Modes of Transnationalism and Black Revisionist History:

Slavery, The Transatlantic Slave Trade and Abolition in 18th and 19th Century German Literature

by

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century German dramatic genre *Sklavenstücke* (slave plays). These plays, which until recently have not received any significant attention in scholarship, articulate a nuanced critique of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade and thus bear witness to an early German-language discourse indicative of abolitionist currents. Tracing individual acts of German-language abolitionism, I investigate the correlation between abolitionist movements in the Euro-American space and German involvements in these very efforts. In this sense, I contest the notion of an absence of German abolitionist awareness in Europe during the Age of Enlightenment. My reading of these slave plays contributes to discussions about the transcultural nature of abolitionist discourse and defies the notion that abolitionist activism only emerged within the specific nation-states that have previously been the subject of scholarship. Challenging this layering both theoretically and analytically, then, requires an innovative shift that centers approaches rooted in Black thought and theories, which are the foundation of this study. These concepts are necessary for engaging with issues of slavery and abolition while at the same time exposing white paternalist perspectives and gazes. Plays of this genre often foreground the horrors of slavery at the hands of cruel white slaveholders, and characterize enslaved Black Africans as unblemished, obedient, submissive, hard-working, and grateful "beings" deserving of humanitarian benevolence. Based on these sentiments, an overarching discourse opposing slavery and the transatlantic slave trade emerged by way of German-language theatrical plays, theoretical treatises, newspaper articles, academic writings, travelogues, diary entries, and journal articles that negotiated the nature, origin, and legitimacy of Black African humanity around debates on slavery. Thus, my study demonstrates that these German-language literary contributions indicate inscribed socio-

critical commentary and take up transatlantic abolitionist discourses, a dialogue that surfaced under the auspices of the Enlightenment.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Abolitionism and German-Language Slave Plays

The last decades of the eighteenth century heralded the rise of abolitionism, a significant, powerful transnational social movement that cut across classes, races, and nationalities as well as genders. Despite the transnational nature of the abolitionist movement, scholars have generally suggested that it operated only within specific European nation-states and the Americas (Paul 115). In this regard, literary scholar Heike Paul identifies a primary scholarly focus on Anglo-American contacts and networks regarding abolitionism, in which German-language contributions are largely absent, in her 2016 chapter "The German Reception of African American Writers in the Long Nineteenth Century" (115). The historians Felix Brahm and Eve Rosenhaft detect a dearth of scholarship on the entanglements of historical actors in German-speaking territories, areas that were less obviously linked to the transatlantic slave trade, slavery, and abolitionism, in their introductory chapter to the 2016 work *Slavery Hinterland: Transatlantic Slavery and Continental Europe, 1680–1850* (1-3). They identify an outdated historical research persistence that specifically centers Western Europe in the context of slavery and abolition (Brahm and Rosenhaft 6). Similarly, historian Sarah Lentz criticizes the lack of German representation in international research on abolitionism in Europe during the early nineteenth century in her 2016 chapter "Abolitionists in the German Hinterland? Therese Huber and the Spread of Anti-slavery Sentiment in the German Territories in the Early Nineteenth Century" (187-88).

But more attention is beginning to be paid to German-language abolitionist texts. Paul alludes to new approaches in research by contending that the interest in circum-Atlantic abolitionist scholarship that includes German-language materials is a recent phenomenon

(115). In the introductory chapter to the 2016 volume *Germany and the Black Diaspora: Points of Contact, 1250-1914*, Honeck et al. similarly refer to a directional shift that engages transnational historical approaches and takes issue with monolithic understandings of national identity (4). Instead, they emphasize "the interconnectedness of various regional developments, [and] no longer [treat] them as separate entities" (Honeck et al. 4). In this sense, transnational historians go beyond political structures in order to allow a wider scope in terms of exploring individuals who are not part of the nation-state (4). Thus, Honeck et al. write that their volume "connects the thriving scholarship on . . . the black Atlantic, thereby firmly placing the story of African German encounters until World War I in a transregional and transatlantic framework" (5). Brahm and Rosenhaft apply a transregional approach that centers people and places within the European continental states that are not often associated with the triangular trade, the context of slavery, and, by extension, abolitionism (3). They discuss German-speaking territories within the context of the hinterland. Brahm and Rosenhaft describe the term hinterland as additional land that regions or states had access to: "an inland area that is economically or politically related to a port city or a coastal area and connected via different transport routes (roads, rivers or canals)" (4). Hinterlands often functioned profitably within the context of industrialization by responding to the demanding structures of world trade. The contributions in the volume by Brahm and Rosenhaft suggest the development of a "personal network of abolitionist propagandists" in the German-speaking territories as early as 1780 (Brahm and Rosenhaft 2-3). The volume includes scholarly discussions ranging from investigations of the relationships between "slavery (outside Europe) and the dynamics of (European) societies" to the moral implications of serfdom in the Holy Roman Empire in the context of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade (Brahm and Rosenhaft 6, 15-16).

Abolitionist discourse was also present in literature, from novels to travelogues to theatrical plays. In the 2018 chapter "Ein 'historisches Gemälde' gegen Sklaverei. Kotzebues dramenästhetische Bildpolitik und die Abolition im ausgehenden 18. Jahrhundert," Sigrid G. Köhler suggests that German-language abolitionist theater and its authors are nearly forgotten and are rarely read (67). She further addresses the fact that these plays, apart from two contributions, are hardly ever discussed or recognized in the field of German literary studies (Köhler 67). The small number of contributions speaks to a marginalization and scarcity of scholarship on German-language abolitionism and abolitionist efforts within German studies, more broadly. The present discussion is similarly relevant to transatlantic American studies, which usually does not consider German-language contributions in the context of slavery and abolition, either. Thus, this discussion also broadens this discipline's scope by including additional voices within the context of slavery and abolition that belong to the spectrum of American literature and history. Discussions on abolitionism outside of the Americas speak to the transnational dynamics of American studies.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

There has been some Euro-American scholarship on German abolitionist contributions. However, a thorough scholarly engagement with German-language contributions prompted by the transnational nature of the transatlantic slave trade, slavery, and abolitionism by authors working in German-language contexts and addressing German audiences has yet to be developed. Furthermore, most scholarship on German abolitionist contributions surprisingly does not consider the fields of Black German studies and Black studies. Critics rarely draw on theoretical models of Black studies and the initial transnational contributions by Black authors of slave narratives, which present an integral part of the

discussion of abolitionism. In this sense, German studies discussions on this subject matter lack instances of Black self-representation, rely primarily on white scholarly contributions, and include few Black studies theories and critical race theories. These frameworks are clearly essential when discussing works on slavery that address not only the commodification of Black bodies, but also the overall portrayal of Black bodies within the transnational context of slavery. Thus, many of the existing scholarly works are just carbon copies of abolitionist contributions by white authors during the Age of Enlightenment, because they present an application and discussion of one white gaze layered upon another white gaze without including other perspectives.

To remedy this gap in the literature, I uncover and examine German-language abolitionist texts through additional and often-underutilized theoretical lenses. My study illustrates how German literary contributions indicate inscribed socio-critical commentary and take up transatlantic abolitionist discourses. In this, I challenge the notion of an absence of German abolitionist awareness in Europe during the Age of Enlightenment. I explore the German eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century dramatic genre *Sklavenstücke* (slave plays). These plays, which until recently have not received any significant attention in scholarship, articulate a nuanced critique of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade and thus bear witness to an early German-language discourse indicative of abolitionist currents. My reading of these slave plays contributes to discussions about the transnational and transcultural nature of abolitionist discourse and defies the notion that abolitionist activism only emerged within specific nation-states.

Challenging this layering both theoretically and analytically, then, requires an innovative shift that centers approaches rooted in Black thought and theories, which are the foundation of this study. Black studies theories allow for the centering of the human and

Black humanity more broadly, and they assert this humanity in the context of dehumanization and commodification, which are foundational to slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Interrogations within this particular school of thought are concerned with race and the specificity of one's Blackness as identifying markers and different layers of oppression within social structures in white-majority societies.[1] Thus, I deem these concepts necessary for engaging with issues of slavery and abolition while at the same time exposing white paternalist perspectives and gazes. This study includes postcolonial theory to further highlight and debunk white essentialist perspectives. I also make use of historical approaches through historical discussions of slavery as well as historical, political, and social insights into German-language contexts in Europe, which are part of the larger field of German studies. Furthermore, my study applies theories tied to the field of gender and sexuality studies, which allows for intersectional character analyses. I draw on philosophical approaches by way of eighteenth-century and late nineteenth-century contemporary understandings of race, specifically Blackness in the context of being Black African, that allow for a contextualization of popular and common knowledge in German-language fiction characterizing Black African populations. These theories uncover viewpoints that have been discursively constructed by white imperial powers. Therefore, this study includes German literary studies approaches that facilitate a contextualization of literary strategies and themes visible in German-language fiction on slavery and the slave trade. Overall, I examine notions of all-encompassing and hegemonic cultural structures

[1] According to Kimberlé Crenshaw's notion of intersectionality, it is recognized that individuals possess multiple identities in the context of societies. The multiplicity of these identities impact each other and so determine an individual's specific positionality in society (Crenshaw 1242). Therefore, a Black woman, for example, experiences the world in various ways not just due to her Blackness and her womanhood individually, but also due to the combined effect of those identities (and any others she possesses): She is not just Black, and not just a woman, but simultaneously both.

through the approaches mentioned above. My objects of analysis include theatrical plays, theoretical treatises, newspaper articles, academic writings, travelogues, diary entries, and journal articles.

Slave Plays in Scholarship

The genre *Sklavenstücke*, as known in scholarship to date, comprises twenty-one plays that were produced between 1776 and 1814. These plays foreground the horrors of slavery at the hands of cruel white slaveholders and characterize enslaved Africans as unblemished, obedient, submissive, hard-working, and grateful "beings" deserving of humanitarian benevolence. The plays' characters are reflective of the lives of actual Black Africans in bourgeois contexts in the West Indies, Africa, and Germany. In these plays, historical events and subjects such as the Middle Passage to the New World, the capture of Africans, adjustments to the new environment, the harshness of plantation life and slavery, inhumanity, torture, love stories, and familial conflict are addressed. Slave plays were first categorized by Barbara Riesche, who identified five different subgenres of slave plays: returnee plays, female Moor plays, plantation plays, revolution plays, and Africa-based plays (of which there is only one). My analysis of the dramatic genre of slave plays will address one play from each subcategory that encompasses the main characteristics of the subcategory. Further studies should be done on the remaining plays from this genre to broaden their presence in academic studies, because this genre has not yet been thoroughly explored.

However, in recent years, the genre has received some attention that is reflected in scholarship on the German-language context of the slave plays. There have been two scholars who have explored this dramatic genre by discussing the entirety of these plays, Uta

Sadji and Barbara Riesche. In the 1992 work *Der Mohr auf der deutschen Bühne des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Sadji discusses the term *Mohr* and mentions that this terminology addresses a spectrum of people of darker complexions during the eighteenth century: Black Africans (including Northern Africans), Persian people, Turkish people and people from India (1). She explains that Black Africans, in particular, have been explored within the contexts of fiction and philosophical and scientific literature, while actual characters on stage have not been investigated. Sadji examines plays between 1776 and 1809 and consulted theater studies journals that reveal how these plays were received in a German-speaking context (1-2). She identifies these plays as largely unknown and reveals that they were not considered relevant in the contemporary context of their time. They were often performed just once and sometimes not even written out at all (Sadji 2). In order to examine parallels, Sadji discusses the depiction of Black African stage play characters in the context of literature produced as a larger part of the discourse on Africa. She coins the term *Mohrenstück*e in naming this genre (Sadji 3-4).

