

SKETCHING A LITTLE PIECE OF HOME: FRIEDA VON BÜLOW IMAGINES
GERMAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

CHARLES HOAG: Sketching a Little Piece of Home: Frieda von Bülow Imagines German National Identity
(Under the direction of Jonathan Hess)

This thesis examines the role of Frieda von Bülow's published memoir *Reisescizzen und Tagebuchblätter aus Deutsch-Ostafrika* (1889) in the construction of German national identity following the unification of Germany in 1871. Although better known for her popular works of fiction and her activism for imperial causes such as the acquisition of colonies in Africa, von Bülow's journal demonstrates how German national identity was created in writing as a result of the author's imagination and interaction with other Europeans in European-controlled colonial spaces. To explore the ways in which German national identity is constructed this thesis focuses upon culturally significant concepts like *Heimat* and the author's definition of Germanness. In particular, the use of *Heimat* within the travelogue, despite being almost exclusively outside European Germany, exhibits characteristics that are found in previous scholarly analyses of *Heimat* based exclusively or mostly upon European space and experiences.

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FINDING HOME IN THE CONTACT ZONE: FRIEDA VON BÜLOW STAKES GERMANY'S CLAIM

INTRODUCTION

In 1889 Frieda von Bülow, a 32-year old aspiring author and vigorous German colonial activist¹, published a compilation of her notes and journal entries in 1889 from her two-year voyage to East Africa from 1887-1889.² The memoir demonstrates a keen observational mind and a gift for figurative language, especially in her lengthy and detailed descriptions of African landscapes and other natural features. At other moments her narrative leans towards a more scientific tone of observation, analyzing and parsing African colonial architecture, urban planning, colonial administration, and even African fashion in great detail. These skills honed in the process of penning her experiences served her well after her trip to Africa when she became a best-selling author in the 1890's with a series of colonial novels including *Tropenkoller* and *Im Lande der Verheissung*. Probably the best-known woman in the German colonial movement prior to World War I for these novels and her other writings, she has become known as the founder of the German colonial novel.³

German national identity is constructed outside of Germany after 1871 in the text of the published memoir *Reisescizzen und Tagebuchblätter aus Deutsch-Ostafrika* as a result of the author's imagination and interaction with other Europeans in European-controlled colonial spaces. Rather than focus on the body of her fictional writings following the

¹ Lora Wildenthal, "'When Men are Weak': The Imperial Feminism of Frieda von Bülow," *Gender & History* 10.1 (1998): 53-77.

² All primary source quotes are from Frieda von Bülow, *Reisescizzen und Tagebuchblätter aus Deutsch-Ostafrika* (Berlin: Walther & Apolant, 1889). Page numbers are in parentheses.

³ Wildenthal, *When Men Are Weak* 54-55.

excellent work of scholars such as Lora Wildenthal and Suzanne Zantop, I will focus exclusively on the text of the travelogue *Reiseskizzen*. A close reading of the memoir demonstrates how travel and a variety of colonial encounters with Europeans contributes to and reflects the author's German national identity as she travels to and lives in German colonies shortly following national unification. The use of *Heimat* within the memoir, despite being almost exclusively outside European Germany, exhibits characteristics that are found in previous scholarly analyses of *Heimat* based exclusively or mostly upon European space and experiences. Frieda von Bülow's imagination blends a nostalgic longing for the "homeland" with her strong desire for the success of the larger German colonial projects.

This paper is divided into two chapters. In the first chapter I will discuss the discourses of international rivalry in the text. They are a leitmotif throughout the memoir and influence expressions of Germanness, von Bülow's personal mission, and discussions of her *Heimat*. I also demonstrate how the memoir defines Germanness and the consequence of that definition for the existence of the German identity. In the second chapter I explore the memoir's definition of *Heimat* and how it manifests itself in different, sometimes subtle, ways throughout the narrative. The infamous Carl Peters operates as both a protagonist of the narrative as well as a kind of model imperial German. Carl Peters' is a central figure in German colonial history,⁴ and von Bülow's observations of his actions are central to the second half of the narrative. For the purposes of this paper, however, his driven, almost obsessive demeanor, mirrors Louise Pratt's analysis of 18th-century efforts to map every area of the earth, especially the blank spots that had eluded earlier navigational European

⁴ Unfortunately, the length of this paper does not permit me to go into details, but he is considered the founder of the "German East Africa" colony and a major figure in 19th century German colonial history (see Wildenthal for a brief account). I am more interested in her observations of his actions and what those observations reveal about her discourses of German identity.

cartography.⁵

Since I often discuss *Heimat* in this paper I will offer my own (perhaps unsatisfactory) definition of the term. Many scholars of German literature often write that *Heimat* is one of the most notoriously difficult German words to precisely translate or capture its full meaning.⁶ I am defining *Heimat* only as it appears in the memoir. *Heimat* means both a collective shared physical space, similar to a home region or hometown as well as a collection of the author's memories and shared experiences associated with home. The *Heimat* is more than just a home; it is the sum of early experiences and cultural products that make one not just German but a *Ludwigshafener*, *Weimarer*, or whatever the site of the person's hometown. One is a product of the *Heimat*, loyal to the *Heimat*, and always a member of the imagined community of home. The author's voyage, and as I argue in Chapter 2, her interactions with fellow Europeans – rather than the indigenous Africans -- in the contact zone(s) shapes the German national identity constructed in the text, of which *Heimat* is one constitutive element.

In the following section I will outline the complex trilateral rivalry between Germany, Britain, and France over African colonies and how it operates within the text of the memoir. In the world of the text, manifestations of von Bülow's support of German colonialism in Africa are influenced heavily by these relationships. They are manifested in a wide spectrum from wishing to emulate British success, envy for those same vast colonial political, economic, social, and political networks, to outright contempt for British colonialism and

⁵ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 30.

⁶ See Celia Applegate's preface for a solid discussion of the term's historical development beginning in the late 17th century. Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California P, 1990).

running finally to fantasies of fabulous future German colonial might.

In the second section, I examine how the German community and a sense of collective Germanness is expressed within the context of (or as a countervailing force to) the international colonial movement and other competitions. On an individual level, Carl Peters' actions in the memoir embody the individual drive for collective German colonial glory within discourses of international rivalries. His energetic, grasping drive to conquer Africa is a product of the international rivalries of the "Scramble for Africa." On the communal level, Germans are characterized through explicit communal characteristics such as expressions of common experience and/or geography and cultural contexts like singing and common language. Through a close reading of the text, implicit shared characteristics such as courage in the face of dangers of international travel and a stubborn determination to succeed in colonial endeavors regardless of the cost also feature prominently in the memoir.

In the final section of Chapter 1 I examine aspects of international competition and Orientalism in some of von Bülow's complicated fantasies. On the surface, they reflect von Bülow's individual view of the contemporary colonial reality within the context of African colonialisms, especially British colonies. The text subtly incorporates German national identity into fantasies that offer her a means (even if only within the confines of the narrative of imagination) of escaping the withering heat, fatal illnesses, and drudgery of her attempts to found a small hospital in German East Africa. Upon further examination, they also reveal how the discourses of international rivalry are intimately related to Orientalist stereotypes of the time. I will highlight areas of the memoir where the author's Orientalist proclivities demonstrate the process of creating and expressing a unique and collective German national

identity through the voice of the narrator, often shaping -- and shaped by—her interactions with fellow European colonialists.

