts and so demonstrate the superiority of their mind-set to both Africans and other Europeans. Yet Barth and Rohlf's subconsciously betray the fallibility of their linear-progressive mind-set. Junker makes ambiguous references to German cultural superiority, whilst also revealing a deep interest in African cultural history. Stuhlmann unsurprisingly upholds a narrative of cultural imposition onto African soil which mirrors his territorial acquisitions. Frobenius however overturns western, a priori images of cultural advancement by reinstating oral culture as the most valid expression of history over and above the written word. This variegated trajectory runs counter to the established norms of colonial discourse and so questions the role of German-African encounter as an integral part of the German colonial project.

Daß die Familie sich pekuniär engagiert, um die Absplitterung eines an sich ihr heute ziemlich gleichgültigen und nur, weil alt, wünschenswerten Gegenstandes zu hindern, das muß unbedingt als ein Symptom ungemein fester, alt fundierter Gliederung und Verkettung der religiösen und sozialen Organismen bezeichnet werden.<sup>255</sup> (Frobenius, I, p.51)

As this excerpt, taken from Frobenius's account of his residence in the Nigerian town of Ilife, demonstrates, religion appears to be a catalyst for cultural progress, for it brings certain levels of social structure and control to societies. This excerpt is particularly significant, as in contrast to our earlier explorers who suggest that monotheistic religions Islam and Christianity are responsible for all cultural development in Africa, the religion Frobenius is referring to here is the indigenous Yoruba worship of Orisha deities. Frobenius's focus on indigenous African religions marks an important turning point in the role of ritual and religion in the *Afrikareisende* macrotext. As has been argued throughout the previous chapters, the analysis of German-African encounters tells a story which parallels developments in German self-understanding during a period of extensive political turmoil. Ritual and religion play a distinct, yet differing role throughout the *Afrikareisende* macrotext as markers of cultural belonging and cultural advancement.

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<sup>255</sup> Frobenius unmistakably compares this progression to Darwinian biological theories of development which shall be discussed in depth in the following chapter. The introduction of religious and social norms is comparable to the development of living organisms which multiply and strengthen their position within society. As they become stronger they modify and create new links and so spread through all parts of society.

Thus in this chapter we move inwards, to focus on the element of human cultural otherness. For in spite of their varied cognitive interests, all explorers present ethnographical and anthropological information collated during German-African encounters.<sup>256</sup> Such information both influenced and was influenced by discourse on race, evolution and culture, and their German ‘time-set’.

The analysis of cross-cultural encounters in this chapter will demonstrate that the trajectory of development throughout *Afrikareisende* narratives is far from clear-cut. Here, an increasingly positive attitude towards African religions is, for example, matched by denunciations of Islam, and, interestingly, also Christianity in certain works. Thus in keeping with the often contradictory elements of German identity as argued in previous chapters, explorers create narratives of cultural appreciation alongside images of Germanic cultural superiority. Hence portrayals of the African other become the most telling signs of developments in German self-understanding. The discussion will examine the treatment of these themes sequentially in order to gauge the trajectory of ideological development in relation to external, political events.

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<sup>256</sup> The term anthropology today encompasses both physical anthropology and cultural anthropology, or ethnography as it was previously known. Our German travellers however drew a distinction between both areas, defining themselves as either anthropologists – the equivalent of contemporary physical anthropology – or ethnologists – the equivalent of contemporary cultural anthropologists. See Penny and Bunzl, *Worldly Provincialism*, p. 1. For the sake of clarity I employ the terms used by the explorers themselves to describe their relevant fields.

## RITUAL TIME, MUSIC, MOVEMENT AND CANNIBALISM

This section will firstly compare the narration of rituals observed amongst Muslim entourages in the works of Barth, Rohlf and Nachtigal, for these are the ‘others’ with whom these explorers have the most contact.<sup>257</sup> This comparison will introduce the theme of fetishism and emphasise differentiated interpretations of the same rituals. Secondly we will examine portrayals of indigenous African rituals in these works and compare them with Schweinfurth’s experiences. This will highlight the theme of movement as an element of contrast, but also connection, between Africans and Germans. Finally, we will look at the theme of ritual cannibalism, comparing Schweinfurth’s with Frobenius’s portrayal. Initially, our first explorers propagate images of indigenous African culture stagnating in non-linear, non-progressive ‘primitive’ concepts defined by fetish and ritual. Yet through the coming analyses we will see that, as their understanding of African rituals deepens, explorers begin to recognise that their sense of self as a ‘modern’ German can be related to ‘unmodern’ Africans. Hence their belief in a one-dimensional path of cultural progression, and the linear-progressive cumulative passage of time, is slowly eroded.

Although our first explorers tend to reserve the term ‘ritual’ for ‘primitive’ forms of African religious ceremony, their passage through Africa is undoubtedly structured by

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<sup>257</sup> The entourage is designated a quasi hybrid role as cultural mediator, yet only within the limits defined by the *Reisende*. The disjunctive relationship between both parties signifies the attempt by the explorers to prevent a reciprocal flow of communication. They employ the entourage as a means to extract information, on which they are grudgingly dependent. Although not a traditional example of ‘encounter’, the institutionalised contact between German explorers and their African entourages forces constant interaction from which the explorers cannot distance themselves. The results provide interesting material for analysis.

events emanating obvious social significance which can also be classed as such. In his work *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*, anthropologist Roy A. Rappaport defines the term ‘ritual’ as denoting ‘the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers’.<sup>258</sup> This wide-reaching definition, as Rappaport states, encompasses much more than religious behaviour. ‘Ritual’ is used with the closely related term ‘ceremony’ in psychological, anthropological and sociological fields to describe ‘certain conventional, repetitive but nevertheless adaptive interactions between people’ (Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion*, p. 26). As we saw in previous chapters, these definitions apply to our earlier explorers who punctuated their journeys with rituals abounding in temporal imagery. The idea of ‘encoding’ plays a significant role in these ceremonies, as gestures of shared belief serve as bonds of common cultural understanding between explorers and their European readership. Ritual acts and celebrations radiate significance for those sharing the explorers’ cultural beliefs and generate apparent incomprehension amongst African ‘others’. Barth’s symbolic reiteration of the western time-set during his New Year celebrations is, for example, deliberately employed as an exclusionary device between ‘them’ and us’, for the Muslim entourage look on in apparent incomprehension.<sup>259</sup> Rituals undertaken by our explorers Rohlf and Stuhlmann are intended to signify order and control – synonymous with rational, linear-time and also Germanic self-

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<sup>258</sup> Roy A. Rappaport, *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 24.

<sup>259</sup> See Chapter IV, p. 122. The entourage partake in the celebration from an uninformed perspective, i.e. externally. They conform momentarily to European hegemony, thus accepting the disjunctive relationship desired and upheld by Barth. However, the watching Muslims may simply be tolerating the ‘infidels’ and censoring any feelings of aggression, as they believe their religion, historically the later of the two, to be the least primitive. The silence of the text here in relation to the entourage does not, as Fiedler suggests, create a clear-cut image of German superiority. This may be the author’s intention, yet it is not entirely successful. One of the most interesting features of the works is the fact that, try as they might, explorers are unable to enclose alterity within familiar German concepts.

understanding. It comes then as no surprise, that their descriptions of African ritual celebrations portray Africa as the antithesis of the rational German mind-set. Barth and Rohlfs, influenced implicitly by Hegelian categories of development, generally classify Islamic cultures as ranking beneath Christianity on a scale of cultural superiority, yet nevertheless – since they are monotheistic – above African tribal fetishism. Levels of cultural advancement are, of course, also measured temporally on a linear, historicist scale. These cultures are marginalised both geographically, residing in remote areas, and temporally, so that the primitive forms of worship signify a stage of development as remote from the explorers' enlightened Christianity as possible. Although never openly stated, Barth, Rohlfs and Stuhlmann imply that they possess the ability to understand both their own and alien cultural rituals, whilst the African 'other' is confined to a state of ignorance. Yet as we shall see in the following section, this cultural barrier is not as impenetrable as certain explorers assume.

Let us look at those rituals observed amongst members of the explorers' entourages before discussing those observed amongst African tribes. In spite of the emphasis evident in the self-portrayals of Barth, Rohlfs and Stuhlmann as lone travellers, their expeditions in truth consisted of large entourages, to whose expertise and local knowledge a great proportion of the expedition's success could be attributed.<sup>260</sup> The entourage's privileged position as cultural mediator proves threatening to those explorers uncertain of their own identity: Barth, Rohlfs and as we shall see later, also

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<sup>260</sup> Fiedler states that 'Indem sich die Reisenden als Helden stilisieren, stellen sie sich gleichzeitig als Individuum in das Zentrum ihrer Texte'. This statement does however seem to contradict Fiedler's earlier remark that the explorers omit all elements of the 'Individuellen' (Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteuer*, pp. 170-1).

Stuhlmann. With this in mind, let us begin with Rohlfs's assessment of North-African ritual practices. Rohlfs, on his way to Rhadames in the first leg of his expedition, is at the foot of the Hammada plateau in the Ghorian Mountains. The following excerpt describes the entourage's spiritual preparation for this testing stretch of terrain. Rohlfs – whose passage is interrupted by this Bedouin ritual, reacts with dismissive incomprehension:

Ehe wir sie [die Hammada T.D.] überschritten, veranlassten mich meine Kameltreiber, weil ich zum ersten Mal des Weges ziehe, einen kleinen Steinhügel, Bu-Sfor oder Bu-saffar (Reisevater), zu errichten. Den Ursprung und die Bedeutung dieser Sitte konnten sie mir nicht erklären, oder ich verstand die Erklärung nicht. Erst später erfuhr ich, daß die Bu-Sfor Fetische sind, welche den Reisenden, der das erste Mal solche hervorragenden Punkte berührt, vor Ungemach schützen sollen, und das mit der Aufrichtung eines Bu-Sfor zugleich der Verpflichtung verbunden ist, den Reisegefährten ein Mahl zu geben. (Rohlfs, I, p. 52)

The narration is typically dry and factual, yet nevertheless far more informative than Rohlfs's typical portrayals of transit. At first, Rohlfs presents us with a clear, and seemingly knowledgeable account of the ritual. He includes an authoritative translation of its name, including orthographic variations. He then refers to the object at hand – a small pile of stones by the wayside – giving us a visual image of the scene. However, we soon realise that this is the full extent of Rohlfs's comprehension. Aside from



external appearances, Rohlf's fails to comprehend the nature of the 'Bu-saffar' until much later. Hence the 'Bu-saffar' presents Rohlf's with an example of impregnable duality. Rohlf's however attributes it to fetishism, a characteristic of 'primitive' cultural status which lacks rational explanation and is rooted in superstition. As Hartmut Böhme writes in *Fetischismus und Kultur*, the nineteenth-century developed an increasingly wide and negative meaning of the concept of fetishism, 'der Fetischismus wird zu einem zunehmend entgrenzten Sammelbegriff, unter welchen alles subsumiert wird, was als irrationale, abergläubische oder perverse Objektbeziehung gilt'.<sup>261</sup> For the idea that an object is granted a 'source of power' and possesses a form of 'agency' to the fetishist undermines the 'wesentliche Prinzipien der europäischen Aufklärung und Wissenschaft' (Böhme, *Fetischismus und Kultur*, p. 17).<sup>262</sup> Rohlf's believes in man's ability to exert control over his environment, not vice versa. Fetishism is thus typically reserved for African 'others' as a sign of absolute difference and cultural inferiority.

In fact, the ritualistic tradition which Rohlf's describes as fetishism is less motivated by 'primitive' religious beliefs than the collective climatic and territorial adversities faced by all desert travellers. Yet Rohlf's fails to acknowledge this connection. Unlike the exclusionary rituals narrated by our European explorers, Rohlf's's entourage attempts to include him in their ceremony. Rohlf's however rejects the possibility of collective

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<sup>261</sup> Hartmut Böhme, *Fetischismus und Kultur. Eine andere Theorie der Moderne* (Rowohlt: Reinbek, 2006), p.17.

<sup>262</sup> This directly contradicts later revalorisations of African art such as we observed in the previous chapter. It is precisely this concept of agency and power that Einstein, for example, particularly emphasises in *Negerplastik*. He tells us that African sculptures are, from the outset, treated by the sculptor as a deity, or the deity's 'custodian'. The relationship between the sculptor and the work is thus one of 'adoration from a distance'. The sculpture is a priori 'independent'. It is more powerful than its maker who, through his full devotion to the object, 'sacrifices' himself to it as the 'weaker' being. Einstein, *Negerplastik*, pp. 5-6.

experience. This is emphasised by the conscious differentiation of narrative situation. Typically, Rohlfs's movement is narrated as a collective, dynamic 'wir' and so encompasses the entourage and himself as leader. Yet here, the 'wir' who travel and move through African terrain together, become the 'ich' and 'sie' of opposing poles of understanding when stationary. This correlates with Rohlfs's alternating narrative situation for transit and sojourn. Here, the notion of fetish ignites the hermeneutic of suspicion and deception which, as we have seen, runs throughout Rohlfs's narrative from his use of disguise and loaded references to the veiled landscape. Rohlfs suggests that the event has no greater substance other than as a mere trick from which his entourage will benefit.

Let us compare Rohlfs's assessment of ritual practices to Nachtigal's experiences. Nachtigal's reveries and aesthetic perception distance him from the controlling western time-set. Heading southwards through the Sahara to the town of Mursuk, Nachtigal demonstrates that his African experience is structured around a hybrid combination of both Christian and Islamic calendars: 'wir hätten gern Murzuq zum großen Beiramfeste, dem 'Id el-Kebir, das auf den 24. März fiel, erreicht. Da dies unmöglich war, so beschlossen wir, den üblichen Hammel in Rhodwa zu schlachten und in der uns zugänglichen bescheidenen Weise den Tag festlich zu begehen' (Nachtigal, I, p. 22). Shortly afterwards, reference is made to the day being 'der erste Ostertag', which merits mentioning, yet goes unmarked by any celebration (Nachtigal, I, p. 26). Like all of our explorers, Nachtigal is not a devout, practising Christian, yet he acknowledges the presence and influence of Christianity in his culture. As we saw in Chapter II, the

influence of Christianity dissipated due to the increasing predominance of science and technology in nineteenth-century Europe.<sup>263</sup> Nachtigal does not reject his cultural affiliation during his passage through Africa, yet he does emphasise its inappropriateness to his endeavour.

Nachtigal reiterates this inappropriateness a short time later as he describes two further celebrations. After traversing the same stretch as Barth and Rohlf's before him, Nachtigal and his entourage are camped outside the town of Tedscherri as they prepare for their departure south-eastwards to 'noch nie von europäischem Fuße betretenen Landschaften' (Nachtigal I, p. 52). Paralleling Barth's symbolic beginning, the eve of Nachtigal's long desert traversal also coincides with a festival synonymous with the beginning of journeys. It is the same celebration which aroused Rohlf's suspicion, yet Nachtigal's description provides us with a completely different perspective. Far from dismissal, Nachtigal views the occasion as a good omen with which to inaugurate his expedition:

Dies war der Tag des Milad, des Geburtstages des Propheten, und da ohnehin der Beginn einer größeren Reise durch das Extrafleischgericht gefeiert zu werden pflegt, das den Namen Bu Safar, das heißt Vater oder Anfang der Reise, führt, so hatten wir abends zuvor einen fetten Ziegenbock geschlachtet und verzehrten ihn morgens vor dem Aufbruche zu Ehren des

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<sup>263</sup> Theologian David Friedrich Strauss's works questioning the historical origins of Christianity and suggesting myth as the hermeneutical key to New Testament texts exemplify the move away from traditional acceptance of Christian teaching in Germany. David Friedrich Strauss, *Das Leben Jesu* (Tübingen: C.F.Osiander, 1835)

Propheten und zur Inaugurierung einer glücklichen Reise. (Nachtigal, I, p. 52)

The same instance which prompted Rohlf's negativity and rejection of shared experience is celebrated collectively by Nachtigal and his entourage. There is no question of misunderstanding or exclusion. In fact, Nachtigal's 'ohnehin' suggests unquestionable acceptance. Rather than describing appearances, Nachtigal emphasises the actions undertaken and their significance. The collective 'wir' participates in all of the actions associated with the celebrations and so blurs the border between 'self' and 'other'. Nachtigal makes no exceptions in his narration to discern who is honouring the Prophet and/or inaugurating the journey. As no differentiation is made, it is clear that all those present share the symbolic nature of both rituals and not – as Rohlf suggests – merely the external motions and pleasure of a feast. In comparison to Rohlf's 'irrational fetishism', Nachtigal's ritual celebration is perfectly rational and comprehensible. It demonstrates the overriding, integrative, symbolic significance of journeys and sacred time to the collective human consciousness.

If we examine a further aspect of Nachtigal's excerpt – the 'Aufbruch' – and compare it with Barth's experiences, the success of Nachtigal's platform for shared communication becomes increasingly evident. Nachtigal highlights the joyous atmosphere as the 'Extrafleisch' dish of plump goat is devoured with relish. The celebratory mood continues as the party prepare to leave, expecting a 'glückliche Reise'. Barth's typical experiences of 'Aufbruch' are in contrast a constant means to reinforce

cultural distance between the explorer and his entourage. Barth complains that his entourage consists of incessant ‘time-wasters’ and implies that this is in fact due to non-Europeans’ inability to understand time’s value (Barth, I, pp. 48-51).<sup>264</sup> Both explorers, instead of creating a picture of cultural ignorance on behalf of the African entourage, appear to be irrational themselves. For they deliberately exclude their entourages from common modes of understanding to then berate them for their incomprehension.<sup>265</sup> Nachtigal’s experience, in contrast, demonstrates that adherence to a strict time-set proves to be detrimental to communication and thus his expedition’s success. As the following encounter epitomises, in Nachtigal’s case, symmetrical communication is facilitated rather than prevented by North-African rituals, once the exclusionary side to the German time-set is disregarded.

Five months into the expedition, now travelling through unfamiliar territory between Tedscherri and Enneri Zouar in West-Tibesti, Nachtigal partakes in another significant ritual. Nachtigal’s expedition is travelling through territory controlled by the Bedouin Zuar tribe. In order to gain permission to pass freely through the territories, Nachtigal invites the leader to his camp. As expected – Nachtigal tells us this is ‘selbstverständlich’ in the desert – a ‘Wortkampf’ begins between both parties which lasts from sunrise to sunset (Nachtigal I, p. 71). Two members of Nachtigal’s entourage, Kolokomi and Bu Said, are nominated as ‘Advokaten’ to bargain for their unhindered

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<sup>264</sup> Later reports, however, written by Emin Pascha, demonstrate a similar, Muslim attitude towards time. In spite of his predecessors’ assumptions that the western concept of time’s value is not incorporated into the Arab-Muslim mind-set, Emin Pascha describes his experiences of lost time with the Arab-Muslim saying ‘Warten ist schlimmer als Feuer’ (Emin Pascha, *Gefährvolle Entdeckungsreisen*, p. 293). The entourages’ silence in both Barth’s and Rohlf’s narratives obscures such cultural parallels.

<sup>265</sup> Again, Fiedler’s assumption that the silence of the text surrounding the entourage creates an image of German superiority does not allow for the subconscious, self-contradictory nature of the authors’ portrayals.

passage with the ‘Sprecher der feindlichen Partei’, Derdekore (Nachtigal I, p. 72). Nachtigal is fascinated by the figure of Derdekore to whom he devotes extensive narrative time. Although the Bedouin’s clothing is pitiful, Nachtigal describes him as a proud, majestic, ambitious figure (Nachtigal, I, p. 72). He tells us that ‘selten habe ich eine solche Gewandtheit in der Diskussion, eine solche Redfertigkeit beobachtet [...] seine Fähigkeit den Inhalt einer Gegenrede zu verdrehen, erfüllte mich mit Bewunderung’ (Nachtigal I, p. 73). Nachtigal is powerless in this situation. He feels blackmailed and threatened by the Zuar (Nachtigal I, p. 74). Yet throughout this ritual, his aesthetic perception enables him to admire Derdekore’s naturally commanding presence and rhetorical skill (Nachtigal I, p. 73). Nachtigal acknowledges his subordination to foreign influence with a significant reference to Derdekore’s departure at ‘the time of ’Ascha’ (Nachtigal I, p. 74). The presence of non-western time in Nachtigal’s narrative signals the redundancy of the western time-set as a marker of presumed cultural superiority.

Let us now look at another aspect of cross-cultural encounter between our German explorers and indigenous Africans. As our pre-colonial explorers move further into less-documented territory, they encounter indigenous Africans with little or no experience of white cultures. Unlike the entourage, the *Reisende* are not reliant on the subjects of these encounters in any way, other than as objects of cognitive interest with which to assess levels of ‘cultural development’. The meetings are unmediated and unstructured by the locals and so signify a considerable communicative disadvantage on their part. These subjects thus present ideal criteria of comparison with which to evince cultural

supremacy, which is by and large judged by the nature of religion and its associated ritual practices. These encounters provide the greatest opportunity for early explorers such as Barth and Rohlfs to impose the western time-set as a disjunctive device with which to maintain objective distance between themselves and ‘the other’ as an object of study.<sup>266</sup>

Yet surprisingly, even Barth, the well-educated representative of Germanic intellectual culture, acknowledges levels of cultural and social development which in many ways seem superior to his own. The explorer has almost reached the expedition’s official destination, Kuka, a town in the Nigerian province of Bornu and residence of the powerful Sheikh Omar. The town is the designated meeting place for Barth and Richardson, who had parted ways two months earlier to undertake short, separate excursions. Barth’s excursion takes him through the bustling town of Kanō, in which he spends six weeks. One particular feature, described below, stands out as particularly positive:

Berücksichtigen wir nun, dass die Gewerbetätigkeit nicht, wie in Europa, in ungeheuren Fabriken betrieben wird, und den Menschen zur niedrigsten Stellung hinabdrückt, sondern, dass jede Familie zu der wirtschaftlichen Blüte beiträgt, ohne ihr Privatleben aufzuopfern, so dürfen wir schließen, dass Kanō eines der glücklichsten Länder der Welt sein müsse. (Barth, II, p. 145)

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<sup>266</sup> Thus the explorers attempt to create the ‘denial of coevalness’ described by Fabian in *Time and the Other*.

Barth's positive appraisal is triggered by negative associations with *western*, ritual movement. It can be said, that the repetitive, dehumanising movement of the production line becomes a ritual movement symbolic of western modernisation. It is the physical representation of commodified time. Commodified time is the marker of industrialisation and modernisation which introduced the production line and eliminated small-scale production. Barth's encounter with, and appreciation of, pre-industrial production methods reawakens a side of our explorers' German mind-set other than a fixation with logic, rationalism and linear-progressive time. The romantic idealisation of the artisan suggests his longing for a past era. Germany's relatively late industrialisation in comparison to its European neighbours meant that European culture's assumed superiority was not yet irretrievably ingrained in Germanic consciousness. Here, Barth suggests an implicit critique of industrialised culture and so valorises alternative social norms.<sup>267</sup> This particular episode, if only momentary, reflects a *conscious* rupture in Barth's assumed cultural superiority. Until now, Barth has unquestioningly encouraged the imposition of his cultural norms onto Africa. Any ruptures in his narrative of cultural superiority – as for example during his desert encounters – have been unintentional. During this episode, however, Barth, implies that his own society would benefit from African norms, not vice versa. Significantly, this realisation is prompted by alternative rhythms which oppose the prioritisation of commodified time.

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<sup>267</sup> Exotic literature presents similar critiques of western culture, yet suggests that the move to non-European locations and the imposition of preconceived cultural values onto these territories provides the solution to European disenchantment. Ridley notes similar criticisms of German industrialisation reflected in Gerstäcker's 'lament for the loss of naturalness in contemporary Germany' in his exotic novel *Die Missionare* from 1868. Gerstäcker's protagonist describes a paradise which Ridley defines as 'a construction of the European mind, anxious to escape particular conditions in contemporary Europe, with the organic, tightly-knit community [...] corresponding closely to that *Gemeinschaft* whose disappearance in the face of urbanization and industrialisation Ferdinand Tönnies was to describe in 1889 (Ridley, *Images of Imperial Rule*, p. 23). Ernst Willkomm's *Die Europamüden* from 1838 also presents a disenchanted image of industrialised Germany.



Rohlf's impressions of the same province differ considerably from those of his predecessor. For Rohlf, his arrival in Bornu marks the completion of a significant part of his expedition. He devotes an uncharacteristically extensive amount of narrative time to the area's history, climate and population. Rohlf even begins with a positive appraisal. He notes high productivity levels and tells us that Bornu possesses an institute of higher education (Rohlf, II, p. 7). Yet characteristically, Rohlf demonstrates that any initial, positive impressions of Africa he may have are deceptive. The aspects which would suggest levels of 'cultural advancement' are indeed overturned by the nature of ritual practices he observes amongst the Africans residing in the 'Negerland' Bornu:

Dennoch hat der Islam im Volk keine Wurzel geschlagen und wird es auch nie, er scheint in Afrika über eine gewisse Grenze nicht hinaus zu können. Man nahm den Eingeborenen ihren uralten Fetischdienst, ohne dass sie für die Idee des Monotheismus gewonnen wurden, nicht einmal ein Wort besitzen sie in ihrer Sprache für Gott, denn kéma-nde, womit sie das Fremdwort Allah übersetzen, heisst Herr im bürgerlichen Sinn; gebetet aber wird ausschließlich in arabischer Sprache, die weitaus den meisten unverständlich ist. Früher verehrten sie einen Waldteufel, Koliram, und einen Wasserteufel, Ngámaram; jetzt feiern sie gar keine Gottheit mehr, und ihre ganze Religion besteht in allerlei Aberglauben und einigen äusserst verworrenen Vorstellungen von Paradies und Hölle der Mohammedaner. Daher haben auch die religiösen Feste keine tiefere Bedeutung für sie, sondern werden nur mit wiederkehrenden Naturerscheinungen, wie

Vollmond, Eintritt der Regenzeit und dergleichen, in Verbindung gebracht.

(Rohlf's, II, p. 9)

As we have seen, Rohlf's tends to lack any deeper sense of understanding when confronted with alternative cultural practices. His judgement of their content is likely to be inaccurate and dismissive. Rohlf's's authoritative narrative style reinforces both spatial and cultural distance between himself as an observer and 'the others' as participants. Mythical creatures, superstition and natural phenomena appear to be the significant aspects of this religion. The episode, although hardly reliable as an insight into indigenous African religions, epitomises Rohlf's's attitude to alternative modes of structuring time. This is the key element on which his judgement of other cultures depends. According to Rohlf's, the Africans in Bornu only honour recurrent, unchanging natural phenomena. Such rituals, so Rohlf's implies, demonstrate African cultural inferiority, for their cyclical nature is not combined with a linear concept of beginning and end. As there is no ultimate goal, Rohlf's implies that the culture itself makes no attempt to attain a 'higher' status. Yet this description also proves that an understanding of time does exist. Even though it is not measured mathematically, it is nevertheless divided into units of reference. These are event-related occurrences, revolving around natural phenomena, or actions, i.e. practical tasks which denote a finite period of time. For Rohlf's, this African concept of time is the epitome of cultural otherness and the greatest threat to his purported superior understanding and control of time. He therefore propagates the Africans' cultural inferiority based on the incongruity of models of temporal reference. He implies that these Africans lack direction, such as the presence

of Europeans on the continent as a liberating force with which to free ‘the other’ from their unending cyclical constraints. The Islamic influence, so Rohlf’s maintains, is wasted here, for these Africans are incapable of comprehending Islamic divine concepts. According to Rohlf’s, these divine concepts are already on a ‘lower’ level than Christianity. Instead, religious practices in Bornu are grouped under the collective, derogatory title of ‘fetishes’. Yet this theme of ‘fetishism’, which even the Romantics considered passé, arouses opposing reactions from those explorers less intent on imposing their own cultural norms onto Africa.

It comes then as no surprise that Nachtigal’s reaction to the theme of fetishism in Central Africa is far more progressive and insightful than that of his predecessors. Böhme opens his work with an anecdote on the use of horseshoes in western culture as bringers of good luck. He states that ‘bereits’ in 1912 the ethnographer Robert H. Milligan had recognised, ‘dass der Aberglaube deutscher Bauern an Glück verheißende Hufeisen dem Fetisch-Glauben der westafrikanischen “Neger” gleichkäme’ (Böhme, *Fetischismus und Kultur*, p. 13). Whilst describing North-African customs in Mursuk, the capital of the province of Fesan, some fifty years earlier, Nachtigal makes a similar observation:

Jedes Haus [in Fesan – T.D.] hat an der Tür ein mystisches Zeichen zur Abwehr, und Mensch und Tier trägt am Arm oder Halse Eckzähne des Wildschweins, Fischknochen, Hundszähne oder geschriebene geheimnisvolle Amulette gegen die bewussten und unbewussten Zauberer.

Wenn der Glaube an diese auch in den meisten Ländern Europas erheblich abgenommen hat, so haben die unbestimmten Theorien der nicht übersinnlichen Krankheitsentstehungen im Volke bei uns noch weitverbreitete Geltung, und eben dieselben Anschauungen finden wir auch in Fezzan gang und gebe. (Nachtigal, I, pp. 33-4)

In direct contrast to Rohlf's narrative style, Nachtigal's narration highlights cultural parallels and so reduces both the geographical and cultural distance between Europe and Africa. Nachtigal thus pre-empts modernist discourse by invalidating the degradation of fetishism and superstition as a belief in magic akin to low levels of cultural development. The theme of fetishism which is ever-present in the *Afrikareisende* macrotext, comes to represent a universal connection rather than a sign of impregnable duality.<sup>268</sup> Our explorers provide early evidence in support of Böhme's statement that the nineteenth century and capitalism paradoxically produced the greatest fascination and obsession with material objects in western society, and so eventually brought the idea of fetishism into the centre of western culture.<sup>269</sup>

Anfänglich war der Fetischismus ein peripherer Term zur Bezeichnung von unverständenen und, im christlichen Sinn, anstößigen religiösen Praktiken, welche Missionaren, Kaufleuten und Reisenden in zentralafrikanischen

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<sup>268</sup> As we saw in the previous chapter, literary exoticism and modernist art explored the 'primitive' within us.