Renaming the genre Sklavenstücke (slave plays), Riesche thoroughly examines these texts in her 2010 work titled *Schöne Mohrinnen, edle Sklaven, schwarze Rächer: Schwarzendarstellung und Sklavereithematik im deutschen Unterhaltungstheater (1770-1814).*[2] She discusses and analyzes these plays within the context of theater studies and identifies five different subgenres of slave plays: returnee plays, female Moor plays, plantation plays, revolution plays, and Africa-based plays. These subgenres are each distinguished by distinct features regarding their plot and character development. Riesche's categorization gives insight into dramatic strategies, themes, and character developments in these plays, which conform to the dramatic

[2] This work was first published as a dissertation in 2007 and then as a book in 2010.

conventions of the time and bear resemblances to existing genres. These dramatic conventions speak to a reutilization or maintenance of specific framings that facilitate an insertion, depiction, and resulting discourse on topics dealing with slavery, the transatlantic slave trade, and abolition in the context of Germany in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Riesche 118-19).

While Riesche and Sadji discuss the overall genre of the plays, other scholars delve into individual plays as part of their analyses. Echoing these subjects, Christopher Michael Geissler's 2012 disssertation titled *'Die Schwarze Ware': Transatlantic Slavery and Abolitionism in German Writing, 1789-1871*, touches on some slave plays in its investigation of the depiction of transatlantic slavery in both German fiction and non-fiction in the time period between the French Revolution and the formation of the German nation-state. Geissler argues that these works were imperative to forming and articulating what he calls a cosmopolitan German identity that is reflective of the globalizing processes visible in the nineteenth century. German literature was also heavily influenced by the French-language context, according to cultural critic Sander L. Gilman in his 1982 work *On Blackness without Blacks: Essays on the Image of the Black in Germany* (36). In this sense, Gilman states that the imagery of the enslaved Black African stemmed specifically from the French genre *literature négrophile* and thus highlights the transcultural functionality of these plays in various language contexts. Gilman claims that these French works likely inspired German-language plays in the genre *Sklavenstücke* (36).

Susanne Zantop delves into the subgenre of revolution plays, specifically, by discussing German-language literary representations of slavery and revolution in the context of the Haitian Revolution in her 1997 work *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870*. Here, she touches on three slave plays alongside other works

that thematize slavery and revolution in German literature (Zantop 145). Zantop states that even those texts "whose obvious purpose is abolitionist and whose topic only marginally touches on the revolutionary events in the Caribbean renegotiate the relationships between race, class, and gender within a colonial context" (145). Zantop understands August von Kotzebue (1761–1819) as putting forward a contradictory viewpoint with the ending of his 1796 play *Die Negersklaven: Ein historisch-hramatisches Gemählde in drey Akten*: He is advocating for abolition while at the same time endorsing a white paternalist rule over Black Africans. This indicates the sometimes-ambivalent nature of abolitionism (Zantop 153).

Wendy Sutherland investigates another type of text, the eighteenth-century bourgeois drama, by highlighting its didactic function regarding bourgeois morals and opposing aristocratic evils (xii). Sutherland argues that aristocratic vices are portrayed as "raced" and linked to Blackness because both are considered to reside outside of the bourgeois and white spectrum (xii). Thus, the bourgeois family context is understood to operate in a "raced" white space that demonstrates morals and virtues, while any depiction of slavery and colonialism is inherently tied to the portrayal of Black African characters (xiii). In this understanding, Blackness is constructed by whiteness. Sutherland discusses this framing based on three slave plays in her 2016 book titled *Staging Blackness and Performing Whiteness in Eighteenth-Century German Drama*. Similarly, in her 2004 book chapter titled "Black Skin, White Skin and the Aesthetics of the Female Body in: Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Ziegler's Die Mohrinn," Sutherland calls out the bourgeois context of the play as normatively white and virtuous, which is then contrasted by the portrayal of Ziegler's African character Toni. Sutherland understands Toni's presence to be conceived of as disrupting the bourgeois framing of whiteness and eliciting fears and terrors of miscegenation.

Returning to Kotzebue, whose play (*Die Negersklaven*) has received the most attention in scholarship, Chunjie Zhang discusses his popularity as well as the proliferation of his works within the context of transculturalism. Zhang identifies Kotzebue's upbringing, specifically his interest in *Robinsonaden*, to be the reason for his depiction of foreign characters in many of his works (88). Zhang also describes how Kotzebue became aware of the situation of the Estonian peasants who served German aristocrats as serfs (90). Zhang understands Kotzebue's experience as having prompted him to write *Die Negersklaven* in order to demonstrate his aversion to serfdom in the form of slavery in her 2017 book titled *Transculturality and German Discourse in the Age of European Colonialism* (90). Drawing on this analysis in my 2019 article "German Abolitionism: Kotzebue and the Transnational Debate on Slavery," I also explore the formulation of Kotzebue's antislavery trajectory by illustrating intertextual instances involving his play *Die Negersklaven.* Based on Kotzebue's work, I investigate the transnational significance of German abolitionist discourse, a topic that I expand on within this study.

Most recently, Sarah Josephine Adams also discusses *Die Negersklaven* in her 2020 article "Democratizing Abolitionism: Anti-slavery Discourses and Sentiments in August von Kotzebue's Die Negersklaven (1796)." Adams draws on Kotzebue's sources of inspiration and focuses in particular on Guillaume-Thomas Raynal and Denis Diderot's *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des européens dans les deux Indes* (1770). Adams traces the use of Raynal and Diderot's work in Kotzebue's play and maps a dialectic of political and private concerns that resonate with and echo historical ideological debates around slavery and abolition. In an earlier article titled "Slavery, Sympathy, and White Self-Representation in Dutch Bourgeois Theater of 1800" (2018), Adams explores two Dutch nineteenth-century bourgeois dramas called *Stedman* (1805) and *Kraspoekol* (1800). She alludes

to the cultivation of ideals such as compassion, integrity, and benevolence in terms of bourgeois theater and examines suffering slave characters in relation to the white bourgeois heroes in the plays. In her discussion, Adams notes that *Stedman* is the Dutch translation of the German slave play *Die Sklavin in Surinam* by Franz Kratter. Similarly, Brycchan Carey discusses a translation of a slave play in his 2013 chapter "To Force a Tear: British Abolitionism and the Eighteenth-century London Stage." Carey explores sentimental representations of enslaved Black Africans and slavery overall in London theater during the eighteenth century. He examines these representations based on a number of plays and performs a close reading of the anonymous English translations of Kotzebue's play *Die Negersklaven* and Thomas Bellamy's *The Benevolent Planters* (1789). Carey shows how these eighteenth-century playwrights set out to manipulate their audiences' and readers' emotions for political purposes.

Moreover, Sigrid G. Köhler has contributed largely to the scholarship in this field by publishing numerous articles on the genre of slave plays. She has written about the debates on slavery and abolition in German-language print media around the 1800s that reflect the graphic portrayal of the horrors of slavery in stage plays in her 2019 article "Drastische Bilder: Journalnachrichten auf der Bühne Versklavung und Abolition als Gegenstände moderner Geschichtsreflexion in deutschsprachigen Journalen und Theaterstücken um 1800." Furthermore, she has published on Kotzebue's play addressing the intent of an authentic portrayal of political debates on slavery as well as slavery and the trade in slaves by way of Denis Diderot's (1713–1784) notion of the dramatic tableau in her 2018 chapter titled "Ein 'Historisches Gemälde' Gegen Sklaverei. Kotzebues Dramenästhetische Bildpolitik und die Abolition im ausgehenden 18. Jahrhundert." In a 2013 article called "Beautiful Black Soul? The Racial Matrix of White Aesthetics (Reading Kotzebue against

Kleist)," Köhler discusses and compares two German works that emerged within the discourse of abolition. She explores the portrayal of the racial constellation and framing of the characters and settings in Kotzebue's play to those in Heinrich von Kleist's novella "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" in the context of an aesthetic transgression of the racial matrix. And in a 2017 book chapter called "Menschenrecht fühlen, Gräuel der Versklavung zeigen—Zur transnationalen Abolitionsdebatte im deutschsprachigen populären Theater um 1800," Köhler discusses the portrayal of brutality on stage and ties this to the understanding of emotions being elicited through stage plays. She categorizes this as political theater and argues that these atrocities need to be shown because simply articulating them does not elicit the same effect.

In 2019, André Georgi published a reprinted edition of Kotzebue's play in German. It is, to the best of my knowledge, the first transcribed version since the original publication in 1796. This edition of Kotzebue's play comes with an afterword in which Köhler contextualizes Kotzebue's abolitionist play within the discourse of the French Enlightenment thinker Louis-Sébastien Mercier (1740–1814), who published a document on theater in 1773. In his *Du théâtre ou Nouvel essai sur l'art dramatique*, Mercier contends that it is a writer's duty to portray social grievances and injustices and condemn them through presenting them theatrically (87). Köhler mentions the transnational nature of debates about slavery and abolition during the time period, which allowed Kotzebue and other writers to draw on a large corpus of material around issues of abolition in a variety of languages (88). While alluding to other German-language authors of slave plays, Köhler highlights the importance of a 1788 travelogue written by Alexander Falconbridge, which was accessible to German-language readers and writers through publishing in German journals, and identifies it as an example of the multi-European-language corpus of discursive material that was

translated into German (92-93). She claims that Kotzebue's play incorporated the present debates by way of drawing on contemporary sources and aesthetically portraying them in unison in order to win over his audience to the cause of abolition.

The detailed depiction of the condition of slavery and historical contexts in these plays is indeed indicative of the transcultural and transnational nature of abolitionist discourse and cultural productions. Honeck et al. verify the dynamism of abolitionist discourse by pointing out a constant "movement, circulation, and interpretation of individuals, ideas and practices from diverse societies that transcend seemingly well-defined national boundaries" (6). In this sense, the transatlantic slave trade often also served a specific purpose in German-language cultural productions. The historian Karin Schüller has, among other scholars,[3] identified debates on slavery in the German realm that have been utilized to reflect specific German social and political conditions ("Deutsche Abolitionisten" 612). For example, the conditions of feudalistic serfdom were often compared to those of the institution of slavery. Thus, texts that engaged issues of the abolition of New World slavery were often understood to be also speaking to the conditions that serfs faced in parts of the German territory. Schüller notes that slavery served as a metaphor for serfdom in the German principalities (612).

Similarly, there have been further discussions of abolition and slavery in German-speaking contexts in the later part of the nineteenth century,[4] which indicates a recurring

[3] Two notable examples are: "Liberalismus, Konservativismus Und Das Problem Der Negersklaverei. Ein Beitrag Zur Geschichte Des Politischen Denkens in Deutschland in Der Ersten Hälfte Des 19.Jahrhunderts" by Rainer Koch (1976) and *"There Are No Slaves in France": The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Regime* by Sue Peabody (1996).