Susanne Zantop argues in her *Colonial Fantasies* that German fantasies of colonial conquest and plunder inspired intrepid colonial agents to seek out exotic people and locales, especially in South America. Although her work outlines fantasies of colonial conquest that frequently predate the historical period of German colonialism in Africa, she argues forcefully that these fantasies (both pre-colonial and those during the period of colonization) and not the inter-European geopolitical struggles were *the* driving force behind German colonial endeavors.⁷ As she and her co-editors explain in the introduction to *The Imperialist Imagination*, even female writers of German colonial literature such as von Bülow participated in male fantasies of conquest and fertility:

Throughout the colonial period, German colonialist literature reiterated a basic pattern that of the colonialist male ‘hero’ who discovers and appropriates unclaimed territory, who settles it down and renders it fertile, and who thus demonstrates over and over again his physical mental and cultural superiority (Warmbold). If precolonial fantasies had focused on ideal colonial relations and were set mostly in the New World, colonial fictions written during Germany’s brief colonial interlude were inclined to stress the hardships and challenges of the actual ‘colonial adventure’ in Africa. These narratives of the newly acquired lands provided not just a space for relating practical experiences, but a sense of the liberation and mastery men as well as women felt when they engaged in what they considered to be a specifically German civilizing mission. More often than not the emancipatory tendencies of texts (concerning gender, not race) were subsumed into and suppressed by their nationalist ideology. While women’s colonial narratives – for example... the diaries, travelogues, or novels of Frieda von Bülow...-- purported to paint a realistic picture of life in the colonies, they too were imbued with fantasies of the physical and moral superiority of the Germans with stereotypical depictions of indigenous groups. In the works of both male and female writers, the question of German identity in international competition continued to form an integral part of the colonialist imagination.⁸

⁷ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies* 4.

⁸ Sara Friedrichsmeyer, Sara Lennox, Susanne Zantop, ed., *The Imperialist Imagination: German*

One must be careful not to indiscriminately apply Zantop's definition of colonial fantasies to every fantasy in the text, which would inadvertently efface the elements 19th-century German imagined national identity, especially the nascent unification movement that included colonial acquisition within Bismarck's strategy of *Weltpolitik*, within the text. Zantop also groups together von Bülow's fictional works with her travelogues where the analysis of colonial fantasies best applies to her novels and not the *Reiseskizzen*.

For example, in the memoir the author's visions are often looking often inward at her own definition of Germanness and/or towards home. These visions are also inspired by or thematically based upon Germany's geopolitical rivalries in Europe, such as her argument the British naval officer and her discussions of German culture with fellow German-speakers on board the steamship. German colonial fantasies, as defined by Zantop looking mainly outward towards the colonial "Other" as a fertile place of conquest and obedient to masculine control, often appear in colonial fictions of the time.⁹ Von Bülow's memoir, after all, purports to be a true account of her travels and not among the colonial fictions for which she is better known. Note also Zantop's own emphasis of the international competition in colonial literature of both men and women around the time of von Bülow's writing in the excerpt above. This rivalry is the most important constituent of German national identity within the text and the most frequent theme of the fantasies within the text rather than the colonial fantasies highlighted by Zantop.

The nominally unified Germany of the 1880's was not, in any case, a single cohesive unit of social ideologies or colonial desire. 19th-century Germans had many different,

Colonialism and Its Legacy (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1998) 22-23.

⁹ Friedrichsmeyer, Lennox, Zantop, *Imperialist Imagination* 21-22.

sometimes conflicting ideas about how to organize their nation socially, politically, and economically. Many Germans disagreed vehemently about the efficacy and value of ruling non-German peoples in places like Africa. Even if German colonial fantasies were uniform (which they are not, although I agree with Zantop that they follow recognizable patterns) the text is ultimately far more concerned with the construction of German identity outside Europe through the medium of interaction with other Europeans, even if some of the text's fantasies do appear to conform to Zantop's classification above.

German geopolitical competition for colonial space and the 19th-century German identity within the world of the text are a multifaceted negotiation of the radical difference among communities of people that, nonetheless, felt connected as a nation in important and lasting ways. The German national community, following Benedict Anderson, was an imagined community of people connected by discourses of local and national identity.¹⁰ Instead of a single lens of discourse analysis, we must incorporate more nuanced discourses of the German nation alongside colonial fantasies of power and domination to more fully appreciate the complex discourses within the *Reisescizzen*.

For a more productive reading of the memoir, we must always consider the physical spaces, their inhabitants, and the subtleties of interactions between peoples, whether the nominally dominant colonial Germans or the indigenous African peoples. Mary Louise Pratt, in her *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, develops the helpful notion of the "contact zone." As she defines it, the contact zone is "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each

¹⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 2006) 6.

other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, racial inequality, and intractable conflict.”¹¹ This is well suited for an analysis of von Bülow’s *Reiseskizzen* because it avoids a monolithic depiction of German, African, or colonial cultures while at the same time emphasizing the copresence of spatially separated peoples within the colonial contact space. These “ongoing relations” are not merely or solely the exploitation of the native Africans by the German colonizers. In addition, although the historical conjunctures and discourses of racisms, imperialisms, and Orientalisms are certainly at work within the text, these kinds of easy labels that imply one-sided historical and cultural processes do not begin to highlight the complex nature(s) of colonial cultural production and von Bülow’s text.

Pratt, however, does not extend this analysis to specifically German cultural products like *Heimat*. She focuses largely on the French and British colonial empires, a strategic choice made by many scholars of colonial literatures that obscures the unique roles of Germans and Germany in colonialist policies and discourses. For example, although many German scholars and adventurers are mentioned in Pratt’s book, they are mere facilitators or tangentially related to the work of mostly British and French colonialists.¹² By relegating Germans to the role of colonialism’s handmaidens, these analyses imply a broader European path or style of colonialism. Germans did not necessarily think of themselves as Europeans first; von Bülow is emphatically a German first. She is explicitly and enthusiastically part of

¹¹ Pratt 6.

¹² Edward Said also places Germans firmly to the background (despite their appearance again and again in fields like biblical studies, philology, and oriental studies) in his *Orientalism*. This scholarly tendency to marginalize 19th-century German scholarship lends credence to Zantop’s arguments about German marginality in 19th-century colonialism. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 25th Anniversary ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 2003).

a greater colonial mission to establish a sustainable colony in east Africa. In addition, this generic European approach to literary scholarship effaces a number of very important differences among the European nations with a colonial presence in Africa in the 19th-century (France and Britain certainly, but also Germany, Belgium, and Italy).

Within the world of the text there is strikingly little of the contact Pratt describes, at least between the author and the indigenous peoples' customs or dress she sometimes describes in her memoir. Carl Peters' activity certainly qualifies as this kind of contact and Pratt's definition of contact zone avoids a monolithic or solely one-way interpretation of his actions. Frieda von Bülow's interactions are almost solely with fellow Germans or the British colonial officials in East Africa. When she does interact with Africans, they are often the well-educated indigenous elite or the occasional servants catering to the German colonialists who do not reflect the vast majority of indigenous people in the region. For our purposes von Bülow's class, gender, and strident colonialist views crowd out any opportunities for meaningful interaction with Africans as equals. Among her fellow Germans, she focuses on defining and maintaining a proper sense of German national identity. The British colonial administration, which had established a presence in East Africa centuries before the Germans, is both of source of envy for its progress compared to the relatively late-arriving Germans and a dangerous rival that von Bülow and Germany must emulate and/or overtake.

„ICH ERZÄHLTE IHM STOLZ UND FREUDIG“: FLYING GERMANY'S FLAG

Many dialogues in the *Reiseskizzen* involve discussions between von Bülow and British colonial officials about British colonies in Africa or her opinion of the state of

German colonial holdings. At the time of her trip to German East Africa (mainland Tanzania and Dar-Es-Salaam) in 1887 the area had been recently designated by the Kaiser as an official German colony. This act followed the famous Berlin Conference in 1884-1885 in which nations, inside and outside Europe with current colonies or interest in colonial acquisitions in Africa, met to draw African colonial boundaries and establish protocol for the official establishment of colonies on African soil. For a dedicated and passionate German colonialist such as von Bülow, Germany had to be as or more successful in acquiring and earning profits from colonies in East Africa as its two main rivals, Britain and France. Her mission as a colonial nurse and other individual pursuits (such as Carl Peters' work through the *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft*) are subsumed within these larger collective contexts of international political and economic competition. The memoir's depiction of conversations between the author and representatives of British colonial administration are thus influenced by these long-standing discourses of international rivalry. The very act of remembering these conversations in the form of a public memoir for German consumption, I argue, is a constituent element of that ongoing European rivalry which by 1889 had reached a high level of intensity.

Von Bülow's national pride and her belief in the importance of German East African colonialism are demonstrated early on in the narrative during a pivotal moment when she confronts a seasoned veteran in the British colonial administration. An argument has broken out among the Germans on board over the nature of German colonial rule: should they seek to create just laws and strive for kind treatment of the native population or seek an extractive economic policy and repressive political policies similar to other European colonial empires?