<sup>269</sup> Our later explorers' fascination with collections – from botanic specimens to human remains and religious artefacts – highlights Böhme's point; 'man sammelte, hantierte, besorgte, begehrte, stellte aus, verbrauchte, benutzte, kaufte und verkaufte, hortete und verschwendete, ordnete und klassifizierte, bewertete und schätzte Dinge in einer alltagsgeschichtlich vorbildlosen Manie und Intensität' (Böhme, *Fetischismus und Kultur*, p. 18).

Stammesgesellschaften auffielen. Am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts dagegen ist der Fetischismus nicht nur weltweit ausgedehnt auf alle Formen der ‘primitive culture’, sondern er ist ins Zentrum der europäischen Gesellschaften gerückt. Was eine befremdliche Alterität primitiver Kulturen schien, schreckt wie eine Fratze aus allen Segmenten der europäischen Kultur selbst. *Alles* konnte als Fetisch und *alle* als Fetischisten verdächtigt werden. (Böhme, *Fetischismus und Kultur*, p.19)

Schweinfurth’s portrayals of African rituals demonstrate increasing levels of insight into African cultural complexities. Although his predecessors Barth and Rohlfs are fascinated to different extents by African displays of music and dance, Schweinfurth is the first to acknowledge their meaning. Whilst residing for a week in the village of Geer in the Bongo district, Schweinfurth witnesses celebrations in honour of crop-sowing. The revelries, initially described as ‘wilde Orgien’ due to the vast amount of alcohol consumed, last day and night throughout Schweinfurth’s stay (Schweinfurth, I, p. 183). Schweinfurth initially remains physically and emotionally remote from the ‘verwirrendes Durcheinander’ of music and dance. Yet on the final evening Schweinfurth remarks that he suddenly ‘bestaunt die Musik’, for he recognises that it mimics ‘die tobenden Elemente’ (Schweinfurth, I, p. 183). He finds himself drawn into the rolling and raging of the drums in wonder and anticipation of the musical crescendo. After confronting the power of nature first hand, Schweinfurth experiences a musical epiphany which enables a greater insight into African culture. The meaning behind the music and dance which had previously eluded him suddenly becomes clear. It is the

common human need to describe, understand and so ‘magically control’ one’s surroundings – in this case the daily struggle with climatic adversity. This example of African culture, previously viewed as a sign of impregnable duality, suddenly becomes a cultural connection. Schweinfurth’s description of rolling African drums which echo epic tropical thunderstorms are cited in numerous later *Afrikareisende* travel narratives.<sup>270</sup>

However, another ritual presents uncharacteristic interaction between Schweinfurth and members of an African tribe. The disturbing encounter takes place in an African village which Schweinfurth is merely passing through. The narration begins with a deliberately misleading, poetic description of a family idyll; three generations are sat together in front of a picturesque domicile on a sunny day. As Schweinfurth and his local translator move closer they notice that the baby lying in a hammock is wheezing, yet no-one is paying it any attention. Inquiring after the baby’s health, Schweinfurth learns that it is the newborn child of a slave. The family is waiting patiently for the baby to die, to then feast on its flesh. Although an anthropophagic tribe, they refuse to kill humans purposely for consumption. Schweinfurth, disturbed by the scene, does not intervene. He protests his inability to alter the status quo, as he is after all a mere

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<sup>270</sup> Emin Pascha compares Schweinfurth’s description of African music and dance to his own experiences in Equatorial Africa. He notes that the music made by the ‘Naturkinder’ merges to become one with the sound of the elements, (Emin Pascha, *Gefährvolle Entdeckungen*, p. 265). Here the term ‘Naturkinder’ is less derogatory than its codification in linear-historicist concepts. For like Junker and Nachtigal before him, Emin admires both the inhabitants’ physical and mental ability to adapt to extreme conditions. As Adolf Bastian writes, the ability to adapt to one’s external surroundings is a sign of *Vernunft*; ‘Das erste der Vernunftsgesetze lehrt, der Natur gemäss zu leben, für den Einzelnen, um seinen Körper nicht zu ruinieren, und für Völker in Betreff der sozialen Organisation. Wer mit dem Kopf durch die Wand will, rennt sich denselben ein’. Adolf Bastian, *Zwei Worte über Colonial-Weisheit von jemandem dem dieselbe versagt ist* (Berlin: Dümmler, [n.d.]), p. 15.

observer on the African continent.<sup>271</sup> He justifies his actions by comparing his behaviour to the similar mentality of the largely Islamic leaders in control of the area; namely it serves little to intervene in local affairs as this is unlikely to change anything in the long term. Yet Schweinfurth, as we shall see, spends a large part of his narration questioning and denigrating Arab-Muslim ideology. Just as the episode began, Schweinfurth swiftly returns focus back to the surrounding vegetation and plant life, and so devotes no further time at all to reflection. The explorer is unable to express his shock at this first experience of cannibalism. Although aware of its presence amongst certain African tribes, Schweinfurth was wholly unprepared for the calm, calculated nature with which it is practised.

Schweinfurth's later encounter with the Monbutto tribes at the most southerly point of his journey through Central Africa provides further insight into his earlier experience of cannibalism. He describes the area 'ein irdisches Paradies' (Schweinfurth, II, p. 90). The completely self-sufficient community with its 'idyllische Behausungen' had neither previous contact to the Arab world nor western culture (Schweinfurth, II, p. 90). In spite of their lack of external influences, the inhabitants display 'bewundernswerte intellektuelle Fähigkeiten' (Schweinfurth, II, p. 89). Schweinfurth resides for five weeks, yet still feels unqualified to comment on the nature of religious celebrations which, contrary to general perception, are highly complex. Yet Schweinfurth finds his entire ideology overturned by the presence of both progressive culture and the most

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<sup>271</sup> The inspiration for Kafka's *Reisender* who embodies the contradictions of German colonial expansion, could have been derived from Schweinfurth's encounter. Kafka's character states 'Es ist immer bedenklich, in fremde Verhältnisse einzugreifen [...] denn er reise nur mit der Absicht zu sehen' (Kafka, *Strafkolonie*, p. 43).

primitive of practices – cannibalism – in one area. Hence he becomes an early critic of the concept of linear, singular human development and cultural advancement as an attribute of external influence.<sup>272</sup> Let us look at Frobenius's experiences of cannibalism, for they present an intensification of Schweinfurth's findings.

Frobenius's description of his residence with the Basongye tribe highlights the paradoxes of rationalism and primitivism spotted by Schweinfurth.<sup>273</sup> He begins by detailing the long and well thought-out process surrounding the consumption of human flesh:

Im übrigen gingen die Menschenzüchter in bezug auf ihre Opfer von klaren Überlegungen aus. Mir sagte ein Bassonge, daß ein Mann nur dann dick und fett würde, wenn er verheiratet sei, und wenn er keinerlei Sorgen habe. Deshalb müsse man also auf jeden Fall einem Zuchtsklaven einer Frau geben, sonst werde es mit dem Fett nichts Rechtes. Außerdem dürfe der Mann nicht beständig in Angst schweben, daß er demnächst gegessen würde, denn dann magere er eher noch ab, als daß er zunehme. Am besten wäre es jedenfalls, wenn es dazu käme, daß der Mann während der Mastzeit Vater wurde, denn dann fühle er sich im allgemeinen sehr wohl und nehme beträchtlich zu. Man sieht daraus nicht nur, wie raffiniert diese Gesellschaft

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<sup>272</sup> As we saw in the previous chapter, Frobenius cites this opinion as widely accepted amongst his contemporaries.

<sup>273</sup> Frobenius's experiences with the Basongye tribe are still recognised as a ground-breaking insight into African culture. See Alan P. Merriam, 'Kifwebe and Other Cult Groups Among the Bala (Basongye)' in *African Religious Groups and Beliefs*, ed. by S. Ottenberg (Archana: Delhi, 1982), p. 20.



ist und ihre Maßnahmen ergreift, sondern mit welcher großen Überlegung  
bis zur logischen Schlußfolgerungen gelangen. (Frobenius, I, p.11)

This excerpt, which summarises Frobenius's experiences with the Basongye, is cited in his opening chapter to both prepare the squeamish reader and to signal a radical rethinking of the so-called 'primitive'. In comparison to many preconceptions of cannibalism as an animalistic, bloodthirsty rampage of human flesh, Frobenius conveys its methodological, calculated, even 'logical' approach. Interestingly, Frobenius relates the process through indirect speech and so emphasises that the rational process comes directly from the 'primitive' African. Frobenius continues to tell us that there is a mystical air of ritual surrounding the occasion, which again is not fuelled by wild, irrational, uncontrolled desire, for after the 'fattening process' has been achieved, the slave is killed in a precise and meticulous manner. Firstly, the tribal shaman consults his oracle for instruction as to the date. The slave is led into the long grass on the savannah and struck from behind. His body is covered in grass for a day then burnt. Only male elders are allowed to partake in the ensuing feast which takes place in the shelter of the long grass. Female tribe members are consequently completely unaware of the practice. Frobenius quotes a nameless traveller from the 1860s who states 'Sie essen Menschenfleisch mit demselben Gefühl, wie wir ein gutes Beefsteak' (Frobenius, I, p. 13). Yet Frobenius counters 'es scheint vielmehr eine ganz eigenartige Stimmung über solchem Festmahle in hohen Grasen zu lagern. Die Speißegenossenschaft wird mit einem Bande umschlungen, das eine gewisse mystisch-religiöse Kraft zu besitzen scheint' (Frobenius, I, p. 12). The tribe belongs to 'die geschmackvollsten und

geschicktesten, taktvollsten und intelligentesten' African peoples Frobenius and his entourage encounter (Frobenius, I, p. 13). They had cities, infrastructure, a parliamentary system and established trade routes long before any other culture had reached the area. Frobenius concludes his excerpt with the following statement:

Ist es nicht augenscheinlich, daß die eine abgeschmackte Sitte der Menschenfresserei durchaus nicht als Symptom absoluten kulturellen Tiefstandes gelten kann? Und ist es nicht ganz klar, daß solche Kunstfertigkeit, solche bedeutende Entwicklung des Handels, solche Städteanlagen und Städtebildung das Produkt langer, kulturgeschichtlicher Entwicklung sind? (Frobenius, I, p. 14)

Contrary to many of our earlier explorers' beliefs, Frobenius demonstrates here that it is impossible to judge cultures on a one-dimensional scale of development from primitive to advanced. He addresses his readers directly and calls on them to rethink existing categories of classification, for the experiences he presents run counter to established norms, in particular the common use of the term 'Neger', with all its negative connotations (Frobenius, I, p. 188). In a complete reversal of his predecessors' findings, his fascination with African rituals is the gateway to a new understanding of African cultures. Let us look at a final example of African ritual, narrated by Frobenius, which is still cited as an authoritative account of African cultural practices.<sup>274</sup> This ritual, most

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<sup>274</sup> Frobenius's experiences for example, are cited as the most in-depth portrayal of Ifa, or the Yoruba ritual of consulting divining chains, in Philip M. Peek 'The Divining Chain in Southern Nigeria' in *African Religious Groups*, 187-205, p. 188. Peek notes that the complex process is still not fully understood by western scholars.

significantly, reveals an African mode of structuring time and an African cultural 'System' which is 'wohldurchdacht' 'anschaulich' and 'rhythmisch'. The existence of this system, Frobenius tells us, will certainly cause surprise, yet a few decades earlier it would have been met with utter disbelief (Frobenius, I, p. 188).

The Yoruba, Frobenius discovers, structure their lives around the ritual consultation of oracles. The Yoruba believe that the oracles establish contact with dead ancestors, who in turn have access to the Orishas, or family deities.<sup>275</sup> These oracles not only dictate a specific ritual time, they also dictate future actions. These tightly structured rituals fall into two types of oracle-reading which are intended to provide answers to yes/no questions (Frobenius, I, p. 191). The first oracle, Frobenius tells us, involves splitting two cola nuts into eight pieces, each with a flat inner side and convex outer side. These eight pieces are then thrown onto a flat surface. If four land on their convex, outer surface, this is an affirmative answer. Any other combination is negative (Frobenius, I, p. 191). This ritual is undertaken annually by each individual to determine the general course of their actions over the next year, for example, the choice of profession, the type of crops to be planted or marriage (Frobenius, I, p. 191).<sup>276</sup> The oracle must also be repeated three times per week, on the first, third and fifth days, to decide smaller

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<sup>275</sup> Each family, or clan, has a given deity, an Orisha, which is worshipped as the clan's life-giving source and protector. Each family member is part of their given Orisha when alive, and when dead, returns to the Orisha. Each Orisha has particular attributes, such as a dislike of certain materials or animals, which living representatives must also observe, Frobenius, I, p. 190.

<sup>276</sup> The oracle is also consulted in a naming-ceremony that takes place five days after the birth of a child. The family Orisha is consulted to determine the newborn child's likeness to its ancestors. As each child is believed to be the reincarnation of its forefathers, ancestral resemblance determines its name. This name can however change, as the child grows and resembles other ancestors more strongly, Frobenius, I, p. 190.

occurrences.<sup>277</sup> The second type of oracle is a divining chain, which is consulted each morning at sunrise by the head of the household. The chain of palm seeds is thrown, caught, laid down and interpreted according to the position of the seeds. This method, Frobenius discovers, both honours the god Edschu, the ‘Anführer’, and ‘Aufseher’ to all Yoruba deities, and gauges his satisfaction with each family (Frobenius, I, p. 260). If dissatisfied, the family is obliged to make sacrifices to Edschu. The ritual consultation of oracles structures the Yoruba calendar and reinforces the presence of Yoruba deities at regular, given intervals. Frobenius tells us that the Yoruba year, which is fourteen months long, is furthermore punctuated by four ritual, sacrificial ceremonies in honour of each of the four main deities. These ceremonies take place on the same day each year, at the end of each quarter-year (Frobenius, I, p. 286). Each of the four main deities, we are told, also represents a direction – north, south, east, or west – and rules over a group of lesser deities. Frobenius tells us that even Yoruba towns and settlements are tightly structured around this system of deities. Temples to each given deity will be found in the relevant part of the town, for example, Schango, god of thunder, comes from the west, hence temples in honour of Schango are constructed in the western part of each town (Frobenius, I, p. 286). Frobenius concludes from these findings, to which he devotes extensive narrative time, that Yoruba culture is an eminent, clearly-structured organism (Frobenius, I, p. 188).<sup>278</sup> Time in this culture is cyclical, for it is a constant process of

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<sup>277</sup> Frobenius tells us that the Yoruba week is five days long., four of which are devoted to the worship of a specific, main deity – Ifa, the god of secrets, Ogun, god of war, Schango, god of thunder and destinies, and Oschalla, god of the skies. The fifth day is devoted to general worship of all deities and care of Yoruba temples, Frobenius, I, p. 285.

<sup>278</sup> Frobenius initially succeeds in obtaining several Yoruba artefacts yet their meaning evades him. As Margaret Thompson Drewal writes in her work on Yoruba ritual, the meaning of Yoruba sculptures often evades ethnographers. Sculptures depict the complex process of the Yoruba member symbolically merging with its given orisha. The process is confused even more by the possibility of mixed-gender merging. Most Yoruba deities are female, yet their human representative can be either male or female.

regeneration, reincarnation and rebirth. Yet, in contrast to Rohlf's dismissive notion of stagnation, the constant reiteration of ritual processes at regular intervals is a source of vitality and growth, for it nurtures, strengthens and structures families, communities and an entire people. Frobenius's fascination with African ritual uncovers the complexities of African culture and presents alternative social and cultural models to question any a priori assumed superiority of German culture. He tells us that: 'die klare Gliederung dieses Volkes zeigt von vornherein [...] eine Gesetzmäßigkeit und eine Folgerichtigkeit, wie sie unter allen Völkern der Erde selten sind' (Frobenius, I, p. 166). This narrative marks the culmination of nascent critique in the earlier works of Barth, Schweinfurth and Nachtigal. Such recognition seems unprecedented in the era of massive European colonial expansion. In fact, as the following quotation demonstrates, Frobenius's insight into African religious ritual prompts him to condemn the colonial project as follows:

Die europäische Welle drängte auch hier mächtig heran und äußerte ihr Bestreben, alles Fremdartige fortzuspülen, alles Selbständige auszugleichen und jedes Widerstrebende zu zermalmen. (Frobenius, I, p. 64)

Frobenius employs dramatic, metaphoric language to describe the destructive potential of colonial expansion and the reason the Yoruba keep their religion so secret. This quote emphasises that the European drive for cultural assimilation goes hand in hand with the processes of industrialisation and modernisation. Many of our German explorers are alienated by tendencies to destroy cultural diversity which enjoys a long-standing

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Margaret Thompson Drewel, *Yoruba Ritual: Performers, Play, Agency* (Indiana University: Indianapolis, 1993), pp, 182-190.

tradition in Germanic culture. There is a sense of urgency in Frobenius's language which reflects a need to protect these ancient cultures from the apocalyptic onslaught. Frobenius however seems confident that the obviously well kept Yoruba secrets will be able to withstand destruction, for over time the 'innere, wohlerhaltene, klare Struktur dieser sozialen mythologischen Lebensart' have managed to remain intact. He is surprised by the 'Widerstand' and 'vitale Kraft' with which the inhabitants defend their religion (Frobenius, I, p. 64). Frobenius's return to Europe with a revalorised image of African religion and culture both refutes a priori beliefs in European cultural superiority and is a sign of rebellion against the uniformitarian spread of European culture.<sup>279</sup> As our explorer's understanding, and acceptance of alternative cultural norms increases, so their belief in, and reliance on, the western time-set as a marker of progress, recedes. This demonstrates Germany's unique and often paradoxical tradition of cross-cultural exchange which, as we shall see, went hand in hand with the Reich's own colonial enterprises. If German explorers view African culture as an essential part of their self-understanding, how does this fit into the expansionist project? With this question in mind, let us look at the category which defines our explorers' understanding of African cultural development and their own place on the African continent: religion, specifically Islam and Christianity.

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<sup>279</sup> Goldwater sees the turn towards the primitive in the Modernist movement as a direct result of a shift in ethnography from dismissive, purely descriptive impressions of African culture in the 1870's to aesthetic appreciation in the early decades of the twentieth century. German museums in Leipzig, Dresden, Berlin and Hamburg were the forerunners in this field, for they were the first to display specifically ethnographic collections. Previously, African art had been combined with collections in museums of antiquity and hence confined to the 'prehistoric'. In *Primitivism in Modern Art*, pp. 3-8.

## MONOTHEISTIC RELIGION

We have examined notions of religion employed by early travellers to categorise African cultures on a scale of more, or less advanced and an image of Christianity as a prerequisite of ‘civilised’ advancement. In this section, we shall see that the picture of religion our later explorers present in fact runs counter to the loaded imagery we saw at the end of Rohlfs’s narrative. As a result of colonial expansion, the theme of religion as a catalyst for cultural development becomes increasingly relevant to our explorers’ African encounters. It prompts them to re-evaluate and re-examine existing concepts of Christianity and Islam. The macrotext of *Afrikareisende* narratives in fact, portrays a shift from unreflected acceptance of monotheistic religions as signs of cultural development, to religion as an instrument of destruction and cultural regression. Yet these results are still two-fold and mirror conflicting aspects of German self-understanding, for the explorers evaluate monotheistic religion according to its relevance to the colonial project. Hence the following discussion of religion moves us closer to the relationship between German-Africa exploration and German colonial expansion. The following sections will compare portrayals of Islam and Christianity from a selection of the narratives, focussing in particular on the theme of religion as a catalyst for cultural development. Let us begin with the presence of Islam in Africa, which is a recurring theme throughout all works.

## ISLAM

Barth and Rohlfs create a narrative of animosity towards Islam. Nachtigal's experiences in Bornu suggest that the once all-powerful Islamic influence, and so control, is regressing (Nachtigal, I, p. 149). The Scheich's stranglehold on surrounding areas is on the wane and violent power-struggles are inevitable (Nachtigal, I, p. 149). Schweinfurth's experience of Islam is also defined by violence – his experience of the slave trade which he associates directly with Islamic mentality. Our later explorers Junker and Stuhlmann view Islam with a coloniser's gaze. As Junker's narrative demonstrates, Islam is a real threat to the colonial 'civilising' project. Junker re-introduces the concept of religious 'fanaticism' and associates the spread of Islam with cultural regression (Junker, pp. v-vi). Hence for Junker, western colonial expansion liberates Africa from the destructive force of Islam. Stuhlmann, however, views Islam as a useful, yet inferior ideology. He benefits from the initial structures, and so control over the local population, which Islamic leaders have established in Deutsch-Ostafrika. He must, however, justify his position as a legitimate coloniser and so Islam must be portrayed as an inferior method of 'civilising' Africa. As the colonial race intensifies, our explorers become increasingly aware of their own, and other cultures' place on the putative evolutionary, hierarchical scale. Stuhlmann legitimises and reinforces Germany's place at the top of this scale, whereas Frobenius reacts almost militantly towards the spread of any ideology which marginalises cultural idiosyncrasies. Thus Islam receives negative portrayals from all authors, yet for differing key reasons.



A comparison of Schweinfurth's and Stuhlmann's exposure to the slave-trade emphasises this point. Both authors associate slavery with Arab-Muslim mentality, yet their differing attitudes towards the process reflect their opposing attitudes towards colonial expansion. Schweinfurth's attitude of distanced, 'scientific' observation towards the indigenous population begins to waver as he witnesses first-hand the effects of the slave trade. The existence of an active trade in human beings was by no means a secret to any of the explorers who crossed Africa. Barth, Rohlfs and Nachtigal were not confronted with the enormity of its scale due to the particular areas they traversed. The comparatively dense population combined with the lack of European presence in the area Schweinfurth traversed contributed to the slave trade's proliferation. Rather than the isolated incidents involving smaller numbers of captured slaves which our earlier explorers narrate, Schweinfurth's journey is punctuated by confrontations with deserted villages and huge slave caravans which stretch as far as the eye can see. In their wake they leave a trail of dead bodies as the exhausted and malnourished captives succumb to the extremities of a passage which tests human endurance to the extreme even in well-equipped expeditions. Schweinfurth is told that the death rate in the caravans is so high that the slave traders purposely capture double the amount in order to maintain their planned revenue when they finally reach the coast.

These horrific images present Schweinfurth with apocalyptic visions of destruction and devastation which he attributes to Arab-Muslims and ultimately Islam. The presence of both in Africa is for Schweinfurth entirely negative. Rather than introducing certain levels of culture and development to the 'primitive' African, Islam according to

Schweinfurth merely displays levels of inhumanity which contradict the supposed superiority of monotheistic religion. Foreign, Moslem potentates who rule over areas of Africa are depicted as ‘apathisch’ and ‘ungerecht’ (Schweinfurth, I, p. 310). The ineffective native resistance to such despotic rule is ‘enttäuschend’ (Schweinfurth, I, p. 312). Mirroring Rohlfs’s mind-set, this information was employed by colonial supporters who succeeded in convincing their opposition that intervention and permanent European presence was necessary for humanitarian reasons. Rohlfs for example tells us ‘es gibt nach meiner Überzeugung nur ein Mittel, das dem Unwesen [der Sklavenhandel] in wirklich erfolgreicher Weise steuern kann: eine europäische Macht’ (Rohlfs, I, p. 171). Schweinfurth however did not openly support this standpoint. Instead the information transferred from the explorer to a wider audience was translated to suit differing ideologies. Colonial supporters such as Stuhlmann, in contrast, were more interested in using the established slave-trade to their own advantage, rather than eradicating it.

Ardent colonialist Stuhlmann’s experience of Islam revolves around his contact with Emin Pascha. At the beginning of the narrative, during preparations for the expedition, Stuhlmann meets Emin Pascha for the first time. Mirroring Rohlfs’s association of Islam with disguise, Stuhlmann claims that Emin’s conversion to Islam was merely a ruse in order to aid his colonising mission: ‘die Überzeugung, dass ihm allein auf diese Weise die Möglichkeit gegeben war, sein Kulturwerk durchzuführen und sich unter der mohammedanischen Bevölkerung heimisch zu machen. Er hat zwar in seiner Provinz äusserlich die mohammedanischen Gebräuche befolgt, in seinem Innern ist er aber

immer ein guter Protestant geblieben' (Stuhlmann, p. 29). The European is again able to imitate the external nature of Islamic culture and deceive the deceivers, i.e. the stereotypically untrustworthy locals. In comparison to Rohlf's, Emin's 'disguise' is far more sophisticated; he officially converts to Islam and celebrates Islamic festivals. It is therefore impossible to discern whether Emin is truly deceiving the local Muslims, or Stuhlmann. Yet Emin's religious otherness makes him a useful tool for the German authorities, as he can negotiate with the 'alien' mind-set.<sup>280</sup> This is particularly advantageous during dealings with Arab-Muslim leaders in the trading enclave Tabóra. The coastal town lies in the centre of Deutsch-Ostafrika, yet German influence here exists only on paper. Asserting German control, i.e. a German governor and colonial authorities, over this strategic point was one of the expedition's main aims. Stuhlmann tells us that Arab leaders are hesitant to sign agreements pertaining to the slave trade (Stuhlmann, p. 67). Emin's negotiating, however, soon smoothes over the situation. We neither know what the exact issue with slave trading is, nor what Emin says about it. Stuhlmann however is certain that the Arab traders have been successfully lulled into a false sense of security, for they assume that nothing much will change under German rule and the slave-trade in particular will not be affected. In reality, so Stuhlmann maintains, an initial period of relative calm will ensue to intentionally pacify the Arab trading population before the Germans gradually fade-out the slave trade (Stuhlmann, p.

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<sup>280</sup> The site of Emin Pascha's former stronghold – also mentioned by Junker in his foreword – became the focus of international attention. The Germans were the first to recognise the fort Faschoda's logistic potential, lying on both the main north-south and east-west trading routes. Emin's insider knowledge was extremely valuable to both the British and Germans for precisely this reason. However, the German expedition's failure to reach the fort of Faschoda remained a further bugbear in the list of failed opportunities and international humiliation with which pro-colonial German discourse characterised the early stages of expansionism. See Levering Lewis, *The Race to Faschoda*.

68). In comparison to Schweinfurth, Stuhlmann's reasons for abolishing the trade are less humanitarian:

Der Sklavenhandel spielt natürlich auch in Tabóra eine gewisse Rolle. Der Laie stellt sich gewöhnlich vor, dass Sklavenhandel nicht ohne unerhörte Greuel und Misshandlungen à la 'Onkel Toms Hütte' vor sich gehen könne: das ist ein entschiedener Irrthum. Der erste Erwerb der Sklaven, die Kriegszüge und Razzias auf die schwarze Ware, sind allerdings im höchsten Grade grausam; die in Tabóra angebrachten Sklaven aber kommen meistens von weit her, haben sich schon an ihre Herren gewöhnt und sind der Swahilisprache mächtig. Ihre Besitzer behandeln sie durchweg gut und menschlich und würden sich nur ins eigene Fleisch schneiden, wenn sie ihr Eigenthum misshandeln oder gar töten wollten. Der Sklave führt im Allgemeinen ein ziemlich faules Leben. [...] Dies alles kann uns aber natürlich nicht abhalten, den Sklavenhandel für eine in ethischer und nationalökonomischer Beziehung verdammenswerthe Institution anzusehen, mit der wir aber noch lange werden rechnen müssen. (Stuhlmann, p. 64)

In contrast to Schweinfurth, Stuhlmann wishes to allay layman's fears that the slave-trade in Tabóra is an inhumane process. He deploys a knowledgeable, authoritative style to strengthen his own position and dismiss all concerns which, unlike his observations, are not founded on fact. Stuhlmann actually admires slave-traders for their shrewd business sense in converting the population into 'schwarze Ware'. Although the slave-

trade was widely criticised in Germany, there remain, nevertheless, certain ardent colonialists like Stuhlmann who appear to envy the Arab traders' ability to harness this potential workforce. Stuhlmann does criticise the process of obtaining slaves, yet holding someone in bondage is apparently not a concern as long as they are not physically abused. He even suggests elements of Hegel's master/servant dialectic, as those enslaved lead an apparently carefree life, whereas their masters are bound by the need to care for and protect their acquisitions and feel acknowledged as dominators!<sup>281</sup> Thus rather than employing popular fictional images, Stuhlmann enhances his observations with both 'fact' and perversions of other more authoritative Germanic cultural references. Again, Stuhlmann addresses his reader and so assumes a shared mind-set and sense of purpose: to impose German culture onto African soil. Islam, and the slave-trade which Stuhlmann sees as concomitant with Islamic influence, should be tolerated as means to an end. That end is to secure Germany's place in the struggle for power amongst world's leading nations.

The discussion of Islam's role as a catalyst for cultural development sheds further light on Germany's new role as a potential, and actual, colonial power. Junker raises this theme in his foreword. Although his expedition was undertaken in the late 1870s when German participation in the colonial race was still a mere possibility, the narrative was completed many years later during the height of German colonial activity. Judging by Junker's comments, his portrayal of Islamic Northern Africa is likely to be marred by

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<sup>281</sup> G.W.F.Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), p. 145.

his attitude towards events that followed his expedition:

Mein Entschluß, das damals in den Tagebüchern meiner ersten Reise gesammelten Material nach Ablauf so vieler Jahre noch nachträglich zu veröffentlichen, findet in den religiös-fanatichen Bewegungen des Mahdistenaufstands im ägyptischen Sudan seine Entschuldigung und wohl auch Berechtigung. Denn alle jene von mir bereisten Länder wurden bald darauf und sind auch noch gegenwärtig, nach glücklich eingeleiteter, mühevoller Kulturarbeit der ägyptischen Regierung unter Gordon Pascha, dem Handel und Verkehr verschlossen. Meine Schilderungen fallen in den letzten Jahren vor jene feindseligen Bewegungen und behandeln außer den von mir bereisten arabischen Ländern speciell jenes Gebiet der Neger, in dem der rühmlichst bekannte Dr. Emin Pascha als ägyptischer Gouverneur abgeschlossen, ohne Verbindung zur Außenwelt, sich zu behaupten gewußt hat. Der unstreitig vielerseits empfundene Wunsch, jene Länder baldmöglichst wieder für kulturelle Bestrebungen eröffnet zu sehen, giebt mir einige Hoffnung, daß meine Darstellung der damaligen Verhältnisse eine freundliche und nachsichtige Aufnahme nicht fehlen werde. (Junker, pp. V.–VI.)