[4] Addressing abolitionist output in German territories after 1815, Paul illustrates the transnational nature of abolitionist literature by investigating the presence of Black literature in nineteenth-century Germany. Paul examines four German-language editions of slave narratives and demonstrates the reception of and discourse on slave narratives in German-language texts. Paul's findings demonstrate that slave narratives present efforts

engagement. Another, likely coincidental, type of dialogue on slavery and the transatlantic slave trade by extension is discussed by the historian Horst Dippel. In his work titled *Germany and the American Revolution, 1770–1800: A Sociohistorical Investigation of Late Eighteenth-Century Thinking* (1977), he explores the impact of the American Revolution in continental Europe and specifically examines the reception of discourses pertaining to America and the Thirteen British Colonies in eighteenth-century Germany. Dippel identifies a German interest in North American colonial dealings with Britain that appeared suddenly when the conflict between the two ensued. Both sides recruited troops in different parts of the German territories, which resulted in a direct German involvement in this larger conflict (8). While Dippel does not address slavery and the transatlantic slave trade per se, one can assume that the populations in the German principalities were aware of the factors that led to the conflict between Britain and the Thirteen British Colonies, as well as the ensuing abolitionist efforts by the British and the Americans. In this, Schüller discusses engagements with America as having provided an entry point into dealing with issues of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade: "Das Thema des Sklavenhandels und der Sklaverei stand in engstem Zusammenhang was mit dem Thema Amerika" (612).

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to terminate slavery and, by extension, the transatlantic slave trade. There also exists a tension regarding this subject matter. On the one hand, there is interest in the African diaspora and its voices, while at the same time, there are competing narratives at work that show a variety of goals and agendas. Paul demonstrates how slave narratives were removed from their politicized context through translation to market them in German territories. This is problematic, because the actual meaning conveyed by the slave narratives was lost due to an overall lack of public knowledge on the subject matter of slavery and abolition in the German context. Additionally, Ottilie Assing (1819–1884) worked as a foreign correspondent in the United States writing for the journal *Morgenblatt für gebildetete Leser* and the newspaper *Allgemeine Zeitung*. Assing's articles were particularly devoted to the abolitionist cause in the United States (Keil 148). She moved to the the United States in 1852 and became more aware of the structural foundations of the American system, which drew her to take up the antislavery cause (Keil 150-51). She became acquainted with leading members of the abolitionist movement, which resulted in a close friendship with Frederick Douglass (Keil 149). Her writings in the German journal and newspaper was heavily informed by her newly shaped abolitionist views. In this sense, her work displayed an urgency for abolition on various governmental levels, such as through national, state, and city politics, which signified the irreconcilability of slavery and freedom (Keil 151).

Since the 1980s, numerous studies have critically explored colonialism and race in German cultural studies.[5] However, there has been little engagement with abolitionism in the context of the critique of the Enlightenment in German literary studies. For that reason, I will return to a debate that emerged in the mid-twentieth century and focused on the contradictions inherent to the Enlightenment. This debate, which peaked in the 1990s, inspired the discourse that is the subject of this study, abolitionism, and slave plays. The paradoxical natures of the Enlightenment and abolitionism often resulted in new forms of the very conditions they were trying to overcome.

Abolitionism and the Dialectics of Enlightenment

Slavery is contradictory to the notion of Enlightenment and the idea of modernity because both concepts stand for progress, unity, reason, equality, and justice, applicable to all of humanity. This contradiction is also exemplified in the movement that advocated for abolitionism: Even though abolitionist efforts sought to improve the lives of enslaved Black Africans, their purpose was more often driven by the needs and priorities of white, Western individuals, which suggests an understanding of humanity that doesn't equally include all human beings. There have been works critical of the Enlightenment by scholars in German

[5] Among these are: *Die Dritte Welt in der westdeutschen Literatur der sechziger Jahre* by Sareika Rüdiger (1980), *Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien* by Horst Gründer (1984*), Literatur und Entwicklung: Studien zu einer Literatur der Ungleichzeitigkeit* by Leo Kreutzer (1989), *Schwarz-weiße Verständigung: interkulturelle Kommunikationsprozesse in europäisch-deutschsprachigen und englisch- und französischsprachigen afrikanischen Romanen: (1970-1990)* by Sonja Lehner (1994), *Poetiken der Interkulturalität: Haiti bei Kleist, Seghers, Müller, Buch und Fichte* by Herbert Uerlings (1997), *"Über alles in der Welt": Deutscher Imperialismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* by Dirk van Laak (2005), *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte* by Sebatian Conrad (2008), *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* by Jürgen Osterhammel (2009), *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte* by Winfried Speitkamp (2014), *German Colonialism Revisited: African, Asian, and Oceanic Experiences* edited by Patrice Nganang, Klaus Mühlhahn, and Nina Berman (2014), and "Post-imperialism, postcolonialism and beyond: Towards a periodization of cultural discourse about colonial legacies" by Dirk Göttsche (2017).

studies that analyzed contributions by Enlightenment thinkers who perpetuated hierarchical racialization, and categorized African peoples degradingly and in ultimately racist ways. These critical studies analyzed, for example, treatises by Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)[6] and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831),[7] to name a few. But these discussions have not been presented within an abolitionist framework.

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[6] Examples of a variety of approaches include: *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* by V. Y. Mudimbe (1988), *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader* edited by Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (1997), "Sublime Waste: Kant on the Destiny of the 'Races'" by Mark Larrimore (1999), *Race* edited by Robert Bernasconi (2001), "Answering the Question, 'What Remains of Enlightenment'?" by Emmanuel C. Eze (2002), "Kant as an Unfamiliar Source of Racism" by Robert Bernasconi (2002), *Race and Racism in Continental Philosophy* by Robert Bernasconi and Sybol Cook Anderson (2003), "Will the Real Kant Please Stand Up: The Challenge of Enlightenment Racism to the Study of the History of Philosophy" by Robert Bernasconi (2003), "Kant's Second Thoughts on Race" by Pauline Kleingeld (2007), *The German Invention of Race* edited by Sara Eigen and Mark Joseph Larrimore (2007), "Antinomies of Race: Diversity and Destiny in Kant" by Mark Larrimore (2008), "Race, Difference, and Anthropology in Kant's Cosmopolitanism" by Todd Hedrick (2008), *Reading Kant's Geography* by Stuart Elden and Eduardo Mendieta (2011), *Kant's Organicism: Epigenesis and the Development of Critical Philosophy* by Jennifer Mensch (2013), *Kant and Colonialism: Historical and Critical Perspectives* edited by Katrin Flikschuh and Lea Ypi (2014), "Kant and Race, Redux" by Charles W. Mills (2014), *Before Boas: The Genesis of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment* by Han F. Vermeulen (2015), "Kant's Racism" by Lucy Allais (2016), "Caught Between Character and Race: 'Temperament' in Kant's Lectures on Anthropology" by Jennifer Mensch (2017), "What's Wrong with Inevitable Progress? Notes on Kant's Anthropology Today" by Jennifer Mensch (2017), and "Kant and the Skull Collectors: German Anthropology from Blumenbach to Kant" by Jennifer Mensch (2018).

[7] Examples of a variety of approaches include: *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* by V. Y. Mudimbe (1988), "Racism and Rationality in Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit" by Darrel Moellendorf (1992), "Hegel and Africa: An Evaluation of the Treatment of Africa in The Philosophy of History" by Ronald Kuykendall (1993), *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader* edited by Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (1997), "Hegel and Haiti" by Susan Buck-Morss (2000), *The Idea of Race* edited by Robert Bernasconi and Tommy Lee Lott (2000), "With What Must the Philosophy of World History Begin? On the Racial Basis of Hegel's Eurocentrism" by Robert Bernasconi (2000), *On the Postcolony* by Achille Mbembe (2001), "W.E.B. Du Bois, Hegel, and the Staging of Alterity" by Winfried Siemerling (2001), "Dialectical Impasses: Turning the Table on Hegel and the Black" by Nigel Gibson (2002), "Others-from-within from without: Afro-German Subject Formation and the Challenge of a Counter-Discourse" by Michelle M. Wright (2003), *Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the African Diaspora* by Michelle M. Wright (2004), "The Falsity of Hegel's Theses on Africa" by Babacar Camara (2005), "The Return of Africa: Hegel and the Question of the Racial Identity of the Egyptians" by Robert Bernasconi (2007), *Hegel and Haiti* by Susan Buck-Morss (2009), "Hegel's New World: History, Freedom, and Race" by Sûrya Parekh (2009), "Hegel, Race, Genocide" by Michael H. Hoffheimer (2010), "Hegel and Fanon on the Question of Mutual Recognition: A Comparative Analysis" by Charles Villet (2011), *Hegel and the Third World: The Making of Eurocentrism in World History* by Teshale Tibebu (2011), *Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution* by Rebecca Comay (2011), *Reason in History: Hegel and Social Changes in Africa* by Babacar Camara (2011), "Modes of Naturalization: Race, Sex and Biology in Kant, Schelling and Hegel" by Susanne Lettow (2013), "Race in Hegel: Text and Context" by Allegra de Laurentiis (2014), "Hegel and the Revolutions Revisited" by Terence Renaud (2016), *Hegel, History, and Race* by Rocio Zambrana (2017), "Re-Articulating Genealogy: Hegel on Kinship, Race and Reproduction" by Susanne Lettow (2019), and "Hegel and Colonialism" by Alison Stone (2020).

The criticisms of the Enlightenment that are relevant to my discussion are grounded in the critique of the institutionalization of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade during the Age of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment is characterized as a philosophical and intellectual movement centered on the concept of Reason. Reason is reinforced through rationality and scientific and technological progress. Robert C. Holub and W. Daniel Wilson, in their preface to the 1993 anthology *Impure Reason: Dialectic of Enlightenment in Germany,* mention the conceptual notion of Enlightenment as having been heavily debated and critiqued at a symposium held in 1991. Holub and Wilson appropriately assess the gravity of these discussions with the notion of Enlightenment at stake. They write that

> it is the enlightenment discourse that gave birth to modern concepts of democratic government, human rights, and concepts like emancipation, equality, and (self-) critique. The American Constitution and particularly its Bill of Rights, for example, are unthinkable except as products of the historical Enlightenment. The debates also make clear, however, that the concept of enlightenment can be abused and misrepresented, and that liberal democracies are easily diverted from their enlightenment origins. (Holub and Wilson 7)

I add to the larger understanding of Enlightenment thought by putting it into perspective in terms of slavery and abolition and questioning the enlightened narrative of progress and rationalized Reason within the context of German studies. In this regard, it is useful to revisit the evaluation of the Enlightenment presented by Horkheimer and Adorno in 1944. Horkheimer and Adorno critique the concept of Reason and rationality as not internalized and stable among all members of society, especially in the context of newly introduced technologies that supposedly ensure the narrative of progress through scientific and technologic invention. Horkheimer and Adorno argue that rationalized Reason can be used in pernicious ways, which emerged in the form of racism, specifically anti-Semitism, in Nazi Germany.