The British officer happens to notice the newly-minted German colonial flag flying above their ship, chartered by the *Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft* (DOAG). He asks her about the flag in a fashion she finds condescending, and von Bülow will brook no contempt from the ostensibly more experienced British colonialist:

Ich erzählte ihm stolz und freudig, dass dies Kreuz auf der Flagge unserer Ostafrikanischen Kolonie prange. Da sah mich der Brite groß an und brach dann in lautes Lachen aus. Ich frug, warum er lache. „Sie haben Ihre Kolonialflagge ja recht bescheiden gewählt,“ sagte er, und lachte von neuem. Ich erklärte ihm darauf sehr bestimmt, das Thema deutscher Kolonisation würde von nun an nicht mehr zwischen uns berührt werden, da ich Spott über diesen Gegenstand nicht annehmen könne und wolle. Der Oberst ließ es sich sehr angehen sein, mich zu begütigen, aber ich blieb meinem Vorsatz treu. Im Stillen dachte ich: Lacht ihr nur. *Wer aber zuletzt lacht, lacht am besten.* [emphasis mine] (10)

Aside from the touchy display of national pride, this excerpt illustrates several elements of the web of relationships Germany had to the major colonial powers in Africa, France and Britain, in areas of colonial acquisition and administration. As Susanne Zantop cogently argues, Germany had a complex trilateral socio-political relationship with France and Britain in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.¹³ They had coalesced as nation-states and claimed large tracts of African colonial territory well in advance of Germany's unification in 1871.¹⁴ Germany's marginal position as a colonial non-power was both a source of shame for German colonialists and a spur to action for von Bülow and others to dream, and ultimately attempt to claim their "place in the sun," or at least a *Stückchen deutscher Erde*. The final inner monologue poignantly expresses this desire, in spite of the asymmetrical balance of power among African colonial territory, reflecting the author's fantasies of a future German colonial triumph.

¹³ Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies* 82.

¹⁴ Matthew Jeffries, *Imperial Culture in Germany, 1871-1918* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 12.

WIR DEUTSCHEN

As a counterpoint to the international rivalries, Germans and German-speaking travelers in the memoir frequently band together or congregate among themselves, often in the face of adversity. Shortly after her dispute with the British officer, the ship encounters a fierce storm. Although the author and many others are forced to hunker down in unpleasant and cramped quarters belowdecks, the entire ship tossing with every swell, a group of young German DOAG employees treat the storm-tossed vessel like an exhilarating thrill ride:

Rings um das auf und niedersteigende Fahrzeug standen dunkle Wasserberge, die den Horizont dicht vor uns abgrenzten. Sonst war nichts zu sehen. Sturzwellen kamen von allen Seiten über das Verdeck und spülten zahllose Silberfische an Bord, die von dem Kapitän und den Matrosen mit den Händen gefangen wurden zum delikaten Frühstück... Die Passagiere lagen in kläglichstem Zustand umher, besonders litten die weißen Priester, stark durch die Seekrankheit. Am tapfersten hielt sich der Regierungsbaumeister Wolf aufrecht, doch meinte auch dieser, so schlecht sei es ihm in seinem Leben noch nicht ergangen. Einige junge Deutsche (nachmals Angestellte der Deutsch-Ostafrikanischen Gesellschaft), die zweiter Cajüte fuhren, boten übrigens den Unbilden der stürmischen Fahrt mit beneidenswertem Frohsinn Trotz. Ich hörte sie täglich singen und jodeln. Jede Sturzwelle wurde mit ausgelassenem Hurrah begrüßt. Der erste Offizier, der die jungen Leute gelegentlich wegen der positiven Gefahr des Überbordgespültwerdens in die Cabine nötigte, konnte nicht umhin dieser unverwüstlichen Laune Bewunderung zu zollen. ‘’pon my word!’, rief er aus, ‘I never saw such a jolly set!’ (14-15)

Scenes such as this storm and other sites of cultural conflict or misunderstanding in the narrative, including important cultural differences between Europeans (Germans and the rival British) as well as between von Bülow and Africans, cumulatively create a sense of shared community among the Germans. In this excerpt, the Captain and the crew (mostly British) struggle with the effects of the tempest but – to their credit – manage to harvest a “delicate breakfast” of silver fish that are washed upon the deck during the storm. The most valiant

(*tapfer*) of all the passengers, however, is the German government's master builder, Herr Wolf. An experienced traveler and important German colonial official, Wolf rides out the storm with stoic determination. This incident, and his later courageous but ultimately losing battle with tropical disease, demonstrates his mettle to the audience.

The most compelling imagery from the scene is the young officials' cavalier yodeling despite the immediate danger of being washed overboard or the vessel capsizing, likely drowning most or all of the passengers and crew. Their almost surreal joviality is a stark contrast to the behavior of the other crew and passengers, even the respected imperial agent Herr Wolf. Indeed, one might point to the several allusions to the age of the young German men as the most salient characteristic that she uses to describe them. The relatively straightforward and superficial nature of that analysis, however, obscures the complex political and social dynamics between the mostly German passengers and the mostly British crew. Although their youth is emphasized, their nationality within the context of the narrative is more important because of the author's constant references to German communal characteristics and the very nature of her trip: essentially a mission to improve healthcare in the new German colony. In other words, the memoir's extended community of Germans includes not only to DOAG functionaries but also Germans traveling, such as the author's expedition from East Africa to Europe and vice-versa, as well as Germans living in Africa.

The Germans who travel are able to weather complications that arise in the course of their journeys in part due to the strength of their explicit shared characteristics like language and the extent to which they spurred onward as a result of the fierce rivalries with other European nations. The memoir's narrative also implies other German characteristics, such as

the bravura of the young DOAG officials in the face of ferocious natural phenomena. The German who live in Africa have a sense of German community, and to a lesser extent their German identity, that is both constituted by and actively constitutes shared cultural products like *Heimat* (which I discuss in much greater detail in the next chapter), the belief in a greater national colonial mission(s), and national identity along the lines I describe above.

Interestingly enough, the physical conditions of the sea voyage beg an analysis of the imagined nature of the community of Germans on board. One could argue that, contrary to the large and geographically dispersed populations that imagine themselves as a unified people or as part of a unified people or peoples as Anderson argues, the ship is in fact a real and tightly-knit (if temporary) community. “Germany” may have been a modular construct that millions of people simultaneously thought into existence over time but, for the Germans aboard, they lived in their own small, very real, and very cramped floating village. The same could be said of the other groups of people aboard the ship that conspired to create collective national identities. There are several important caveats I have to this analysis.

First, although the Germans were spatially much closer while traveling than they might otherwise have been in Europe, that does not by itself guarantee any sort of national affiliation. Frieda was often close to the British officers but nonetheless drew sharp distinctions between herself and them along lines of national identity. In addition there are plenty of other sites of division or conflict, even among fellow Germans in a small space. Social class, gender, education, religious denomination, geographic origin within Germany, native dialect, and enthusiasm for the success of the East African colony are several points that immediately spring to mind. Although the voice of the narrator in the text does not

explicitly state the motives for this behavior, one can reasonably infer that Frieda spent most of her time with high-ranking colonial officials and/or aristocrats during the voyage because of reasons involving gender norms and social class of the time.¹⁵ Even within the narrative itself, the pseudo-celebrity Carl Peters gets much greater amounts of ink than the interesting (but probably lower class) young Germans about whose yodeling she comments in the above passage.¹⁶

Once the aforementioned storm breaks and the ship makes the highly anticipated return to a nearby port, however, the jovial young Germans are nowhere to be seen: “...Ich sehnte mich, festes Land unter den Füßen zu fühlen, aber von unseren Deutschen war nichts zu hören und zu sehen” (18). The author, perhaps with tongue planted in her cheek, draws an important distinction between her actions and the bravado of the young male Germans: regardless of their lack of fear and callous attitude to the dangers of travel, she manages to get off the ship first. Her voice is like that of a mother (or perhaps an older, wiser sister) clucking at the misguided bravery of youth while at the same time appreciating the extent of their (German) *Tapferkeit*. Thus their community, based on shared cultures and common experiences of travel and/or adversity, also has more nuanced distinctions between its members. Those more nuanced distinctions between community members are, however, subsumed within larger discourses of international rivalry and German colonialism in Africa.