Junker's dramatic style implies the importance of his coming portrayal. He portrays Islam as the root of evil, a negative influence and the cause of the Mahdi uprising. According to Junker, it is Islamic 'religious fanaticism' which devastated the area and

the beginnings of cultural advancement, and so took Northern Africa back years on the scale of civilised development. Whereas European power opened the area to trade and progress, Islamic fanaticism, so Junker maintains, spread silently like a disease, enveloped the country in darkness and shut it off again from the outside world. All traces of European, 'cultural' progress were destroyed. Junker does not differentiate between Islam and religious fanaticism, grouping both together as the enemy, the 'other'.

Yet whilst in Africa, Junker is undeterred by Islamic culture. In fact, his opening description of Alexandria presents a conflicting image of modern trading and 'Kulturarbeit' in this British protectorate. Junker describes the city as follows:

Ein Paar Tage genügten mir, um alles zu sehen, was von der antiken Stadt übrig geblieben; die moderne, mit ihren fast ausschließlich dem Handel ergebenden Bewohnern, die ihre Geburtsorte in allen fünf Erdteilen aufsuchen konnten, bot der Wißbegierde auch kein besonders reiches Feld. Wie zwar überall, spielt auch bei den Alexandrinern das Geld die Hauptrolle. Luxus und Nachahmung Pariser Moden mit oberflächlichster Bildung gepaart, ein verwirrendes Durcheinander aller möglichen lebenden Sprachen, das ist das Bild, welches sich dem Fremden aufdrängt. (Junker, p.

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Let us examine this portrayal of British ‘Kulturarbeit’ in Alexandria, a city which, although still heavily influenced by Islam, the British have succeeded in ‘opening to trade and commerce’. As Junker states in his foreword, this status quo should be reinstated. Yet here, we see that materialism, superficiality and avarice are the qualities Junker associates with the area. In this excerpt he is particularly scathing of the uneducated rich. The spread of greed, materialism and unoriginality are qualities which Junker associates with modernity, for they are familiar evils from which it seems he had hoped to flee. Hence the even greater disappointment when confronted by them in Africa. International trade is the cause of absolute chaos, ‘verwirrendes Durcheinander’, and hardly mirrors the British ‘Kulturarbeit’ suggested earlier. Such ambiguous, even conflicting opinions are characteristic in Junker’s work. He seemingly desires colonial presence as a catalyst for development, particularly in international trade. Yet later he recognises that the ideology accompanying such capitalist trade relegates the importance of local culture – in this case Alexandria has lost sight of its ancient majesty.

Our explorers’ sometimes conflicting ideologies mirror those of the German colonial enterprise itself. On the one hand, Germanic pluralist traditions, coupled with a heterogeneous understanding of national identity, favour cultural idiosyncrasies and the desire to maintain the many varieties of human existence. Our explorers rebel against the assimilating forces of capitalism, which they see as destroying both German tradition and the African continent. Yet on the other hand, the chance to compete with powerful, imperial, nation-state rivals and finally overcome long-standing national inferiority complexes also runs hand in hand with the spread of capitalism. Junker



typifies this inner conflict which occurred on both an individual and collective scale. Islam here becomes the scapegoat, as it apparently prevents the spread of German possession in Africa, for Junker's future 'Kulturarbeit' does not necessarily refer to *British* influence. The Reich also had strong interest in the area.<sup>282</sup> As Junker's narrative demonstrates, Islam becomes increasingly defined by a coloniser's gaze: is Islam a help or a hindrance to potential German territorial expansion in Africa? Let us look at coloniser Stuhlmann's attitude to Islam as a progressive force in Africa. He describes the existing Arab-Muslim influence in Tabora as follows:

Im Orte haben die Araber, wie überall, einen grossen Einfluss auf die Bevölkerung, die sie in Sitten und Kleidung nachzuäffen sucht. Trotz all des vielen Schlechten, was ihre Einwanderung in das Land gebracht hat, wird doch Niemand verkennen, dass alle Kultur und aller Handel (vielleicht mit Ausnahme von Uganda) durch sie eingeführt worden ist, und dass sie auch fernerhin ein wichtiges Kulturelement bleiben werden, das wir uns dienstbar machen müssen. (Stuhlmann, p. 62)

In this case, Stuhlmann is certainly full of praise for Arab-Muslim influence in the area, as it appears to keep the local inhabitants in check. Stuhlmann uses the term 'nachäffen' in association with these locals<sup>283</sup> and so implies that the indigenous African population is no better than a pack of unruly animals. As such, he duly acknowledges the Arab

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<sup>282</sup> Two years after the failed German expedition Faschoda became the focal point in the 'scramble for Africa'. The British eventually gained control. Levering Lewis, *The Race to Faschoda*.

<sup>283</sup> Fiedler discusses an excerpt from Wissmann's narrative which employs identical terminology. Both explorers share a common ideology, yet contrary to Fiedler's conclusions, this cannot be generalised as the norm throughout all narratives. Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteuer*, p. 168.

leaders' ability to 'control' them. Hence Stuhlmann views Islam as an inferior, yet useful ideology; the first 'stages' of cultural development have been attained through the imposition of Muslim customs. Islam, so Stuhlmann implies, can therefore be tolerated. Yet Stuhlmann's Eurocentric, presumed superiority cannot acknowledge Islam's equal religious status. Stuhlmann's imperialist ideologies rest partly on his belief that his nation and mind-set are superior to others, which consequently justifies their expansion into other territories and the inevitable destruction of 'lesser' cultures. The collective 'wir' includes the 'culturally advanced', German reader as part of this nation and so complicit in his expansionist plans. Thanks to Emin's negotiations, the Reich successfully consolidates its control. Stuhlmann describes events as follows:

Bald nach unserer Ankunft begann der Pascha Unterhandlungen mit den Arabern, die er bei seiner genauen Kenntniss der arabischen Sitten und Gebräuche meisterhaft führte. Er verhandelte stets in ihrer eigenen Sprache mit ihnen und schrieb die erforderlichen Briefe selbst nieder. Wenn nicht wichtige politische Verhandlungen stattfanden, waren Nachmittags zu bestimmter Stunde stets einige Araber bei uns anwesend, die sich gern mit dem Pascha in religiöse Gespräche einliessen und dabei jedesmal durch seinen Scharfsinn und seine staunenswerthen Kenntnisse geschlagen wurden. (Stuhlmann, p. 65)

The theme of deception is ever-present, as Stuhlmann implies that the Arab leaders are successfully convinced that the Germans accept their culture, whereas really the

Germans want to exploit Arab influence to avoid yet more local dissent. Stuhlmann proudly tells of this amazing feat of deception which Emin conducts with such ‘mastery’. Yet in reality, Stuhlmann is completely unaware of the actual negotiations undertaken between the Arab leaders in Tabóra and the Reich’s official colonial representative, Emin Pascha. Stuhlmann understands none of the dialogue taking place. He is rarely even present at the negotiations themselves. His opinion can only be formed from Emin’s appraisal of the situation. Emin has sole control over the proceedings and, as we hear, even writes the documents himself. Consequently no-one really knows to what the Arabs have agreed. No one knows if the German transcript is an accurate translation of the Arab version. Emin could easily be deceiving Stuhlmann, yet Stuhlmann is so confident that he is culturally superior to both the Arab-Muslims, and of course the local African population, that he is blind to the deficiencies in his own knowledge.

Surprisingly, the spread of Islam in Africa also receives criticism in the second volume of Frobenius’s narrative. Under the heading of ‘Die Brille des Islam’ Frobenius devotes the opening chapter of his second volume to his experiences in Sudan. Although Frobenius does not employ the ‘Schleier’ imagery, the title again suggests deception due to masked or marred vision. However in this case, Frobenius is referring to his predecessors’ marred judgement, for he accuses them of observing Sudanese culture from behind a veil – from the ruling majority’s Islamic perspective. Frobenius begins with an attack on current ethnographic discourse which portrays Islam as the religion which, in spite of its presumed inferiority to Christianity, ‘die höhere Kultur den “armen

Negern” zugeführt und ihnen die Möglichkeit einer höheren Entwicklung verliehen habe’ (Frobenius, II, p.1). This idea mirrors the thoughts of Rohlfs and Stuhlmann.<sup>284</sup> Frobenius however gives a long description of Sudanese history which refutes such conceptions. Although Barth, Rohlfs and Nachtigal passed through the area, Frobenius is the first to observe its religious variety. Frobenius provides the reader with an explanation for his predecessors’ oversight. His predecessors resided at the Muslim Sultan’s palace, and so spent little time amongst the non-Muslim, rural population. Nachtigal’s expedition mandate involved bringing gifts to the Sultan in recognition of this hospitality. Consequently these explorers’ impressions of Sudan were very much influenced by the ruling Islamic elite.

Frobenius however describes two types of Sudanese ‘von zwei vollkommen verschiedenen Völkertypen. Ich verstehe aber hier unter “Typus” nicht eine Zusammenfassung von Rasseneigentümlichkeiten, sondern von Kulturmerkmalen’ (Frobenius, II, p. 2). Frobenius seems to be distancing his research from biological concepts of race and instead focussing on *Volksgeist*, for both groups are similar in appearance and physiology. It is their religion and the associated mentality which divides them. One of the ‘Typen’ is made up of so-called ‘Staatenbildner’ the other of ‘Splitterstämme’ (Frobenius, II, p. 2). The ‘Staatenbildner’ are the ruling party who reside in cities and towns. They control most trading routes and through long-standing constant contact with Arab traders often converted to Islam. They often speak different

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<sup>284</sup> The Austrian explorer Oskar Lenz concludes his narrative *Timbuktú* from 1884 with a chapter on Islam and African exploration. Lenz is extremely negative towards Islamic influence in Northern Africa as it, so he maintains, hinders the spread of European modernity. Oskar Lenz, *Timbuktú. Reise durch Marokko und den Sudan*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1884), II, p. 381.

languages to their agrarian, rural-dwelling ‘Splitterstämme’ subjects. The rural areas are so remote that little communication between both ‘Typen’ occurs. The ‘Splitterstämme’ rarely practise Islam. Instead, they follow their forefathers’ ancient religions. The religions are numerous and diverse, like the extensive number of individual tribes. Frobenius tells us that the Dinka, Nuer and Dilotes revere spirits which do not possess the power to alter the world, yet offer explanations for natural and social occurrences. Deng, the rain spirit, is their chief deity.<sup>285</sup> The Shilluk however see their king simultaneously as god which is unacceptable to the Dinka (Frobenius, II, p. 10). These rural communities are often exploited and misrepresented by the ‘Staatenbildner’. However, Sudanese history in Europe is mainly represented from the point of view of the ruling party. The mainly Islamic opinion and view of Sudan was incorporated into *Afrikareisende* and western narrative. Frobenius however, focuses his attention on the ‘Splitterstämme’, who display social structures and order which long pre-date the arrival of Islam.

Part of Frobenius’s proof rests on Islam’s historical development. Only through contact with other ‘höherstehenden Völker’ such as the Persians and later the Hellenes did the ‘kulturarme’ followers of Islam attain a ‘sehr beachtenswerte höhere Ausbildung und intellektuelle Tiefe’ (Frobenius, II, p.5). Racial mixing and cross-cultural contact thus appear to be the key to progress in this case. As the following quotation

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<sup>285</sup> Schweinfurth as we have seen, spent a considerable amount of time amongst the Dinka, yet felt unable to comment on the nature of their religion due to its many complexities.

demonstrates, the spread of Islam in Northern Africa is portrayed with a sense of apocalyptic foreboding:

Vor allen Dingen fehlte dem Islam in der Form, in der er den Sudan erreichte, jene gewaltige Kraft, die ihn zuerst über die nordafrikanische Erde hintrug: die staatenbildende Idee einer Rassenwanderung, die Wucht der arabischen Völkerwanderung. Die Schwungkraft dieser Völkerverschiebung, die die Mittelmeerländer erzittern ließ und die dem Islam die gewaltige Kraft der ersten Entwicklung gab, die hat den Sudan nie erreicht. Deshalb hat der Islam entwickelnde Kraft nur dort zeigen können, wo er schon kulturelle Prädisposition vorfand. Der Islam ist im Sudan überall auf ältere und ihrer Höhe nach nicht zu unterschätzende Kulturen aufgepropft.  
(Frobenius, II, p.6)

Frobenius suggests an unstoppable force of human movement that spread like a wave of destruction over the continent. Such terminology echoes Junker's negative description of Islam. Frobenius intentionally suggests the beginnings of a parasitic infestation, nesting, waiting to grow and cause havoc. Yet it appears that Islam itself is not the focus of Frobenius's dismay. For he praises the levels of education and intellectual depth both encouraged and attained by followers of Islam. That is, the levels attained by the more developed, synthesised religion which was the result of clashes with Persian and Hellenic cultures. The destruction and devastation emanating from the above trend is

Frobenius's concern. He mourns the loss of local, indigenous religions and in particular the loss of cultural variety which follows the spread of any major ideology.

As the massive wave of human movement had more or less died out before it reached Sudan, the progressive Persian and Hellenic influences also failed to reach here. Although Sudan does show outward signs of Islamic influence, for example universities and institutes of higher learning, according to Frobenius, Islam in 'seiner hohen Entwicklungsform' never penetrated the real Sudanese *Volksgeist* (Frobenius, II, p. 5). Instead, two aspects became predominant: the notion of 'heathen' inferiority and fatalism (Frobenius, II, p. 6). Both resulted in stagnation, as the hard-working 'heathens' were politically and territorially marginalised. Fatalism, according to Frobenius merely presents a comfortable alternative to dealing with serious situations by resorting to a few compensatory ritual practices (Frobenius, II, p. 6). Furthermore, the momentum created by the massive Islamic 'Völkerwanderung' that introduced Islam to areas of Northern Africa met too much resistance in Sudan. It is not, as Frobenius states, the Sudanese lack of intellectual capability which prevented the development of Islam but the resistance and superiority of the pre-existing ancient culture and religion. The arrival of Islam was in contrast a catalyst of regeneration. The new 'Kraftsammeln und Kraftausdrücke' which resulted from resistance, initiated new stages of development. Frobenius

concludes his excursus on the spread of Islam in Africa and Sudan, in particular, with the following statement:

So finden wir, daß, als um das Jahr 1000 die islamischen Kaufleute in den Sudan kamen, sie schon allenthalben auf einen wohlgegliederten Handel trafen, in mächtige Städte und auf glänzend ausgearbeitete Verkehrsstraßen kamen. Es ist also aus den arabisch geschriebenen Chroniken ohne Schwierigkeit zu beweisen, daß der Islam in Wahrheit nicht anders als nur befruchtend und anregend gewirkt hat. (Frobenius, II, p. 7)

In contrast to the earlier, dramatic, apocalyptic language, Frobenius's concluding remarks are presented in more factual terms. This tactic is deployed to cement his unorthodox findings: contrary to popular belief, he asserts the superiority of these ancient religions and their followers, the 'Splitterstämme', for they encourage exemplary social and economic structures. Frobenius's picture of harmonious, controlled trading systems, powerful, prosperous and gleaming towns stands in direct contrast to his portrayal of the Arab mass exodus. His desire to refute the belief that African cultures only progress when ruled by foreign powers is conveyed with a passion uncommon in scientific, academic discourse. Centring his observations on these fairly unknown tribes, Frobenius, like Schweinfurth, rejects the definition of cultural stages of development as he recognises both 'primitive' and complex social forms and characteristics in every culture including his own. Unlike Rohlf's and Stuhlmann's unmistakable animosity towards Islam, Frobenius does not criticise the religion itself,



but the marginalisation of pre-existing, local religions. Frobenius does however acknowledge that Islam did act as a catalyst in relation to Sudanese religion, as it initiated a process of regeneration. These appraisals of Islam and Islamic influence are differentiated, yet generally negative. Those explorers who are appreciative of cultural difference associate Islam with inhumanity, marginalisation and destruction. Those who favour colonial expansion deploy images of Islam to support their expansionist ideology. When Junker composed his work, Germany was a potential colonial power. Islam was a potential threat to this project and so Junker upholds a narrative of animosity towards it. He implies that German presence in Africa would free it from this destructive force. Stuhlmann was writing at a time when the scramble for Africa was at its peak. The struggle between nations and cultures was never more evident. Stuhlmann implies that all necessary steps must be taken to strengthen and secure Germany's place in this struggle. The role of Islam in his narrative is as a means to attain this goal.

## **CHRISTIANITY**

Let us now turn our attention to the image of Christianity portrayed in the works. Christianity receives less attention than foreign, alien religions and had already lost much status in Germany as science provided alternative, rational explanations for human existence. Yet Christian narrative, as Barth demonstrates, is still incorporated into European culture and the European time-set. Rohlf's frames his passage through Africa with images of Christian enlightenment radiating over the darkness of primitive Africa.

Yet surprisingly, the image of Christianity receives increasingly negative portrayals in our later works. Again, it is evaluated against the backdrop of colonial expansion. Stuhlmann's narrative epitomises these developments. As he demonstrates, Christian missionary activity is the cause of violence and displacement in the as yet uncolonised Uganda.

On reaching the border between Deutsch-Ostafrika and Uganda in December of 1890, Stuhlmann finds the country on the brink of civil war. The recently converted Catholic and Protestant camps are vying for political sovereignty. The Muslim minority has been displaced to a small, infertile area of the country. French Catholic and British Protestant missionaries had successfully polarised the country's ruling structure. One party advised the King, the other the tribal chiefs. The imminent threat of British colonisation was bitterly opposed by the Catholic King and his followers. Using terms reminiscent of Junker's attitude towards the Mahdi, Stuhlmann recreates the atmosphere with a sense of foreboding: 'die Verhältnisse zwischen den religiösen Parteien hätten sich aufs Äusserste zugespitzt, so dass bei dem allseitigem Fanatismus das Schlimmste zu befürchten sei' (Stuhlmann, p. 146). The introduction of rival ideologies to such 'lower' cultures, so Stuhlmann says, can only result in bloodshed (Stuhlmann, p. 146). Unlike his assessment of Islam as a useful tool in the colonising project, Stuhlmann criticises the use of Christianity as a method of cultural colonialism, as it involves too much irrational emotion. Stuhlmann implies that the British and French are poor colonisers as their actions result in horrific, indiscriminate violence. They lack rational, logical

control. When emotions such as jealousy become involved, the colonising project is doomed (Stuhlmann, p. 199).

In order to reinforce his image of the British and French as inferior colonisers, Stuhlmann describes the unwise decision to send a sizeable British military expedition into Uganda at a time when the country was a tinderbox of religious rivalry. The British expedition decides to attack the Muslim minority in order to unite the rival Christian factions against a common enemy. The Muslim minority incurs great human and territorial losses, yet the expected political consequences fail to emerge. Instead, the arrival of British firepower enrages the Catholic faction and the long-expected conflict explodes into a violent battle. The Protestants, aided considerably by British weapons, succeed in gaining control. The Catholic Waganda are powerless in the face of British heavy artillery and its 'eherne Sprache' (Stuhlmann, p. 203). Stuhlmann employs these terms to convey the inhumanity of this brazen, metallic language as it rips through human flesh. It is the unmistakable, universally understood language of physical violence, destruction and power. We do however get the impression that Stuhlmann is in awe of this fire-power.

British soldiers do not intervene in the conflict, but they do provide the means for the local population to neutralise each other, leaving an 'empty' space on which to establish a protectorate. Barth's earlier, foreboding reference to the spread of European weaponry in Africa thus becomes a premonition. Their introduction into African tribal rivalries could bring nothing but devastation. During Barth's audience with local potentate Sultan

Bello, Barth is asked for European ‘Arznei des Krieges’. ‘Unter den letzteren verstand er [Sultan Bello] Raketen, ein Produkt europäischer Zivilisation, von dessen ungeheurer Wirkung die Bewohner des Sudans durch eine frühere Expedition in Kenntniss gesetzt waren’ (Barth, II, p. 75). Barth’s contrast between ‘Zivilisation’ and ‘ungeheuer’ is unmistakable. He pre-empts modernist critique that the development of such technology sows the seeds of civilisation’s downfall.<sup>286</sup> Yet none of our explorers predict that technology’s destructive potential will be demonstrated during conflicts between European nations on European soil. The site of destructive conflict still seems to be Africa, where violence, so Stuhlmann implies, is encouraged by an African mentality which leans towards irrationality and fanaticism. The effects of this are all too clear in Stuhlmann’s report of the battle which took place on the Catholic missionaries’ island stronghold. The battle was the culmination of hostilities between rival Ugandan factions:

Dann landeten die Soldaten und wütheten ziemlich stark unter den Waganda. [...] Die Waganda sowohl als auch die Soldaten der Engländer, Sudanesen sowie Sansibariten, raubten und plünderten so viel sie nur konnten und schleppten auch viele Sklaven fort. [...] Es ist ja an sich erklärlich, dass Kriegswuth und religiöser Fanatismus solche Exzesse herbeiführen können, und ich bin überzeugt, dass die englischen Offiziere alles thaten, derartiges Sklavenfangen zu verhindern. Auch haben sie später alle Gefangenen, die sie ausfindig machen konnten, in Freiheit gesetzt. Dagegen blieben sie anscheinend etwas zu unthätig, als man die

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<sup>286</sup> Max Horkheimer, and T. W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente*, 12<sup>th</sup> edn (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2000)

[katholischen] Missionare ihrer Habe beraubte. Meinem Gefühl nach ist es überhaupt nicht zu rechtfertigen, wenn in Innerafrika Europäer sich gegenseitig bekriegen. Es mag immerhin sein, dass die Engländer durch den Widerstand der Katholiken aufs Äusserste erbittert waren, und die Aufregung des Gefechtes entschuldigt Manches. Europäer aber sollten in solchen Fällen ein für alle Mal ihre Differenzen der Entscheidung in Europa anheimgeben. Szenen, wie die Beschiessung der französischen Missionare durch das englische Geschütz, müssen das Prestige der Weissen den Negern gegenüber auf das Äusserste schädigen. (Stuhlmann, p. 204)

In the first part of the excerpt Stuhlmann employs uncharacteristic narrative techniques to emphasise the scene of chaotic destruction. The experiencing self dominates and so enhances the dramatic, violent images. ‘Wütheten’ ‘schleppten’ ‘raubten’ und ‘plünderten’ hardly suggest a carefully planned and well-executed military operation. The list of different nationalities taking part in the action creates an image of total disorder. It is impossible to discern who is fighting whom. British soldiers, French missionaries and African troops are grouped together as a deliberate snub. We get the impression of marauding, medieval hordes, rather than a well-trained army. The colonisers have been reduced to the same level as their ‘primitive’ followers.

Stuhlmann’s chaotic, irrational depiction of events mirrors the irrational nature of the conflict itself, for religious ideology, as Stuhlmann maintains, is irrational and non-scientific. According to him it has no place in the colonising project. He acknowledges

the Kaiser's birthday with a banquet, yet barely mentions Christian festivals. So not only are Stuhlmann's colonial rivals the focus of his criticism, he also seems to suggest that the Ugandans are incapable of understanding 'progressive' religions. Their introduction merely results in 'fanaticism' and 'excess'. Stuhlmann's attachment to strict military order and discipline finds its antithesis in such excesses. A shift in narrative situation marks the entry of a logical, rational, Germanic mentality. Stuhlmann, the level-headed observer, weighs up the evidence judiciously, considering both sides of the argument before passing judgement on his fellow Europeans. He implies that they have regressed, and 'gone native', consumed by African excesses, emotion and 'primitive' blood lust. Stuhlmann however remains in control of both himself and his subordinates, and so implies his superior colonising ability. Yet his request that Europeans negotiate their differences on home territories will soon enough unmask the myth of 'white prestige' over foreign cultures. Stuhlmann's cultural ignorance leads to his failure to recognise parallels to European history as he claims 'die Eingeborenen sind nicht fähig, religiöse Differenzen von politischen zu trennen' (Stuhlmann, p. 214). Rather than widening the gap between 'them' and 'us', Stuhlmann thus unintentionally emphasises universal human behaviour.

According to their own reports, the German delegation in Uganda acts as advisors to both parties and succeeds in convincing the King to accept British rule as the less violent solution. Unfortunately, the local population – according to Stuhlmann's narrative – were desperate to accept the German flag over the British. 'Der König erklärte, [...] wenn schon das Protektorat einer europäischen Macht nicht zu umgehen

sei, so wolle er die deutsche Flagge über seiner Hauptstadt hissen' (Stuhlmann, p. 107). Yet the Anglo-German treaty which was ratified in Europe during Stuhlmann's expedition ultimately decided the country's fate.<sup>287</sup> Germany conceded a large number of potential claims in hope of more amicable relations with Britain. The pro-colonial camp protested vigorously, yet without effect. Stuhlmann's narrative doubtless embellishes the locals' willingness to relinquish their territories in order to fuel the anger and critique of German government policy. Emin, so Stuhlmann states, would have been thoroughly capable of resolving the issue if the Germans had not been prevented from acting (Stuhlmann, p. 107). In the end, the Germans appear morally irreproachable as they would – so Stuhlmann maintains – have been able to take control without indiscriminate bloodshed (Stuhlmann, p. 199). Stuhlmann does not criticise killing itself, he criticises disorganised killing.

This attitude mirrors Rohlfs's report of the siege of Magdala. Rohlfs represents precolonial Germany as an observer on a British mission, this time to re-establish control in Abyssinia in 1868.<sup>288</sup> This obviously upholds the image of Germany, lagging behind other European colonial powers in the 'scramble for Africa' and constantly taking on the passive role of observer rather than initiator. Through his excursus on Tewodros, Russell Berman's analysis of the scene successfully demonstrates that the image of the 'irrational, exotic native' is a purely European projection.<sup>289</sup> By

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<sup>287</sup> The expedition received the first notification of the Anglo-German treaty through newspaper reports. Although Germany had relinquished any future claims in Uganda, Peters advised Emin Pascha to hold talks with Ugandan factions in order to demonstrate German neutrality. Wissmann however forbade any contact whatsoever which Emin and Stuhlmann ignored.

<sup>288</sup> Gerhard Rohlfs, *Von Tripolis nach Alexandrien; Beschreibung der im Auftrag seiner Majestät des Königs von Preussen in den Jahren 1868 und 1869 ausgeführten Reise* (Norden: Fischer, 1885).

<sup>289</sup> Berman, *Enlightenment or Empire*, p. 47.

transforming the request for communicative dialogue on behalf of the native leader into an irrational act, the British justify the need for military intervention. Nineteenth-century British colonial discourse thus produces absolute alterity. Berman attributes this development to the trends evident in the process of consolidation of national unity in Europe, which negated the possibility of local culture. As we saw in Chapter II, processes of assimilation were inherent to nation-building and consolidation. Assimilation, so Berman suggests, was also expected of colonised peoples. Germany though, had not yet achieved this stage of national assimilation, with deep divides still evident between the individual *Länder*.<sup>290</sup> Rohlfs thus demonstrates a different attitude towards the ensuing violence by British soldiers. Although he does not directly condemn the harshness of the British attack, Rohlfs does criticise the operation's evident lack of methodical preparation. He assumes that a German general would have conducted the operation in a more orderly fashion and with greater scientific precision, i.e. with less *random* bloodshed. Rohlfs the 'observer', like Stuhlmann, projects the image of the erratic, irrational 'other' onto the colonising nation. Thus Rohlfs both criticises British methods of expansionism whilst simultaneously justifying any future German expansion into Africa. Yet after three decades have passed, Stuhlmann's status as a German has not brought any increased leverage on the international stage. He still employs the same narrative strategy as Rohlfs in order to mask national inferiority complexes. He masks Germany's position of relative impotence and inactivity with claims to moral superiority. The only development between his and Rohlfs's portrayals would be the focus on Christianity as a germ which spreads the destructive disease 'irrational chaos'. Christian ideology and associated irrational emotions appear alien to rational, logical

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<sup>290</sup> Blackbourn, *The Long Nineteenth-Century*, pp. 259-263.



and methodical German expansion. Religion has no place in Stuhlmann's image of the scientific Germanic mind-set.

This chapter examined the effect of variegated German ideological influences during our explorers' portrayals of rituals and religion. As the analyses have demonstrated, our explorers' portrayals of German-African cultural encounters present a differentiated outcome which does not follow a pattern of increased closure towards otherness in line with German unification and colonial acquisitions. Rohlfs employs non-Christian rituals as markers of absolute difference between the 'culturally advanced' German explorer and the 'primitive', 'barbaric' African. The cyclical nature of these celebrations confines African culture to a state of stagnation. Barth discovers pre-industrial communities with established trading systems, social structures and networks that rival conditions in his dehumanising, industrialised German home. His confrontation with Africa exposes the need for authentic experience against the background of alienation through modern culture and industrialisation. Nachtigal's acknowledgement of universal superstition and fetish points to a new sense of humanistic understanding – the unmodern African 'other' is part of the modern German 'self'. Frobenius highlights a trend of increasing sympathy towards, and interest in African culture. He is for the most part intent on bringing a newly valorised African culture to Europe and Germany in particular, providing a link to cultural modernism.

We have also seen negative attitudes as our explorers Rohlfs and Stuhlmann propagate notions of Germanic cultural superiority, in particular implying their superior colonising

ability. Yet such differentiated attitudes, as we have seen, do not simply re-occur from work to work. Junker for example praises the effect of British rule in Egypt, yet regrets the spread of capitalist values in African society. Similarly, Schweinfurth may display a positive attitude towards Africans, yet becomes almost militant against Arab-Muslim influence. Even the most positive heterophilic attitudes, such as those displayed by Frobenius, begin to waver when discussing the effects of Islam.

It has been argued that German-African encounter tells the story of Germany's domestic journey to national self-understanding. Our discussion of ritual and religion demonstrates that a tradition of Germanic, heterophilic cross-cultural encounter was still firmly ingrained in Germanic discourse after national unification and even appears to increase in intensity. The consolidation of the German Reich and its emergence as a colonial power in Africa prompted widespread discussion of cultural development as the German nation struggled to define its own route to unification by analysing the path of others. The reality of colonial expansion and the loss of cultural idiosyncrasies in some ways awakens the side of German identity which favours cultural plurality and diversity. This drives Frobenius, for example, to investigate and document indigenous religions with a sense of urgency and intensity. His focus on Yoruba ritual time questions notions of Germanic superiority and linear-historicist concepts of progress. Yet our explorers also reveal a deeply ingrained sense of national inferiority towards other European nations. As our explorers' portrayals of religion reveal, a trend develops throughout the macrotext of works which moves from Rohlf's propagation of Christianity to an ever-increasing interest in politics. Stuhlmann discards religion as part of the European

‘civilising’ mission. Instead he differentiates between European nations and reinforces his concept of a distinctly German identity, one that is rational, logical and methodical. As we shall see in the following chapters, encounters on African soil become defined by inter-European, rather than African-European exchange. Consequently, the notion of Germanic inferiority towards other *European* nations takes precedence over the new-found connections to African cultures as a ‘vital force’ highlighted in this chapter.