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944), Horkheimer and Adorno detect the risk of "tireless self-destruction" as inherent in the conceptualization of Enlightenment (xiiii). They articulate the danger of intensely taking up enlightened scientific methods that are then excessively utilized without critical reflection. Horkheimer and Adorno argue that the aforementioned context is symptomatic of human servitude by way of an unquestionable dependency on a particular method that dominates any further human social and philosophical interactions: "If public life has reached a state in which thought is being turned inescapably into a commodity and language into celebration of the commodity, the attempt to trace the sources of this degradation must refuse obedience to the current linguistic and intellectual demands before it is rendered entirely futile by the consequence of those demands for the world history" (xiiii-xv). Thus, an over-emphasis and fixation on one particular method or approach is deemed to have transformed from an initial "positive cause . . . [to] something negative and destructive" (Horkheimer and Adorno xv).

Horkheimer and Adorno's point of departure is the domination of the conceptual notion of Enlightenment over nature (Holub and Wilson 7). Not critically and naturally engaging bears the risk of falling prey to dominant structures that no longer require human rational self-reflection and grounding in Enlightenment reason to properly assess and critique one's constant theoretical and methodological applications. This is where Horkheimer and Adorno establish a close relationship between Enlightenment and controlling domination. They claim that the emancipatory understanding of Enlightenment ultimately endorses oppressive behaviors (Holub and Wilson 7). In this sense, HongLim Ryu describes Horkheimer and Adorno as investigating the intellectual notion of rationality with the concept of Enlightenment in his chapter "A Reading of the Dialectic of Enlightenment: The Fate of Reason in the Contemporary World" (1999):

> In the analysis and interpretation of the relationship between human beings and nature, 'enlightenment' implies a mode of thought which emancipates human beings from the despotism of myth and helps them to control and dominate nature, and the 'dialectic of enlightenment' refers to the ways in which enlightened, rational thought contains traces of myth and irrationality, which in turn contain a rational core. (586)

In further critiquing rationalist patterns of control and domination, Horkheimer and Adorno address the likelihood of people—and thus the governmental structures they uphold—blindly reverting to barbaric and irrational ways even while being in possession of some internalized enlightened principles of rationalized reason (163). They provide explicit examples of entire populations and societies falling victim to the proliferation of faulty and coerced notions of rationalized reason. Horkheimer and Adorno typify the late stages of capitalism as comprising conditions conducive to being politically misled by proponents of totalitarianism. They describe a scenario of the "half-educated condition . . . [having become] the objective spirit" (Horkheimer and Adorno 163). This Hegelian condition implies that the human spirit has not yet completed its philosophical succession, which, however, does not interfere with an understanding of one's rational self within the context of fellow spirits. This has an impact on the ways of social interactions and cultural institutions (Redding 3.2.2).

The precondition for a disastrous outcome, warned of by Horkheimer and Adorno, is the underlying existence of a totalitarian government. This government could easily reestablish the political power of "provincial charlatans of politics, and with them the system of delusion, as the *ultima ratio*, imposing it on the majority" without any resistance from the society, in fact unbeknownst to the population due to citizens having been pacified by the culture industry (Horkheimer and Adorno 163). Enlightenment rationality expresses itself in brutal fascist structures, "the 'repressive tolerance' of 'liberal' societies dominated by a

mindless culture industry" (Holub and Wilson 8). Horkheimer and Adorno allude to the dangers of the culture industry, addressing its novelty during the twentieth century:

> What is new, however, is that the irreconcilable elements of culture, art, and amusement have been subjected equally to the concept of purpose and thus brought under a single false denominator: the totality of the culture industry. Its element is repetition. The fact that its characteristic innovations are in all cases mere improvements to mass production is not extraneous to the system. With good reason the interest of countless consumers is focused on the technology, not on the rigidly repeated, threadbare and half-abandoned content. The social power revered by the spectators manifests itself more effectively in the technically enforced ubiquity of stereotypes than in the stale ideologies which the ephemeral contents have to endorse. . . . [The culture industry's] control of consumers is mediated by entertainment. (108)

Horkheimer and Adorno define the potential outcome of discrimination and ostracism of a particular group of people, which citizens have been manipulated to believe in by the ever-present exposure of the culture industry while under totalitarian rule: "Only those suffering from persecution mania can tolerate the persecution which domination inevitably becomes, provided they are allowed to persecute others" (164). Horkheimer and Adorno apply this theoretical conceptualization to anti-Semitic discourses and practices by alluding to the philosophical prehistory of anti-Semitism (Ryu 592). They aim to demonstrate the view that morality, art, and modern science can easily be transformed into instrumentalized rationality:

> The increase in economic productivity which creates the conditions for a more just world also affords the technical apparatus and the social groups controlling it a disproportionate Advantage over the rest of the population. The individual is entirely nullified in the face of the economic powers. These powers are taking society's domination over nature to unimagined heights. While individuals as such are vanishing before the apparatus they serve, they are provided for by that apparatus and better than ever before. In the unjust state of society the powerlessness and pliability of the masses increase with the quantity of goods allocated to them. The materially considerable and socially paltry rise in the standard of living of the lower classes is reflected in the hypocritical propagation of intellect. Intellect's true concern is a negation of reification. It must perish when it is solidified into a cultural asset and handed out for consumption purposes. The flood of precise information and

> brand-new amusements [from the culture industry] make people smarter and more stupid at once. (Horkheimer and Adorno xvii)

Horkheimer and Adorno carefully address enlightened human reason and rationality as being shapeable by practices and discourses that comprise the societal, global, political, and legislative orders of things (Ryu 594). Thus, there are two options here: First, offering criticism based on a rationalist conception of idea, or second, refuting the purpose of rationality by centering one's own usefulness, as well as being blindly coerced into offering false critiques. Ryu articulates the dangers associated with the latter scenario. He notes that reason no longer operates according to rationality, but rather, according to expediency, which implies a pragmatist aspect to reason that can be adapted and altered as a means to a specific end (Ryu 595). The centrality of pragmatism in universalist reason is especially pronounced when it comes to self-preservation, during which the process of reflectively engaging with rational thought is no longer of significance. This very circumstance negates the conventional universality of reason that is grounded in the division of thought from the object. Here, Ryu establishes "the collapses of reason and the collapse of individuality" as identical circumstances (595).

While Horkheimer and Adorno critique the contradictory nature of the Enlightenment in the context of European fascism, cultural critic Birgit Tautz addresses the beginnings of critiques articulated against the Enlightenment by early critics by quoting Rey Chow, stating that "'the critique of the West ha[d] become not only possible, but mandatory'" (Chow qtd in Tautz 1).[8] Among those figures is the cultural critic Valentin-Yves

[8] Tautz continues by stating that "books exposing the colonial and imperial entanglements of German literature and culture had just been published: John Noyes's *Colonial Space*, Susanne Zantop's *Colonial Fantasies*, and Russell Berman's *Enlightenment or Empire* are but a few examples. The field of German, or Germanistik, was in the process of reorganizing itself and making other, hitherto unheard voices heard; it has evolved—predominantly in the United States—as German Studies" (Tautz 1).

Mudimbe. In his 1988 work titled *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge*, Mudimbe states that the African context was mainly looked at from the perspective of categorizations and conceptualizations that are based on a Western epistemological order (x). He claims that Western epistemology as an organizing factor allows neither discussions of African originality nor independent discussions about African contributions in their own right. Thus, he poses the larger question of whether African traditional systems can be conceptualized or thought of outside of a Western framework of rationality.

In this context of debating African philosophy, Mudimbe sets out to critically synthesize "complex questions about knowledge and power in and on Africa" (xi). In this sense, Mudimbe demonstrates the limits of Western philosophy and decides to not include some of the most-known Western philosophers, such as Descartes, Diderot, Aristotle, and Rousseau, because he does not deem these perspectives useful in his endeavors (xii). Any inclusion of these Western giants of philosophy would "generally express a normative *doxa* and its submission to an *episteme* . . . [which would] reveal the development of anthropological and philosophical theories" (Mudimbe xii). For this reason, Mudimbe engages discourses on African communities, societies, cultures, and peoples as "signs of something else" in an attempt to "interrogate their modalities, significance, or strategies as a means of understanding the type of knowledge which is being proposed" (ix). Drawing on the ancient Greek word gnosis (to know), which highlights the rigid structures of Western epistemology, Mudimbe offers what he calls an archaeology of African gnosis (ix-x). He explores the system or network of knowledge that addresses philosophical questions "first, concerning the form, the content, and the style of 'Africanizing' knowledge; second, concerning the status of traditional systems of thought and their possible relations to the

normative genre of knowledge" (Mudimbe x). The centrality in Mudimbe's study lies in renouncing Western philosophical patterns of rationality in order to make space for a self-determined "process of transformation of types of knowledge" (x).

Continuing with this examination of the Enlightenment, the French philosopher Louis Sala-Molins attackingly portrays a detected hypocrisy in his investigation of the French Enlightenment in *Dark Side of the Light: Slavery and the French Enlightenment* (2006). Sala-Molins detects fundamental discrepancies visible in the modern context of Enlightenment. He writes of the contrast between expectations and the actual events, as demonstrated by the white European struggle for equal rights while the transatlantic slave trade was in full force. Sala-Molins notes how the violent capture and enslavement of African peoples and concepts of paternalism visibly implemented through colonialism represent how a clear divide between laws applicable to Europeans and all "Others" becomes visible, exemplified by the Code Noir (1789).

Sala-Molins discusses French Enlightenment intellectuals as having not "considered the black population, freed or enslaved, of the Caribbean and the other colonies" in a French context (12). Echoing Horkheimer and Adorno, Sala-Molins describes the contradictory nature of the ideals of the Enlightenment, which "dabbles in the non-negotiable, cheapens what it adores, displays for auction on the steps of the temple that against which its anathema should be directed, upholds slavery even as it condemns it . . . extols submissiveness and yet glorifies revolt, crushes liberty at the same time it celebrates it" (Sala-Molins 30). Contrasting the liberatory essence of the Enlightenment and French Revolution with a failure to initiate the emancipation of enslaved Africans in the Caribbean, Sala-Molins critiques the failure to extend Enlightenment core values to apply to *all* human beings at all times (Ogle 282). He argues that this failure, among other things, in the

Enlightenment's linking of universal rights to being human was itself compromised by a flawed theory of man that was, in essence, ethnocentric. In this sense, an accomplished humanity was naturally considered to be white and European while all other peoples, especially African peoples, were at the bottom of the scale. Essentially, Sala-Molins argues that "the crucial test case for the Enlightenment is the slave trade and slavery" (8), and French philosophers and revolutionaries failed this test. "By not calling for and taking moves to implement immediate general emancipation before 1794, they failed to live up to the universal pretensions of their principles of justice, reason, and equality" (Ogle 282).