Second, the text imagines a greater Germany and international community of Germans throughout the narrative. From the colonial fervor with which she boards the first

¹⁵ Almost all of her time at African ports is spent with men, usually the local rulers and other European colonial dignitaries, such as the Italian consul in Zanzibar or on board with Herr Wolf.

¹⁶ Of course, there is also a more mundane reason for Peters’ prominence in the memoir. As Wildenthal argues, there is strong circumstantial evidence of a romantic relationship between von Bülow and Peters around the time of her stay in German East Africa. Wildenthal, *When Men Are Weak* 57-58.

vessel towards North Africa to her frustration with the lack of funding for medicine in the colony from the *Heimat*, von Bülow is never more than a thought or daydream away from the imagined nation. Even if the travelers are separated by space from large concentrations of other Germans or are moving through space not explicitly imagined as German (although the concept of national or colonial waters underscores this point), their individual identities, to the extent they are members of a nation or nations, are subsumed within the larger national imagined community or communities. Much of the hardship of voyaging she describes originates from the distance of cultural or national norms (in clothing or food, for example) that the German travelers must endure. There is no space within the text that is not mapped and/or re-mapped as part of national space or discourses of national identity even when spatial relations might allow for a real community to exist, be re-imagined, or created alongside other national identities. If there is no (documented) tension between the imagined greater German community and the small nation of Germans aboard the vessel, what about when they finally arrive in Africa?

In this instance the modular nature of German nationhood argued by Anderson more accurately describes the imagined community of Germans in the colony. Although clearly not the *Heimat* about which she reminisces, the social settings in von Bülow's journeys, such as her stories of her home and the many picnics with the DOAG leadership, convey a strong sense of the German national culture and Germanness. In fact, the intense yearnings for the mother country (about which I write later), the physical distance from Europe, and the otherness of the indigenous African climate and culture reinforce this essential mental link supporting the edifice of German nationalism abroad.

To take a small example, the two-month sea voyage seems to heighten the narrator's awareness of her own membership in the German nation.¹⁷ Reflections on the emotional effects of physical distance from home or privations while in the process of travel are common themes in the narrative. They occur with equal frequency during parts of the text when she is in transit and living in Africa. However, she devotes a much higher proportion of writing during her time at sea to her thoughts about Germany, colonialism, and other German passengers. Their physical closeness means that they will encounter one another more frequently than they might otherwise. In addition, contrary to the colonial environment she describes where small groups of Germans are often surrounded by large numbers of non-Germans, the ship has a large number of Germans in a relatively small space. Since the ship also has several European non-Germans, who also happen to originate from a national rival (Britain), discourses of international rivalry abound. Forced to close quarters with fellow Germans and arguably spurred by the presence of rivals, the narrator is vigilant about the status of the German nation and the place(s) she imagines for herself within it.

A textual example supports this argument: When she describes the appearance of a fellow German who had traveled extensively, she explicitly connects travel (through the effects upon his appearance) with the substance of his Germanness:

Am folgenden Morgen kamen mehrere deutsche Herren an Bord, die bis Aden mit dem Bremer Lloyd gefahren waren und nun in diesem schattenlosen Felsenfest auf uns hatten warten müssen. Unter diesen Herren befanden sich der zur Vermessung der geplanten Eisenbahnlinie von der Deutsch-Ostafrikanischen Gesellschaft ausgesandte Regierungsbaumeister Wolf und sein Adjutant, Herr von Hake, etwas Amerikaner im Äußerem, von Gesinnung aber so deutsch, wie nur diejenigen es werden, die im Ausland unter dem steten zu kurz kommen der Unsrigen zu leiden gehabt haben. (12-13)

¹⁷ She does not write about her national identity in these terms, so any arguments as to what the text explicitly communicates about the author's beliefs about her own national identity would be pure speculation.

In the last sentence of the above excerpt, she makes several interesting observations about the DOAG official Herr von Hake. First, she compares his (worldly?) appearance to that of an American. The author never elaborates on this comparison and it is unclear from the context that to which she is exactly referring. She uses American here to signify a kind of cosmopolitan amalgam of several European cultures; an outward resemblance that is both rooted in the discourses of international rivalry but also outside it. The United States, though a rising industrial power in 1889, has an even smaller colonial footprint in Africa than Germany at the time. His clothing and carriage seems vaguely threatening and outside the norms of German behavior and culture.

In contrast to the officer's alien exterior, his disposition (*Gesinnung*) is strongly, authoritatively German. Unlike in other areas of the memoir, she does not list what those qualities are. As previously mentioned, she invokes *Tapferkeit* to emphasize the Germanness of the young colonial officials. Later on in the narrative, she mourns the loss of *Regierungsbaumeister* Wolf with perhaps a tinge of professional reproach for his stubborn, quintessentially German refusal to take quinine in response to a malarial outbreak. In addition, the lack of explicit character reference implies a sense of intimacy with the audience; they already know what "*von Gesinnung aber so deutsch*" means. They can populate the template of Germanness with whatever imagined history or characteristics they wish.¹⁸

Finally, the nature of von Hake's Germanness is strengthened because of his suffering

¹⁸ Interestingly enough, von Hake is never mentioned in the memoir again. One could argue that this supports his role as a kind of cultural template, a palette onto which her contemporary German audience can create their vision of themselves without interference from a historical figure or evidence.

from the absence of German culture during his travel. His long forays into the *Ausland*, having worn down his German exterior and replaced it with a -- perhaps dangerous, perhaps merely foreign -- appearance, have refined the German essence of his spirit. Rather than an adventure to explore and conquer the unknown wilderness like the exploration myth of Manifest Destiny, his time away from the mother country has worn him down, changed him. Implied here are two things: first, only time spent with compatriots will replenish his need for German culture and, one assumes, change his appearance back to a more fitting German countenance. Also, her language strongly connotes an intimate bond imagined as an exclusive dividing line between us and them (*der Unsrigen*).

Other stereotypes are employed to define the German community. Singing and the author's assertions about the inherently musical nature of Germans appear at several points in the narrative. In one noteworthy incident, von Bülow is in the midst of a polite conversation in English with the wife of local colonial ruler about European current events. The gathering is a mix of many different nationalities and in the beginning of their conversation, the other woman is uncertain about von Bülow's origin.¹⁹ She replies:

Ich versicherte ihr mit Selbstgefühl, dass ich eine Deutsche sei, was sie einen Augenblick zu überraschen schien. Sie fasste sich aber sogleich und bemerkte: ‚O, wenn Sie eine Deutsche sind, dann sind Sie natürlich sehr musikalisch.‘ Also von dieser Seite kannte sie uns. (56)

There are many assumptions by the author in this one statement. The assertion that all Germans a) are musical, b) all know the same music or *Volkslieder*, or c) that one could describe every German as “musical” reveals the extent to which implied characteristics (in

¹⁹ She doesn't write explicitly about her reaction to this instance of mistaken identity, but one can imagine the author being somewhat taken aback by this comment. On the other hand, von Bülow was fluent in French and English as well as her native German.

this instance explicit in the text of the memoir but implied in the conversation) of the German community function in this memoir. One must, of course, acknowledge that this stereotype contains a grain of truth; in the 19th-century many middle- and upper-class Germans had collections of religious songs and *Volkslieder* gathered within popular collections such as the *Kommerzbuch*.²⁰ However accurate these descriptions of common behaviors or characteristics may be, as single adjective cannot neatly summarize the staggering variety of even contemporary (continental) popular German music, much less all German-speaking cultures. Within the text however, these assertions of geographic, linguistic, or other commonalities illustrate the cohesive nature of the German community employed by the narrator that operate both outside of and as a constitutive element of the discourses of international rivalry.

FRIEDA VON BÜLOW'S ORIENTAL FANTASIES

The narrator makes many detailed observations of hardships during travel, individuals met during visits to the several ports during the journey to German East Africa, and the living conditions of those places. The perspective is generally dismissive of eastern African cultures, especially Arabic cultures. This is typical of travel writers and German historians of the time, many of whom would have influenced von Bülow through her education about the exotic peoples of eastern Africa and famous collections of tales like *Book of the Thousand and One Nights* (1704-1717). She pithily sums up the entire city of Zanzibar in a few sentences after a short jaunt from the harbor to her hotel:

Der Weg vom Landungsplatz zum Hôtel ist kurz, aber charakteristisch. Vor allem bietet er an Schmutz und Unordnung, was man von arabischer Straßenpflege irgend erwarten kann. (22)

²⁰ From discussion during a presentation of a draft of this paper at UNC-Chapel Hill on March 17, 2007.