Den Neger einer Erhebung auf höhere Zustände für unfähig zu erklären, wäre bare Willkür, allein für die niedrigen Stufen der bis jetzt vorhandenen Gesittung einzig nur die Natur des Festlandes anzuschuldigen, hiesse gänzlich die Verschiedenheit in der Begabung der Menschenrassen verkennen.<sup>291</sup>

This excerpt, taken from Oscar Peschel's standard work *Völkerkunde*, epitomises the widely-accepted views of race and progress prevalent in Germany at the time of our works' composition. Darwinian evolutionary theory had exploded onto the scene in 1859 and added a new dimension and complexity to travel narratives composed after this time.<sup>292</sup> The rise of evolutionary theory and racial discourse are concomitant with a new understanding of previously unimaginable time-scales and development stretching back over billions of years. Race becomes central in our works as explorers attempt to classify and differentiate not only between Germans and Africans, but between Africans themselves. It will be argued here that the theme of race can be employed as both a sign of ultimate difference and of similarity, depending on the explorer's mind-set. Our explorers' findings include portrayals which support theories of racial hierarchy and superiority; a belief in human development progressing along one set evolutionary path. Yet other explorers argue against such monolithic, one-dimensional theories of human development. This reflects the two most pressing questions facing German self-

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<sup>291</sup> Oscar Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, 6<sup>th</sup> edn. (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1885), p. 513.

<sup>292</sup> The first German translation of Darwin's *Origin of the Species* appeared in 1860.

understanding at the time: explaining the nature of their own route to national unification, and a need to legitimise Germany's right (through theories of racial superiority) to a place amongst the most powerful nations in the world in the scramble for Africa and elsewhere. Thus our later explorers' cognitive interest in time modulates into the evolutionary time-scale of racial development and the task of defining Germany's place on this evolutionary scale. Their focus shifts to natural time, to the slow invisible processes of human change as indicators of either ateleological, or inherently hierarchical, human development. In the first part of this chapter we shall examine our explorers' understanding of race against the discourse of the time. The second part of this chapter focuses on the nature of race in German colonial debate and evaluates our explorers' contribution to it.

## **RACE**

In this section we will concentrate on the themes of racial classification, hierarchy and hybridity in the works of Schweinfurth, Junker, Stuhlmann and Frobenius, for these later narratives reflect the widespread influence of racial discourse and Darwinist evolutionary theory at the time. We shall look in particular at the presentation of racial hybridity in the travel narrative, for this plays an integral role in German colonial discourse. In order to illuminate these points we shall firstly look at racial discourse in Germany at the time of the narratives' composition.

The category of ‘race’ focuses mainly on physical appearance. Our first explorers’ define ‘races’ according to basic external qualities such as skin colour and features. Yet in later works, categories of analysis become increasingly sophisticated, including cephalic measurements, anatomy, physiology and susceptibility to disease. This trajectory parallels developments in racial discourse during the period of the narratives’ composition due to the emergence and popularisation of Darwinism.<sup>293</sup> Such biological theories of evolution soon extended into areas of anthropological research, as not only the physical evolution of the human race, but also the development of human, social organisation became the focus of attention.<sup>294</sup> Evolutionary discourse in Germany was popularised by Darwinists such as zoologist Ernst Haeckel, who in 1863 prompted discussion of Darwinism incorrectly as a theory of development and progress. Biological theories of ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ organisms became intrinsically linked to

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<sup>293</sup> Some critics have suggested that due to Germany’s lack of colonial territories and lower levels of interaction with non-European ‘racial others’, racial theory and Darwinism were slower to take hold in Germany than in Britain and France. See for example Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought 1860-1945: Nature as Model and Nature as Threat* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Yet as William M. Montgomery writes, earlier works on evolutionary theory such as Robert Chambers’ *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844) appeared in two separate German translations in 1846 and 1851 and sparked debate in German scientific circles even before Darwin’s *Origin*. William M. Montgomery, ‘The Reception of Darwinism in Germany’, in *The Comparative Reception of Darwinism*, ed. by Thomas F. Glick (Chicago: Chicago University, 1988), 81-117, p. 82. After the first translation of *The Origin of the Species* in 1860, a flood of articles and books appeared in Germany that touched on Darwinian theory in one way or another. Montgomery also states that ‘German scientists made important contributions to evolutionary theory, contributions that helped determine what Darwinism came to be’ (Montgomery, ‘Darwinism in Germany’, p. 81). The main German voices criticising Darwinian theory – Rudolf Virchow and Adolf Bastian – targeted the speculative nature of Darwin’s theories, claiming that in spite of his travels, he did not provide enough factual evidence through actual encounters to support his conclusions. See Adolf Bastian ‘Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 1871’ in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 3, (1871), 133-43 (pp. 137-138) and Rudolf Virchow, ‘Anthropologie und prähistorische Forschung’ in *Anleitung zu Wissenschaftlichen Beobachtungen auf Reisen*, ed. by Georg von Neumayer, (Berlin: Oppenheimer, 1875), pp. 571-90 (p. 580)

<sup>294</sup> See Pascal Grosse, ‘Turning Native? Anthropology, German Colonialism, and the Paradoxes of the “Acclimatization Question,” 1885-1914’ in Penny and Bunzl, eds, *Worldly Provincialism*, pp. 179-198, p. 180.

history and archaeology.<sup>295</sup> Nature, rather than an eternal cycle of birth, growth and death, became an arena of continuous but ateleological change. Nature therefore did not contradict existing historicist theories of development, but rather complemented them, adding a new, almost unimaginable time-scale. In a text published in 1866, German geologist Friedrich Rolle emphasised the necessity of struggle and selection in human history. He drew attention to a struggle for space between races as a driving force behind human development. Progress was thus attained by the elimination of weaker races.<sup>296</sup> The German zoologist Oskar Schmidt argued that human progress, though a fact of history, was confined to a few privileged nations only. Some inferior races, which were distinct species, were capable of advancement, but for many ‘destruction in the struggle for existence as a consequence of their retardation [...] is the natural course of things’.<sup>297</sup> As Paul Weindling states in *Health, Race and German Politics*, ‘the public mind linked the unity of mankind and the animal world with, the politics of unification. The nation was the culmination of the evolution of life from simple to complex organisms, and science offered insight into the laws of social progress’.<sup>298</sup> Germany in particular sought answers to the nation’s long route to unification – viewed by many as the culmination of human social evolution.<sup>299</sup>

Such scientific developments in the nineteenth-century, which apparently proved the existence of ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ organisms, are often seen as justifications for racism.

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<sup>295</sup> Although not employed by Darwin himself, leading German scientists and Darwinists such as Ernst Haeckel, Ludwig Büchner and Carl Vogt employed these terms.

<sup>296</sup> Friedrich Rolle, *Der Mensch, Seine Abstammung und Gesittung im Lichte der Darwinischen Lehre* (Frankfurt am Main: Hermann’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1866) p. 109.

<sup>297</sup> Oskar Schmidt, *Doctrine of Descent*, (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1873), p. 298.

<sup>298</sup> Paul Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics Between National Unification and Nazism 1870-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 30.

<sup>299</sup> Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics*, p. 32.

Social Darwinism certainly adapted biological theories at an early stage to justify doctrines of racial hierarchy and conflict. However, as Penny and Bunzl state, ‘the overwhelming majority of German ethnologists and anthropologists were liberal champions of cultural pluralism during the imperial period’ (Penny and Bunzl, *Wordly Provincialism*, p. 2). Weindling also states that ‘ideas of fixed racial types and a vital essence or *völkisch* character was rejected by the first generation of Darwinian anthropologists’ (Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics*, p. 48). Although our explorers were for the most part neither ethnologists nor anthropologists, their contribution to the discipline, as we shall see, is nevertheless indisputable. Later explorers demonstrate increasing levels of interest in racial development and its link to cultural progress. Their differentiated findings suggest both diversity of humankind and a belief in hierarchical racial theory. Let us analyse their evaluation of Africans against the backdrop of racial discourse.

‘Rasse’ as a term appears in Barth’s and Rohlf’s works, yet first gains prominence as a category of analysis in Schweinfurth’s travel narrative – thus coinciding with its prominence in academic discourse at the time and Schweinfurth’s strong Darwinian stance. Schweinfurth’s narrative certainly supports Weindling’s statement that ‘nations and cultures were evaluated by anthropologists and medical experts according to biological concepts. Anthropologists applied techniques of comparative anatomy and biology, and physiological measurement to the problems of human physique and culture’ (Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics*, p.49). Schweinfurth’s shift of attention from botanic to human objects is undertaken with similar evaluative and



comparative methods. Rather than collecting plant specimens, he maintains a catalogue of physical measurements taken from each tribe he encounters. Where possible, Schweinfurth collects skulls and bones. He employs his statistics for more sophisticated arguments than a correlation between cranial capacity and the level of ‘civilised development’ as evinced by Vogt.<sup>300</sup> He is the first of our explorers to undertake such activities and is openly influenced by scientific discourse of the time. Yet his contemporary Nachtigal, although a physician, spends little time on physiological aspects of African cultures and concentrates instead on behavioural characteristics. Let us examine Schweinfurth’s deployment of racial theory in his analysis of Africans.

Schweinfurth spends a great deal of time studying the Dinka, the first central-African tribe he encounters (Schweinfurth, I, p. 148). His account of the period spent with the Dinka begins with the following description:

Obwohl einzelne Stämme der Dinka in Bezug auf Körpergrösse oben auf der Skala der menschlichen Rasse stehen, übersteigt die Mehrheit der westlichen Teil dieser Nation kaum eine mittelmäßige Grösse. Aus sechszwanzig Vertretern, die gemessen wurden, lag die Durchschnittsgrösse bei 1,7 m. Danach ist die Durchschnittsgrösse der

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<sup>300</sup> Carl Vogt argued the inferiority of the African as on average his skull was smaller than its European counterpart. *Vorlesungen über den Menschen. Seine Stellung in der Schöpfung und in der Geschichte der Erde* (Gießen: J. Ricker, 1863). The analysis of skulls to gauge evolutionary development was a widely accepted practice, and particularly popular in the explosive question of human descent from apes. See Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, pp. 46-100. Opponents of Darwinist evolution struggled to find differences, for example, between the skulls of higher apes and those of humans. Biologist Heinrich Bischoff who compared human skulls with those of the orangutan and chimpanzee was forced to concede that the fundamental structures of skull and brain were the same. See Montgomery, ‘Darwinism in Germany’, pp. 94-5.

Dinka geringer als die der Kaffir, aber übertrifft die der Engländer. [...] Überhaupt sind die ganzen Körper mit einer allgemeinen Harmonie durchzogen, und der naturwissenschaftliche Student wird die Beweise wohl kaum übersehen, dass die Natur hiermit ein Ende der hierfür bestimmte Entwicklung angestrebt hat. Das Volk der Dinka muss zu den dunkelsten Rassen mit eingerechnet werden, aber das Tiefschwarz ihrer Hautfarbe wird von einem Hauch bräunlichem Teint ersetzt, wenn die Asche, mit der sie sich so gerne einreiben, abgewaschen wird. [...] Irgendwelche behauptete Einheitlichkeit der Physiognomie ist eine gänzliche Illusion. [...] Angenehme, oder besser gesagt gewöhnliche menschliche Gesichtszüge sind selten. Scheußliche Verzerrungen werden durch Grimassen noch erhöht, welche die kurzen Augenbrauen die sowieso niedrigen Stirnen gänzlich verschwinden lassen. (Schweinfurth, I, pp. 148-50)

This description of external appearance represents a greater level of sophistication and detail than similar representations of African peoples given by earlier explorers. This information is complemented by Schweinfurth's factual, authoritative tone, short, clearly-structured sentences and 'impartial', third-person narrative situation. Schweinfurth is confident that his knowledge is accurate enough to be *the* authority on the Dinka over accounts given by previous travellers and chooses a narrative style which emphasises this image. The excerpt begins with an empirically based judgement, firstly comparing the average height of the Dinka to the rest of the human race in general, then

secondly to both other African peoples and the English. These observations suggest great diversity within the human race. ‘Menschliche Rasse’ is employed as an inclusive, all-encompassing term. Schweinfurth’s opening remarks therefore do not purposely seek differences between Africans and Europeans, but rather emphasise the extent of variations within this collective group. Weindling states that ‘Darwinian biology set out to explain human origins and the causes of human variations, while accepting that there was a single human race derived from a common progenitor’ (Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics*, p.49). Yet as the excerpt continues, it becomes clear that Schweinfurth, like other scientists and academics of his era, employs the term ‘race’ liberally to mean both the equivalent of a biological species and sub-species. Schweinfurth for example refers to the human race, then the Dinka as one of the darkest races then continues to find yet another racial subcategory as he describes the illustration of a male Dinka included in his work as belonging to the ‘feiner geförmten Rasse der Dinka’ – by this he means those with whose features ‘woran nichts auszusetzen ist’ (Schweinfurth, I, p. 150). Schweinfurth’s portrayal, like the term ‘race’ itself, thus becomes highly ambiguous.

Let us look more closely at Schweinfurth’s references to a lack of physiognomic uniformity, which he states has been incorrectly maintained by previous travellers to the area. This misconception, so Schweinfurth maintains, is due to ‘unerfahrene Beobachtungen’ and most probably fleeting glimpses rather than in-depth observation (Schweinfurth, I, p.149). Such diversity amongst the Dinka people in both features and height suggests that variations between individuals of the same race are as great as those

between races. This would support the liberal, humanist theory put forward by Charles Loring Brace in his 1863 work *The Races of the Old World*. Brace maintains that races are varieties and not distinct species, as physiological evidence demonstrates that differences among individuals of the same race are as great as those between races.<sup>301</sup>

Yet Schweinfurth's portrayal then lapses into simplistic, dualistic categories of more or less aesthetically pleasing, which can hardly be classed as scientifically quantifiable. Interestingly, there is no shift in tone from the authoritative, informative style with which Schweinfurth conveys his empirical findings. Hence even though such remarks are reminiscent of Rohlf's unsophisticated observations, they are given equal weighting in Schweinfurth's narrative. Rohlf was certainly intent on discovering concrete differences between the German 'self' and the African 'other', rather than any common human characteristics. Schweinfurth's comments echo Rohlf's tone and so continue an older European discourse of physiognomic racism, which equates dark faces and features with cultural negatives.<sup>302</sup> Schweinfurth's ambiguous remark concerning nature's development also presents the reader with conflicting ideologies. The remark, directed at those studying science, is an unmistakeable reference to Darwinian evolutionary theory. Schweinfurth's description of the Dinka's general physiognomy is hardly laudatory, describing their appearance in quite unscientific terms as no better than baboons (Schweinfurth, I, p. 150). Yet he states that their overall physical composition exudes a certain harmony, which for him is proof that nature has pursued

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<sup>301</sup> Charles Loring Brace, *The Races of the Old World* (London: John Murray, 1863) pp. 376-7. See also Hawkins, *Social Darwinism*, p. 62.

<sup>302</sup> As cited in Chapter III, Christoph Meiner's *Grundriß der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1785) propagated notions of unaesthetic African physiognomy as an external indicator of inferior moral judgement. These theories were widely accepted as proof of European superiority.

and attained a certain developmental goal – a goal intended for this particular area. The harmony is thus the result of evolutionary processes of selection which according to Schweinfurth have reached their culmination. The addition of ‘hierfür bestimmten Entwicklung’ suggests different levels of evolutionary development, for different races, residing in different locations (Schweinfurth, I, p. 149). On the one hand this seems to suggest notions of racial hierarchy. Yet this remark also questions the ideology of one-way, linear progress and the cultural superiority of these norms.

Schweinfurth’s findings favour a more diverse, branch-like pattern of development. This is particularly significant in regard to our explorers’ attachment to the western time-set. In earlier chapters it has been suggested that the structure of both the narrative and journey mirrors the ideology each explorer intends to convey. Rohlfs for example portrays a linear, dynamic route ‘quer durch Afrika’. In contrast, Schweinfurth’s journey once reaching jungle territory is particularly intricate in structure, with no clear direction and largely devoid of references to time. So rather than suggesting that Schweinfurth displays monolithic evolutionary ideologies of one set goal for human development, akin to those of Bagehot for example,<sup>303</sup> it would appear that whilst he does suggest variations in evolutionary development, he does not necessarily suggest a hierarchical structure or pattern to these variations.<sup>304</sup> Schweinfurth’s emphasis on developmental

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<sup>303</sup> Bagehot established a set of identities and differences located along an evolutionary continuum in which the presumed attributes of pre-historic people designated the starting point of evolution. Walter Bagehot, *Physics and Politics, or thoughts on the application of the principles of “natural selection” and “inheritance” to political society* (London: Henry S. King, 1872).

<sup>304</sup> This contradicts Fiedler’s analysis of Schweinfurth’s portrayals of Africans which are ‘verallgemeinert’ as follows: ‘Seine [Schweinfurth’s] Völkerskizzen zeigen den Einfluss der “zeitgenössischen Entwicklungstheorie”, die die “wilden Völker” als biologisch-psychologische Vorstufe der “Kulturvölker” begriff’ (Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteuer*, p. 166).

progress as specific to certain locations – in this case swamplands – also emphasises the distinct role of the environment and adaptation in the equation. As ethnographer Bastian states, the ability to adapt successfully to one's surroundings is a measure of 'Vernunft'.<sup>305</sup> Schweinfurth's reference to nature's goal suggests that the Dinka, through processes of natural selection influenced by the environment, have reached a stage of physical development in which they have perfectly adapted to their surroundings. This adaptation is an invisible process of change which occurs in minute stages over generations. Here, development is not measured in how fast one can move from A to B, nor is the ability to measure time in minutes and seconds a sign of progress. One is unlikely to observe evolutionary changes within one lifetime. Time is measured on an extensive scale over hundreds, thousands and billions of years. As the analysis of our explorers' encounters with African space demonstrated, the daily struggle for existence in Africa is a recurrent battle between man and the elements. Slowly, this recurrent struggle induces change. As Nachtigal, Junker and now Schweinfurth have suggested, the ultimate achievement is the ability to adapt to this harsh habitat. It can be argued that Schweinfurth, rather than justifying racist discourse through scientific theory, in fact employs Darwinist discourse to acknowledge African peoples' successful evolutionary adaptation.

Junker's later portrayal of the Bari provides an interesting comparison, for he counts these people as belonging to the same 'group' as the Dinka and, like his predecessor, sees the role of the environment as a key factor in their development. Junker defines this 'group' as those 'stelzenbeinige, dunkelbisterbraunhäutige Nilneger, welche die

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<sup>305</sup> Bastian, *Zwei Worte*, p. 12.

tiefgelegenen, alljährlich den Überschwemmung ausgesetzten, sumpfbedeckten Uferlandschaften [...] bewohnen' (Junker, p. 284). During his expedition, Junker spends over two years in the areas around the Blue and White Nile, and so encounters numerous tribes belonging to this 'group'. The Bari are the first indigenous Africans Junker encounters during his first excursion from Khartoum to the Blue Nile, one year into his expedition. Junker begins his short excursus as follows:

Nicht mit Unrecht hat man der dünnen, langen, untern Extremitäten wegen diese Völkerschaften mit den Sumpfvögeln verglichen, da sie ja auch häufig wie Steltzvögel auf einem Beine stehen, während sie die Ferse des anderen Fußes an die Innenwand des Standbeins anstemmen. Die Muskulatur der Bari ist wenig ausgebildet; die Körperfülle einzelner, hauptsächlich der Frauen, beruht auf Fettansatz. Ihre Hautfarbe weicht wenig von derjenigen der anderen Nilneger ab, es ist ein tiefes, meist glanzloses Bisterbraun, unter dem bei dem einen oder andern ein chokoladefarbiger Untergrund durchschimmert. Die Iris ist ausnahmslos braun, die Bindehaut im Auge schmutziggelb, oft auch orangefarbig. Der Schädel ist dolichokephal, die Stirne niedrig, die obere Partie des Hinterkopfs erscheint mehr entwickelt, die Backenknochen sind etwas abstehend, der Mund breit, mit dicken Lippen. (Junker, p. 285)

Junker's detailed portrayal is significant on several counts. The description, which becomes increasingly detailed and anatomical, is matched by a shift in narrative style

from lengthy, descriptive sentences, to an endless, list-like presentation of facts. The language also follows this pattern. We begin with the Bari's overall general physical appearance, which Junker recreates in layman's terms. The comparison with swamp-birds has a certain literary quality which creates a visual image for the reader. We then receive a general idea of body-shape and an unscientific description of skin-tone and colour, which demonstrates far greater levels of detail and distinction than Rohlfs's 'black' or 'brown'. Junker's description of shimmering 'chocolate' base-tones is more indicative of an artists' perception than scientific classification. The description of the eyes moves us to a combination of physiological detail and unscientific 'dirty-yellow'. Junker concludes his description with a detailed anatomical impression of skull size, shape and particularities. The lack of full-stops in this section adds an air of enthusiasm to this otherwise dry description. Junker is evidently extremely interested in this particular area of anatomy. The inclusion of this information in Junker's text is similarly a sign that he deems this information of value to the wider academic community. This reflects a general scientific trend, mentioned above, in the correlation between cranial volume and shape, and evolutionary development. For, when describing the rear part of the skull, Junker significantly refers to its shape as more developed, rather than simply larger, or more prominent. This indicates a process of change over time, induced by natural processes which slowly alter form – thus reminiscent of Schweinfurth's eroded rock and the invisible, yet ever-present passage of natural time. Hence the increased interest in human otherness and our explorers' focus on racial and evolutionary theory, alters their cognitive interest in time. Rather than employing the ability to measure and



‘control’ time as a sign of cultural superiority and so exclusion, these explorers focus on natural time, on slow invisible processes as markers of either difference or similarity.

Interestingly, Junker does not qualify his observations with judgements on the Bari’s aesthetic appeal. Nor does he make judgements on their character. Unlike Schweinfurth’s reference to baboons, the comparison with birds does not indicate a value-judgement. The correlation between ‘swamp-inhabitants’ and the Bari is again a geographical statement of fact, and not associated with inferior levels of development. Junker emphasises that the similarities in appearance and behaviour observed within this ‘group’ are also the consequence of similar, swamp-like habitats. However, if we compare this description of indigenous Africans with Junker’s descriptions of North-African Bedouins, we find notable differences in Junker’s cognitive interest. Here, we receive no information concerning skull-size. Instead we get Junker’s impressions of aristocratic physiognomy and majestic presence. Hence Junker again falls into the category of ambiguity as his differentiations between black Africans and nomadic Bedouins could imply a sense of racial hierarchy. It is impossible to say with certainty whether his interest in cranial shape and volume implies assumed ‘lower’ evolutionary status.

Let us compare this portrayal with another of our post-unification travellers, zoologist Stuhlmann. In contrast to Schweinfurth and Junker, there is no doubt that this active pro-colonialist employs evolutionary theory to support his own imperialist, nationalist, and Social Darwinist agenda. This is particularly evident in Stuhlmann’s description of the

Waganda tribe in Uganda. As a potential site for German territorial expansion, Uganda and its inhabitants are of great interest. This is mirrored by Stuhlmann's extensive narrative time devoted to climate, landscape, agriculture and people. Stuhlmann's uncharacteristically detailed description of the Waganda begins as follows:

Von den Bewohnern lässt sich schwer ein einheitliches Bild entwerfen, denn dadurch, dass bei den Kriegen Frauen aus umliegenden Staaten ins Land gebracht wurden, hat eine Kreuzung des Wagandastammes mit zahlreichen anderen Völkerschaften stattgefunden. [...] Der echte Waganda lässt aber immerhin seine Bantu-Natur in Physiognomie, Wuchs und Sprache nicht verkennen. Von mittelgrosser, ziemlich schlanker Gestalt, zeigt er eine gut entwickelte, abgerundete Muskulatur. Der meist etwas länglich geformte Kopf, dessen hintere Parthie bisweilen stark hervorspringt, hat ein ovales, regelmässig gebildetes Gesicht, dessen Backenknochen und Jochbogen nicht stark hervortreten. Die Nase ist meistens ziemlich breit, doch ist ihr Sattel weniger platt als bei anderen Negern und die inneren Augenwinkel einander ziemlich genähert. Die schöngeschlitzten, oft recht grossen und glänzenden Augen sind von ebenmässig geschwungenen, nicht sehr hervortretenden Superciliarbögen überwölbt, auf denen mässig starke Brauen sitzen. Der Mund ist verhältnissmässig klein, die Lippen nicht zu dick, der Bartwuchs meist schwach. Die Ohren sind mittelgross, wohlgeformt und ihr Läppchen niemals durchbohrt. [...] Der Hals ist von normaler Länge und geht meist in schönem Bogen in die Schultern über. Der Thorax ist ebenmässig,

trapezoidisch gebildet und der Musculus deltoideus an den Schultern gut gerundet. Das Gesäss springt wenig hervor, ebenso wie die Lenden-Curvatur nur gering ist. Oberschenkel und selbst auch Wade sind gut entwickelt. (Stuhlmann, p. 173)

Here, the most notable characteristic is Stuhlmann's attention to detail. The explorer's observations are more sophisticated than his predecessors and reflect a good grounding in human anatomy. Questions of human origins after 1859 had prompted a surge in comparative anatomical and zoological investigations, which corresponds to Stuhlmann's level of knowledge and cognitive interest (Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics*, p. 50). The highly factual and condensed excerpt is presented via short, concise and informative sentences. Stuhlmann's third-person narration in the present tense gives the impression that he has his object of study before him and is recording the information as he observes. This sense of immediacy also creates an atmosphere of uncontested authority. Stuhlmann wishes his readers to believe that he is presenting objective 'facts'. He begins with a brief, general description of the Wagandas' physical appearance before moving directly to physiognomy, which is granted the most narrative space and so prioritised. Significantly, although Stuhlmann is extremely precise in his representation, there is room for numerous qualitative judgments on all aspects of the Wagandas' external appearance. Unexpectedly, Stuhlmann implies that Wagandan physiology and anatomy are 'better' than many of their African counterparts. He employs characteristics that are stereotypically reserved to imply Africans' unaesthetic appearance – wide, flat noses, wide faces, large mouths

and wide lips – and tells us that in this case, these features are not particularly prominent. Instead he reinforces the notion of regular, symmetrical features through repeated references such as ‘regelmässig’, ‘ebenmässig’ and ‘wohlgeformt’. The reference to skull-shape is particularly interesting, as Stuhlmann also implies that the shape is particularly distinct in certain cases. There is no further elaboration on this issue, hence Stuhlmann assumes a shared knowledge with his reader relating to concepts of skull-shape and human development. He implies that, at one time, this skull area was flatter and so concomitant with lower evolutionary development. The overall, by Stuhlmann’s standards relatively positive, image of the Waganda, is supported by three references to ‘good’ muscle-development. His observations on skin-colour are particularly interesting as they resemble those of Schweinfurth in sophistication – or rather unsophistication – describing it as ‘ein sattes Chokoladenbraun’. Yet Stuhlmann includes a reference to this skin colour as corresponding to ‘Etwa No. 2 u. 3 von Fritsch’s Farbentafel’ (Stuhlmann, p. 173). His observations are therefore scientifically quantifiable – leaving little need for in-depth interpretation. This reference also demonstrates Stuhlmann’s grounding in anthropology. Gustav Fritsch, a strongly nationalistic Darwinist and racial anthropologist, was particularly interested in cerebral motor responses. As Weindling states, Fritsch ‘compared the motor centre to a government minister. Any movement after removal of the centre was similar to the continuation of bureaucratic activity whilst the minister was on holiday. Experimental biology revealed the mechanisms of order, control and hierarchy’ (Weindling, *Health, Race and German Politics*, p. 44). Stuhlmann was not only familiar with Fritsch’s work, he also adopted the same ideology of hierarchy and control in his dealings with African

peoples.<sup>306</sup> A belief in hierarchy, in particular his place at the top of the scale, was essential to the expansionist nature of his expedition mandate.

However, the above appraisal of the Waganda suggests that Stuhlmann is intentionally reducing the image of absolute difference between Africans and Germans. This could indicate some level of recognition of common human descent. Yet Stuhlmann's ensuing portrayal of the Wagandas' character and behaviour engages with further aspects of racial theory that refute this possibility. Stuhlmann reinforces a sense of racial hierarchy and so justification for territorial expansion by presenting an alternative 'struggle for existence' to that evinced by Schweinfurth. This particular struggle promotes Stuhlmann's distinctly Social Darwinist ideology. In 1869 leading biologist Ludwig Büchner argued that the struggle for existence, like all organic matter, had undergone a series of transmutations. Rather than referring to violent conflict between races, he argued that whilst the struggle between peoples was formerly a contest of weapons, strength of body, courage and ferocity, this struggle now expressed itself in an emulation of good and useful arts, in discoveries, contrivances and sciences. The time, he maintained, was past in which one people subjugated another or exterminated it to take its place. He concluded that it was not only by destruction, but by peaceful competition that one can attain superiority over the other. Violent conflict however still took place between 'lower' or 'backward' races, as they were still in the preliminary

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<sup>306</sup> Stuhlmann's effective criticism of Christianity which we saw in the previous chapter is also shared by leading advocates of racial hierarchy Vogt, Büchner and Haeckel, whereby the latter was not as thoroughly materialistic and favoured instead a 'materialistically flavoured monism' (Montgomery, 'Darwinism in Germany', p. 84).

stages of evolution.<sup>307</sup> Stuhlmann reinforces this ideology in his narrative by defining the Waganda – who were embroiled in civil war – according to their violent, warlike nature and so relegating them to a presumed lower evolutionary status (Stuhlmann, p. 191).