Similar to Sala-Molins, the cultural critic Paul Gilroy identifies internal tensions that are indicative of a contradiction between an enlightened progressive narrative and the advent of the institution of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. He writes that these tensions are inherent in modernity and thus the Enlightenment. He points to a deep rupture that allowed the emergence of the triangular trade and the institution of slavery, which stand in stark contrast to Enlightenment principles. In *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993) Gilroy's point of departure is a critical reading of the institution of slavery, which he defines as a system of a political and cultural nature that was imposed on Black historiography and "intellectual history by [a particular] . . . economic and historical matrix" (15). This reading pertains to questioning the non-criticized and contradictory violent presence of slavery within the rationalist enlightened framework of Reason in modernity. In this, Gilroy deems an engagement with intellectual proponents of modernity to be essential due to their often-proclaimed personal investment in Enlightenment universalism (43). The notion of enlightened universality is grounded in the premise of the inclusion of all of humanity, which Gilroy negates through his discussion of race, racialization, and nationality having originated within ethnic absolutism, which assigns Black diasporic people the status

of non-human and/or non-citizen (6). In arguing that the institution of racialized slavery is an inherent part of Western civilization, Gilroy identifies the slave/master relationship as being central to Black diasporic critical debates on modernity. He claims that the fundamental nature of philosophical and literary modernity lies in a sense of purposeful perpetuation and participation in "racialist reason and white supremacist terror" (Gilroy x). Thus, the modern subject is inevitably determined by historical formations of individualization and embodiment that are manifested by binaries such as "black and white, male and female, lord and bondsman" (Gilroy 46). Gilroy proposes a thorough reevaluation of the linkage between slavery and modernity regarding the historical framework of the formation of the African diaspora. He further argues that most debates on modernity are academically constructed by scholars who are not willing to admit the shortcomings and pitfalls of modernity (Gilroy 46).

In this, Gilroy places his well-grounded critique in contrast to scholarship arguing otherwise. He discusses opposing views articulated by, for example, Marshall Berman and Jürgen Habermas (46). I will discuss Marshall Berman specifically here because his line of argument directly relates to the presentation and categorization of debates on slavery in terms of the Enlightenment project. Marshall Berman argues for an intimate harmony of the modern environment and subject, solidified by way of an influx of modernity philosophers. The list of intellectuals provided by M. Berman is indicative of the ethnocentric European centeredness of modernity. Gilroy writes that M. Berman's view of modernity disconnects from the past and thus negates the possibility of a modern ruptured self or composite entity. M. Berman does not engage the historical period of imperial conquest within his conception of modernity, which constitutes his denial of an identity formation inherent to the diasporic nature brought forth by Gilroy. Thus, M. Berman typifies and promotes the idea of an

inclusive equality of humanity in terms of enlightened benefits in the context of modernity: "Modern environments and experiences cut across *all* boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology: in this sense modernity can be said to unite all mankind" (M. Berman qtd. in Gilroy 46; emphasis added). M. Berman portrays modernity and its enlightened ideas as all-encompassing, uniformly accessible, and bestowed upon all human beings. M. Berman's exclusion of the advent of modernity — and its obvious ties to industrialization and modernization by way of the newly established capitalist, political, and cultural system of oppression and forced labor that facilitated the reorganization of the imperial economy — presents an incomplete theoretical assessment of modernity. The processes mentioned above shaped self-serving identities that enabled an imperial self-consciousness grounded in a superior sense of Western civilization.

As domineering structures of forced labor emerged alongside an enlightened notion of modernity, M. Berman's view is demonstrated to be void and baseless. This further highlights the validity of Gilroy's critique of M. Berman's labelling of the cultural forms of the Black Atlantic as working class (48). Gilroy writes that M. Berman's perspective raises "profound problems about . . . [the] presentation of the continuity of modern identity and the totalising wholeness with which he invests his conception of modern experience" (48). Berman assumes that a reading of plurality regarding modern experiences of Black people within the context of modernity could be understood to foreground and initiate clashes "between the regional values of a distinct sector or community and the supposed universalism of occidental rationality" (Gilroy 48). Slavery and its effects are to be read as closely linked to historical relationships of dependency and opposition. In this sense, African diasporic intellectual and cultural accomplishments need to be acknowledged as existing

within and not necessarily always outside and counter to the master narrative of Enlightenment tenets.

Gilroy illustrates the habitual tendency of counter-discourses in modernity (49). He states that the histories of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade are not discussed in a counter-discursive manner. These debates would allow critical engagements of the gaps between modern experiences and expectations. The lack of a counter-discourse in the enlightened context of modernity paradoxically portrays the transatlantic enterprise of slavery as not being linked to European imperialist power structures and systems. Instead, Gilroy establishes that the perception of slavery and its historical, social, and economic implications is deemed irrelevant and is assigned to the realm of the African diaspora for others to engage with: "In this setting, it is hardly surprising that if it is perceived to be relevant at all, the history of slavery is somehow assigned to blacks. It becomes our special property rather than a part of the ethical and intellectual heritage of the West as a whole" (Gilroy 49). I regard this move as casting blame on the West for the enslavement of Africans in the New World, which further solidifies the European ignorance, indifference, and inability to critically question and engage the dominant structural involvements that were beneficial to the growth and maintenance of European imperial power.

Gilroy concludes his examination by way of a hopeful reading of Hegel's master-slave dialectic. He deems this theoretical work to be indicatory of the need for future research on modernity within the context of the Enlightenment that is representative of overdue engagements with the formation of the Black Atlantic. Gilroy articulates the importance of an approach that sees the intimate association of modernity and slavery as a fundamental conceptual issue. This is significant because it can be used to offer a mesmeric idea of history as progress and because it provides an opportunity to reperiodicize and

reaccentuate the account of the dialectic of the Enlightenment, which has not always been concerned with looking at modernity through the lenses of colonialism or scientific racism. Second, a return to Hegel's account of the conflict and the forms of dependency produced in the relationship between masters and slaves foregrounds the issues of brutality and terror that were also too frequently ignored when Gilroy's work was first published. Taken together, these problems offer an opportunity to transcend the unproductive debate about Eurocentric rationalism, which banishes the slave experience from its accounts of modernity while arguing that the crisis of modernity can be resolved from within (Gilroy 53-54). Gilroy demands a thorough and critical engagement with slavery and its contradictory nature within the larger discourse of modernity and the operational principles of the rationalist Reason of the Enlightenment. He calls for a critical discourse to be conducted by Euro-American Enlightenment scholars, in particular, who he argues must grapple with the failure of the Enlightenment to live up to its progressive ideals.

While Gilroy's critique of modernity is grounded in the consideration of the institution of slavery and the trade in slaves, Russell A. Berman's argument perpetuates an understanding of Reason and the Enlightenment that relies on the violation and brutalization of non-Western people, which he accepts because it leads to an overall positive outcome. In fact, in my view, R. Berman reinforces the internal tensions of the concept of the Enlightenment. R. Berman's interpretation is indicative of discourses by white Euro-American intellectuals who do not want to be implicated in terms of the Western imperial structures that oppressed and subjugated non-Western colonial subjects. In particular, the Enlightenment within modernity is held in high esteem by German studies intellectuals because it is understood to present various forms of emancipation in German principalities and continental Europe overall. A critique of the concepts of Reason and rationality

punctures a hole in the stable and supposedly all-inclusive, all-encompassing nature of these terms.

In an attempt to contest the critique of travel accounts being colonialist in nature, R. Berman argues for a reconsideration of the relationship between colonialism and the Enlightenment. R. Berman presumes colonial travel to be a precondition for enlightened thought among Western imperialist travelers in *Enlightenment or Empire: Colonial Discourse in German Culture* (1998). He points to an engagement with new territories that can be read as "site[s] of another order of meaning, a cultural alterity, the very difference of which might even be the source, or the incentive, of Enlightenment for the traveler" (4). R. Berman disregards the colonial overriding structures of power and violence; instead, he identifies the potential for what he terms new experiences (5). R. Berman's erasure of the material realities and dangers of colonial confrontation seems both historically inaccurate and inconsiderate of the insurmountable victims of colonial violence. Furthermore, he proposes a one-sided colonial outcome beneficial only to the colonizer, noting that the confrontation with colonial alterity could lead to an enlightened perspective. R. Berman ignores the brutality inherent to colonial ventures, which implies an indifference to the physical violence and mental and psychological oppression that are detrimental to the sense of self of the colonized and that function as a tool in service of emergent enlightened sentiments among Western and imperial conquerors.

Going back to the beginnings of this debate, Gilroy and Sala-Molins address the imperial violence inflicted on Black and brown people through expeditions to the New World, the institution of slavery, and the transatlantic slave trade. Horkheimer and Adorno, Sala-Molins, and Gilroy have demonstrated the failure of Enlightenment Reason and rationality. Horkheimer and Adorno thematize an Enlightenment failure by way of Nazi

Germany and the Shoah. The criticism voiced by these intellectuals can be seen as portraying the Enlightenment and its principles as inherently tied to inequality and violence. Following this, the questioning and condemnation of violent acts committed and validated by the existing imperial structures surfaced by way of abolitionism.

On that note, it is important to highlight the beginning of scholarly interventions that take different approaches to the Enlightenment period.[9] In the 2000 article "Hegel and Haiti," Susan Buck-Morss argues that Hegel's knowledge of the slave revolt in Haiti inspired his idea of the master-slave dialectic in *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. Buck-Morss draws on evidence from the periodical *Minerva: Ein Journal historischen und politischen Inhalts,* which was

[9] Notable examples of a variety of approaches include: *On Blackness Without Blacks: Essays on the Image of the Black in Germany* by Sander L. Gilman (1982), *Colonial Space: Spatiality in the Discourse of German South West Africa 1884-1915* by John K. Noyes (1992), *Dunkle Reflexe; Schwarzafrikaner und Afro-Amerikaner in der deutschen Erzählkunst des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts. Fünf exemplarische Texte* edited by Amadou Sadji and Reinhold Grimm (1992), *Schwarze Teufel, Edle Mohren* by Peter Martin (1993), *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* by Susanne Zantop (1997), *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader* edited by Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (1997), "The Color of Reason: The Idea of 'Race' in Kant's Anthropology" by Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (1997), *Afrika im Schatten der Aufklärung: das Afrikabild bei Immanuel Kant und Johann Gottfried Herder* by Wolbert Schmidt (1999), "W.E.B. Du Bois, Hegel, and the Staging of Alterity" by Winfried Siemerling (2001), "Answering the Question, 'What Remains of Enlightenment?'" by Emmanuel C. Eze (2002), *Enlightenment Against Empire* by Sankar Muthu (2003), "Deutsche Abolitionisten in Göttingen und Halle. Die Ersten Darstellungen des Sklavenhandels und der Antisklavereibewegung in der Deutschen Historiographie des ausgehenden 18. und beginnenden 19. Jahrhunderts" by Karin Schüller (2004), *Das Europa der Aufklärung und die außereuropäische koloniale Welt* edited by Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (2006), "Deutschland, Der Atlantische Sklavenhandel Und Die Plantagenwirtschaft Der Neuen Welt" by Kalus Weber (2009), *Der Sklavenaufstand Von Haiti: Ethnische Differenz und Humanitatsideale in der Literatur des 19. Jahrhunderts (Literatur-Kultur-Geschlecht)* by Marie Biloa Onana (2010), *Hegel and the Third World: The Making of Eurocentrism in World History* by Teshale Tibebu (2011), *(Re-)Writing the Radical: Enlightenment, Revolution and Cultural Transfer in 1790s Germany, Britain and France* by Maike Oergel (2012), *Sophie Discovers Amerika: German-Speaking Women Write the New World* edited by Robert B. McFarland and Michelle Stott James (2014), "Abolitionists in the German Hinterland? Therese Huber and the Spread of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in the German Territories in the Early Nineteenth Century" by Sarah Lentz (2016), *Germany and the Black Diaspora: Points of Contact, 1250-1914* edited by Mischa Honeck et al. (2016), "'On the Brain of the Negro': Race, Abolitionism, and Friedrich Tiedemann's Scientific Discourse on the African Diaspora" by Jeanette Eileen Jones (2016), *Slavery Hinterland: Transatlantic Slavery and Continental Europe, 1680-1850* by Felix Brahm and Eve Rosenhaft (2016) and "German Entanglements in Transatlantic Slavery: An Introduction" by Heike Raphael-Hernandez and Pia Wiegmink (2017).