Her frequent recriminations of the laziness, redolence, and immorality of the African and Arabic cultures and cultural products notwithstanding, her visit to Zanzibar does reflect the discourses of international rivalry via a fantasy of colonial dominance and envy of the British power to remake their home away from home in the colonial context. As she goes to visit a British consul's home in the Indian quarter, she is transported "as if by magic" to a pocket of pure British culture amidst the local squalor:

Aus den Indierstraßen gelangten wir zwischen die mit Palmzweigen gedeckten Hütten der Neger und bogen zuletzt in ein Mauerpförtchen ein. Mit dieser Biegung verwandelte sich die Scene vor uns wie durch Zauber. Mitten in Neger-Armseligkeit, indischen von Unsauberkeit strotzenden Kramläden und arabischen Schutthaufen sieht man auf einmal ein Stück Englands vor sich mit seiner blanken in voll entfalteter Blüte vor stehenden Kultur. Erstaunen, Bewunderung und nationale Eifersucht erfüllten mich bei dem überraschenden Anblick. 'Wenn wir doch erst so weit wären!' rief ich. 'Das wird wohl noch einige Jahrzehnte dauern,' meinte lächelnd mein Führer, 'hier steckt viel englisches Geld darin und jahrelange Arbeit.' (29-30)

Surrounded by the squalor of the native dwellings, the British officials have spent thousands of pounds and decades of time to transform their homes into a copy of England. Her awe is equaled only by her envy of the successful civilization of the uncivilized African space. She goes on to describe in great detail the almost Faustian changes the British have wrought in their magical pocket of England in Africa:

Hier hatte das britische Vermögen, das Gepräge der eigenen Art dem vorgefundenen Fremden auszuzwingen, es fertig gebracht, arabische Bauten in heitere englische "cottages" mit Loggien, blumengefüllten Erkern etc. umzuwandeln. (30)²¹

The contemporary rivalry of British and German cultures is obvious within the text. The author simply cannot hide her shame and jealousy upon seeing the profound expression of

²¹ I am reminded here of the "model villages" built by Marie Antoinette in the 18th century, such as the *Petit hameau* at Versailles.

British colonial power and their ability to replicate a little “home away from home.” It was of course impossible for climatological and financial reasons to replicate the mother country in Africa, as the official tacitly acknowledges. Von Bülow’s desire burns none less brightly and she is inspired by this and other experiences during the voyage to further the missions of fully (or as fully as possible) subduing and molding the cultures of German colonies to as closely mirror Germany as she could. After all, later in the memoir she reveals her own very personal reasons for desiring to see Africa for herself (as well as her Orientalist proclivities):

Ich habe als Kind mit Vorliebe die Märchen von tausend und einer Nacht durchblättert, die mein Vater in einer vier Foliobände starken Prachtausgabe mit unzähligen Illustrationen besaß. Jetzt scheint mir diese orientalische Märchenwelt vor meinen Augen lebendig geworden, so oft ich Gelegenheit habe, nachts die Gassen zu durchwandern. (42)

In other words, her childhood fantasies from reading her father’s illustrated *1001 Nights* have literally come to life. Her Orientalist dreams of exotic peoples and far-away lands are in front of eyes. Rather than respect the cultural differences or contemplate how to incorporate the African space into her plans, her thoughts immediately turn to how best to eliminate any semblance of the Orient from the German colony.

Most importantly, it is her interaction with the British that has prompted her memories of home. Without the example of the British colonial domination in the Orient, she would not have been prompted to fondly remember reading her father’s books. It is the competition with her fellow Europeans within the text that drive expressions of German identity, including her memories of her home. The British colonial experiences are the benchmark against which German national identity, including Orientalist fantasies of transforming exotic places and people, is measured.

CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 1

In the first section we analyzed the ubiquitous discourses of international rivalry throughout the memoir. Susanne Zantop rightly points out the historical significance of the trilateral relationship between German, France, and Britain but effaces the German-African colonial context in her analysis. These discourses constitute and are constituted by expressions of German national identity, the historical contexts of German colonialism, and the even von Bülow's Oriental fantasies of colonial domination. At times filled with prickly national pride and other times struck with profound national jealousy, these narratives of international competition are the most important recurring themes within the text.

Secondly we observed the dialectical creation of German identity through the processes of travel and the discourses of international rivalry. The process of travel indicates that German national identity operates on two levels: the modular imagined community of Benedict Anderson as well as a small but physically close community of Germans aboard the vessel. In the memoir German national identity and Germanness are categories that are described, coded, and compared to non-German religious and national identities. Germans are labeled as *tapfer*, musical, and sharing a discrete set of cultural beliefs. In this sense, German identity is constructed both from within the individual (as a repository of common experiences, memories of a *Heimat*, the German language, etc.) and in the process of contrast with other non-German individuals and identities in and through the medium of travel.

Finally the author's Orientalist discourse and her fantasies of colonial domination were shown to originate in some of her earliest experiences, such as leafing through her father's dog-eared copy of *Die Märchen von tausend und einer Nacht*. Her nostalgia about

childhood fantasies mingles with the reality of British colonial dominance of the east African coast at the time. Von Bülow's disdain of indigenous cultural and spatial organization operates as a reflection of the contemporary colonial rivalries.

In the next chapter I will closely analyze more of von Bülow's frequent fantasies, from her nostalgic daydreams about the distant *Heimat* to the fantasies that confuse and even obstruct the narrative's otherwise cohesive tone of German cultural unity and communalities. I will also elaborate on Carl Peters' role in the memoir, especially as one of the most important agents of imperial Germany in Africa but also the way in which his actions are remembered as an emblematic German example for readers to emulate. Most importantly, I will demonstrate how the memoir demonstrates some examples of Applegate's definition of *Heimat* but also reveals how the text's use of *Heimat* is incorporated into German national identity as a result of interaction with Europeans in European-controlled colonial spaces.

CHAPTER 2

FRIEDA VON BÜLOW'S "GERMANY"

In the first section of this chapter I will highlight the nostalgic, recuperative function of *Heimat* in the memoir. Often when facing adversity or profound loneliness due to the distance from home, the author frequently reminisces about her memories of home. *Heimat*, then, is more than merely a specific geographic locale or collection of memories from her childhood but rather a bulwark against the otherness of her physical and cultural environment. In fact, the memoir defines *Heimat* in a sense similar to Applegate's broader idea of a national *Heimat* that emerged historically in the mid- to late-nineteenth century in Germany.²² The memoir even conflates (as was typical for literature of the time) relatively marginal -- geographically speaking relative to the heart of the *Heimat* -- modern-day Rhineland-Palatinate -- German-speaking cultures, such as East Frisia and German-speaking Switzerland.²³

In the second section of this chapter I will focus on the role that Carl Peters plays in the *Reissescizzen*. He is the most written-about person in the second half of the narrative, when von Bülow focuses on her work as a nurse and the day-to-day activities of the DOAG on the ground. As a powerful and well-known agent of the imperial nation he embodies the aggressive, expansive, and acquisitive official culture of imperial German colonialism in Africa.²⁴ The exploration and rapid acquisition of territory and wealth observed by the

²² Applegate 7-14.

²³ Specifically referencing *Die Leute von Seldwyla* or the area around Zurich (128)

²⁴ Wildenthal *When Men Are Weak* 55-62.

author is one of the most straightforward ways of establishing a worldwide German empire, one that, with time, could compete with the powerful British Empire. Her travelogue is written with the German audience at home in mind and seems to be intended to increase support for German colonialism.