This ‘fighting stage’, according to Walter Bagehot, is the precondition for the next stage of development – the rule of law. The most tame and obedient tribes succeeded in the first stages of the struggle for life, which is greatly facilitated by the universal trait of human nature apparently particularly pronounced amongst ‘primitives’ – imitation. They blindly follow and emulate their leader. Such imitation or mimicry implies a childlike desire to emulate the physically appealing. This appeal only relates to the visible, external nature of appearances. Bagehot believed that so-called ‘primitives’ and ‘savages’ shared many proclivities with children of civilised societies. This is not a new concept, for Rohlf's also includes imitation to imply ‘primitive’ cultural status. Bagehot however scientized the assumption by linking it to evolutionary theory.<sup>308</sup> Stuhlmann's narrative employs similar, scientifically institutionalised concepts of imitation and mimicry as apparent proof of lower evolutionary status.<sup>309</sup> He implies that these ‘childlike’ Waganda are in need of leadership and would willingly follow, i.e. imitate. Throughout his narrative Stuhlmann implies his ability to lead and Africans' desire to imitate. There is a sense of personal satisfaction in Stuhlmann's descriptions of how his

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<sup>307</sup> Ludwig Büchner, *Man in the Past, Present and Future: A Popular Account of the Results of Recent Scientific Research* (Cambridge, Chadwyck-Healey, 1994) p. 156.

<sup>308</sup> Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, p. 113.

<sup>309</sup> Yet as we saw in Chapter IV, Homi Bhabha has pointed out that there is a fine line between mimicry and satire. The mimicked may initially feel flattered by emulation, yet mimicry soon becomes mockery as it not only copies, but also emphasises the mere externalities of cultural practices. Such mimicry can also become threatening.

well-trained soldiers conform to his military order. ‘Ein schriller Pfiff ruft alsbald die Soldaten herbei, die in wenigen Augenblicken die Zelte abschlagen und zusammen rollen; die Träger haben sich schon in dichter Menge um die Lasthaufen gruppiert, um, sobald der Befehl dazu ertheilt wird, ihre Kisten und Ballen aufzunehmen’ (Stuhlmann, p. 52). The African soldiers are given uniforms as markers of rank and place within the expedition.<sup>310</sup> These structures and symbols of national belonging – uniform and flag – similarly protect Stuhlmann from the intrusion of otherness and any uncertainty as to his role or relationship to the African ‘other’. Stuhlmann’s own identity and relationship to his entourage are thus based on rigid, hierarchical military structures and ideology. He leads and they follow.<sup>311</sup> Hence his hierarchical mind-set is transposed onto Africa and constantly reiterated through military drill and a concept of order. This order is, according to Stuhlmann, mirrored in hierarchical evolutionary scales.

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<sup>310</sup> Colonisers of course do not want the colonised to understand the ruling culture in depth, as this again may then present a threat. For as evolutionary theory suggests, obedience, fidelity and emulation of a leader’s qualities are also the key to success in the process of natural selection. (See Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 167. Those tribes who mimic and learn from their leader’s admirable qualities are most likely to sacrifice themselves for the common good. Although such courage could appear detrimental in the struggle for existence – the strongest, most morally astute members of the tribe would have the shortest life-expectancy and thus produce insufficient offspring – such tribes would nevertheless eventually be victorious over less obedient tribes in the struggle for existence.

<sup>311</sup> However, the mere mimicry and acceptance of external structures which Stuhlmann initially desired from his soldiers does become a threat. For instead of imitation, the African soldiers understand and internalise Stuhlmann’s ideology. The expedition unexpectedly encounters former soldiers of the British-Egyptian army who had served under the Pascha during the Mahdi invasion. They possess equal and even higher military ranks than Stuhlmann. Emin’s sense of loyalty to these soldiers prompts him to take them on the expedition. Not only do the Egyptian officers have higher military ranking than Stuhlmann, they are also allowed to retain control over their own soldiers, leaving Stuhlmann demoted. Ironically, Stuhlmann’s constant attempts to make the nature of his uniform and rank clear to his soldiers, now enables them to understand the new-comers’ military superiority. African ‘others’ have succeeded in appropriating the structures designed to keep them in check and ultimately usurped Stuhlmann’s authority. The incident exposes the fragile basis of Stuhlmann’s identity – he can no longer rely on his rank to define his believed superior position within the group.

Hence Stuhlmann employs aspects of racial theory to steadily construct and reinforce arguments in support of his expansionist agenda. The Waganda, rather than equals, are in fact portrayed as ideal potential colonial subjects. Their appearance is not ‘offensive’ to potential German settlers and their build and strength make them ideal labourers. As such, the Waganda are a perfect economic ‘resource’. According to Stuhlmann, they also require leadership. Thus, through a literary medium Stuhlmann engages with the debate surrounding racial theory and, as we shall see in the following section, engages with several aspects of the colonial debate in an attempt to win support for his expansionist agenda. The focus on race moves our explorers’ cognitive interest into the area of politics and the colonial debate. Let us look at a further, prominent aspect of racial theory which influenced our explorers’ perception of Africans.

## **HYBRIDITY**

The question of distinct racial types or common human characteristics was of particular interest in the debate on evolution and racial theory. This question was inseparably linked to discourse on miscegenation and racial hybridity, the prominence of which is reflected in these later travel narratives. Theories of racial hybridity become essential to our later explorers’ interest in potential human development and the future of the German nation. These works highlight a general Germanic fascination with racial hybridity and seem to suggest, as Robert J.C. Young discusses in *Colonial Desire*, a



latent dialectical combination of sexual desire and repulsion.<sup>312</sup> Earlier narratives contained if at all, almost asexual portrayals of African women. The explorers seem to shun any notion of sexual attraction as if this questioned their objectivity. Expansion into colonial territories however altered this relationship. Racial discourse transformed the notion of sexuality into scientific theories of cultural development and so justified its inclusion in exploratory narratives. As Charles Loring Brace argued that races were varieties and not distinct species, he concluded that they could consequently inter-breed. He rejected the claim that racial hybrids were infertile and would eventually become extinct. Instead he envisaged a time in the future when racial intermixing could result in a new and more perfect race. He saw this happening to North American settlers in particular. Humans, he concluded, were capable of conscious and rational adaptation and settlers were already displaying physical differences to their ancestors (Brace, *Races of the Old World*, p. 375). The question of racial intermixing was still unanswered and therefore at the forefront of racial discourse at the time of our post-unification narratives. *Afrikareisende* were at the source which could determine the answer to this question. Were Africans distinct species, progressing along a slower evolutionary path and so separated from shared heritage with German explorers? Would racial intermixing result in the degeneration of the ‘white German species’? Or were Africans part of the same race which demonstrated universality in its variety and different, yet equal evolutionary outcomes? Let us see how our explorers engage with this debate.

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<sup>312</sup> R.J.C.Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London; Routledge, 2003 [1995]).

Even non-academic, military travellers to Africa, who were interested in neither ethnographic nor anthropological investigations, joined in the debate on the advantages and disadvantages of racial mixing. Rust for example, the young German officer who led a party of soldiers to join Carl Peters in the race to rescue Emin Pascha, spent a period of unexpected sojourn on the island of Zanzibar. Rust is eager to immerse himself in the diversity of this multicultural community. He is neither oblivious nor condescending towards difference. Yet he generalises each ‘race’ by its apparently specific attributes; the Arabs in Zanzibar are ‘schöne Gestalten’ and ‘wohlerzogen’, the Hindus ‘friedliebend’. The Goans are however, ‘verkommene Mischlingsgeburt ... die Fehler zweier Rassen’ (Rust, *Emin Pascha Expedition*, p. 39). Rust does not expand on this judgement, which seems to result from their alcohol consumption, yet it stands in harsh contrast to his descriptions of other residents. The Swahili’s general appearance is also aesthetically pleasing, a result of the mixture of Arab and Ethiopian racial influences. There are thus plenty of references to both the positive and negative aspects of racial hybridity, in this case the Swahilis’ advantageous appearance is marred in Rust’s judgement by a generally low intellectual capacity – the combination of ‘Fehlern beider Rassen’ (Rust, *Emin Pascha Expedition*, p. 39). As Rust demonstrates, even inexperienced, untrained eyes employ categories of popular racial discourse to classify foreign peoples.

The majority of theories based on the problems of racial intermixing were intended to discourage colonists from being ‘led astray’ by exotic ‘natives’, rather than reflecting

any real scientific premise.<sup>313</sup> Stuhlmann, for example, mentions that Emin has a child who is present during the preparations for the expedition. Emin dotes on his young daughter Ferída (Stuhlmann, p. 3). There is no description of the child's appearance, nor mention of the child's mother. The only references to Emin's African wife are in Emin's diaries, which were published posthumously. Stuhlmann must have known that Emin's wife was African. Yet at the beginning of the narrative, the explorer is intent on creating a favourable image of the man whom he agreed to accompany on the expedition. This is more for his own benefit than for Emin's, as Stuhlmann, an ardent nationalist, cannot be seen taking orders from someone who was not loyal and beneficial to the Reich.<sup>314</sup> Emin's character was after all doubted by both the British and the Germans. His religious status made him automatically suspicious. It is no surprise then that Emin's wife remains unmentioned. The daughter is only spoken of in order to portray a softer side to the infamous figure. This potentially scandalous information is thus censored slightly to alter the perception of this strange personality, for Emin's mixed-race family and his conversion to Islam made him a very strange candidate for colonial enterprises.

A much publicised case surrounding the infamous colonial entrepreneur Carl Peters, the founder of Deutsch-Ostafrika and Emin Pacha's 'rescuer', demonstrates the general attitude towards inter-racial relations. Descriptions of fertile land in Stanley's expedition diaries encouraged Peters to search for 'available' territories in this part of the continent. Peters however, who was unlikely to accept any authority, was not one to shy away

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<sup>313</sup> See Perras, *Carl Peters*, p. 165.

<sup>314</sup> His admiration of expedition leader Emin Pascha is based on his assertion that the Pascha is acting solely in German interests and has 'national prestige' at heart (Stuhlmann, p. 5). Stuhlmann employs this terminology often, yet it does not appear in any of the previous works examined in this study. Bastian refers to 'Prestige' as 'politisch künstliche Verschlingungen' (Bastian, *Zwei Worte*, p. 5).

from violent encounter, blackmail and outright terrorisation of the local population. He was recalled to Germany after only a short period in the newly-founded protectorate. Yet the German government found his colonial agitation more harmful at home than abroad and so he was relegated to an outpost in a remote area of Deutsch Ost-Afrika near Mount Kilimanjaro.

In Peters's case, the colonial mind-set encourages human, as well as territorial possession. Peters's sexual relationship with an African woman resulted in the well-publicised 'Kolonial-Skandale' which shocked the German public and rocked the German government. According to Peters, the woman he was involved with had been living in his station as a housekeeper. She fled to her native tribe, yet was forced to return as Peters threatened the tribal leader with violent revenge. Soon after her return, Peters's men were ambushed and killed by her tribesmen during a reconnaissance mission. Peters hanged the 'housekeeper' whom he suspected of conspiracy. As these events became public, so did Peters's sexual relationship with the woman. As Perras suggests in his biography of Peters, the most shocking aspect of the scandal seemed not to be the actual killing, but the method of hanging which was associated with 'native' methods of punishment. The sexual relationship nonetheless confirmed the suspicion that Peters had shockingly 'gone native'.<sup>315</sup> In such cases, the colonial mind-set thoroughly rejected its representatives' adaptation to African structures. Theories of

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<sup>315</sup> See Perras, *Carl Peters*, p. 167. Frieda von Bülow's novels *Der Konsul*, *Tropenkoller* and *Im Lande der Verheißung* are based on Peters with whom she had extensive personal contact. The term *Tropenkoller* refers to the mental and physical deterioration experienced by many German colonial officials when removed from the controls and checks of European society. Their regression into 'native' behaviour was institutionalised as a genuine affliction. Frieda von Bülow, *Im Lande der Verheißung. Ein Kolonialroman um Carl Peters* (Dresden: Reißner, 1907). *Tropenkoller* (Berlin: Fontane & Co., 1905). *Der Konsul. Vaterländischer Roman aus unseren Tagen* (Berlin: Fontane & Co., 1891). On the relationship between Bülow and Peters see Perras, *Carl Peters*, pp.181-4

racial intermixing and the dangers this posed supported this mind-set well. As racial hybrids were deemed infertile and would eventually become extinct, scientific theory could be imposed to prevent colonial officials being influenced by ‘native ways’.

Even Frobenius, one of our most open-minded explorers, highlights the extent and authority of discourse on miscegenation in his introductory chapter. In this chapter, Frobenius showcases his findings within the current discourse on African ethnography. The following ambiguous statement seems out of place with his later cultural assessments:

Wenn wir nur langsam erkennen lernen, welche eigenartigen Einflüsse vordem schon bei diesen [afrikanischen] Völkern eingedrungen sind, wie in jüngeren, alten und sehr alten Zeiten allerhand Einwanderungen und Kolonisation unter ihnen stattgefunden haben, – wenn wir in der Lage sind zu erkennen wie und unter welchen Formen diese Kulturmischungen stattfanden und ausklangen – dann gewinnen wir einen guten Leitfaden für alle Fragen nach der Art und Entwicklungstypen, in denen die sogenannte Negerschaft überhaupt sich zu bewegen imstande ist. (Frobenius, I, p. XXI.)

Frobenius’s statement is significant, for it reflects the connection between archaeology, ethnography and biology, and also the general fascination with racial heredity. These influences and cultural mixing go beyond the mere observation and imitation of foreign cultural practices discussed by Rohlf in his evaluation of Bornu. Frobenius’s ‘Arten’

and ‘Typen’ imply both culturally and physically distinctive races. The analysis of artefacts and ethnographic study, combined with biological concepts, help to determine a people’s past and so, Frobenius says, their future. Echoing Schweinfurth, he refers to different stages of development attainable by African peoples. These stages appear to be quantifiable as certain specific ‘types’. This implies that comparable types are already in existence, or have been known to exist elsewhere. Africans, so Frobenius suggests, have yet to reach such status. Development is therefore still an unfinished process in Africa. This is not necessarily a negative comment, as European civilisation was also deemed to be constantly evolving. Yet Frobenius’s additional comment ‘überhaupt’ seems to cast doubt on any possible development whatsoever.

Frobenius’s final comment on African evolutionary potential appears sinister when considered against German colonial discourse of the time and the pressing question of harnessing African physical potential in the colonies.<sup>316</sup> Earlier in his introduction, Frobenius refers to the ‘höchste Arbeitskraft der Negervölker’ in tropical Africa (Frobenius, I, p. XX). He then refers to the prominence of illness as the main focus of current discourse surrounding the ‘Negerfrage’ (Frobenius, I, p. XXI). Frobenius suggests studying healthy ‘specimens’ before concentrating on the sick – again in order to gauge the trajectory of past racial intermixing. Yet the most unexpected and uncharacteristic analysis of racial intermixing is Frobenius’s portrayal of the Congo. He discusses the arrival of Portuguese colonists in the African city of San Salvador in the sixteenth-century. Already a well-developed trading enclave, Portuguese influence

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<sup>316</sup> Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?*, p. 35.

transformed the city into a Christian kingdom, whose ‘Pomp in Europa eine Zeitlang sprichwörtlich war’ (Frobenius, I, p. 40). Yet as Frobenius tells us:

Ein weiteres Jahrhundert nachher: nur elende Trümmer, elende Negerhütten und Buschvolk in Lumpen! So schnell verging die herrliche Samt- und Seidenpracht. Und weshalb? Weil man die Tragfähigkeit jener Rassen überschätzt hatte, weil man vergessen hatte zu unterscheiden, was äußerlich angenommen und innerlich als Saat aufgefangen war; weil die Rassenfrage verkannt war. Weiße Rassenmacht und weißer Rassenwille waren vom schwarzen Phlegma absorbiert – die weiße Rassenkraft war in Verniggerung zerflossen’. (Frobenius, I, p.41)

This seems to refute any possibility of positive cultural appraisals to come. Yet we have already seen that Frobenius rejects notions of African cultural inferiority which are based on a lack of written historiography and instead revalorises alternative, *African* cultural norms. This dramatic excerpt however, remains at the beginning of his narrative as an assertion of white racial superiority. Without justifying or approving of this dualistic assertion, let us analyse the possible intentions behind this statement.

If we look at the excerpt more closely, the information presented is more ambiguous than the closing lines suggest. Frobenius tells us that San Salvador was a thriving city before Europeans arrived. Social structures, trading networks and the rule of law were already in place. It is the introduction of Christianity however, which appears to be the

kingdom's downfall. Hence Frobenius argues that the black race at its current stage of evolutionary development is not ready for the mighty wrath of 'white' energies. Consequently, any hybridisation would return to type. So rather than condemning black potential, he implies that more time is required, and perhaps hybridisation with another more suitable race.<sup>317</sup> This statement is more consistent with Frobenius's later findings than the assumption of inherent black inferiority. Frobenius also refers to 'jener Rassen' in the plural, thus criticising the strength and potential of both the European and the African race.

Following this excerpt, Frobenius fails to engage with the racial aspect of intercultural mixing. He is more concerned with the transfer of cultural influences concomitant with the movement of peoples. Frobenius, for example, concludes his excursus on the Yoruba with a comparison between depictions of the hammer-wielding Schango and Thor in northern mythology (Frobenius, I, p. 252). Frobenius discovers that Schango is also worshipped as the god of the sun and agriculture and often depicted as a ram. From these findings he draws parallels to the Germanic myths surrounding Wotan and suggests that 'in alter Zeit [ist] die Kultur dieses Gottes einmal gegen den Strich der Weltgeschichte von Westen nach Osten gewandert' (Frobenius, I. p. 253). In contrast to Frobenius's introductory remarks quoted above, this statement implies that African culture is not only an essential part of western, German culture, but the catalyst of its original development.

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<sup>317</sup> These arguments echo the theories presented by Bastian – Frobenius's major influence – in Adolf Bastian, *Allgemeine Grundzüge der Ethnologie* (Berlin: Dümmler, 1884), pp. 6-8.



As this section has shown, the prominence of racial discourse in many aspects of nineteenth-century academic and popular discourse is mirrored by our explorers' portrayals of African peoples. Germanic interest in cultural development and social evolution foregrounds such biological theories of evolutionary development. Schweinfurth demonstrates a transition between Rohlf's simplistic racial dualism, the emergence of Darwinian theory in racial discourse and a Herderian interest in varied paths of cultural development. This combination suggests the nature of debate to come in the years following German unification. Junker builds on the emphasis of environment as a strong determiner in the process of adaptation. He also, like Schweinfurth, focuses on the skull as a marker of development and change. Their cognitive interest in processes of natural evolutionary change distances them from concepts of 'clock-time' and linear progress. Stuhlmann's assertion of hierarchical racial theory however, reflects the acceptance of racial categorisation in nineteenth-century science. It is cognate with his imperialist mentality and colonial mandate. Stuhlmann also suggests that there is a natural, logical order that mirrors the military order and hierarchical structures he upholds within his entourage. Frobenius emphasises the increasing normalisation of racial theory, yet remarks that western mythology can be linked to African cultural influence. Yet the scope of this discourse is broad, as are our explorers' extremely differentiated findings. Aside from Stuhlmann's portrayal, attempts at racial categorisation tend to negate theories of racial hierarchy – a fact that was unprecedented in the era of widespread European imperial expansion.<sup>318</sup> Our explorers demonstrate that humanity is universal through its racial differences and diversity. Yet

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<sup>318</sup> As Penny and Bunzl write, such trends were not evident in other European nations until the twentieth-century as expressions of growing anticolonialism, *Worldly Provincialism*, p.1.

the explorers nevertheless present a far more ambiguous picture than, for example, their impressions of African rituals. Let us now look at the connection between race and colonial politics in German-Africa discourse.

### **RACE, ADAPTATION, COMMERCE AND THE COLONIAL QUESTION**

Our explorers' cognitive interest in racial theory gives their works an increasingly political dimension, as the question of racial hierarchy was central to German colonial debate. This colonial debate in fact began long before the unification of the German Reich in 1871 and its actual emergence as a colonial power in 1884.<sup>319</sup> Yet it was Friedrich Fabri's landmark essay *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?* (1879) that truly brought the 'Colonialfrage' to the forefront of public and political debate (Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?* p. 6). Fabri gauged the general public mood of discontent and timed his plea accordingly. Addressing the problems of the *Auswanderungswelle* which drained Germany of its young entrepreneurs, trade embargoes and tax penalties imposed by the all-powerful British, and an ensuing economic slump, publicist and colonial supporter Fabri argues that territorial expansion is the solution to the Reich's ills (Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?* p. 1). Fabri states that expansion into

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<sup>319</sup> According to Zantop, 'colonial fantasies' emerged towards the end of the eighteenth century in Germany. Yet the role of specifically German-African encounters remains problematic in this concept. Zantop's focus is South America, which, even after unification and Germany's first colonial ventures in Africa, still remained the most desirable area for potential colonisation in pro-colonial propaganda. See Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?* and Klaus J. Bade, *Friedrich Fabri und der Imperialismus in der Bismarckzeit. Revolution – Depression – Expansion* (Freiburg im Bressgau: Atlantis, 1975), p. 86 and Perras, *Carl Peters*, p. 47.

these territories is in fact a predetermined goal:<sup>320</sup> ‘durch eine providentielle Ordnung im Haushalt der geschichtlichen Entwicklung sind diese großen, weitgestreckten Territorien Jahrtausende hindurch der weißen Rasse für kommende Zeiten aufbehalten worden’ (Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?*, p. 29). Fabri qualifies his statement by emphasising Germany’s (wasted) potential as the European nation with, he maintains, the greatest colonising ability (Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?*, p. 15).

Colonies, so Fabri continues, should be acquired according to their suitability for either settlement or trade (Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?*, p. 31). Geographical and climatic conditions, and the Germans’ ability to survive and adapt to these conditions were understandably essential factors in the decision between both types of colony (Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?*, p. 35). Focussing on southern Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and northern Patagonia, Fabri suggests that these areas in particular promise increased *Lebensraum*<sup>321</sup> – often stated as a reason for mass German emigration to the USA – the possibility of fulfilling the pioneer-settler fantasy, whilst also, and most importantly, preserving the German *Volksgeist* from the melting-pot society of the USA.<sup>322</sup> Emigration was seen by pro-colonial factions as a

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<sup>320</sup> See also Bade on Fabri, p. 86.

<sup>321</sup> As we saw in Chapter II, p. 69, the meaning of ‘Lebensraumpolitik’ at the time of the travel narratives’ composition referred to a notion of ‘classical colonialism’ and thus differed from later connotations associating it with National Socialist ideals of expansion into Eastern Europe.

<sup>322</sup> In the *Winnetou* series, Karl May popularised the image of the Germanic pioneer. *Winnetou: Reiseerzählung in Gesammelte Werke*, 86 vols (Bamberg: Karl May Verlag, 1992 [1892]), vol. 7. As Ridley states in *Images of Imperial Rule*, other authors of exotic novels such as Charles Sealsfield presented images of American idyll which highlighted the influence of boundless space as a criteria for political participation and successful society (p. 21 and 33). As we shall see, such images echo Paul Rohrbach’s concept of the ultimate German settler, a prototype of German ideals and boundless African space in which these ideals can spread. The connection between space and political participation was however not new and had, originally, been popularised by Alexis de Toqueville’s famous study *De la démocratie en Amérique* (1835). Toqueville saw America as a model democracy and answer to Europe’s political ills. His study analysed the factors contributing to America’s political success in order to create

vehicle to expand German nationality overseas and not for it to be consumed and transformed by other national identities (Perras, *Carl Peters*, p. 47). Social Darwinist arguments for *Lebensraum* employed biological, organicist metaphors to portray the German *Volksgeist* as an organism in need of space in which to grow and thrive.<sup>323</sup>

Questions raised by Fabri concerning Germany's ability, and need, to colonise were the focus of widespread public interest. Economists, ethnographers, biologists and missionaries who represented both pro- and anti-colonial factions, brought their expertise and opinions to the public domain through articles, treatises and speeches. They created a discourse which, they hoped, would have direct influence on both the public mood and political policy.<sup>324</sup> Established economist and colonial advocate Paul Rohrbach and his contemporary, ethnographer and colonial critic Adolf Bastian, were leading voices in this debate both prior to the Reich's colonial ventures and throughout the colonial era. Focussing on their works as representative of both sides of the debate, let us look at how the experiences narrated in our travel narratives both contributed to and were influenced by this discourse, commonly known as 'Die Colonialfrage'. This 'question' was largely determined by the following aspects: firstly the *Acclimatisationsfrage*, which debated German physiological compatibility with harsh African climatic influences, secondly the *Eingeborenenfrage*, which debated the future relationship between German settlers and colonised Africans based on theories of racial superiority.<sup>325</sup> Proclaiming white racial and cultural superiority would of course both

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similar conditions in France. Alexis de Toqueville, *De la démocratie en Amérique*, 2 vols, (Brussels: Haumann, 1835, 1840)

<sup>323</sup> For example, Paul Rohrbach states that, in *Ostafrika* 'manch überschüssige Geisteskraft, die jetzt in der Heimath thatenlos versiegt, sich austoben können und Keime anpflanzen für Kolonialschöpfungen' in *Afrikas Osten: mit dort eröffneten Ausblicken* (Berlin: Dümmler, 1885), p. 17.

<sup>324</sup> Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?*, p. 1.

<sup>325</sup> Fabri introduces this terminology which was continued by later colonial supporters.

justify and legitimise German actions on African soil. Yet our explorers present differentiated views, which in turn reflect conflicting elements of German national self-understanding: should Germany abstain from the colonial scramble for territories, respect cultural difference and remain morally irreproachable yet politically inferior, or fight for a place amongst the world's leading political powers in the struggle for colonial territories, regardless of detrimental effects to other cultures? Let us begin with our explorers' contributions to the 'Acclimatisationsfrage'.

#### ***DIE ACCLIMATISATIONSFRAGE: GERMAN SETTLEMENT ON AFRICAN SOIL***

African colonies were not high on the agenda for settlement areas in which the German nation could expand. German Expeditions during which explorers had succumbed to the harsh climate had been mainly concentrated around Northern and Central Africa which, as it would turn out, played little part in German colonial expansion. These areas either already 'belonged' to other European nations, or they were inhospitable expanses of desert or dense jungle territory.<sup>326</sup> Hence German colonisation of Africa rarely featured in colonial agitation at the time our first expeditions were undertaken.<sup>327</sup> African exploration, rather than being viewed as the forerunner of actual territorial expansion,

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<sup>326</sup> Conversely, the areas of Africa which did become German colonies were little-known in German exploratory discourse. The missionary and traveller Johan Ludwig Krapf had long resided in German South-West Africa before it became German territory and was familiar with local territorial rivalries, but Carl Peters's main source of information on East Africa was Stanley's report of the area as the 'paradise in East Africa' in Henry Morton Stanley, *How I found Livingstone* (Dover: Minneola, 2001). See Perras, *Carl Peters*, p. 51.

<sup>327</sup> As we shall see, Bastian provides evidence of small-scale, German settlement projects undertaken on the American continent. Africa did not come into question for such projects until international events forced Germany to defend its established trading interests.

seems (apart from a genuine interest in Africa itself) primarily concerned with creating a Germanic self-image. When the possibility of expansion into African territories did arise, it took the Germans somewhat by surprise, for even after years of observation the Reich was severely under-prepared for its African colonial enterprises.<sup>328</sup> Later pro-colonial discourse attacked German-Africa exploration for its humanistic liberalism and failure to convert ethno-geographic knowledge into actual territorial possessions.<sup>329</sup> Rohrbach criticised the standard of ‘wirtschafts-geographische Kenntnisse von Afrika’ at the time German colonies were established. Levels of information were ‘nicht nur in weiteren Kreisen, sondern auch an den maßgebenden Stellen so gering, wie man es sich nur schwer denken kann’.<sup>330</sup> Stuhlmann’s in-depth fact-finding expedition through Deutsch-Ostafrika, for example, took place several years after the colony had been established.

Once African territories had been appropriated, initial debate focused on the type of colony suitable for these particular areas and returned to Fabri’s earlier discussion of settlement versus trade. *Afrikareisende* narratives were a source of invaluable information on this particular aspect of the colonial debate.<sup>331</sup> Barth, Schweinfurth and

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<sup>328</sup> Initially Bismarck, following the British model, handed the running of African colonial territories over to private trading companies in an attempt to avoid direct financial liability for overseas possessions. See Perras, *Carl Peters*, pp. 69-70. The naïve assumption that Germany could mark out protectorates in which German entrepreneurs could co-exist alongside ‘native’ inhabitants was soon belied by actual experience. The few settlers in such territories soon became the focus of local power struggles as rival groups vied for the settlers’ influence and violent conflicts followed. Ensuing attempts to ‘divide and rule’ ended in disaster. For example the Herero-Nama uprising against German colonial rulers of 1904-07 which the Germans ended with indiscriminate bloodshed and a massacre of almost 85% and 50% of the local population, respectively. See Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, pp. 111-127.

<sup>329</sup> See Carl Peters, ‘Die Kulturhistorische Bedeutung des Deutschtums’ in *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des Allgemeinen Deutschen Kongresses zur Förderung überseeischer Interessen* (Berlin, 1886), p. 81.

<sup>330</sup> Paul Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen* (Gloekner: Leipzig, 1911), p. 7.

<sup>331</sup> See Grosse, ‘Turning Native?’, pp. 180-1.

Frobenius paint a picture of an omnipotent African climate, too harsh for Europeans to tolerate. This mirrors colonial critic Bastian's dismissal of German plans for African settlement. Stuhlmann, however, sees selection as an inherently progressive process and so the solution to this problem. Echoing colonial advocate Rohrbach's settlement agenda, Stuhlmann maintains that over time, German settlers will develop physiologically superior traits to enable their survival. Let us look firstly at the arguments against German settlement.