first published in 1792. In her article, Buck-Morss discusses the contradiction of freedom being considered the highest attainable and universal political value during the late eighteenth century, while the machinery of slavery (particularly the capitalist and systematic enslavement of Black African peoples) was established contemporaneously at an unimaginable magnitude. The enslavement of Black African peoples was "increasing quantitatively and intensifying qualitatively to the point that by the mid-eighteenth century it came to underwrite the entire economic system of the West, paradoxically facilitating the global spread of the very Enlightenment ideals that were in such fundamental contradiction to it" (Buck-Morss 821). Buck-Morss addresses the dangers of treating historical events in disciplinary isolation because counterarguments and evidence may then be disregarded as insignificant: "The greater the specialization of knowledge, the more advanced the level of research, the longer and more venerable the scholarly tradition, the easier it is to ignore discordant facts" (822). She mentions disciplines such as African American studies and diaspora studies as being in particular danger of being disregarded as irrelevant and thus isolated. In this way, Buck-Morss understands her research connecting Hegel and Haiti to be incompatible with the rigid disciplinary structures of the university (822).

Accordingly, in his 2015 work *Herder: Aesthetics against Imperialism*, John K. Noyes sets out to explore Gottfried Johann Herder's (1744-1803) stance on imperialism. Here, Noyes maps "the threads that connect his [Herder's] Kant studies to his [Herder's] innovative philosophy of language and history, and to his condemnation of imperialism as it appeared to a mid-eighteenth-century German intellectual" (*Aesthetics against Imperialism* 3). Noyes highlights and centers Herder's epistemology because it moves any "philosophical analysis towards aesthetics, anthropology, and cultural history" (*Aesthetics against Imperialism* 3). Noyes claims that while this has been acknowledged by scholarship, what is crucial is that Herder

explored anti-imperialism as ethically grounded in epistemology (*Aesthetics against Imperialism* 3). This engagement is of historical relevance because it addresses questions in terms of theories of imperialism and aesthetics (*Aesthetics against Imperialism* 4).[10] Noyes views Herder's works as a direct response to the imperialist restructuring of the world (*Aesthetics against Imperialism* 6). He writes that one can "trace precisely the path that led from the experience of living in a world structured by expanding capital, uneven development, and imperialism, to the idea that the aesthetic project is also a project of anti-imperialism" (Noyes, *Aesthetics against Imperialism* 7).

Noyes states that scholarship on Herder thus far has failed to recognize that reading his anti-imperial stance as fundamental to his entire philosophy also reveals core contradictions in his thought (*Aesthetics against Imperialism* 12). Herder's anti-imperialist stance is understood to be based in Reason, which ultimately claims universality in and of itself and thus presents another layer of contradicting problematics, especially in the context of discussions of common humanity versus diversity. Noyes's analysis points to major systematic and inherent flaws in Herder's anti-imperialist perspective (*Aesthetics against Imperialism* 16). Noyes sets out to provide a foundation for navigating debates that oppose imperialist politics and imperialism altogether based on aesthetics, a field today known as postcolonial theory (*Aesthetics against Imperialism* 16). In this sense, Noyes engages "a set of problems . . . that arose in the midst of Enlightenment debates on aesthetics, knowledge, and the nature of human life . . . [as well as Herder's] attempt to formulate and resolve some of

[10] Noyes writes that aesthetics, in Herder's view, explores how cultural contexts restrict so-called "universal expressions" while still seeking to capture this characteristic of universality (*Aesthetics against Imperialism* 8). Thus, specific expressions of humanity are uniquely shaped by the contexts they emerge in, but they are linked by each sharing this universal experience of contextualization.

the problems that continue to haunt postcolonialism" (*Aesthetics against Imperialism* 17). The systematic oppression and overriding understanding of common universalism is applicable to the Enlightenment and thus Herder's anti-imperial notion of aesthetics, as well.

An earlier critical examination of the Enlightenment is found in Sara Eigen and Mark Larrimore's 2006 anthology titled *The German Invention of Race,* which illustrates the advent of the conceptual notion of race as pivotal and fundamental to philosophy and the social sciences. Eigen and Larrimore state that race was heavily discussed and debated in a scientific manner by intellectuals in German-language contexts (1). This abundance of discourses is understood to have led to "details of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century racial science, and have tended to oversimplify eighteenth-century positions" (Eigen and Larrimore 1). The concept of race as well as the subsequent emergence of racial science stands in contradiction to the ideals of the Enlightenment. Eigen and Larrimore mention scholarship in terms of race as having covered and featured "the era of New World conquest and genocide, the Spanish expulsion of the Jews, and the development of the slave trade. Such studies are vital for a developed understanding of the relationship between economic policies of exploitation, religious ideals and ideologies, and quasiracial accounts of human difference" (2). They state that these kinds of engagements often overgeneralize and simplify the vast variety of contradictory stances present among intellectuals in the eighteenth century. They also refer to another camp in scholarship that emerged from African American studies and cultural studies programs in the United States (Eigen and Larrimore 2). Focusing primarily on Anglo-American source material in the context of racist beliefs and structures, these contributions are usually not translated and remain accessible to English-speaking audiences. The essays in this anthology prove that there was no one debate on race

that facilitated and encouraged the emergence of racism and antiracism. Rather, numerous topics were shaped by these emerging discourses of race (Eigen and Larrimore 3).

In the 2008 book *Heredity, Race, and the Birth of the Modern*, Sara Eigen Figal examines the "German eighteenth century—within its broader European context" regarding the multiple meanings and functions of heredity (2). She claims that the idea of heredity allowed Enlightenment thinkers to formulate and constitute understandings of community (Eigen Figal 3). In discussing German intellectuals who were a significant part of a larger European dialogue, she focuses on German circumstances in the ethnic, intellectual, and political sense (Eigen Figal 8). Eigen dedicates her discussion of texts by Georg Forster, Johann Gottfried Herder, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Immanuel Kant, and Christoph Meiners to the invention of race as a scientific conceptual notion (9). She states that race "is a phenomenal hybrid product, a flawed extension of the logic of species that was intended to fill in a gap in the biological continuum between the hereditary family unit and the genealogically produced, familial species" (Eigen Figal 9). In this sense, Eigen traces the links between identity formations, articulated by way of race, that highlight and enable the use of "a morally charged language of heredity in making possible the conceptual shifts that seem to entangle permanently the facts and the fictions of race" (9). She concludes her focal discussions in this book by examining how the idea of heredity in the eighteenth century is connected to an understanding of the "good" alongside ideas of compassion and kinship (Eigen Figal 11). Scientists, philosophers, and writers rely on facts in their analyses and suggest that these views are supported by nature, but this ignores the social meanings and moral weight these facts carry (Eigen Figal 11).

Tautz also discusses the Enlightenment in a 2007 work titled *Reading and Seeing Ethnic Differences in the Enlightenment: From China to Africa*, in which she engages the formation of the

modern concept of ethnicity and its appearances in various eighteenth-century German writings (3). In tracing the foundational genealogy of the modern notion of ethnicity, Tautz "concentrates on obscure processes of perception and representation which have only subsequently been interpreted through the attribution of clear-cut, albeit confining, binary oppositions applied to groups that share certain traits such as ethnic or national belonging and that, in turn, distinguish one group from others" (3). This discussion reveals unstable constructions of ethnic peoples and demonstrates the historical existence of variations of subjectivity, which do not always operate according to the known binary power relation of Self and Other (Tautz 3). Tautz mentions the notion of the universality of the Enlightenment as having emerged in opposition to material instances of ethnicity while also permeating them (4). Tautz's study further demonstrates how "the differences among these perceptions and representations expose fragile conceptual boundaries of ethnicity" (3). This becomes visible when exploring Enlightenment writers' divergent views toward China and African peoples. China was valued as a stable model for intermingling philosophy and politics, while Blackness was seen as symbolizing an inability to grasp Reason (Tautz 4-5).

My work contributes to the small corpus of scholarship that critiques Enlightenment core ideals by way of exploring a German-language abolitionist dramatic genre that through its very nature critiques slavery and its institutional emergence in modernity. Abolitionist discourse is part of the Enlightenment discourse and points to the contradictions that were later called out by critics like Horkheimer and Adorno. Abolitionism allowed critiques of slavery and the trade in slaves to be voiced. As I will show in the ensuing chapters, opinions were often based on compassion, empathy, and sympathy for enslaved Black Africans, especially in terms of the brutality and force that was used against them. Other proponents of abolition were driven by an understanding of an all-encompassing humanity that also

extended to enslaved Black Africans. It needs to be noted that while abolitionists advocated for the termination of slavery and the end of the transatlantic slave trade, there were a variety of approaches present in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The historian J. R. Oldfield describes the various transnational abolitionist strategies that present a spectrum of abolition: "For the most part, activists were guided by their sense of what was possible, whether that meant [a complete] 'abolition' or 'emancipation', 'gradualism' . . . [,] 'immediatism' [or amelioration]" (68).

The vital link that significantly ties together Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of the Enlightenment to my discussion of abolitionism is the instability, inviability, and weakness of both movements, Enlightenment and abolition. In the context of Nazism, achievements in the sciences, overall human progress, and principles of secularism and human rights ultimately resulted in a collapse "into new forms of the very conditions of primeval repression which it earlier set out to overcome" (Bradley 39-40). This can be said for some of the strategies on the spectrum of abolitionism, as well. While abolitionism's goal is to terminate the institution of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, amelioration does not present a viable option for this termination. Instead, it operates according to Bradley's formulation by simply presenting the persisting institution of slavery and preexisting condition of the trade in slaves in a new light. This new establishment is understood to center the well-being of the Black African enslaved population while still protecting and highlighting the importance of the capitalist agenda. Thus, the luxurious living conditions of the white Western middle class are maintained at the expense of the enslaved Black Africans' freedom, ensuring the continued mass consumption of colonial goods such as sugar, cocoa, and tobacco in white, middle-class households. In this sense, white abolitionist viewpoints and understandings are to be taken with a grain of salt because they often propose self-

serving solutions to the discussion at hand. I consider the different applications of these viewpoints in my dissertation as they apply to historical and philosophical documents alongside the genre of the slave plays.