In her seminal work on the historical development of German nationalism, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat*, Celia Applegate demonstrates that the notion of a hometown or homeland and local German culture formed a complex dialectical relationship with the German national community that is unique to German identity.²⁵ The discourses of the German nation are inseparable from the text and actions described in colonial projects like the *Reisescizzen*. As Applegate points out, the locally and nationally determined *Heimats* helped form and were formed by movements of national political unity in the mid and late 19th-century.²⁶ Without examining the function of *Heimat* in colonialist discourse like von Bülow's non-fictional text, Applegate misses an opportunity to analyze a critical element in the construction of late 19th-century German identity. In fact, the ubiquity and flexibility of von Bülow's Germanness, expressed as a longing for her *Heimat* and in the interaction with non-Germans through the medium of travel, underscores the need to further examine her discourses of *Heimat*.

A LITTLE PIECE OF GERMAN EARTH

For an example of the most straightforward instance of a nostalgic longing for the *Heimat* in the memoir, the author, not yet at her final destination, describes the habitual search for and desire to receive even a small amount of mail from Germany while residing

²⁵ Applegate 3.

²⁶ Applegate 7-14.

temporarily at Zanzibar:

Immer wieder bin ich in den Salon gegangen, der mit sechs Fenstern das Meer beherrscht, und habe erst durch das Opernglas, dann mit unbewaffneten Augen nach dem schwarzen Punkt am Horizont gesehen, der auch gar nicht größer werden wollte! Als dann endlich gegen vier Uhr der brave Britisch India-Dampfer sich bedächtig im Hafen liegende Schiffe schob und seinen Salutschuß abfeuerte, empfanden wir Beide ein so heftiges uns selbst unerklärliches Gefühl der Freude, daß uns die Thränen in die Augen traten. Das Schiff kommt eben aus der Heimat und war für uns die erste Gruß. (60)

This brief scene packs many of the narrative's *Heimat*-related leitmotifs in a few short sentences. The first sentence uses the language of habit, indicating a constant and repeated set of behaviors. The distance from home intensifies the feelings of homesickness as well as making the logistics even delivering a letter and getting a reply into a rare and celebrated occurrence. There is also a strong collective tone to the description as she writes how "we" felt such a strong emotion and the postal ship was even like the "first greeting" from a long-gone acquaintance. The nostalgia in the text is plainly evident from the insistent desire to speed up the ship's travel by will alone, the tears of joy at its arrival, and the personification of contact from the *Heimat* as if merely reading the letters from home were a substitute for the people who had penned them in the first place.

One might read this passage merely as travelers, long from home, who are overjoyed at the chance to correspond with their loved ones. As previously mentioned, the journey to Africa was so long and expensive at that time that even sending mail was fraught with logistical challenges. In fact, much of the operational difficulties encountered by early colonists were the lack of services that were ubiquitous at home such as mail, German foodstuffs, and medicine (hence the urgent need to build hospitals and pharmacies where possible). Applegate, however, correctly points out that Germany's movements of national

unity and even the notion of a provincial and national *Heimat* were unique to Germany in the mid- and late-nineteenth century.²⁷

In addition, the collective nature of *Heimat* is displayed in the act of imaging the longed-for homeland as well as celebrating contact. Interestingly, the author describes her feelings in joyous terms such as “ein so heftiges uns selbst unerklärliches Gefühl der Freude.” There is nothing in the memoir (with the notable exception of her national identity) that evokes anything like this passion and depth of emotion. She may have missed home during the first small journey to Egypt and the rivalry on the ship may have aroused passionate displays of national pride, but once her journey had taken her far enough from home the intense longing for the *Heimat* is a companion for the remainder of her travels. It is this yearning combined with her Orientalist fantasies and the realities of European colonial competition that drive the desire to create a little *Stückchen deutscher Erde*.

Although shared cultural characteristics such as a common language, religious beliefs, and geographic origin feature prominently in the *distinction* between German and non-German, the *creation* of German identity is, in fact, a process of definition from the interior of the individual outward to contrast with the European cultures, places, and peoples of the contact zone. The text of the *Reisescizzen* describes, codes, and compares German as a category with African, French, English, and other national identities. In this sense, German identity is constructed both from within the individual (as a repository of common experiences, memories of a *Heimat*, the German language, etc.) and in the process of contrast with other non-German individuals and identities in and through the medium of travel. In von Bülow’s text, interaction with Europeans and her fantasies are the primary axes around

²⁷ Applegate ix-xx.

which German identity is constructed. As she travels through African space and colonial cultures, her writings reveal distinctively German characteristics such as Lutheran Protestantism during the 16th century in Germany, an imagined community of the German nation, and the single-minded pursuit of larger socio-economic goals like the establishment of German colonies on par with the French and English holdings.

In the beginning of her trip, her account is filled with enthusiasm for the colonial project and the adventures of traveling, despite repeated bouts of seasickness and less-than-acceptable accommodations aboard the ship. After the heated dispute with the English colonial officer described above, von Bülow is furious. Her German pride impugned by British effrontery, only the balm of sharing the common experience of a German (though not her geographical) *Heimat* with a fellow German soothes von Bülow's anger:

Mit dem Friesen sprach ich so lange von seiner Heimat, bis er zu meiner Befriedigung den angenommen Engländer fallen ließ, und die deutsche Eigenart vorkehrte. Er sang uns abends am Klavier deutsche Volkslieder vor und erntete allgemeine Beifall. (10-11)

There are several very interesting things going on in these two brief sentences. First, it is revealing that she is speaking with a Frisian in German about his *Heimat*. Frisia is typically divided in to three regions: West Frisia, East Frisia, and North Frisia. The first region is part of today's Netherlands and the other two regions are located in Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein. These relatively small and isolated areas are located in the extreme western range of historically German-speaking areas along the coast of the North Atlantic.²⁸ Frisians have been at the margins (at best) of Germanness in terms of language and political history compared with, say, residents of the *Pfalz* region in the southwest or Berlin in the

²⁸ My thanks to Dr. Jonathan Hess for this insight.

northeast.²⁹ It is unclear whether they are speaking in High German or if von Bülow is familiar with the Frisian dialect. Her writing, however, clearly effaces any cultural or linguistic difference between the two. Speaking of his *Heimat* has the almost magical ability to soothe her, returning her to her “particularly German nature” (*die deutsche Eigenart*).

Second, *Heimat* is expressed several ways in this encounter. It is contained within the memories of the Frisian’s hometown and local culture. She does not mention any specific common places or shared experiences, so it does not appear that she has encountered him before their meeting on the ship or even traveled to Frisia. She is from central Germany in the present-day region of Thuringia.³⁰ Von Bülow goes on, saying that her German nature was revived through the discussion of a (but not her) *Heimat*. This general sense of communal connection and national amalgam of local particularities (each *Heimat* as opposed to the general idea of *Heimat*) is reinforced by the later session of German folk songs, presumably known by every German-speaking person. This is also a sharing of *Heimat*; in this case the music re-creates and establishes the nation from a common language and musical culture. Interestingly enough, later on the author remarks the perceptiveness of a local woman when she emphasizes the “musical” nature of Germans to von Bülow at a party (44).

This episode confirms Applegate’s definition of *Heimat* in that the shared culture and boundedness of that culture demonstrate the powerful effects of national identity on human behavior. What do these travelers really share in common, with the possible exception of some popular songs sung around the piano? The power of merely describing *his* home is

²⁹ This refers to the spatial distance from the cultural “heart” or center of today’s German nation as well as being on the margins of the development of modern *Hochdeutsch*.

³⁰ Wildenthal *When Men Are Weak* 56.

enough to revive the very essence of *her* German identity. The author's German identity interacts with *Heimat* like a vaccination against the process of wearing down German identity that seemed to afflict the *Amerikaner* described previously by von Bülow. *Heimat* has the power to redefine certain marginal peoples or cultures as German but when the voyage becomes too difficult to bear or the distance from the European *Heimat* becomes too great, the author's imagination can be re-formed and refresh the identity. As Applegate writes in the preface to *A Nation of Provincials*:

Consciousness of national belonging is one of the most striking and least understood of modern phenomena. The modern nation asserts its legitimacy in many ways, but most strikingly in the willingness of its members to believe in it, to identify with it, and even to die for it. . . Yet a disjunction persists between national claims and national realities, between the enormity of the influence of the national idea in the world today and the arbitrariness of national identities themselves. In the study that follows, I explore the implications of one aspect of that disjunction: the capacity of borders themselves to take on cultural meaning that transcends their political or economic purposes.³¹

My interest in the operation of *Heimat* within the memoir stems mainly from the desire to further explore the "consciousness of national belonging" that Applegate aptly describes above. To the extent that the physical borders of the national imagination are static or bounded (such as the long ship voyages), *Heimat* functions within the memoir much as Applegate argues in her book. Applegate does not, however, explore the role that fantasy or mission plays in the process of creating cultural meaning for geographic boundaries.