Barth, for example, loses both Richardson and Overweg. Yet it is not just the fact of these explorers' deaths which is significant, but the narrative portrayal of the event. In the following excerpt, Barth's portrayal of Overweg's tropical illness depicts not just physical, but most shocking of all, mental deterioration. The two German explorers had separated after reaching Kuka. Overweg headed for Lake Chad and Barth to Massenja and Baghirmi further south. After returning from the second of his excursions, Barth is summoned to his companion's aid on the swampy shores of Lake Chad and finds him as follows:

Sobald Delirium eintrat, murmelte er [Overweg] fortwährend ganz unverständliche Worte, in welchem ein Gewirr von allen Begebenheiten seines Lebens enthalten zu sein schien, sprang wiederholt rasend von seinem Lager auf und rannte mit solcher Wut gegen die Bäume und das Feuer, dass vier Männer ihn kaum zurückzuhalten vermochten. Gegen morgen wurde er endlich ruhiger und hielt sich still auf seinem Lager, ohne dass ich bemerkte,

wie seine Kraft schon ganz gebrochen sei. In der Hoffnung, er habe die Krisis überwunden, glaubte ich nach der Stadt zurückkehren zu können. Ich fragte ihn, ob er etwas Besonderes wünsche, und er deutete an er habe etwas zu sagen; es war mir aber unmöglich, ihn zu verstehen. Aus dem, was sich bald ereignete, kann ich nur den Schluss ziehen, er habe mir im Bewusstsein seines nahen Todes seine Familie empfehlen wollen. [...] Mit Tagesanbruch, während einige Regentropfen fielen, hatte sich sein Geist nach kurzem Kampfe vom Körper gelöst. Am Nachmittag legte ich ihn in sein Grab. (Barth, III, p. 424)

This tragic scene in no way promotes German settlement on African soil. Rather than imposing German norms and an image of Germanic superiority onto African soil, Overweg is consumed by some inscrutable, foreign disease. Barth is now just as incapable of conversing with his German companion as with the local population and so both fall into a state of complete isolation. Barth's attempts to recapture this disturbing experience are narrated uncharacteristically. Overweg's delirium is told in one ranging, disjointed sentence which includes only one reference to 'er'. This enhances both the confusion and the fear induced by Overweg's behaviour. The scene, in particular the reference to 'Gewirr von allen Begebenheiten seines Lebens', contains parallels to Nachtigal's timeless, irrational, dreamlike deliriums which we saw in Chapter IV. Yet whilst Nachtigal's experiences were gripping and illuminating, Overweg's state of mind is portrayed as highly disturbing. As the last lines suggest, for Barth it is the evident loss of mental control which presents the most fearsome aspect of Overweg's illness. Barth's



controlled, academic ‘self’ is unable to express emotion freely as his sole companion on the African continent leaves him. Yet the uncharacteristic detail of falling raindrops seems to substitute for Barth’s own lack of tears and inability to portray any sense of emotion as he buries his friend.

Leading ethnographer and anti-colonialist Adolf Bastian employed information gained from such portrayals<sup>332</sup> to point out the pure incompatibility of the German physiological constitution with the African climate and thus the sheer futility of settlement colonies. In his anti-colonial essay *Zwei Worte über Colonial-Weisheit von Jemandem dem dieselbe versagt ist* (1881), which was composed to refute Fabri’s call for territorial expansion, Bastian employs aspects of adaptation and racial theory to strengthen his argument *against* German settlement in African territories:

Als völlig gedankenlose werden die Flüchtigkeiten spurlos vorübergehen, in all’ diesem Geflatter von Colonisationspapieren, so laut sie bei dem Mode-Anstrich ihrer Tagesphrasen in der Literatur ephemere auch parlieren mögen. Naturgesetze stossen sich mit Worten nicht um, und als unumstössliches Naturgesetz ist dasjenige zu betrachten, das den ethnischen Typus, oder den biologischen im Allgemeinen, auf die geographische Provinz hinweist, die ihn geschaffen (die ihn entstanden gesehen, wenn man lieber will). Wie der Quechua, trägt der Neger den Abdruck seiner Umgebung zur Schau, d.h. den

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<sup>332</sup>Bastian was familiar with Barth’s work which he cites as preparatory material for his own expedition. Adolf Bastian, *Deutsche Expedition der Loango-Küste*, p. 25.

für ihn congenialen, und also den für Andere feindlichen, bald mehr weniger schädlichen, bald geradezu verderblichen. (Bastian, *Zwei Worte*, p.12)

Bastian employs further statistics from a Texan settlement project whereby one thousand of the original four thousand German emigrants died within the first three years of the colony's founding. A second German project in Central America ended in disaster as 'ein armer Krüppel als einzig übriger angedeutet wurde' (Bastian, *Zwei Worte*, p. 11). Echoing our explorers' interest in racial discourse, Bastian reinforces his examples with biological concepts of human evolution in order to negate the media frenzy surrounding colonial projects. As we saw above, explorers such as Schweinfurth and Junker were particularly interested in the role of the environment in evolutionary progress. The general consensus reached by them and Bastian, was the fact of superior African adaptation to harsh climatic conditions. Rather than suggesting that Africans are racially inferior, our explorers recognise alternative evolutionary outcomes.

Colonial advocate Rohrbach, however, countered Bastian's theory. He maintained that 'fast zwei Jahrzehnte lang die Kolonien als Abschiebungsplätze für halb oder ganz gescheiterte bürgerliche und militärische Existenzen angesehen wurden' (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p.11). These inferior exemplars, so Rohrbach maintains, were like self-destructive germs within the German colonies, for they displayed negative character and personality traits, and above all, questionable moral judgement (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p.12). This in turn made them susceptible to the affliction

commonly known as *Tropenkoller* (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 12).<sup>333</sup>

Rohrbach, intensifying racial debate and its link to colonial discourse, suggests a second-generation, master race of German settlers who, through nurture and selection, would be physically more suitable to their surroundings:

Die Tatsache, daß die zweite Generation in einer viel unmittelbaren Beziehung zu dem Lande und seinen Eigentümlichkeiten aufwächst und von klein auf mit einer viel genaueren Kenntnis aller dortigen Lebenserfordernisse ausgestattet ist, macht sie zu eigentlichen Trägerin des Besiedlungswerks [...] Gerade diese Möglichkeit, unsere nationale Gesamtqualität durch Schaffung eines neuen Typs zu verbessern: des Deutschen, der sich über See bodenständig einwurzelt, aber in nationaler Beziehung bei der politisch geeinten Gesamtheit des Deutschtums verbleibt, sie ist es um deretwillen wir ganz besonders darauf bedacht sein müssen.

(Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 29)

Bastian's rejection of the pioneer fantasy due to the German incapability to adapt, is reinstated and developed even further by Rohrbach's creation of a new racial 'type'. The first generation of settlers would volunteer for this altruistic project with the knowledge of its greater good for the 'fatherland'. This new racial 'type' would possess superior 'African' physical qualities induced by the influence of their new surroundings, yet

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<sup>333</sup> This affliction became institutionalised in German colonial discourse. According to Rohrbach it is a: 'Hyperthrophie des Selbstbewußtseins' caused by the combination of insufficient social controls, the sudden release from all concerns of etiquette and gentility and a belief in one's superior status over 'primitive' races. Paul Rohrbach, *Die Kolonie* (Frankfurt am Main: Rütten and Loening, 1907), p. 82. See also Peter's discussion of the colonial bureaucracy in 'Witness to the Execution', p. 408 and 414.

maintain the superior Germanic ‘Geist’.<sup>334</sup> Rather than the prolific population of African territories, this small yet superior group of second-generation settlers would be capable of harnessing Africa’s most valuable possession, ‘die Eingeborenen’, and exploit its potential as a workforce (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 19). Rohrbach acknowledges superior African ‘racial’ characteristics such as physical strength, yet these are merely environmental consequences.<sup>335</sup> Rohrbach’s ‘master-settler’ would be the product of evolutionary selection. As such, Rohrbach’s master-settlers would inevitably be superior to their German counterparts and thus a potential threat to the existing nation. He suggests that they should therefore remain in Africa as a symbolic example of Germanic capability with which to fuel German national pride, rather than return to the homeland to become a new racial prototype for the entire German nation.

Here, Rohrbach’s comments echo Fabri’s definition of the perfect agricultural colony. Both maintain that African colonies should be the site of limited and selective settlement:

Der Europäer ist unvermögend, unter den Tropen mit eigener Hand den Boden zu bauen. Er mag auf die Produktion und die Art der Culturen nach den Bedürfnissen des Marktes einwirken, der Anbau selbst wird stets in den

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<sup>334</sup> These arguments suggest that through the process of adaptation, each generation of settlers would be physically – and of course mentally – superior to their predecessors. Interestingly, Bastian begins his anti-colonial treatise with a survey of colonial ventures dating back to Ancient Greek civilisation. His argument rests on the inevitable process that ‘oft bald genug [trat] die selbst zur Macht gelangende Colonie als bedenklicher Rival auf’ (Bastian, *Zwei Worte*, p.1).

<sup>335</sup> As we saw above, the term ‘race’ is applied liberally to mean both the equivalent of a biological category and sub-category.

Händen der Eingeborenen liegen. (Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?*, p. 35)

Stuhlmann's portrayal of the newly-colonised Tabóra links elements of the 'Acclimatisationsfrage' with discourse surrounding the 'Eingeborenenfrage'. His intentions are frankly aimed at controlling the local population and harnessing both their physical potential and knowledge of agriculture. The Wanyamwési, who inhabit the areas around Tabóra, are 'im allgemeinen wenig von Krankheiten heimgesucht' (Stuhlmann, p. 84). Stuhlmann continues to invest much narrative time explaining the few illnesses to which the Wanyamwési are vulnerable and so consolidates the locals' value as a potential workforce. Yet Stuhlmann's portrayal then diverts attention away from questions concerning the creation of a similar physical constitution in German settlers. Instead, Stuhlmann tells us 'der Ackerbau spielt in der Thätigkeit der Eingeborenen eine hervorragende Rolle' (Stuhlmann, p. 77). He is particularly interested in the existing, successful tobacco-growing industry which would be extremely advantageous for potential 'trading' agricultural settlements. Hence Stuhlmann's narrative portrayal creates an ideal site for the perfect agricultural trading colony as defined by Fabri. German settlers would be in the minority, in positions of power over colonised Africans.

Stuhlmann continues his appraisal of the area by stating that: 'die grosse Wichtigkeit der Handelsniederlassung Tabóra ist nicht nur durch ihre geographische Lage in der Mitte zwischen der Küste und den drei grossen Seen, sondern auch die dort ansässigen

Bevölkerung, die Wanyamwési, bedingt' (Stuhlmann, p. 73). Rohrbach similarly states that at the time of territorial conquest, German colonial authorities were not yet fully aware that 'der grösste Wert, den Afrika besäße, bestände in seinen Eingeborenen' (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 19). As we saw in the previous chapter, Stuhlmann refers to the slave population in Tabóra as 'schwarze Ware' (Stuhlmann, p. 63). This commodification simultaneously suggests a distinct value, which is carried throughout Stuhlmann's appraisal of the Wanyamwési and implied in his portrayal of the Waganda, discussed earlier.<sup>336</sup> While colonial critics discourage German settlement on the basis of physiological incompatibility, pro-colonial discourse encourages limited settlement on the grounds of German potential to develop superior physiological traits through processes of selection. The resulting unequal power-relations and subordination of the colonised African population is then justified by pro-colonial discourse surrounding the *Eingeborenenfrage*. Let us analyse our explorers' contributions to this debate.

### ***DIE EINGEBORENENFRAGE***

Colonial supporters such as Stuhlmann and Rohrbach debated the *Eingeborenenfrage* as the problem of harnessing the African's superior physical capabilities to their utmost potential – working for German industries in African colonies. Stuhlmann's problem concerning the Wanyamwési is their 'grosse Wanderlust'. He tells us, 'Jahr für Jahr

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<sup>336</sup> See Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and its Function in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism* (London: Cass, 1977)

geht seit langer Zeit etwa ein Drittel sämtlicher Männer als Träger oder Händler an die Küste' (Stuhlmann, p. 89). We know that Stuhlmann opposed the slave-trade mainly because of its draining effect on the local population and so, ultimately, the potential workforce. This 'Wanderlust' presents a similar problem. In order to engage the maximum population in German services, the locals would necessarily be in forced labour. Their cyclical 'Wanderlust' would be replaced by fixed, regimented routines. Germans would exert absolute control over the population if they succeeded in reducing the effect of cyclical rhythms such as relocation of towns and villages according to agricultural cycles. German colonisers would erect permanent structures, such as forts, near which locals would be encouraged to settle. These Africans would at last be fixed in a geographically-definable location with fixed, measurable coordinates. Let us examine those arguments in favour of such effective control over the colonised population. They are based on widely-accepted elements of racial discourse, taken as markers of distinction between 'higher' and 'lower' races: moral superiority, sexual behaviour and materialistic desire.

Rohrbach's colonial agenda addresses criticism of this aspect of the 'Eingeborenenfrage' and the possibility of 'Arbeitszwang' by removing any sense of moral responsibility from the equation (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 36). Rohrbach's definition of the 'Eingeborenenfrage' – which soon becomes the 'Eingeborenenproblem' – centres on Social Darwinist, hierarchical racial categorisation (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 32). Deploying the same terminology we

saw in the works of Stuhlmann and Frobenius, Rohrbach formulates the pressing ‘Eingeborenenproblem’ as follows:

Prinzipiell handelt es sich darum, ob die afrikanischen Eingeborenen, vor allen Dingen die Neger, als Rasse einen inferioren Typus des Menschengeschlechts gegenüber den Weißen darstellen oder nicht; praktisch haben wir eine Entscheidung darüber zu treffen, auf welchem Wege und nach welchen Grundsätzen ihre Arbeitskraft für die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung unseres Kolonialbesitzes ist. (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 32)

Here, Rohrbach speaks of the collective ‘wir’ and so engages both the German people and political leaders in the outcome of this decision which, he implies, will influence Germany’s future actions in the colonies and the future of the nation. As Rohrbach soon makes clear, he is convinced that ‘die Inferiorität des schwarzen Afrikaners’ is an irrefutable and unchangeable ‘Tatsache’ (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 39). The only question which remains unanswered is whether to subject the colonised Africans to forced labour (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 39). Rohrbach suggests that, as the so-called ‘childlike’ Africans require external influences (German colonial rule) in order to progress from their ‘Inferiorität’ in any way, ‘Arbeitszwang’ is not only necessary, it is ‘human’, and ‘erzieherlich’ (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 39). Furthermore, so Rohrbach maintains, the Africans’ work-ethic and productivity will increase under ‘white’ German control. Although a firm believer in racial hierarchy, even Stuhlmann, the most avid colonial supporter, fails to attain such



clarity of racial categorisation in his analysis of African peoples and their potential as a workforce. Finally, Rohrbach concludes the following from his findings:

Wir müssen uns nur hüten, das Werturteil, das hier gefällt werden muß, nach der moralischen Seite hin umzubiegen, als ob hier ein Verdienst und dort eine Verschuldung vorläge. Was wir erkennen müssen, ist einzig und allein die Tatsache, daß die weiße und die schwarze Rasse objektiv verschiedenwertige Entwicklungstypen des menschlichen Geschlechts darstellen. (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 40)

Here, Rohrbach attempts to refute all possible criticisms and doubts – from ‘Kolonial philantropen’ – by claiming that, as the African ‘Rasse’ is ‘minderwertig’, the level of moral accountability in dealing with colonised Africans is greatly reduced (Rohrbach, *Das Deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 36). Rohrbach’s focus on racial and evolutionary theory demonstrates a clear link between his and our later explorers’ cognitive interests. However, his monolithic theory of racial hierarchy which places the ‘white race’ at the top of the scale represents only one aspect of our explorers’ variegated findings, that associated with Stuhlmann’s expansionist mentality. Rohrbach’s definition of race also encompasses the inheritance of cultural, behavioural and psychological, as well as anatomical racial traits. Hence his cognitive interest shifts towards biological definitions of human, social organisation and Social Darwinist theory. Many advocates of Social Darwinism stressed the importance of inheritance of acquired *behavioural*

characteristics.<sup>337</sup> The relevance of this is essential to legitimating Rohrbach's political agenda.

Rohrbach's comments on sexual reproduction amongst African slaves, for example, suggest a level of inherent promiscuity which was often employed as a sign of ethical primitivism and racial inferiority. According to Rohrbach, psychological resistance inherent in enslaved 'white races' resulted in a conscious refusal to reproduce, which consequently meant that the slave population eventually died out (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 40). In *Physics and Politics*, Bagehot proclaims that 'primitives' and 'savages' are driven by their instincts and passions. They indulge in repellent practices such as lying and thieving, they place little value on human life and wallow in sexual licence and 'communal marriage'.<sup>338</sup> Stuhlmann, for example, consolidates his negative portrayal of Tabóra's slave population by commenting that 'das geschlechtliche Leben [ist] sehr lax' (Stuhlmann, p. 61). The consequence of such lax behaviour, according to Bagehot, is that 'primitives' and 'savages' possess an 'ingrained sense of morality' which is at most 'rudimentary and defective' (Bagehot, *Physics and Politics* p. 113). Rohrbach attempts to remove the moral sphere from racial theory and so eliminate any sense of guilt, blame or sympathy. Yet it is the origin of this moral faculty which for many of Darwin's contemporaries separated humans from animals. This moral faculty was viewed as particularly developed in 'advanced societies'.<sup>339</sup> Rohrbach obviously classes the German Reich as advanced. Yet it was also

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<sup>337</sup> Environmental changes, as we have seen, could be posited as a source of such variations. Hawkins, *Social Darwinism*, p. 30.

<sup>338</sup> Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, pp. 115-116 and 122.

<sup>339</sup> Hawkins, *Social Darwinism*, p. 28.

the growth of the sympathetic, moral instinct which encouraged welfare schemes and the proliferation of the weak and infirm. The struggle for existence was thus attenuated in ‘highly civilised nations’, with the result being that the biological value of their populations was in danger of being reduced. However, this could not be checked without deterioration in the noblest part of humankind’s nature.<sup>340</sup> Whilst Rohrbach proclaims white racial superiority and encourages expansion into African territories, he simultaneously encourages developmental regression by discounting the relevance of the moral faculty. It is precisely this question of morality which prompts Frobenius to question the colonial endeavour. His impression of British colonial rule in Ibadan is one of ambivalence and apathy towards the colonised population. There is no justification, so Frobenius argues, for territorial expansion based on theories of moral and hence cultural superiority. Yet Rohrbach defines apathy, sloth and phlegm as inherited *African* characteristics. He states; ‘hier stoßen wir auf den inneren Grund, weswegen der Neger im großen und ganzen so schwer zur Vermehrung seiner Leistungen zu bewegen ist: seine Bedürfnisse sind nicht nur gering, sondern ihm fehlt auch der Trieb, sie zu vermehren, d.h. sich zu kultivieren’ (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 34). Rohrbach’s solution requires generating a desire for material consumption, a capitalistic mentality which would stimulate the stereotypically ‘sluggish’ African *Volksgeist* to work for the objects it desires.

Bastian, in contrast, points out that the African’s unwillingness to work for colonial masters is a sign of his intelligence, as he recognises, and consciously refuses, to become a tool of industrialisation (Bastian, *Zwei Worte*, p. 15). Barth and Schweinfurth

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<sup>340</sup> Darwin, *Descent of Man*, p. 206.

both praise and envy self-sufficient African artisan communities as ‘das glücklichste Land der Welt’ (Barth, II, p. 45) and ‘ein irdisches Paradies’ (Schweinfurth, II, p. 90) for they produce goods without the dehumanising processes of capitalist industry. As Rohrbach’s arguments in support of territorial expansion rest largely on the belief that Africans are indeed racially inferior, it is unsurprising that he should criticise such observations made by *Afrikareisende*:

Reisende, die nur flüchtig beobachten, haben dagegen eingewendet, daß hier und dort afrikanische Eingeborene sehr fleißig arbeiten, um ihren Lebensunterhalt zu gewinnen [...] In Wirklichkeit ist kein Grund zur Erregung vorhanden. Auch der größte Negerfreund kann nicht behaupten, daß die schwarze Rasse im ganzen genommen mit der Summe körperlicher Arbeitskraft, über die sie verfügt, im Verhältnis annähernd soviel Werte schafft, wie die übrigen Völker, die durch ihre Lebensumstände und durch ihre innere Charakterveranlagung zu wirklicher Arbeit getrieben werden. (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 35)

Rohrbach’s comments again rest on the assumption that ‘schwarze Rassen’ possess superior levels of physical strength, yet this strength is suppressed by an inferior *Geist*. Findings to the contrary, reported by nameless *Reisende*, are dismissed as mere ‘flüchtige Beobachtungen’. Rohrbach’s flippant reference to the sources of these fleeting glimpses as found ‘hier und dort’, implies a lack of authority behind such

judgements.<sup>341</sup> Rohrbach's reference to *Reisende* in the plural, does however indicate that such contradictory statements were not uncommon. Hence Rohrbach's statement refutes Fiedler's assertion that the image of the African 'other' portrayed by *Afrikareisende* contributed to both pro-colonial discourse and so the acquisition of territories. Rohrbach, the voice of pro-colonial, Social Darwinist agitation, is typically critical of *Afrikareisende* exploration, yet does reserve praise for Rohlfs's 'achievements' (Rohrbach, *Afrika's Osten*, p. 12).

As we have seen, there is a strong counter-tradition to Rohlfs's and Stuhlmann's German-Africa encounters which runs throughout the *Afrikareisende* macrotext. Frobenius's findings, which were published a year after Rohrbach's work, provide a new perspective on the Sudanese. Frobenius refers to the peoples of the Sudan as 'Typen', yet he categorises them by cultural, rather than physical traits (Frobenius, II, p. 2). These cultural traits, so Frobenius maintains, are induced by the existing social order. Rather than Rohrbach's Social Darwinist comparisons between societies and the natural world, Frobenius's ideology is more influenced by August Comte's theories of cultural heritage.<sup>342</sup> Comte claimed that each society existed in a temporal dimension and that each generation was influenced by the culture of its predecessors. Consequently, as society evolved, this cultural heritage played an increasing role in shaping the human mind and action. Frobenius consequently portrays amongst others the Dinka, Nuer, Mossi, Nupe, and Napata tribes as traditional 'Arbeiter' and 'Produzierer'. Although

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<sup>341</sup> Rohrbach was familiar with the works of Barth, Rohlfs, Schweinfurth and Nachtigal, which are mentioned briefly in *Afrikas Osten*. Here, Rohlfs receives high praise. Rohrbach, *Afrikas Osten*, p. 45.

<sup>342</sup> Auguste Comte, *Soziologie*, trans. by Valentine Dorn (Jena: [n.pub.], 1923) 3 vols. See also Dirk Kaesler, ed., *Klassiker der Soziologie: Von August Comte bis Norbert Elias*, 2 vols (Munich: Beck, 1999).

Frobenius portrays them as historically repressed by their Islamic counterparts, they are in his opinion culturally superior:

Daß die Entwicklung des Islamischen Geistes unserem modernen Kolonialbestreben, die Kräfte der Sudanvölker nutzbar zu heben und noch mehr der Wertarbeit nutzbar zu machen, heute noch irgendwie günstig sein könnte, kann ich nicht finden. Im Gegenteil, scheint mir die islamische Bewegung alle Anhänger zu Kaufleuten und Kapitalisten zu machen, alle 'Heiden' aber mehr und mehr zu versklaven und in niedere Arbeitsklassen herabzudrücken. Und das ist doch so gefährlich, wie nur irgend denkbar. Denn den Handel können wir zuletzt durch unsere eigenen intelligenten Kaufleute fördern und weiter entwickeln, da alle Negervölker geborene Händler sind: die Tatsache, aber, daß die kleinen heidnischen Negervölker, die die eigentlichen Bodenarbeiter und produzierenden Kräfte darstellen, mehr und mehr vergrämt, niedergedrückt und verdrängt, aus ihren Arbeitstätten verjagt und verdrängt und in ihren Wohnsitten territorial eingeengt werden, dies zu dulden, heiße einfach eine Politik zum eigenen Schaden betreiben. Dabei will ich sogar die Frage, ob es nicht unsere Aufgabe ist, dem Islam die Pflichtgefühle der christlichen Denkweise gegenüber zu stellen, ob dies nicht eine selbstverständige Aufgabe unserer Kulturzeit ist, nicht erst anschneiden. Und ich denke auch gar nicht an Taufe, sondern an Erziehung in unserem Sinne. (Frobenius, II, p.8)

Echoing Rohrbach's definitions of colonialism, Frobenius employs terminology such as tapping into local 'Kräfte' to increase levels of productivity and 'Wertarbeit'. It is difficult to discern whether Frobenius is directing his criticism solely at Islamic influence in the Sudan, or colonial policy in general, for his description of the situation in the Sudan mirrors that of other colonised African nations. The apparent desire to increase productivity merely leads to the historical repression of the most hard-working tribes and their political and social marginalisation. In fact, Frobenius's portrayal of the class-system which was established in Sudan is representative of industrialised western society. The lowest, most repressed classes undertake the bulk of manual labour. Those with the most power are 'Kaufleute und Kapitalisten' which Frobenius employs as derogatory terms. It is evident that Frobenius sees the spread of Islam as responsible for this social order, yet the parallels to German colonial projects are unmistakeable. Rohrbach desired a large African workforce to be engaged in manual labour and imbued with a capitalist mentality in order to enhance their desire for material goods. Frobenius does state that trade amongst the Sudanese could be stimulated by 'unsere eigenen intelligenten Kaufleuten', yet he does not seem to suggest that colonial presence is a requirement of this process. Rather than Rohrbach's derogatory portrayal of lazy, phlegmatic Africans, Frobenius points out a natural ability to trade. As reports by even our most culturally exclusive traveller Rohlfs demonstrate, markets and trading outlets bustle with energy and dynamism. The ability to trade also requires a level of shrewdness and knowledge of value. These qualities are hardly indicative of Rohrbach's inferior African. In fact, Frobenius points to shared human understanding. For the ability and necessity to trade produce requires a certain level of intercultural communication.

Finally, in complete reversal of Rohrbach's statement, Frobenius directly addresses his readers' sense of morality in order to win their support. Fearing their lack of interest in the fate of labouring tribes in the Sudan, he calls on a sense of moral judgement in order to reverse what he sees as the practical enslavement of half the Sudanese population. Interestingly, Frobenius seems to suggest that Christian doctrine could lead by example and discourage such repression. It is again doubtful that Frobenius is implying full colonial expansion into the area. As we have seen, he is highly critical of the British presence and hypocritical deployment of Christianity in Nigeria. Nevertheless, Frobenius mirrors pro-colonial, paternalistic suggestions of 'Erziehung'.

Our later explorers' experience of Africans is dominated by racial theory and its link to colonial discourse, yet their factual treatment of the problem is far more liberal and differentiated than might have been thought against the backdrop of crass racial hierarchical theories. The focus on 'clock-time' as a marker of cultural distinction fades as evolutionary theories turn our explorers' gaze to questions of human development over millenia. Schweinfurth, Frobenius and to a lesser extent Junker, demonstrate a genuine interest in the development of peoples over time which rejects monolithic theories of one set-path for all humanity in favour of diverse, yet equal evolutionary outcomes. Yet Stuhlmann still bundles linear-progressive beliefs together with theories of hierarchical racial development. Evolution, for him, has one set goal which can only be attained through the ruthless struggle for survival, a struggle which, as we shall see in the final chapter, increasingly occurs on a national scale. This struggle becomes a dominant dimension of German-African encounter. Long-standing inferiority complexes



coupled with a rise in nationalist discourse and increasingly intense inter-European competition for African territories influenced our explorers' colonial perspective. Consequently, European encounters on African soil become most relevant to our explorers' understanding of Germany's place on the evolutionary scale.

This study argues that Germany's repeated encounters with the 'dark continent' also tell the story of changes in Germanic national self-understanding. So far we have seen how the travel narratives documented those changes in the sphere of spatial experience, racial self-understanding, religion and culture. German encounters with Africa and Africans contain images of self-understanding which range from a recognition of human universals and common origins – both culturally and racially – to an image of African racial inferiority and a 'moral' obligation to 'own' African physical potential. This chapter examines the relationship between the narrated experiences of Africa and the extent to which they reflected on and influenced the evolving political situation in both Germany and Europe. As the European presence increased in Africa throughout the nineteenth century, the number of inter-European encounters on African soil increased dramatically and added a new dimension to the travel narrative. Africa becomes a site on which inter-European rivalries were played out. The narration of such clashes highlights the rise of German nationalism in the German colonial project. The struggle for Africa as presented in the travel narrative is a proxy struggle for Europe. Our explorers' time-set modulates into an understanding of Germany's place in this struggle. Has Germany's time now come, or should it remain a passive observer in the struggle for Africa and elsewhere? Our narratives thus become essential to understanding the political landscape of the time and Germany's much-debated rise from passive observer to self-destructive world power.

## **NATIONALISM, NATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE AFRICAN COLONIAL PROJECT**

As we saw in Chapter II, reasons for Germany's late colonial expansion were not only debated extensively at the time, but remain a key feature in current scholarly discourse. This section will shed light on less-debated, yet, as we shall see, crucial factors influencing the German imperialist mentality – nationalism and national self-understanding, in particular a long-standing feeling of national inferiority in comparison to the British. Our works portray a shift in attitude from liberalism and cosmopolitanism, to nation-state, nationalism and Social Darwinism. The following examples of pro-colonial discourse highlight the significance of nationalism for the expansionist project and so reflect the public and political mood at the time our works were composed.