Overview of Chapters

Modes of Transnationalism and Black Revisionist History: German Understandings of Slavery, The Transatlantic Slave Trade and Abolition in 18th and 19th Century Literature is organized as follows: The first chapter discusses the origins and initial instances of humanitarianism and abolitionism in the Euro-American space. The emergence of abolitionist sentiments is contextualized within traditional German understandings of benevolence by way of pietism, evangelization, and missionary trips. In addition, the German intellectual tradition critical of slavery and degrading human categorization is illustrated as speaking to German-language engagements indicative of Enlightenment tenets. In this context, I present intellectual debates that are emblematic of rational and enlightened understandings of humanity during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in German-language contexts. These debates are indicative of a paradigm shift in terms of understandings of discourses about Black Africans. Furthermore, I explore the transcultural practices and complexities that resulted from the transatlantic slave trade and affected the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation much like they affected imperial powers such as Britain, France, and the Netherlands. This discussion reveals the nature of debates on slavery, its actual prevalence, and inseparable links to oppressive economic structures through agricultural slavery (serfdom) in the German lands. It provides a historical framework for the emergence of slave plays and allows for an in-depth analysis in the third chapter.

The second chapter discusses German- and English-language contributions that were prompted by the transcultural nature of slavery and abolitionism and written by authors working in German-speaking contexts and addressing German audiences. This discussion further calls into question the notion that German abolitionist awareness did not exist in Europe during the Enlightenment while also addressing the ambivalent nature of abolitionism. This examination is motivated by the *Sklavenstücke*. Here, my focus lies on the years 1775 through 1815, the time period during which these plays were produced. I also include the discourses and contributions that constitute the tail end of this period and are indicative of material essential for further analysis of these plays. It needs to be noted that these social, political, and cultural discussions on slavery and the trade in slaves do not abruptly cease with the conclusion of the investigation of this chapter, but my discussion only covers the years mentioned above, the period in which slave plays were produced. In addition, this chapter draws on German understandings of benevolence and abolitionism as articulated in newspapers and periodicals. These works are then contextualized within the framework of eighteenth-century abolitionist strategies to obtain an understanding of the intensity and frequency of abolitionist discourse in the German lands. My approach illustrates how German literary contributions indicate inscribed socio-critical commentaries and take up transatlantic abolitionist discourses.

The third chapter draws on the outcomes discussed in the first and second chapters. The first chapter illustrates the emergence of German abolitionist sentiments, while the second chapter stresses the importance and magnitude of abolitionist discourse in German-language contexts. Accordingly, the third chapter pertains to the portrayals of characters and overall narratives that reflect German as well as transcultural intellectual understandings of humanity and historical understandings of the portrayal of slavery and the trade in slaves at

that time. Furthermore, this chapter discusses and analyzes the slave plays, drawing on various approaches and frameworks, including historical and historiographic approaches, Black studies, critical race theories, and postcolonial thought. These frameworks are essential for analyzing the portrayal of Black bodies within the transnational and transcultural context of slavery and abolitionism. As mentioned above, slave plays were first categorized into five subgenres by literary scholar Barbara Riesche in her 2010 work *Schöne Mohrinnen, edle Sklaven, schwarze Rächer: Schwarzendarstellung und Sklavereithematik im deutschen Unterhaltungstheater (1770-1814).* My analysis addresses one play from each subcategory in order to discuss these plays widely.

In tracing the historic construction of Black African bodies as commodities subjected to historical violence, I discuss these plays on a number of levels. Drawing on Hortense Spillers' notion of "the *theft* of the *body*" (emphasis original, 206) and the reduction of human beings to objects, I discuss the idea of "being for" the captor. I also examine the paradigm of the transition into slavery, drawing on Orlando Patterson's understanding of rituals and marks that manifest the transformation and assumption into slavery. Here, my focus lies on slaves being stripped of their names and identities that existed before their capture and enslavement, which signifies the erasure of the previous self and confirms the violent transformation into slavery. Then, I investigate the portrayal of the Black African female slave within the framework of the bourgeois drama. I utilize Spillers' analyses as well as civil rights activist and critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw's notion of intersectional feminism here. Moreover, Saidiya Hartman's discussion of the Venus, an emblematic enslaved woman in the Atlantic world, is brought into conversation with the slave plays. Based on this exploration, early traces of colorism and its implications for Black African female slaves are explored. After that, I examine the concept of gender differentiation during

slavery by discussing the conditions of Black African enslaved women, as well as the place of white women in the late eighteenth-century German literary tradition. Next, I explore the institution of slavery and its oppressive nature in debates on slavery during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Following that, the abolitionist literary dichotomy of good versus bad slave masters as an additional exploitative layer of commodification placed upon Black African bodies is discussed. Finally, I focus on historical violence as an essential part of the abolitionist narratives that were formed in white colonial paternalist paradigms.

The epilogue allows for a glance into future scholarship by suggesting research directions in light of the key findings from my study.

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CHAPTER 2

INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS OF ANTISLAVERY THOUGHT IN EUROPE: THE RELEVANCE OF ABOLITIONISM IN GERMANY

> Like slavery itself, the slave trade did not just wither away. It ended because of an arduous campaign that began in the 1780s as the traffic reached its peak, with over nine hundred thousand Africans shipped during the decade. (Coniff et al. 162)

> To talk of universal, natural, or human rights is to connect respect for human life and integrity with the notion of autonomy. It is to conceive people as active cooperators in establishing and ensuring the respect which is due them. (Charles Taylor qtd. in Hunt 9)

Abolitionist Predecessors: Bartolomé de Las Casas and George Fox

If we want to trace abolitionist thought back in time, Bartolomé de Las Casas (c. 1484–1566) may serve as an early example of influential figures expressing views that foreshadow key thoughts of abolitionism. Franklin W. Knight understands Las Casas's anti-imperial and anticolonial critique of the conditions of the Spanish conquest of the Americas to still resonate in contemporary contexts (xiiii). Knight describes Las Casas as having been "the first full-time advocate of the underprivileged in the history of the Americas [who] . . . embraced the cause of social and political justice for the indigenous population of the Americas" (xii). Similarly, Dani Anthony states that "through his actions and writings, Las Casas became an important figure in the development of ideas of what we would now call human rights" (Anthony "July 2015"). Furthermore, the cultural critic Nina Berman thoroughly examines Las Casas's role during the Spanish conquest of the New World in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in her chapter "Imperial Violence and the Limits of Tolerance: Reading Luther with Las Casas" (2016). Berman mentions Las Casas as having become "an outspoken critic of imperial violence against American Indians" despite having been an initial proponent of the conquest ("Imperial Violence" 149). Las Casas grew up in

Seville, which through its inland port was part of the trading system to the New World. Berman notes Seville's proximity to the kingdom of Granada, which was the last and remaining refuge during the Reconquista (722–1492). Berman states that both Muslims and Jews were targeted by the Reconquista forces: "All synagogues were closed and later converted to churches. . . . After various pieces of legislation regulated the status of Muslims and Jews in distinct ways, Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492 (Alhabra Decree), as were Muslims in 1502 (dates differ for various regions of the Iberian Peninsula) unless they chose to convert" ("Imperial Violence" 149). While conversion served as a survival strategy, Muslim converts were not fully trusted and were ultimately expelled from Spain in the seventeenth century (Berman, "Imperial Violence" 149).

Berman, drawing on Latin American historians, describes a "de facto" system of slavery in the Americas during the sixteenth century that was built on slave labor by Native Americans ("Imperial Violence" 150). This system, called *encomienda,* was established by the Spaniards. Its purpose was to provide Native Americans with "protection" and instruction in Christianity, but required them, in return, to work for the ones that "protected" them. Las Casas was "a Dominican friar (1522) . . . also . . . a settler and even soldier, and thus . . . an economic and military agent of the conquest" (Berman, "Imperial Violence" 150). During his extensive travels through South America, he witnessed the magnitude of the colonial violence inflicted on the Amerindians by the Spanish colonists. As a Dominican friar, Las Casas contextualized his experiences and encounters within a Catholic framework of understanding, which is often reflected in his commentary about his time in the Americas. Anthony describes Las Casas as having been sickened by the physical degradation and exploitation of Native Americans in Caribbean Spanish colonies, which prompted him to give up his slaves and holdings ("July 2015"). His critique of the Spanish conquistadors is

harsh and condemning because he expects them, as true Christians, to behave according to core Catholic principles and values:

> There have been above twelve million souls—men, women, and children—killed, tyrannically and unjustly, on account of the tyrannical actions and infernal works of Christians. . . . Principal and general customs have been employed by those, calling themselves Christians . . . in extirpating and striking from the face of the earth those suffering nations[:] . . . unjust, cruel, bloody, and tyrannical warfare . . . to oppress them with the hardest, harshest, and most heinous bondage to which men or beasts might ever be bound into. (Las Casas qtd. in Berman, "Imperial Violence" 152)

Las Casas's critique extends to any imperial violence he witnessed while in the Americas. Thus, he criticizes the imperial oppressive practices of other colonials, as well. Las Casas was equally critical of German colonizers in Venezuela (Berman, "Imperial Violence" 152).

In the spirit of altruism and missionary endeavors, Las Casas recognizes redeeming qualities among the Native Americans, especially in terms of their response to being unjustly oppressed and brutalized by the Spanish colonials. Las Casas sees the potential in Amerindians and considers them to be "humans who are perfectly fit to become Christians" (Berman, "Imperial Violence" 152). Native Americans are understood to be God's creation but are not necessarily considered equal, because Las Casas characterizes them as "a simple people, altogether without subtility, malice, or duplicity, excellent in obedience, most loyal to their native lords and to the Christians whom they serve; the most humble, most patient, meekest and most pacific, slowest to take offence and most tranquil in demeanor, least quarrelous, least querulous, most lacking in rancour or hatreds or desire for vengeance of all the peoples of the earth" (Las Casas qtd. in Berman, "Imperial Violence" 152).

Their obedient and submissive nature makes Amerindians well suited to join the Catholic faith, in Las Casas's thinking. It seems that Las Casas considered these attributes to be perfect for serving the Christian God. He describes the Amerindians as being "excellently

fit to receive our holy Catholic faith and to be indued with virtuous customs, and the people with the fewest impediments to this that God has created upon the earth. . . . These peoples [are] the most fortunate in the world, if they but knew God" (Las Casas qtd. in Berman, "Imperial Violence" 153). Las Casas thinks that urging Native Americans to convert is for their benefit. As such, he starts advocating in earnest for an amelioration of their treatment. He repeatedly pleads their case before the special council in Valladolid, which ultimately led to a passing of the New Laws in 1542 (Berman, "Imperial Violence" 152). While implementation of the law was not sufficient in abolishing the brutalization of Amerindians and led to Las Casas's continuous advocacy, his viewpoint and critique of imperial practices should be acknowledged regarding his Catholic understanding of advocacy against violence. It needs to be noted that Las Casas's advocacy for amelioration was prompted by what he considered to be an unjust treatment of Native Americans. He was led by sympathy and compassion toward the brutalized people and felt it was his duty to intervene; nonetheless, it seems this amelioration came at the price of conversion.