In another example, as von Bülow enjoys a Protestant German-language sermon in Zanzibar, she imagines herself transported to a distant religious ceremony at the time of the Reformation:

³¹ Applegate ix.

Unser Geistlicher, Herr Missionar Greiner, erschien deshalb am Sonntag in kurzer Joppe, in die Stiefel gesteckten Beinkleidern und hohen Reiterstiefeln von gelbem Leder. Man glaubte sich in eine Hussiten- oder Hugenottenandacht aus der Zeiten der Glaubenskriege versetzt, als der Prediger des lauterer Wortes ritterlich gewappnet, die Bibel in der einen und das Schwert in der anderen Hand seiner Herde voranzugehen hatten. Wir sangen wieder den Choral: „ nun danket alle Gott“, dessen großartige Melodie immer und überall die Herzen erhebt. (46-47)

In one sense, this flight of fantasy is on its surface related to German identity because the Reformation and subsequent wars over belief and territory in the 16th and 17th centuries are a critical moment in the development of German national identity on the basis of the High German (*Hochdeutsch*) language, then just being established as a possible national tongue.³² Upon closer examination, however, this curious amalgamation of different religious identities is analogous to the geographical and linguistic disparities in the discussion about the Frisian *Heimat*. Germanness is associated here with discourses of religion rather than music or fond memories.³³

More importantly, at this moment of the text, Frieda's longing for her *Heimat* builds to an intense level of nostalgia and homesickness. The German-language sermon is an island of familiar culture and community amid an ocean of foreign, exotic, and inferior African practices. That her reverie refers to the predominantly non-German Hussites and the Huguenots makes it all the more interesting. The Hussites were followers of the early Christian reformer Jan Hus (c. 1369-1415), a forerunner of the Reformation. Influenced by social issues and propelled by Czech (then Bohemian) nationalism, it is a curious choice for the fantasy German Protestant minister/warrior wielding a sword in one hand and the Bible in

³² I am indebted to Dr. Clayton Koelb for these and other insights into the history of the German language from his "History of German Literature I" course at the Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

³³ The nuances of Germany's rich religious history are sadly beyond the scope of this paper. Needless to say, there are many complex historical relationships that are simplified here for want of space to discuss them in detail.

the other. This warrior-priest imagery is superimposed in Frieda's mind over the 19th-century Protestant minister conducting the sermon in Zanzibar.

The author has used her imagination to reflect on several elements of German national identity. As previously mentioned, the colonial setting is isolated from Europe because of the dislocation of traveling to a new far-way place and the distance from the homeland prevents easy communication and some typical patterns of behavior such as sharing traditional foodstuffs or cultural products like artwork. Pratt's contact zone is a complex and multifaceted but fairly ground-level depiction of the numerous individual and cultural interactions among inhabitants of colonial spaces. In this case, von Bülow is interacting in her fantasy, but surrounded by European imagery as physically surrounded well as her fellow Germans taking in the sermon. There is no contact with the indigenous groups in the text, only reflections of German history and the imaginative leap backward hundreds of years in time to create a national space before even the nominal unification of Germany shortly before the author's trip. Another fellow German, the infamous Carl Peters, is a frequent presence in the second half of the memoir. His presence tends to focus the narrative away from any fantasies and directly on the colonial mission(s) at hand.

VON BÜLOW WITH THE DOAG

Frieda von Bülow is the most famous and most well-researched female *Kolonialroman* author of the 19th-century.³⁴ In addition to her popular novels such as *Tropenkeller* (1905) and *Im Lande der Verheissung: Ein deutscher Kolonial-Roman* (1907), she also published her journal and notes from the 1887 trip to eastern Africa with the DOAG

³⁴ Wildenthal *When Men Are Weak* 53. She features prominently in such prominent recent works of German cultural and colonial studies as *The Imperialist Imagination* as well as *Women for Empire*.

under the direction of Carl Peters in the *Reisescizzen*. Much of the secondary literature on von Bülow emphasizes her stature as a female author in a field of colonial literature dominated by men.³⁵ Very few women published bestselling novels, much less groundbreaking texts about such masculine topics as traveling abroad, battling tropical illness, military struggles, and non-German cultures. She practically invented the genre of the *Kolonialroman*,³⁶ but little analysis has been done of the travelogue for those adventures: her experiences with the DOAG published in the *Reisescizzen*.

Although her *Kolonialromane* were more popular among German readers of the time and are more well known to contemporary Germanists, her memoir certainly had nothing approaching the commercial success of her novels. Many authors and self-proclaimed experts in colonial travel claimed intimate knowledge of the terrain and prior travels but their expertise was gained entirely from reading in libraries, sometimes without ever leaving the town or cities in which they lived.³⁷ Frieda von Bülow braved the hardships of colonial travel and defied 19th-century bourgeois gender norms to get first-hand experience in Germany's east African colony. Von Bülow's perspective is also quite rare among 19th-century German travelogues. Although she traveled with the DOAG, she was neither an official of the DOAG nor a government agent motivated by profit and interested in selling her journal entries to eager German readers and potential investors. She was sympathetic to their goals³⁸ but the text reveals that she did differ with them on several occasions. In addition, this text is more candid and a less stylized account of Carl Peters' actions than in

³⁵ Even when she is featured in a work, such as in *Women for Empire*, the emphasis is often on her gender, her affair with Peters, and/or the racist and/or colonialist language of her novels. Lora Wildenthal, *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945* (Durham [N.C.]: Duke UP, 2001) 28-31.

³⁶ Wildenthal *When Men Are Weak* 55.

³⁷ Pratt 6.

³⁸ And apparently romantically involved with Peters at the time. Wildenthal *When Men Are Weak* 56.

her novels where he features as a protagonist.³⁹

Although she was not a member of the DOAG, she traveled with them and was in a unique position to observe their actions during the voyage. Her comments on the character and actions of Carl Peters make him one of the most prominent people in the second half of the memoir. For example, the relatively leisurely pace of her infrequent forays off the ship and into the towns, villages, and other areas away from the immediate coastal region are contrasted by the hurried, frequent, and business-oriented expeditions of Peters and the DOAG staff. Even in the context of a sailboat trip for pleasure, von Bülow comments on Peters' single-minded sailing style when he is at the rudder:

Zu beschaulichen Reflexionen und gemütlichen Unterhaltungen kommt es nicht, wenn Dr. Peters führt. Dieser geniale Mann scheint nur rastlos vorwärts eilen zu können, ohne Rücksicht auf das, was rechts und links vom Wege sich bieten mag: ‚Der eignen Bahn nachgehend grad‘ und verrückt.‘ (98)

This is no pleasure cruise: Peters' gamble of creating the DOAG, only recently given imperial support, must be profitable in order to continue. He, of course, has a vested economic and egotistical interest in rapidly turning German colonial enterprises into sources of revenue. In addition, there is a sense of understated German masculinity in von Bülow's portrait of the bustling colonialist entrepreneur: hard-working, unafraid to take risks, and most importantly, drive by the knowledge that, by 1887, almost every valuable human and natural resource in Africa had been claimed. If he and Germany were to get in on the action, they would have to move quick and perhaps even cut some corners. We see this in a later encounter recorded by von Bülow.

³⁹ I unfortunately do not have the space here to get into the details of her complicated relationship with Carl Peters. See Wildenthal for a concise account. The autobiographical nature of her account of the trip and its importance as a cultural product prior to her colonial novels involving Peters are of most interest to this paper.

In other words, if there is Germany is going to triumph against its archrivals France and Britain, it must do so quickly and decisively. The interactions with local leaders are clearly a means to produce the end of a stable African territory controlled by Germany. To the extent that the discourses of international rivalry are motivating the mission, they are the *prima facie* political purpose of writing the memoir. It is a record – a flattering picture of Peters – for the home audience. The purpose then is to persuade the *Heimat* of the worthiness of almost all colonial activity, including von Bülow's own mission. Peters' prominent role in her later fictional accounts also supports the argument that Peters is a role model, perhaps even a model German. The imperial rivalries dictate the colonial agenda and what cannot be won by aggression and sheer cheek had to be pursued by other, more duplicitous means.