### **NATION-STATE, NATIONALISM AND SOCIAL DARWINISM**

Rohlf's post-unification essays epitomise the rise of German nationalism, an increasing interest in national character, and the relevance of both to colonial expansion. His essay 'Eine Eisenbahn nach Zentralafrika' (1877) is particularly significant, as it highlights both Europe's relationship to Africa and the Reich's altered relationship to its European neighbours. No longer a mere observer, Germany is now a

potential participant – and hence competitor – in the ‘scramble for Africa’:

Sämmtliche Nationen Europa's wetteifern, den Continent [Afrika] zugänglich zu machen. Das eine Volk thut es, um Kolonien zu erwerben, das andere, um aus den unermesslichen reichen Schätzen, welche Inner-Afrika an Produkten aller Art birgt, den ersten und direktesten Vortheil zu ziehen. Wiederum ein anderes verfolgt bei der Erschliessung Afrikas nur humanitäre Zwecke, während ein viertes seinen höchsten Lohn in der wissenschaftlichen Erforschung des schwarzen Kontinentes sucht. Aber selbst die wissenschaftliche Erschliessung kann der Handhabe des Handels nicht entbehren. (Rohlf's, *Eine Eisenbahn nach Zentralafrika*, p. 45)

Here, Rohlf's paints a picture of dynamic European nations and their inevitable advance on the phlegmatic, secretive darkness of Africa. Such dualism is characteristic in Rohlf's travel narrative, yet here we also see a strong differentiation between European nations. The reiteration of 'Wissenschaft' together with the alliteration of 'Erforschung' and 'Erschliessung' intentionally emphasise this aspect of European-African interaction. There is little doubt that Rohlf's reference to scientific knowledge refers to the German Reich's intentions on the Continent. These intentions may be morally irreproachable, yet even scientific discovery, as Rohlf's tells us, is ultimately dependent on trade. It is no coincidence that Rohlf's mentions European nations competing for control over trade routes. He implies that the Reich's current policy of African exploration is of little benefit when scientific information is not employed to gain trading advantages over

European rivals.<sup>343</sup> Hence Rohlf's arguments advocating German presence in Africa are implicitly founded on inner-European relations and the necessity to compete with other nation-states. Although he sees himself as superior to the African, this is not his main motivation for colonial expansion. Thus critics such as Fiedler, who focus on explorers' narrated images of African others as justifications for German colonial expansion, overlook this essential development in German expansionist propaganda and therefore also German national self-understanding.<sup>344</sup>

Rohlf's latent implications linking increased German presence in Africa with a more powerful German nation, become explicit in his later essay, *Angra Pequena. Die erste deutsche Kolonie in Afrika* (1884). The short piece, which epitomises developments in pro-colonial discourse at the time, was written to emphasise the positive aspects of Germany's entry into the colonial race, for the acquisition of these first territories had come under severe criticism from opposition leaders and the public sphere.<sup>345</sup> Rohlf begins his treatise as follows:

Ein freudiges Gefühl durchbebte die Brust eines jeden Deutschen, als im Sommer 1883 die Zeitungen die wunderbare Mähr verkündeten, ein Deutscher habe ein bisher unabhängiges Gebiet an der Westküste von Afrika als eigen beworben [...] Hätten sie [die Deutschen] es vor 1870, als Deutschland nur ein geographischer Begriff war, gekonnt? Hätten die

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<sup>343</sup> As we saw in the previous chapter, this echoes the general trend in pro-colonial discourse which typically criticised German exploration of Africa for its failure to convert knowledge into political advantage.

<sup>344</sup> Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteuer*, p.174.

<sup>345</sup> Perras, *Carl Peters*, pp. 44-8.

Hansestädte sie schützen können vor ungerechten Eingriffen oder neidischen Ansprüchen anderer Nationen? Selbst Preußen hätte es kaum vermocht. Deutschland als Macht existierte nicht. [...] Kaum ein Dutzend Jahre waren genügend, um das Nationalgefühl bei den echten Deutschen so zu entwickeln, daß ein rechter Mann es wagen konnte, auf eigene Hand herrenloses Gebiet zu erwerben. (Rohlf's, *Angra Pequena* pp. 3-4)

This rousing attempt to awaken a sense of national pride and patriotism is uncharacteristically passionate. The vigour and enthusiasm of the piece reflect Rohlf's changed attitude towards Africa now that his desire for colonial territories has been fulfilled at last. Rohlf's attempts to transpose some of his enthusiasm onto the reader by addressing him directly. He thus implies that the reader is effected by, and involved in, events. Rohlf's continues the positive, optimistic tone by telling us that, in spite of poor soil and a lack of existing trade, this first colony remains invaluable to the German nation-state as a symbol of growth, strength and proof that it is equal to its rivals. Although the German nation-state is still in its fledgling stages, we can assume that Rohlf's belief in Germanic, superior access to scientific knowledge enabled its speedy territorial expansion.<sup>346</sup> Most significant to our analysis is the fact that Rohlf's not only links the existence of a nation-state to the colonial endeavour, but also a strong sense of patriotism and national pride. In works written prior to German unification, such references to German 'Nationalgefühl' and German 'Macht' would have been

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<sup>346</sup> Rohlf's narrative of German scientific superiority is carried throughout all of his works, as are his assertions that knowledge gained should be used to acquire territorial advantage. See also Fiedler, *Zwischen Abenteuer*, p. 172.

unthinkable. According to Rohlf, only 'echte Deutsche' display such national pride and revel in the thought of possessing an empire.

As we saw in Chapter II, Germany's late consolidation as a nation meant that it was historically an outsider-state within Europe. Germany, as Rohlf tells us, did not exist as such and consequently possessed little leverage over other European colonial powers such as Britain and France. Rohlf expresses his joy that the German Reich can compete with these European neighbours at last. Territorial possessions, so Rohlf implies, provide a symbol of national triumph with which to encourage the new phenomenon of German patriotism, whilst also demonstrating Germany's power to rival states.<sup>347</sup> The title of the treatise, 'die erste deutsche Kolonie', suggests that the expansionist drive has only just begun. Rohlf concludes his work with the statement: 'möge diese deutsche Besetzung leben, blühen und gedeihen!' (Rohlf, *Angra Pequena*, p. 16). The new sense of national pride will, Rohlf implies, grow in concord with this, and any further territorial acquisitions. The Social Darwinist undertones are unmistakeable: the more territory gained, the stronger the nation becomes, both internally and externally. Like an organism, growth and expansion mean survival in the struggle for existence.

As the following excerpt demonstrates, the concept of growth as inherently progressive, and automatically equal to increased strength and power, becomes a recurring theme in pro-colonial circles. Stuhlmann, in the early stages of his expedition,

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<sup>347</sup> See Kundrus, *Moderne Imperialisten*, p. 35 on the reflexive nature of colonial possessions as a symbol of identity-consolidation for the German people and as an outward example of Germany's new status as political power to its European neighbours.

enjoys a chance meeting with colonial advocate and founder of Deutsch-Ostafrika, Carl Peters. He narrates the encounter as follows:

Die beiden Tage unseres Beisammenseins vergingen rasch in wichtigen Unterredungen, wobei alle darin übereinstimmten, dass die Besetzung von Tabóra samt dem Westufer des Victoriasees unser dringendstes und nächstes Ziel sein müsse, und ferner, dass es von höchster Wichtigkeit sei, Uganda und die Aequatorialprovinz für neutral zu erklären. Unsere Mahlzeiten verliefen natürlich nicht ohne begeisterte Reden auf das Gedeihen unserer jungen Kolonie, und hinter einem Glase Wein übertraf man sich gegenseitig in sanguinischen Plänen und Entwürfen. (Stuhlmann, p. 44)

This excerpt revolves around growth, expansion and the consumption of territories ahead of other rival nations, the British in particular. Stylistically, the list of potential acquisitions is reminiscent of Rohlfs's railway project. Here, the expansionist project is couched in military terminology and coupled with a sense of urgency. Now that the German Reich has a foothold in Africa, these colonial supporters can, and must, advocate ever more territorial conquests.<sup>348</sup> Yet officially they have no permission to expand into areas such as Uganda. As we saw in the previous chapter, Uganda's fate

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<sup>348</sup> In spite of decisions made at the 1884/5 Berlin conference, areas agreed on as neutral territories, such as the Congo and Niger River mouths and basins, were also eventually divided up between those nations who participated in the conference. By 1914 Africa had been fully divided between these nations. Colonial supporters such as Stuhlmann and Peters felt that the German regime had given up too easily on the possibility of more territories. H.J. de Blij and Peter O. Müller, *Geography: Realms, Regions and Concepts* (London: John Wiley, 1999), pp. 134-38.



was decided by international treaty without any regard for territorial advantages that might have been gained by Stuhlmann's expedition. As the second part of the excerpt suggests, Stuhlmann however believes himself to be acting in the interest of the German nation. He employs the familiar term 'gedeihen' to express his hopes of growth and fruitfulness for the young empire.

Carl Peters, who shares in Stuhlmann's 'sanguinische Pläne', was one of the most vocal and infamous figures in German colonial debate. His pro-colonial propaganda makes explicit the increasingly aggressive nationalist and Social Darwinist undertones in German colonial discourse, and also the role of British-German relations in this process. In his article 'Deutsche Kolonialpolitik aus englischer Perspektive' (1884), Peters clarifies his nationalist objective with a myth of Germanic ideology – *die deutsche Eiche*<sup>349</sup>. He deploys this motif to mobilise nationalist and expansionist sentiment. He compares the English state to a tree which gets light and air in order to develop its branches freely and luxuriously in all directions; the German state is an even nobler trunk, yet it is confined between rugged mountains and thus hindered from developing its boundless vitality on all sides.<sup>350</sup> The Social Darwinist, expansionist implications of this message are obvious. The route to a strong nation-state meant struggle between other neighbouring and rival states, for space was the essential criterion for survival.

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<sup>349</sup> See Chapter IV on tree and forest symbolism and its place in Germanic national ideology.

<sup>350</sup> Carl Peters, 'Deutsche Kolonialpolitik aus englischer Perspektive', in *Die Gegenwart*, I (March 1884), p. 329.

Pro-colonial discourse and its pressure groups such as Peters's *Kolonialverein* directed their nationalist arguments towards fuelling anti-British sentiment and appropriating the myth of British superiority over the Germans to support their own agenda. Yet although British policy and protectionism were often criticised, they were also widely accepted as the key to success and world power. Fabri, for example, states that the 'allbeherrschende' British hindered Germany's entry into the colonial race with false promises of free-trade (Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?*, p. 6). The British, so Fabri continues, deceived Germany into believing that it should be grateful not to be burdened with the 'Ballast colonialer Besitzungen' and so successfully eliminated an opponent from the colonial race (Fabri, *Bedarf Deutschland der Colonien?*, p. 6). In his praise of the Reich's first colony, German South West Africa, Rohlf's for example criticises the British assumption: 'Die Engländer verstehen stillschweigend, daß all derartigen Landstriche dermaleinst britisch sein müßten' (Rohlf's, *Angra Pequena*, p. 2). Yet Rohlf's simultaneously admires this egotism and desires to emulate British colonial success. Hence British national identity was employed as a mirror in which Germany could recognise its own deficient national identity and hopefully rise to the challenge. Peters, for example, states that British national egotism was the key to its success.<sup>351</sup> Rohrbach too employs the British example to highlight Germany's failings in colonial ventures; 'Vor allen Dingen herrschen in England sowohl in geschäftlicher als auch in nationaler Beziehung ein viel weiterer Blick und eine viel größerer Bereitschaft zu neuen großzügigen Unternehmungen, als bei uns' (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, pp. 8-9). Thus pro-colonial discourse reinforces a link between

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<sup>351</sup> Peters, 'Deutsche Kolonialpolitik', p. 335.

successful territorial expansion and national character.<sup>352</sup> Hence Rohrbach concludes that a strong German nation, comparable to the English, is dependent on colonies:

Mag es um die Ausdehnung des nationalpolitischen Deutschtums, oder um die wirtschaftliche Produktion von gewerblichen Rohstoffen, Nahrungs- und Genußmittelnhandeln – in jedem Fall müssen wir den obersten Zweck unserer Kolonialpolitik und Kolonialwirtschaft in ausschließlich nationalbedingten Sinne verstehen.[ ...] Wir betrachten die Gründung von Kolonien und alle Maßnahmen zu ihrer Entwicklung als zu dem Zwecke geschehen, um die politische und die wirtschaftliche Stellung Deutschlands zu verstärken. (Rohrbach, *Das deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 26)

As a leading economist, Rohrbach knew that financial gain from African colonies was dependent on a satisfactory solution to the ‘Eingeborenenproblem’. Yet this excerpt is particularly significant, for here, Rohrbach’s plea for colonies rests primarily on a Social Darwinist concept of the German nation’s spiritual growth, whilst economic benefits present a secondary, added bonus. First and foremost, so Rohrbach maintains, foreign colonies secure prestige and recognition on the world stage and should thus be obtained at all costs. Pro-colonial circles thus placed increasing emphasis on the need to strengthen the German nation which appears endangered by the British defence of its national interests. Bastian’s critique of colonial agitation significantly points to the use

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<sup>352</sup> As Kundrus writes, British colonies were seen as a result of a strong national character, whereas in Germany, nationalist sentiment was mobilised through the image of colonial power. *Moderne Imperialisten*, p. 6.

of such artificial terms as national 'Prestige' with which pro-colonialists mobilise nationalist sentiment and fuel inter-European rivalries (Bastian, *Zwei Worte*, p. 5).

The role of national rivalries and their effect on German self-understanding in the case of our earlier explorers is particularly interesting. Contrary to the developments expected after his culturally open and humanistic composition, Nachtigal went on to play a key role in the German colonial project. On returning from his expedition, his involvement in politics and the public sphere gained him the position of *Reichskommissar* to West-Africa.<sup>353</sup> In 1884, reports of French and British intrigues endangering established German trading operations on the Guinea coast prompted requests for official protection of German interests in the area. After much hesitation Bismarck personally requested Nachtigal to lead the project. Initially referred to as *Afrikareisende*, explorers became commonly known as 'unsere Afrikaner'.<sup>354</sup> Due to their expertise and knowledge of the continent, explorers were well-respected sources on African expansion.<sup>355</sup> Much weakened by recurring bouts of tropical illness, Nachtigal knew that this would be his final mission. Yet, asserting that it was his 'Pflicht',<sup>356</sup> he hoisted the German flag throughout areas of Togo and Cameroon and so won the race against the British for control of the area.<sup>357</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> See Editor Horst Schiffer's introduction to Nachtigal's *Tibesti. Die Erstdurchquerung des Sudan 1869-1874* (Tübingen: Erdmann, 1978), pp. 9-25.

<sup>354</sup> Rohrbach, *Das Deutsche Kolonialwesen*, p. 10.

<sup>355</sup> Nachtigal became president of the Deutsche Afrikanische Gesellschaft and in 1879 president of the Gesellschaft für Erdkunde. Schiffer, *Tibesti*, p. 20. Junker notes that he met Nachtigal, Rohlf's and Schweinfurth at the prestigious international geographical congress in Paris, 1875, where all three explorers were speaking. Junker, *Im Sudan*, p. 1.

<sup>356</sup> Kurt Hassert, *Die Erforschung Afrikas* (Leipzig: Goldmann, 1941).

<sup>357</sup> The British Imperial Commissioner Hewett became known as the 'too-late consul', as by the time the finances for his expedition were arranged and he arrived in Guinea, he found that Nachtigal had been there shortly before him and hoisted the German flag.

Nachtigal's cosmopolitan orientation and desire to preserve cultural diversity presented in his narrative seem to have been drastically influenced by events which occurred on his return. Yet as he composed no journal during the expedition, it is only possible to speculate on his motivations. On the one hand, it would have been more or less impossible for Nachtigal to refuse an order given directly by Bismarck. Yet the word 'Pflicht' may also shed some light on Nachtigal's actions, particularly if it is taken as a reference to *patriotic* duty. For during his expedition, Nachtigal was unaware of the consolidation of the German Reich and thus the role of a specifically German national pride or national interests never entered his work. It is possible that the consolidation of the German Reich could in some ways have altered the nature of identity and belonging developed in Nachtigal's narrative. Although appreciative of cultural diversity, Nachtigal suddenly possessed a German identity which was decidedly less fluid – definable within fixed territorial borders, possessing centralised institutions and suddenly able to compete with its European rivals. Nachtigal thus epitomises the contradictory tendencies which define German national identity in the late nineteenth-century.

Whilst serving as *Reichskommissar* and actively involved in the German colonial project, Nachtigal was simultaneously completing his travel narrative which celebrates cultural diversity.<sup>358</sup> Torn between maintaining a Germanic appreciation of cultural

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<sup>358</sup> Rohlfs's status as an Africa expert, together with his ardent nationalism, also gained him the position of *Reichskommissar* to Zanzibar. Rumours abounded that the Germans were attempting to negotiate with the Sultan on the possible annexation of the island with the existing German protectorate, Perras, *Carl Peters*, pp. 53-5. This highly sensitive and secret mission was sabotaged by Rohlfs, no less. The British soon heard of the project through Rohlfs's indiscretions – he attempted to threaten and blackmail the Sultan if he failed to accept German demands. The British made their position clear. Zanzibar was a sphere of British influence, linking their trading outpost in Aden to the African continent. The German

pluralism and asserting the new Reich's power over its long-standing rivals, Nachtigal became one of the first Germans to instate the concept of 'liberal humanist expansion'.<sup>359</sup> The concept was seen as a different, *German* version of territorial expansion which attempted to preserve cultural diversity in German protectorates whilst simultaneously demonstrating the new Reich's power to its European rivals. This 'superior', pacifist version of territorial expansion was designed to refute widespread colonial criticism in Germany.<sup>360</sup> By the time Germany entered the colonial race, knowledge of the violence associated with other European nations' colonial endeavours was widespread. As the Herero-Nama massacre demonstrated, the concept of liberal, humanist expansion however soon ended in horrific violence as local uprisings were quashed with overwhelming military force.<sup>361</sup> Contrary to initial intentions, protectorates became fully fledged colonies. Conflicting ideologies which could be maintained on paper, proved to be one-sided when translated into practice.

In Nachtigal's and Rohlfs's cases, the unification of the German Reich, increasing German nationalism and inter-European rivalries, all heavily influenced their later

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Reich denied any interest in the area and withdrew Rohlfs from his position, Perras, *Carl Peters*, p. 102. Paradoxically, the traveller most intent on achieving such a position is thus the least well-known for his colonial (mis)adventures. Nachtigal in contrast was more publicly acclaimed for his colonising mission in Togo – particularly as he beat the British to it – than his sensitive contributions to the field of ethnography.

<sup>359</sup> See Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, p. 32

<sup>360</sup> Colonial agitation enjoyed a short-lived popularity in liberal circles around 1848, interestingly amongst the generation of 1848 revolutionaries. As a reaction to a sudden and large wave of emigration, Richard Wagner is quoted as saying: 'Nun wollen wir in Schiffen über das Meer fahren, da und dort ein junges Deutschland gründen. Wir wollen es besser machen als die Spanier, denen die neue Welt ein pfäffisches Schlächterhaus, anders als die Engländer, denen sie ein Krämerkasten wurde' (Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, p. 20). Although this colonial enthusiasm was short lived in liberal circles, later pro-colonial rhetoric employed similar terminology in order to encourage liberals to join the expansionist drive.

<sup>361</sup> Herman von Wissmann put a violent end to rebellions in the coastal region of Deutsch-Ostafrika in 1888/89. This event marked the collapse of the charter system and the official beginning of a state-run colony. Gründer, *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien*, pp. 154-5.

actions. Let us look at the theme of German national identity and inter-European interaction as it is presented through narrated images of Britishness and Germanness in travellers' accounts of German-British altercations on African soil.

### **NATIONALISM AND THE EUROPEAN 'OTHER'**

As we have seen, the motivations behind Germany's late colonial expansion remain much-debated. The following analysis will test the hypothesis that 'new' German nationalism, fuelled by inter-European rivalry, were the driving forces behind Germany's territorial expansion. Examining the works from the colonial period, it shall be argued that the explorers' portrayals of British-German encounters on African soil paradoxically play a more integral role in the creation and maintenance of German colonial ideology than their encounters with Africa and the African 'other'.

Stuhlmann's narrative portrayal of British-German relations on African soil epitomises the rise of nationalism as a feature of African exploration. We know that Stuhlmann was hoping for territorial success in Uganda, which at the time was on the brink of civil war. As neither side was willing to cede total control, the Germans evidently saw a chance to present a viable third option – German protection. Yet whatever negotiating successes Stuhlmann's party had on the ground, they were negated by British international influence, for the British gained control of Uganda through international negotiations. Stuhlmann was left demoted and dejected after this failed opportunity. Consequently, he

was highly critical of the indiscriminate violence used by warring factions, including British soldiers in Uganda. In fact, the work is dotted with references to British colonial incapability and underhand dealings which increase in strength as we reach the explosive episode in Uganda.

The first reference to the British occurs at the very beginning of the narrative, as Emin Pascha tells Stuhlmann of his experiences with Henry Morton Stanley. Stanley is described as ‘eine imponierende Persönlichkeit und hat grossen Einfluss auf seine eigenen Leute, obwohl er sie häufig brutal behandelt. Als Menschen freilich kann ich Stanley bei seinem rücksichtslosen Egoismus keine Sympathien schenken’ (Stuhlmann, p. 3). Although this reference is directed solely at Stanley, this ‘rücksichtsloser Egoismus’, as we shall see, becomes associated with British national character in general. Stuhlmann, for example, is unable to obtain weapons and ammunition for his expedition, as the British authorities organised a blockade in Aden to prevent any weapons entering their African territories and thus the hands of African insurgents. Consequently no-one could receive fire power. Capitän Rust’s report of the Emin Pascha rescue operation also names the British blockade as one reason for the expedition’s failure.<sup>362</sup>

Yet Stuhlmann is careful to make references to the ‘grosse Civilisationswerk’ which is apparently a common European bond for the good of all humanity, to be shared by all

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<sup>362</sup> ‘Sperrt England seinen Hafen [in Aden] so sind die übrigen Dampferlinien unterbunden. Daher das Bestreben der Nationen in jüngster Zeit, sich in diesem Punkte von dem bösen Albion frei zu machen, das auch in seinem Hause eine wenig zusagende Kontrolle über Fremde ausübt’ (Rust, *Emin Pascha Expedition*, p. 2).



Europeans on the African continent (Stuhlmann, p. 27). He tells us: ‘denn ob das Zivilisationswerk mit englischer oder deutscher Hilfe ermöglicht werde, sei für die Sache vollkommen gleichgültig’ (Stuhlmann, p. 104). Stuhlmann however is intent on demonstrating British lack of interest in a common good in favour of national advantage. Stuhlmann’s portrayal must therefore denigrate British ‘civilising’ efforts and leave an immaculate German national image intact.

Literature and in particular, literary techniques, become a powerful manipulative tool in the colonial project, as in spite of such collective ‘civilising’ efforts, Stuhlmann continually makes latent references to European differences and rivalries in the run-up to his Ugandan exploits. A long-established British trader, Mr. Stokes, who had undertaken several short journeys with the expedition, had rather underhandedly been passing negative reports about the party to the German *Reichskommissar*. Stokes eventually admits misunderstanding on his behalf and the matter is settled over a celebratory meal in honour of Kaiser Wilhelm’s birthday. ‘Wohl nie ist ein fröhlicheres Fest im Innern Afrikas gefeiert worden. Kleine Differenzen der Europäer, wie sie ja bei dem engen Zusammenleben unvermeidlich sind, wurden bei dieser Gelegenheit ausgeglichen’ (Stuhlmann, p. 141). Nevertheless, Stuhlmann employs this opportunity to display further negative character traits associated with a British representative – cunning and trickery. Hierarchical racial theorists such as Bagehot associated such characteristics with African peoples as a sign of baseness and cultural inferiority. Impatience was also classified as a base and childish character trait, thus akin to ‘primitives’ and ‘savages’. Again such character portrayals appear in connection with

British officials. Emin Pascha sends Stuhlmann orders to remain neutral between both French and British parties in Uganda. He implies that the British are bound to act rashly and illogically as their representative, a Mr. Gedge, is 'ein wenig Feuerbrand' and finds it impossible 'geduldig zu sein' (Stuhlmann, p. 147). Deploying literary tools to his advantage, this time through an innate silence of the text, Stuhlmann implies that in contrast to the British official, he is calm, rational and logical.

Tensions escalate as the inevitable Ugandan conflict looms. The German party still hopes that it might be 'forced' to intervene in events and eventually gain some territorial leverage in spite of the Anglo-German treaty (Stuhlmann, p. 188). The British representative requests German military aid if British support fails to arrive within twenty-four hours. Unfortunately for Stuhlmann, a British military party arrives to quash any German hopes. This British party, according to Stuhlmann, merely succeeds in stoking the conflict. They resort to military conflict too early and the results, as we saw in the previous chapter, are devastating. Stuhlmann portrays British soldiers wildly attacking French missionaries, plundering, raping and pillaging alongside the hired African mercenaries. This episode is the culmination of Stuhlmann's latent references to British character weakness, for the British become indivisible from the Sudanese and Zanzibarites. They exhibit culturally base, indiscriminate, irrational acts of violence. Stuhlmann counters with images of Germanic rationality, logic and sympathetic negotiating skills. He maintains that the Germans could have avoided violence

altogether. In his summary of events, he tells us:

Für uns Deutsche wären die Schwierigkeiten weit geringer gewesen. Wir hätten von vornherein vermittelnd zwischen den Franzosen und Engländern gestanden und waren beiden Theilen gleich erwünscht. [...] Dem eminenten politischen Talent Emin Paschas und seiner Kenntniss der Sitten dieser Völker wäre es aber unzweifelhaft gelungen, alles für uns zu einem friedlichen Ende zu führen. (Stuhlmann, p. 199).

Hence not only are the Germans apparently superior tacticians, their actions, according to Stuhlmann, do not harm the collective civilising project. British and French actions in Uganda however, ‘müssen das Prestige der Weissen den Negern gegenüber auf das Äusserste schädigen’ (Stuhlmann, p. 205). Stuhlmann’s Ugandan experience culminates with the following telling sentiments:

Die Civilisation Europas ist unaufhaltsam bei der Arbeit den sonnigen Kontinent zu erobern und ihm die Segnungen der europäischen Kultur zu eröffnen. Aber das darf nicht gewaltsam und plötzlich geschehen. [...] Es ist jedenfalls vom ethischen Standpunkte aus schwer zu entscheiden, ob wir berechtigt sind, den Naturmenschen aus seinem vegetirenden Dasein aufzurütteln, wenn er nicht selbst nach unseren Kultursegnungen verlangt. Aber die Expansivkraft Europas ist egoistisch und unerbitterlich. Im Kampf ums Dasein muss es sich ausdehnen, muss es neue Absatzgebiete für seine

Produkte schaffen. Wenn der Neger dadurch, dass ihm Bedürfnisse geschaffen werden, zum Arbeiten gezwungen wird, so ist ohne Zweifel auch eine Kulturaufgabe gelöst. (Stuhlmann, p. 214)

Here, the opening lines present a deliberate contrast to the following remarks, both in style and content. We have a seemingly harmless image of colonialism as ‘civilisation’, spreading to the sunny climes of Africa. This first, descriptive sentence is contrasted by the following short, sharp references to ‘Gewalt’ and ‘plötzlich’. These are unmistakably directed towards British territorial expansion. Earlier references to ‘Religionsgemeinschaften’ which ‘die Saat des Hasses und der Zwietracht ausstreuen’ (Stuhlmann, p. 214) add an ironic note to Stuhlmann’s ‘Segnungen der europäischen Kultur’. Stuhlmann’s portrayal of events in Uganda suggest that the British and French are incapable and unworthy colonisers, for they are unable to carry out the ‘cultivating’, ‘civilising’ project. Their endeavours, so Stuhlmann maintains, ultimately end in indiscriminate violence.

Yet the most significant factor is Stuhlmann’s Social Darwinist explanation of European territorial expansion. This competition between capitalist *European* nations is the most important motivation behind colonial expansion. The *African* racial question is secondary. Stuhlmann describes this inter-European struggle as a bitter and brutal war. Europeans consume territory with animalistic instincts. The events which prompt Stuhlmann’s outburst however, suggest that the Germans are losing this fight for survival, for the Germans are unwilling to fight with such commitment. They remain

morally irreprehensible with the 'Prestige des deutschen Namens' intact (Stuhlmann, p. 163). Yet once again, the Germans are impotent in the face of their great rivals. Stuhlmann thus carefully constructs an image of the British in Africa throughout his narrative, which coincides with his disappointment. He feels that he has lost the potential German colony to unworthy opponents, who just happen to enjoy more international political sway. This constructed image of the British also creates a counter-image of the Germans. Earlier explorers Barth and Rohlfs were intent on consolidating an image of German identity through their 'superior' methods of rational, methodical exploration and so control over the unknown. Stuhlmann employs the same criteria to reinforce an image of the German as a superior coloniser. This image of the rational, controlled German is constantly reinforced throughout the narrative. It is reinforced by Stuhlmann's references to the military precision with which his expedition traverses Africa, the regularity of both the entourage's movement, and the use of military drills to regularly punctuate their passage. The expedition is subject to a strict order and hierarchy, which Stuhlmann attempts to uphold at all costs. This order and hierarchy is mirrored in Stuhlmann's descriptions of Africans as 'beneath' him on the linear-progressive evolutionary scale. Such closure to otherness which we saw in earlier narratives, was concomitant with a belief in goal-orientated linear progress and an attachment to the western time-set as a major factor of self-reference. Now, we see that Stuhlmann incorporates these values into his nationalist mind-set. The rigidity of his hierarchical belief in order and progress means closure to both African and European others. Progress, for Stuhlmann, means success in the struggle for national survival. Success is measured in territorial acquisitions.

Stuhlmann's portrayal of German cultural superiority yet political impotence, enhances and inflames pre-existing German national inferiority complexes. Barth had made earlier references to German inferiority during his expedition with Richardson. Open expressions of anti British sentiment were of course impossible in Barth's narrative due to the nature of his financial sponsorship. However, in 1860, long after his expedition had been completed and his narrative published, a letter was published in *Petermann's Mittheilungen* which Barth had written during his expedition. Barth writes: 'Wir armen Deutschen, die mit so armseligen Mitteln [...] mitten in Afrika reisen sollen, und unser eigenes Vermögen so wie unser Leben preisgeben, sind bisher nicht wie Mitglieder der Expedition noch wie Gentlemen, sondern nur als Bedienstete angesehen worden'.<sup>363</sup>

This narrative of national impotence is a more successful justification for territorial expansion than implied African racial inferiority. Our works so far contribute actively to this anti-British, pro-German and pro-expansionist discourse. Stuhlmann argues in favour of aggressive territorial acquisitions over European rivals, for the struggle for Africa presented in the narrative is a proxy struggle for Europe.

Let us now compare the theme of German and British national rivalries in Frobenius's typically anti-colonial narrative. This theme is particularly significant in Frobenius's work which was composed shortly before Anglo-German tensions reached their

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<sup>363</sup> August Petermann, ed., *Mittheilungen aus Justhus Perthes' geographischer Anstalt über wichtige neue Erforschungen auf dem Gesamtgebiete der Geographie von A. Petermann*. (Gotha, 1860), p. 408.

pinnacle with the outbreak of the First World War. The increased presence of Europeans in Africa intensified the number of encounters between Europeans and consequently their documentation in the travel narrative. Frobenius's work provides surprising insight into British-German relations on the African continent. As the political landscape changed, so did the power structures and relationships between these parties. Between 1870 and 1910, the vast majority of African territory had been colonised by European nations. Nachtigal had barely met another European throughout the entire course of his expedition. His meetings with Europeans at the beginning and end of his journey symbolically mark his departure and re-entry into the 'civilised' world – a return marked with mixed feelings. For our colonial travellers however, interaction with foreign European colonial officials punctuates their journeys with increasing regularity. Frobenius finds himself in mundane negotiations with European colonial officials in order to gain travel permission, instead of with local potentates as his predecessors had done. As we have seen, wider political interaction between European nations and decision-making undertaken in Europe become an integral part of the colonial travel narrative. Each piece of traversed space had become politically significant in some way. Encounters with fellow Europeans on African soil prove – in this phase – to be more significant and influential to the colonial drive than encounters with Africans.

Frobenius's narrative contains remarkable ethnographic and anthropological insights. Yet a history of Anglo-German rivalry is also carried throughout it, which parallels developments in pro-colonial discourse. Events come to a head in his narrative, for Frobenius experiences the physical effects of Anglo-German political rivalry when he is

imprisoned and put on trial by British colonial officials in Ibadan. Echoing Stuhlmann's sentiment, Frobenius prepares his reader for the increasingly negative portrayal of British actions which is to come. In his introduction, Frobenius states that 'gerade die in ihrem nationalen Ehrgefühl viel intensiver ausgebildeten Engländer' should not transpose their inter-European conflicts onto those Europeans in Africa (Frobenius, I, p.xxii). Frobenius refers to British national pride as 'ausgebildet', it is something that has been learned and perfected over time. This is a recurrent theme in pro-colonial discourse, as, for example, Rohrbach demonstrates by stating English national character enjoys a much more established tradition than the German. It is implied that Germany as a comparatively 'new' nation cannot possibly have reached a comparable level of national self-confidence. Although Germany had 'caught up' with its industrialised neighbours, there always remained a sense of inferiority towards the British which as we have seen, is reflected in such statements about British national identity. Yet, mirroring Stuhlmann's reference to collective 'Zivilisationswerk', Frobenius suggests that 'Geschwisternationen' should be unified under the banner of science for the greater good of all mankind (Frobenius, I, p. xxiii). These statements are particularly interesting as they echo both Stuhlmann and Peters's anti-British sentiments and claims of moral superiority over the British, yet Frobenius does not share their openly pro-colonial ideology. Thus in spite of his anti-expansionist stance, Frobenius's narrative portrayal of Anglo-British interaction in Africa nevertheless contributed to a nationalist, Social Darwinist expansionist agenda.



From the outset, Frobenius's narrative implies an intensification of inter-European rivalries since Stuhlmann's expedition. In his introduction, he refers matter-of-factly to inter-European political differences which were transposed onto African soil and which presented him with severe difficulties during his expedition. Stuhlmann in contrast, merely suggested that European differences exist but, as we saw, these could be smoothed over with a festive banquet. Yet both authors state that European political differences can, and should, be solved in Europe and upheld in Africa. Frobenius's portrayals of inter-European encounters on African soil do seem to pre-empt, even suggest, events to come in Europe.

Ibadan is under British protective rule and run by an established colonial system. It is the true starting-point of Frobenius's expedition and also his tense relations with the British. Initially, Frobenius is well received by British officials. However, his requests for travel permission and hired carriers are continually – and as Frobenius suggests – deliberately postponed. Frobenius is a coloniser in a foreign colony. He presents no direct threat to British territorial claims. The underlying fear of knowledge as the key to power and the link between new discoveries and the all-important idea of national prestige would, however, be sufficient motivation for the British to hinder the German expedition in its quest for 'new' knowledge, if this is indeed the case. It is of course difficult to judge the true nature of events from Frobenius's obviously prejudiced report. Frobenius relates rumours which he hears from African clerks that suggest such motives: 'man erzählte sich, daß gewisse Herren der englischen Regierung durch meine schnellen und unerwarteten Erfolge verstimmt seien, und daß gewisse Maßnahmen

vorgeschlagen wären, um auch für England gleiche Sammlungen zu sichern' (Frobenius, I, p. 67). Again this notion of rumours, secrecy and implied underhandedness is reserved for British actions only. Frobenius, like Stuhlmann, provides us with clues leading up to the main Anglo-German encounter in order to explain why the British act comparatively maliciously.

Frobenius is finally granted permission to leave the city of Ibadan and believes his dealings with British authorities to be over. He heads the holy city of Ife, south of Ibadan, yet still in the same province. Here, Frobenius finds obtaining artefacts surprisingly difficult. Yet Frobenius, being as he suggests, a superior ethnographer than his British counterparts, learns where an idol – the Olokun – is being hidden (Frobenius, I, p. 80). The following excerpt describes his efforts to find it:

So pilgerten wir dann am anderen Morgen die Straße nach Nordosten und kamen auch wirklich in eine Region herrlicher Palmenhaine, alter Opferplätze und kleiner Tempel. Diese Plätze waren nun auch den Engländern vorher bekannt geworden, aber sie waren, da alle wesentlichen Dingen mit Strohkappen verhüllt waren, an allem Wichtigen vorbeigegangen. Wir gingen der Sache natürlich mit deutscher Gründlichkeit kräftig zu Leibe. (Frobenius, I, p. 85)

Frobenius's 'German thoroughness' is of course rewarded, and he discovers the prized statue and numerous other artefacts. British haste and impatience – familiar stereotypes

in our narratives – hindered their find. Frobenius leaves his reader in no doubt who is the superior scientist, and that this is a result of national, rather than individual traits.

Elated by their find, Frobenius's expedition leaves the city 'froh und fröhlich'. They are met soon after by the British official Mr. Partridge, 'Polizisten und Fahrrädern, Dolmetschern und einem ganzen Gerichtsstosse' (Frobenius, I, p. 111). The expedition is ordered to turn back to the city whilst Mr Partridge, who had been the cause of numerous delays in Ibadan, investigates accusations of theft made against Frobenius. Mr Partridge's party, Frobenius notes, arrives considerably later than his own, as its members had taken time to change into 'Galakleidung' in order to make a grand entrance into the city (Frobenius, I, p. 111). Frobenius scornfully describes the scene as mere theatre, a remark that is reminiscent of European descriptions of African potentates' courts as mere pomp and theatricality. Stuhlmann, for example, includes an excerpt from the British treaty with the Ugandans which permits the King to maintain 'the pomp and display of his court' (Stuhlmann, I, p. 158). Such displays were not considered threatening, for they were classed as mere display with no actual authority or substance.<sup>364</sup> This seems to be Frobenius's general view of proceedings, as Mr Partridge immediately sets up a provisional court in which to try the 'offenders'.

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<sup>364</sup> This paradox is later employed by Kafka in order to highlight the inherent conflicts surrounding colonial expansion. Kafka's soldier and condemned prisoner display theatrical, almost clown-like behaviour which subverts the authority of the colonial scene on two levels, firstly mimicking and thus mocking the coloniser's behaviour and secondly highlighting the performance-like and ritualistic nature of this 'civilised' justice. This image is intentionally reinforced later in the tale as we are told that executions draw huge crowds of spectators. Kafka, *Strafkolonie*, p. 43.

Frobenius initially views the proceedings with a note of sarcasm. He expects this to be yet another mere time-consuming ruse with which to sabotage his speedy progress. Yet events take a more sinister turn as the trial lasts several weeks and Frobenius, together with his entourage, is imprisoned for its duration. Frobenius's physical impotence is matched by judicial impotence, as he tells us that he and his two colleagues are rarely cross-examined or even allowed to speak. The following excerpt is exemplary of his negative appraisal of events:

Mister Partridge began nun mit einem Verhör, betreffend die ganze Olokungeschichte, einem Verhör, das vom frühen Morgen bis zum späten Nachmittag dauerte und das in einer Weise führte als sei er Staatsanwalt und Gerichtspräsident in einer Person. Er stellte die Fragen mit so klar ausgesprochener Voreingenommenheit, daß meine Herren und ich uns immer verblüffter ansahen. Es war ganz augenscheinlich, daß Mister Partridge alles betonte und aufschrieb, was auch nur im geringsten widrig für meine Leute klang. (Frobenius, I, p.113)

This is not merely a report of events. The author consciously deploys narrative techniques to enhance the detrimental nature of these proceedings to his expedition. The repetition of 'Verhör' emphasises his bewilderment and outrage. The first sentence, long and extensive in structure, mirrors the tedious and long-drawn out proceedings. Frobenius uses legal terminology to highlight the contrast between justice and what he sees as mere chicanery. Partridge exercises utmost power and authority in one figure,

yet is apparently devoid of the necessary qualities such as morality, reason and wisdom. Hence the British official has actually become the stereotypical, despotic African potentate as portrayed by Rohlfs, Stuhlmann and Schweinfurth in their narratives. Stuhlmann portrays the previous Ugandan King's rule as 'das alte, straffe, grausame Regiment' (Stuhlmann, I, p. 162). Schweinfurth portrays Muslim potentates using similar language. Like the local potentates in his predecessors' narratives, Frobenius also finds himself subject to time-wasting theatricalities led by a local figure of authority. Here, for the first time in his narrative, Frobenius employs familiar, negative connotations associated with time. This significantly marks the beginning of his increasing closure towards, and rejection of, the British, the new 'others' on African soil. Concomitant with this growing hostility towards the British, is an overwhelming positive image of 'Germanness'.

As the trial proceeds, the differentiation between those locals present and British officials becomes increasingly hard to discern. Frobenius thus again employs similar narrative techniques as those used by Stuhlmann to depict the British in Africa. Frobenius states that the local population has been bribed into testifying against him and is merely interested in the court spectacle as a break from the norm. Frobenius then concludes that those who do testify against them have poor characters and see nothing wrong with lying (Frobenius, I, p. 115). According to Frobenius, Partridge shares this opinion of lying and other negative characteristics as he later states that no trial took place, it was in fact merely 'ein Treffen' (Frobenius, I, p. 116). British underhandedness continues, so Frobenius maintains: 'das Bewußtsein von seiner [Partridge's] Unwahrheit

bezeugte er damit, daß er selbst eine hübsche Sammlung via Ibadan wegbrachte' (Frobenius, I, p. 116). The artefacts confiscated from Frobenius were supposedly returned to their rightful African owners. Frobenius, however, notes that many were later found on display in the British Museum. Partridge, believing he has confiscated Frobenius's most valuable find, draws the trial to a close. Frobenius is free to leave, yet he has lost the majority of his artefacts. He continues his portrayal of events with the following image:

Heute kommen mir diese Tage wie eine traumhaft schauerliche Unmöglichkeit vor. Jetzt, wo ich weiß, daß meine englischen Freunde selbst über diese Handlungsweise des Mister Partridge empört sind, jetzt ist mir das Ganze doppelt schleierhaft. Wie ein Traumleben ist mir diese Erinnerung an die Wochen vor Weihnachten 1910 und Mitte Januar 1911, denn diese Verhandlungen, dieses Vorgehen gegen uns, die wir opferfreudig unsere Heimat, unsere Lieben und die Behaglichkeit des Lebens für lange Zeit aufgegeben hatten, um idealen Arbeitsbedürfnissen zu folgen, die sind ja auch so unglaublich brutal, so an sich unverständlich. (Frobenius, I, p. 127)

Here, Frobenius employs familiar images which radiate connotation to his readers. As we saw in the previous chapter, he employs 'veil' imagery to criticise his predecessors' oversight in relation to Sudanese indigenous religions. He now employs this familiar image – reserved by Rohlf's for the 'deceitful Arab-Muslim' – to suggest trickery,

baseness and mystery amongst the British. In a reversal of roles, British colonial representatives now become the ‘threatening others’. They are at once the time-consuming potentates and the mysterious, untrustworthy, deceitful, cunning locals. Frobenius makes a significant reference to time and so emphasises the duration and timing of his captivity. Rather than merely referring to the date, he emphasises that he was held during an important religious celebration – Christmas. Frobenius paints a deliberately stark contrast between the warmth, comfort and scientific ideals associated with his ‘Heimat’ and the unbelievable, incomprehensible brutality of British representatives in Africa. Frobenius’s reference to brutality suggests cultural violence, for it is clear to Frobenius that Partridge’s ‘verkehrte nationale Empfindungen’ are directed solely at his German nationality (Frobenius, I, p. 126).

Frobenius continues to lay even greater emphasis on his German identity and the superior Germanic *Geist* during his description of the Christmas celebrations his party nevertheless enjoy whilst imprisoned and awaiting the end of the trial:

Als dann mein lieber, guter, treuer ‘Edisonapparat’ einsetzte und: ‘Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht’ erschallen ließ, als wir dann vom grünen Plan den wohlgerösteten Weihnachtsvogel nahmen, mit deutschem Schaumweine auf die Lieben daheim und auf das Gedeihen unserer Wissenschaft und vor allen Dingen auf die Deutsche Treue tranken, – Himmel, ist das nicht doch eine Weihnachtsstimmung? – Wirklich, es war eine große Verschwendung von Lichtern und Süßigkeiten und Geschenken, aber es war dieser Abend ein

Bad im deutschen Geiste, ein Abend, der uns von dem Staube fremder, unreiner Landstraße befreite. An diesem Abend waren wir glücklich, sehr glücklich! Bis in die Nacht hinein lasen wir uns vor aus alten und neuen Büchern, bald dieses Stück, bald jenes; wie es unsere kleine Kulturoase auf unserem Kofferboden eben bieten konnte. (Frobenius, I, p. 128)

The evening is evidently designed to contrast with the example of British culture to which the Germans are being subjected. 'Treue' in particular, is reserved solely for the Germans. The atmosphere of trust, friendship and happiness emanating from the German party, contrasts with the cunning treachery of the British. The mood suggests peace, tranquillity and intellectual exchange. Frobenius mentions earlier that he has a great collection of German works with him and the excerpt suggests that only German works belong in this 'Kulturoase'. Frobenius, who makes neither reference to Christian celebrations, nor the Christian calendar throughout his narrative, suddenly emphasises this particular celebration. The British appear all the more uncivilised, for they imprison their fellow Europeans during the most significant, Christian celebrations. Hence Frobenius implies that power-hungry Mr. Partridge has truly 'regressed' whilst in Africa. He has not, however 'gone native', for at this point, Frobenius rates African culture more highly. Again we see references associated with the western time-set during moments of closure towards other cultures.

Although it would be difficult to describe Frobenius as an ardent nationalist, his work makes clear references to distinctly German attributes such as *geistige* superiority,



morality and scientific pre-eminence over British representatives. This emphasis on *German* culture infers a lack of comparable British standards. Frobenius's portrayal of the Anglo-German encounter paints an irreproachable picture of the German party and a negative image of the British. The British even usurp the African stereotype of 'kulturlöse Völker'. The excerpt mirrors Stuhlmann's Ugandan experience which implicitly criticises German passivity. Although Frobenius is portrayed as morally and intellectually superior, the British gain the upper hand, for they are the most powerful nation in the world. The episode literally cries out for aggressive action against the British, who are depicted as guarding their own national interests at all costs.

Throughout the analysis of German-African encounters we have seen two sides to Germanic identity. On the one hand an interest in cultural heterogeneity and openness to difference and on the other a belief in superior Germanic access to scientific knowledge, fuelled by a long-standing sense of inferiority towards powerful European neighbours. Frobenius's narrative epitomises these paradoxes of Germanic self-understanding. Whilst presenting a newly revalorised image of African culture, his narrative simultaneously upholds the myth of German political inferiority, yet cultural and intellectual superiority. Hence Anglo-German interaction in Frobenius's case demonstrates the continuous nineteenth-century pattern of German impotence against British acts, for despite their assumed moral superiority, the Germans appear powerless to assert any claims over the British.

The narratives thus become powerful tools in reflecting and contributing to a pro-colonial mentality, yet not through their negative portrayals of Africans, as many critics have suggested. Such subjective, literary portrayals as Frobenius's trial episode, became translated into media fact and appeared as newspaper dialogue between both nations.<sup>365</sup> Such events re-asserted German fears of marginalisation which they had experienced in Africa and saw as a threat to their territorial position within Europe. As we have seen, there are numerous references to events being precursors of further action to come on European soil. Explorers allude to the interconnection between events in Africa and their eventual consequences in Europe. Although critical of British methods, Social Darwinist concepts suggesting survival of the fittest, point towards such bold actions as the only means of national survival. Pro-colonial discourse criticised the nature of German Africa-exploration for its passive humanism and unwillingness to translate knowledge into actual possessions. So it would seem that, rather than a fear of 'African otherness' and negative portrayals of African peoples, the British bear the brunt of negative opinions and so become the new 'threatening others' on African and therefore, also *European* soil. Our works thus describe phases in Germanic national self-understanding which culminate in a strong sense of national identity and an urgency to defend national interests at all costs. German-Africa encounter resulted in a re-valorised image of African culture and its universal connections to German culture. Yet British-German encounter on African soil resulted in a newly valorised image of Germanic

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<sup>365</sup> Frobenius tells us that one of his letters home was 'accidentally' leaked to the German press, making the incident the focus of public attention and outrage. This prompted retaliation and angry accusations against him and his 'Arbeitsweisen' in the 'schlecht informierte' Times, whereby the German Press 'mit erfreulicher Energie und deutscher Gründlichkeit dem Tatbestande nachging' and defended his actions! (Frobenius, I, pp. 138-9). The Emin Pascha affair, which ignited Anglo-British rivalries that are carried through our works, also enjoyed great attention in the British and German national press. Perras, *Carl Peters*, p. 23.

culture and a Social Darwinist justification for it to expand. The Germanic time-set has modulated into the assertion that Germany's time has now come.

## CONCLUSION

This study has sought to demonstrate that German-African encounters in *Afrikareisende* travel narratives are the product of a combination of complex, often contradictory influences: cultural heterophilia and expansionist aspirations generated by a history of national inferiority and inter-European rivalry. These seemingly contradictory influences, it has been argued, stem from the conflicting elements of German self-understanding which in turn result from variegated, pluralist German traditions and Germany's late unification. As the analysis progressed, we saw how our chief cognitive interest in time is expressed through the key themes of spatial exteriority, cultural expression, racial discourse and religion. These themes, which are carried throughout the macrotext of *Afrikareisende* narratives, develop against the backdrop of German domestic and international politics. The analysis has shown that changes in our explorers' time-set affect the nature of their presentations. This in turn reflects changes in the nature of German self-understanding as it moved through a period of transition from a loose confederation of states to nation-state, colonial empire and world power.

The key to analysing the images portrayed in travel narratives is the understanding of the works as literary compositions. The works are not only factual representations. They undergo extensive retroactive narrative shaping, as the authors attempt to recreate their African experiences in words. Here, the concept of time in its narrative function is particularly telling. Our authors deploy the relationship between narrative and narrated time to radiate connotative significance over events, to imply their sense of control over

their narrated experiences and hence their journey through Africa, but also to signal a shift away from received concepts of cultural understanding in favour of a qualitatively new experience of African alterity. Hence the narratives are constructed pieces of both conscious and subconscious inner exploration which reveal the travellers' struggle to reconcile African experience with their preconceived cultural values.

The analysis of African spatial exteriority in revealed that the first explorers moved from Europe to Africa with a fluid notion of their Germanness. In contrast to other established European nation-states, German identity was not consolidated within fixed territorial borders. Influenced by the scientific discourse which dominated all aspects of nineteenth-century life, our explorers' German identity appeared to revolve around an understanding of rationality, logic and the ultimate power of science; a linear-progressive concept of history, and a belief in German superior ability to access and deploy this knowledge. Traversing Africa and packaging it into a series of experiences measurable by time-units would demonstrate superior German ability to uncover the mysteries of the unknown continent which had remained inaccessible to western knowledge for so long. Discovering absolute differences between the African and the German would, it can be argued, aid the *Reisende* in their understanding of their own Germanness. Yet attempts to subject African experience to packaging in linear, measurable time-units and analogies to European navigational discoveries ultimately failed to establish Germanic cultural superiority. Instead they dialectically exposed the intransitivity of the time-set on which these first explorers' sense of identity rested. Encounters with African terrain demonstrated that German identity, due to its fluidity,

was susceptible to penetration by external influences. We saw Germanic traits which had been marginalised by the onset of scientific heuristic paradigms resurface as valid modes of experience; Romantic explorations and dream-time. Nachtigal experienced subversive, illogical, dream-like states which overturned pre-existing beliefs and paradoxically led to enlightenment and greater understanding. Nachtigal's reveries awaken his aesthetic perception and so his awareness of African space as a common cultural bond for those who inhabit it. Schweinfurth's jungle, initially a site of undiscovered botanical treasures and a 'home from home', becomes a harsh habitat and the epitome of Darwinian natural struggles for survival. The ancient trees and eroded rocks become natural symbols of time's now incommensurable passing. They signify a new awareness of infinite time-scales and the slow process of change and development that is 'deep time'. These embodiments of natural, infinite time-scales render 'clock-time' irrelevant and thus signal a modulation in our explorers' time-set. Schweinfurth's narrative introduced Darwinian influences to the works and the theory of evolution as a theory of diversity and variety, rather than goal-orientated linear-historicist progress.

Junker's post-unification narrative revealed a shift in attitude towards African space now that Germany's entry into the colonial race was a real possibility. Yet contrary to expectations, Junker's desert experiences did not signal automatic closure to cultural difference. The unification of Germany and the creation of a locatable, territorially-defined national identity, generally associated with processes of cultural assimilation and closure towards difference, did not automatically undermine German openness to cultural otherness. Instead, Germany's particular history and path to unification arouses

an awareness and interest in the paths of other nations. Building on Schweinfurth's concept of time as natural, infinitesimal changes, time-scales are extended, as an interest in the development of cultures over time comes to the fore. Hence the cognitive interest in time as a mere instrument with which to measure the passage of minutes, recedes.

Yet Junker's engagement with landscape incorporates variegated and even conflicting impressions within one work; Africa remains 'timeless', unchanged since its depiction in the Bible, whilst in other areas, the land has been appropriated by the ultimate feature of modernity and commodified time – the railway. The explorers' appreciation for both of these seemingly opposing features reflects both the Germanic desire for cultural diversity, coupled with the underlying realisation that colonial expansion and the international political power it brought with it, were becoming a very real possibility for the newly consolidated Reich. Thus our explorers' modulated time-set nevertheless remains two-fold: on the one hand we see an interest in a-teleological human evolution, and on the other, goal-orientated, linear-progressive, hierarchical concepts of one set path for human development. Stuhlmann's narrative epitomises this variation of the time-set.

In his work, African landscape again became a fitting canvas on which to consolidate an a priori image of German national identity, both within Germany itself and more widely to other European nations. His passage through African terrain reflects the rigidity of Rohlf's earlier movement. Stuhlmann's strict routine is upheld through his incessant references to order and hierarchy. His passage is punctuated at regular

intervals by military drill and flag-raising ceremonies. Rather than references to the amount of time taken to traverse terrain, Stuhlmann gauges his progress by the frequency of German flags he sees flying. He proudly 'germanicises' walking in-line through African terrain. Hence his movement through African space incorporates the linear-progressive western time-set into an understanding of German identity as methodological, ordered, rational and now that it is territorially defined within fixed borders, progressing along the linear, hierarchical scale of human, cultural development. Yet Frobenius's encounter with colonised African space signals alienation. Modern European structures, apparent symbols of 'advanced' civilisation, stand next to dilapidated African, semi-permanent constructions. Yet here, Frobenius realises, European structures are mere façades, constructed to disguise the lack of real control and substance behind colonial rule. These differentiated encounters with African space thus refute notions of a clear-cut trajectory of development which sees Germany's development into a nation-state and colonial power as concomitant with closure to otherness.

The depth of cultural analysis presented in the travel narratives increases in complexity. Barth's and Rohlf's attempts to categorise and gauge African cultural development in familiar, linear-progressive historical epochs, proves unsuccessful. Junker makes ambiguous references to German cultural superiority, whilst also revealing a deep interest in African cultural history. Stuhlmann unsurprisingly upholds a narrative of cultural imposition onto African soil which mirrors his territorial acquisitions. Yet Frobenius's work signals a complete subversion of the time-set as an



indicator of western superiority and cultural control. Instead, he lays emphasis on *natural* history and a sense of larger time-scales as indicators of time's passage. Natural monuments – faces, eroded rocks, even ancient forests – embody time's passage. Frobenius's investigations into African historical awareness result in revolutionary aperçus. Refuting written historical documents as the sole marker of historical awareness, Frobenius revives the authority of oral culture with Herderian assertions of diversity and universality. History is carried within those closest to the land. As such, Frobenius revalorises African culture as a vital and essential force. This move, surely not coincidentally, is coeval with the rise of primitivism within the Modernist and Expressionist movements in Germany and fluctuations in the flow of knowledge from Germany to Africa.

The move inwards to elements of human otherness presents a further intensification of such radical ideas. The presentation of fetishism by Rohlf's as the antithesis of the rational, progressive, enlightened German is eroded by Nachtigal's acknowledgement of superstition as a human universal. Barth's confrontation with Africa exposes the need for authentic experience against the background of alienation through modern culture and industrialisation. Frobenius's portrayals of African religion signal an increased interest in cultural difference and a sense of egalitarian appreciation of cultural diversity as essential to his understanding of the 'German self'. This is doubtless influenced by Germany's own chequered path to national unification, combined with Darwinian evolutionary theory. However, our explorers become almost militant against the rise of monotheistic religion in Africa. On the one hand, a belief in cultural diversity is

essential to our explorers' self-understanding. Monotheistic religions are portrayed as destructive forces akin to the spread of capitalistic industrialisation and so the erosion of this difference. For Stuhlmann, religion has no place in Africa for it is concomitant with emotion and as such, the antithesis of German rational, methodological expansion.

The prominence of racial discourse in the travel narratives mirrors the increasing wealth of interest generated by Darwinian theory, and its relevance to the history of European interaction with non-European 'others'. Anatomical and physiognomic comparisons in our works emphasise the shift in cognitive interest towards human 'specimens'. Here, humans become physical embodiments of change and the passage of time. Depending on the explorers' mind-set, we see racial theory as an indicator of human diversity and universality; our explorers value successful adaptation to climatic adversity, or as supporting theories of racial hierarchy and one set path to an ultimate evolutionary goal; Stuhlmann carefully deploys elements from all aspects of racial theory to construct an image of the racially inferior African. Although our explorers engage with several elements of racial theory employed in pro-colonial discourse, their highly differentiated findings do not justify expansion into non-European territories on racial grounds. This, significantly, runs counter to the history of other leading European nations. *German-African* encounters contain both conscious and subconscious recognitions of common human origins, a revalidation of the 'primitive' as an essential part of modern, German culture. Our explorers unexpectedly question assumptions of German cultural superiority and the overbearing influence of modernity.

Yet a counter-tradition is also evident, which becomes increasingly relevant to German self-understanding; a notion of German 'otherness' and inferiority within *Europe* is carried from the first narrative to the last. This theme of inferiority and political marginalisation ultimately tips the balance in our explorers' understanding of time as human, cultural development and Germany's place in this process. Barth, the observer on a British expedition, was tolerated, as he was expected to collate scientific information which would ultimately benefit the British Empire. Residing in British-dominated Egypt, Schweinfurth commented on the lack of interest accorded to momentous events in German politics. As the balance of power in European politics began to shift and the newly unified German nation increased in power and wealth, so politics became increasingly relevant to *Afrikareisende* passage through Africa. Inter-European rivalries are magnified on African soil and represent a proxy struggle for Europe. As our explorers Stuhlmann and Frobenius demonstrate, the German Reich is failing miserably in this struggle. Stuhlmann's narrative illustrates Germany's new role as an imperial nation, and consequently the increased competition with Britain for a piece of African territory. Stuhlmann makes clear that Germany lost out to its rival due to a lack of political influence. His image of the irrational, warlike British soldiers marauding in hordes indistinguishable from the Africans, is carefully placed against the image of German superior access to rationality and logic. Hence Stuhlmann implies that Germans were, and would be, superior colonisers due to their methodological and controlled approach to territorial acquisition. These features, associated with the western time-set and concomitant with closure to otherness, resurface as *the* essential criteria for successful territorial expansion. Frobenius's narrative highlighted the peak in British-

German rivalries. His work was punctuated, not by meetings with African potentates as his predecessors experienced, but by British bureaucracy. For by this time, no piece of African territory remained uncolonised. Political rivalries in Europe were transposed onto African soil as Frobenius's expedition was sabotaged at every turn. Although Frobenius gained the greatest insight, returning to Europe with a revalidated image of *African* culture, he also returned to Europe with a revalidated image of *German* identity. He narrates an image of Germanness as morally and intellectually superior to its British counterparts, yet impotent due to German political marginality. Our narratives demonstrate that in the era of imperial competition, territorial expansion presented *the* way forward to the political influence and recognition which Germany so desired. The message seems to be that in order to protect Germany from similar marginalisation within Europe, aggressive nationalism and participation in a Social Darwinist struggle between nations is inescapable. The nation is the culmination of German, evolutionary, cultural development, and the time had come to defend this status at all costs.

The travel narratives thus help to explain the processes which saw Germany move from its role as a passive observer of international affairs, to an imperial nation and later to a xenophobic power-hungry nation with catastrophic consequences. As the narratives suggest, the nineteenth-century was not a clear-cut developmental step towards National Socialism. Up until the outbreak of the First World War, explorers expanded a German tradition of openness to cultural difference. Yet it was precisely such aspects of difference and otherness as factors in German self-understanding which induced both positive and negative results. As African experience demonstrated, sensitisation to

cultural difference had little influence in the game of power politics, and without political influence, nations and cultures feared ‘consumption’ by powerful rivals. In the end, paradoxically – but in Orientalist terms, logically – negative images of German-British encounters portrayed in the travel narratives prove to be the most influential factors in nineteenth-century German-Africa experiences. The narratives seem to suggest that without resistance to the all-powerful British Empire, Germany was destined to remain in the eighteenth century. The time had come to defend the nation’s interests and position on the hierarchical scale of human, cultural development, and join the struggle for national survival.

These findings reveal the largely underestimated effect of inter-European national rivalries on German national self-understanding in the run-up to the arguably most significant conflict in recent European and world history. Until now, the focus on Germany’s devastating attitude towards human otherness post 1914 has dominated the understanding of earlier cross-cultural encounter. As such, those aspects of inter-European interaction on foreign soil have remained unexplored. In the aftermath of the First World War, the underlying fears of political marginalisation and inferiority in Germany were inevitably incensed and so facilitated the step towards aggressive defence of German national interests at the expense of cultural heterophilia. The extensive scholarly interest paid to this period of German history can, and should, be re-evaluated against the backdrop of differentiated, nineteenth-century representations of cultural difference.

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