Invited along to one of these exploratory trips, she relates the conversation between Peters and a local political leader about the recent acquisition of his peoples' territory by the DOAG:

Herr Dr. Peters ließ ihm versichern, er sei ein Freund aller Araber, also auch der seinige. Er würde ihn deshalb in keiner Weise schädigen, oder sich Rechte nehmen, die ihm nicht zukämen...er hoffe nur, daß der Wali ihm und den deutschen Herren ebenso redlich dienen werde, wie er es dem Sultan gethan. Der Alte sah tief ergriffen aus. Das Neue der Situation schien ihn zu überwältigen. Indessen erneuerte er die Versicherungen seiner gänzlichen Ergebenheit und war sofort bereit, der Aufforderung des Herrn Dr. Peters Folge zu leisten und uns das umliegende Ackerland zu zeigen. (100)

A contemporary reader should be skeptical of Peters' genial offers of friendship, equality, and reciprocity towards the indigenous peoples given his historical track record.⁴⁰ The gentle

⁴⁰ Peters is well known for bribing, intoxicating, or otherwise inducing indigenous leaders to sign or mark "contracts" that he then later used as leverage to acquire their territory. He frequently changed the terms of agreements or "cut out" uncooperative local leaders by arranging new deals with regional colonial rulers. His racist views about African and Arabic peoples are also well known. These behaviors are by no means universal -- colonial history abounds with swindlers and racists -- but they do demonstrate a kind of German

leadership of the DOAG is a marked change from the status-quo centuries-old system of informal, confederation-style political rule centered in Zanzibar. Despite the clearly saddening news of a political upheaval, the indigenous leader offers to show the Germans around, especially the rich local farmland:

Die freundlich gesinnten, zutraulichen Schwarzen beeiferten sich mir die nach ihrem Geschmack schönsten Blumen abzubrechen, während wir im Geschwindschritt eine Niederung am Fuße bewaldeter Hügel durchwanderten. Die Herren ließen hier und da Erde umgraben, um Proben mitzunehmen. Dies Vornehmen umstanden die Schwarzen stets mit eherbietiger Scheu. Sie mochten eine symbolische Handlung darin sehen. Dem alten Wali traten Thränen in die Augen, so daß Herr Dr. Peters sich veranlaßt sah, ihm wieder und wieder zu versichern, falls die Deutschen sich hier anbauen sollten, würden sie kein Stückchen Land in Besitz nehmen, das der betreffende Eigentümer nicht herzugeben willig sei. (101)

In an emerging pattern, rightful concerns about the change in political circumstances are met with repeated reassurances of heartfelt friendship and aid from the DOAG. Note the careful scientific operation that occurs simultaneously with the social act of friendship. Von Bülow's condescending attitude towards the Africans was common for the time but her relatively dry description (*Erde umgraben*, *Probe mitzunehmen*) of the soil sampling indicates a cultural resonance with the essentially economic/scientific nature of the trip. This kind of science in the pursuit of profit is a direct descendant of the 18th-century cartographical and classificatory voyages that Pratt outlines.

In this case the author's and Peters' missions coincide: establish a sustainable foothold in eastern Africa at all costs. We may never know the exact nature of their personal relationship and whether or not that affected her otherwise fairly factual account of her trip. My reading indicates that the tone of the memoir is strikingly different in the first half than

particularity in the late 19th-century African colonial context. Wildenthal *German Women* 28-35.

the almost breathless accounts of Peters' activity in the second half. There are no more carefully observed landscapes, no off-handed mentions of African clothing and street cleaning. One could argue that this is just a reflection of a (somewhat) mundane ocean voyage compared to high-profile expeditions to acquire and explore territories and peoples previously unknown or little-known to Europeans. The weight of evidence from the memoir suggests that, while perhaps not exactly propaganda, Peters' prominence, the author's own beliefs about colonialism in Africa, and her fairly fluid German national identity places Peters' in a sympathetic role similar to that of a role model for the far-away *Heimat*.

CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 2

In the first section of this chapter I examined how the German identity is created in the text focusing upon aspects of German national identity in von Bülow's fantasies about her homeland. On the surface, they reflect von Bülow's individual view of the contemporary colonial reality as well as elements of Germany's own collective religious and political history. Longing for the *Heimat* by the author is one instance of the resonance of borders upon culture. Her recurring nostalgia and profound emotions associated with home are examples of the cultural meaning ascribed to borders of the *Heimat*. Experiences such as her interaction with British officials at the beginning of the memoir and her strong association with her fellow Germans on board demonstrate the process of creating and expressing a unique and collective German national identity whose central point is the bounded *Heimat*.

In addition I demonstrated the nostalgic, recuperative function of *Heimat* in the memoir. Whether thoughts of childhood reading or listening to the memories of a fellow German-speaker, the author frequently reminisces about her memories of home. *Heimat*,

then, is more than merely a specific geographic locale or collection of memories from her childhood but rather a bulwark against the otherness of her physical and cultural environment. In fact, the memoir defines *Heimat* on a local and national level, reflecting Applegate's broader idea of a national *Heimat* that emerged historically in the mid- to late-nineteenth century in Germany. The memoir even conflates other very different and relatively marginal (geographically speaking relative to the heart of the *Heimat*, now Rhineland-Palatinate) German-speaking religious cultures, such as the Huguenots and Hussites. These are examples of the power that the borders of the *Heimat* and Germany exerted on the consciousness on a traveler thousands of miles from her homeland.

In the final section I outlined the role of Carl Peters' in the narrative. I argued that he is a possible protagonist for the second half of the memoir. He is featured prominently in the text, his actions are described in positive terms, and the strong nationalist viewpoints of both the author and Peters' regarding the need to acquire the remaining African colonies and/or seize the initiative from their rivals the British in East Africa all support this claim. Von Bülow's writing can thus be seen as created for consumption by the German audience with the intent of increasing support for the expensive and dangerous colonial land grabs made by Germany in Africa at the time.

More scholarship about Frieda von Bülow's nonfiction writings is critical to furthering the vital study of German national identity in the late 1800s. Lora Wildenthal and a few other scholars are the admirable exceptions to this pattern but even Wildenthal marginalizes her memoirs and other writing compared to the *Kolonialromane*. This paper cannot (and indeed should not) answer important objective questions such as the nature of

her relationship with Carl Peters. In addition, scholars like Applegate and Alon Confino have made important strides in examining the importance and historical development of *Heimat* in Germany. What about Germans living abroad, such as settlers in modern-day Namibia from the mid-19th-century onwards? Texts such as the *Reiseskizzen* can begin to help us answer those questions.

Susanne Zantop's argument that colonial fantasies are *the* main driving force behind German colonialism offers this paper a point of departure. While fantasies play an important role in the memoir, they do not appear to be the sole –or even the central – driving force behind the memoir or its observations of German colonialism. Zantop's work tends to overlook the role of *Heimat* in the colonial space (or contact zones). For this author, the *Heimat* was a nostalgic place to which she returned in times of stress. Her visions, both real and imagined, were not the driving force behind her colonial endeavors and only peripherally related to the text's narrative.

Contemporary studies of colonialism and colonial travel literature tend to marginalize the importance of and efface differences between German speakers. We have seen that concepts such as national identity can have very different meanings for groups of people that otherwise identify very strongly with each other. It can also change as a person travels or they find themselves in a new environment. Interaction with fellow Europeans was the primary axis around which this author expressed her identity as a German. As important as the African colonial context was to her travelogue, it remains shaped by the Europeans, especially the British, with whom she felt her nation had to measure its own strength and geopolitical reach. Frieda von Bülow was clearly not just colonial history's handmaiden. She

took risks and strove to fulfill her mission while leaving a rich written record of her experiences. Future scholars must investigate the world of 19th-century German travelogues written by intrepid travelers like von Bülow, unearthing them from the shadows of mainstream colonial literature. As the author discovered, the journey is as unpredictable as the destination.

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