While Las Casas certainly did not consider conversion to Christianity to be an act of oppression, David Spur argues that in colonial discourse, one often "seeks to dominate by inclusion and domestication rather than by a confrontation which recognizes the independent identity of the Other" (32). Therefore, the imposition of one's religious beliefs serves as an oppressive act, as well, even if Las Casas did not recognize it as such. Ultimately, Las Casas acknowledges Native American humanity by way of their ability to conform to Western religious standards. Once these converted Amerindians accepted the Christian faith, they could be integrated into Western imperial structures: The act of conversion was associated with Native American docility and submissive nature. Las Casas's compassion reveals an imperial Christian and Catholic agenda that does not aim to honor Amerindian

culture, life, and liberty. His agenda is especially pronounced by his earlier suggestion of using Black Africans for forced labor instead of Amerindians, but he ultimately changed his mind:

> Las Casas himself changed his rhetoric over time as he and his argument matured. For instance, he originally advocated the use of African slaves instead of indigenous Americans because Spaniards considered them to be hardier than natives. . . . In making this argument, Las Casas may have inadvertently provided the Spanish government endorsement of the new idea of slavery based on race, rather than the medieval concept of slavery as the result of war and conquest. Las Casas later advocated that all slavery be abolished, but the burgeoning European empires paid little attention to this moral idea when so much wealth and power was at stake. (Anthony)

This quote demonstrates Las Casas's progressive viewpoint later in life, which extended to all types of slavery and enslaved people, including Black Africans. This and his initial compassionate and evangelizing approach toward interactions with Native Americans become fundamental to later abolitionist transcultural discourses, though his perspective was not without its contradictions. One century later, Las Casas's line of argument that centered on Native Americans as God's creation in need of instruction in Christianity is echoed by the founder of the Quakers in Britain.

George Fox (1624–1691) called for the gospel to be preached to slaves, as well. Fox made this known in a 1657 public letter to Quaker societies in the West Indies (Craton et al. 202). The title of George Fox's letter, "To Friends beyond Sea, that have Blacks and Indian Slaves," alone hints at its importance for slaves of African and Native American origin—the term Indian in the title could however also refer to the West Indian indigenous population. While the letter (most likely) directly addresses members of the various Quaker societies in the West Indies, the actual message seems most pertinent to the actual enslaved people in those communities. It needs to be noted that this letter was not a binding document in any shape or form, because the actual binding Quaker rules were implemented and took effect

on the North American continent about 120 years after Fox's letter. Therefore, Fox's letter can be understood as a form of exhortation that foreshadows the effort and commitment to abolish slavery and the trade in slaves overall that was led by the Quakers.

In his letter, Fox establishes an inherent equality of humans under God's law. He asserts that God created the world and all of its inhabitants, which highlights the importance of all humanity being God's creation and then extends this thought to enslaved peoples, as well. Thus, Fox puts emphasis on God as an entity that respects all people, which again confirms the inclusion of enslaved Black Africans and indigenous peoples in the West Indies in this thinking. In this sense, all of humanity has been made of one blood and enjoys God's creation equally, regardless of their "status" (just vs. unjust) in the world, according to God's law:

> God that made the world, and all things therein, and giveth life and breath to all, is the God of spirits of all flesh, and is *respector of persons;* but whosoever feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him. And He hath made *all nations of one blood,* to dwell upon the face of the earth, and his eyes are over all the works of his hands, and seeth every thing that is done under the whole heavens; and the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. And He causeth the rain to fall upon the just and upon the unjust, and also He causeth the sun to shine upon the just and the unjust; and He commands to love all men; for Christ so loved all, that He died for sinners. And this is God's love to the world, in giving his Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish. And He doth enlighten every man that cometh into the world, that they might believe in the Son. (Fox qtd. in Craton et al. 202)

Fox signifies that all of humanity is worthy of God's love, while stressing God's command for all of humanity to love (and thus be accepting of) each other. He strengthens his argument by alluding to Jesus Christ's sacrifice of dying for all of humanity, taking on the burden of accepting the sins of the people in the world as his own, and sacrificing his life for these people who are sinners in order to wash away all of humanity's sin. Fox urges slaveholding members of the Quaker communities to read these biblical references in the

context of mass enslavement through the transatlantic slave trade and pleads for mercy on behalf of the slaves. Fox illustrates that accepting this testimony (and prophecy) from the Bible as true and thus also accepting Jesus Christ as God's son rewards a Christian believer with life everlasting that "should not perish" (202).

Fox clarifies that life everlasting is only attainable through acknowledging, believing in, and acting according to Jesus Christ's example. In this sense, Fox refers to the preaching of the gospel as a tool for liberty and freedom that should be directed to "every creature under the heaven; which is the power that giveth liberty and freedom, and is glad tidings to every captivated creature under the whole heavens" (Fox qtd. in Craton et al. 202). While one could interpret the understanding of freedom and liberty attainable by accepting Jesus Christ as one's personal savior and Lord, in a Christian sense, as a metaphorical statement, Fox considers this to be applicable in a true and practical sense. Quakers are asked to act in the same manner that Christ did and make it their mission to unburden enslaved populations and enlighten them by teaching them the gospel, thus contributing to the covenant that Jesus Christ is understood to effect through his very (spiritual) presence: "And the word of God is in the heart and mouth. For Christ is given for a covenant of the people, and a light to the Gentile, and to enlighten them; who is the glory of Israel, and God's salvation to the ends of the earth. And so, ye are to have the mind of Christ, and to be merciful, as your Heavenly Father is merciful" (Fox qtd. in Craton et al. 202). This letter is indicative of early Quaker convictions to abolish the practice and institution of slavery in the larger context of their evangelical teachings. Those teachings speak to a particular moral and natural order of the world that foregrounds mercy as a similar attribute to benevolence and altruism, as noted by various scholars discussing Quaker motivations in antislavery efforts (202).

Pathway to German Abolitionism Discourse: Pietism, Enlightenment and Serfdom

Fox and Las Casas offer a glimpse into early understandings of amelioration as a policy or practice within the spectrum of approaches to abolitionism. Both cases demonstrate the role of Christian tenets, Catholic or otherwise, in the context of their claims to compassion, sympathy, and altruism. These sentiments bear similarities to those present in German classical Pietism. In the 1988 book *The Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism: The Rejection of an Activist Heritage,* Paul P. Kuenning discusses the German origin of Pietism and the strong foothold it had in American Lutheran Pietism and abolitionist involvements. Kuenning describes German Pietism as having responded to existential and human needs in the wake of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) (Kuenning 7). Pietism also countered the structures inherent to Lutheranism in the later part of the sixteenth century:

> Doctrinal formulations and creedal concerns had almost totally eclipsed ethical imperatives and human needs. Pietist leaders often referred to their efforts as an attempt to extend Luther's reformation of doctrine with a reformation of life. Their reform movement was also a response to the widespread human suffering and moral deterioration left in the wake of the Thirty Years' War. Its message of holy living, love for neighbor, and moral renewal spoke directly to an existential need. (Kuenning 7)

It is in this sense that Dale W. Brown highlights the central theological motifs of Pietism in his 1978 work *Understanding Pietism*. Brown mentions the importance of and emphasis on practical Christianity that was prompted by the rigid structures of Lutheranism (27). Thus, Pietists proposed concrete ideas for Bible study, conventicles, and the inclusion of laymen. These conventicles "were prayer meetings, sought to combat separatism by emphasizing attendance at worship and participation in the sacraments" (Brown 157). The Bible was to be used in one's everyday life by reading it devotionally and applying it to one's lifestyle, which further emphasizes the practicality of Pietism (27). The practical aspect of Pietism also meant committing to showing faith in the form of actions of love and godliness (Brown 27-

28). This ethical commitment presented Pietism as expressing a "theology of goodness" (Brown 28). The understanding of goodness also applied to God's grace: "Pietists strongly emphasized that the God who is good enough to forgive us is powerful enough to change us. Consequently, we find varying degrees of emphasis on repentance, the new birth, and conversion" (Brown 28). These notions of forgiveness, mercy, and compassion were extended to all of humanity. Despite society's ills and its constant deterioration, Pietists had "hope for the world" (Brown 28). This hope was expressed in merciful acts and the belief in conversion in the form of a revolutionary transformation through God alone, who can change human lives (Brown 28).

Formed under the leadership of two German men, August H. Francke (1663–1727) and Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705), Pietism emerged in sixteenth-century and seventeenth-century Germany (Kuenning 7). Spener, a theologian, was the actual founder and an influential figure in the rise of German Lutheran Pietism (Kuenning 9). Kuenning echoes Brown by describing Lutheran Pietism as having emerged in response to the need for a reformation of Christian faith, which resonated closely with its believers and thus human day-to-day needs (13). This demand materialized in two specific practices: "First, a deep inner spirituality, centered in Scripture and prayer, with an experience of conversion as its hallmark. Second, an intense outward thrust of missionary and benevolent activity as the inevitable and necessary expression of New Birth, or living faith" (Kuenning 13). The historian Richard L. Gawthrop examines Prussian Pietist activism in his 1993 work *Pietism and the Making of Eighteenth-Century Prussia*. He traces both Spener's and Francke's contributions to Pietism by way of their religious and theological viewpoints:

> Spener believed that reform of the Lutheran church would, eventually and in some unspecified way, bring about the desired change in society. The more radical Francke worked for the simultaneous transformation of both the

> church and the social order. Francke envisioned . . . a model society . . . with institutions for socialization and economic activity, whose expansion would begin a reform of the entire world. (Gawthrop 150)

Francke's view of society overall resonated with his understanding of what it meant to be "unconverted" (Gawthrop 151). He believed that society's unconverted state enabled the growing social ills, such as selfishness and egoism, that all social groups were corrupted with. In identifying the root cause of the deterioration of society, Francke critiqued the education system as lacking in conveying "true knowledge and fear of God" and discipline. He further points out a societal disregard for "widows, orphans, and the poor, a neglect of both their immediate material needs and their underlying afflictions" (Gawthrop 151). Francke deemed these conditions to have resulted in crime, sexual promiscuity, and other sins and saw the clergy responsible for addressing this social condition by way of Lutheran teaching estates (Lehrstand) (Gawthrop 151-52).

These teaching estates were understood to have been provided by God in an attempt to provide a pathway for the betterment of social deterioration (Gawthrop 152). These educating institutions welcomed all people and thus speak to Brown's characterization of increasing lay participation. Francke did not ascribe to the notion of predestination and accordingly believed that every individual could better themselves by conversion, which echoes an understanding of "hope for the world" as well as what Brown mentioned as "God's work in changing human lives" (28). These institutions were built after Francke's Halle *Anstalten* as Christian educational and social institutes that were understood to present a model for all human conduct (Gawthrop 152-53).

> Rejecting any form of predestination, Francke maintained that God had issued a "general call to grace," granting salvation to whoever experienced rebirth and served his or her neighbor. Institutions such as the Halle *Anstalten* were intended to carry out God's purpose in this respect by preparing for conversion people from every sort of moral and social

> background and providing them with opportunities to help convert others. (Gawthrop 152).

Francke's educational intervention in order to cure the ills of society resonates with the overall Pietistic mission to the world. Contextualizing Spener's theological convictions within Francke's conceptual framework shows Spener's optimism regarding the betterment of society as a whole (Brown 129).

Spener's viewpoint reflects the strong influence of *Heilsgeschichte*, that is, salvation history—history as the progression of religiously defined time. In this sense, Spener's hopefulness is based on his belief in the fulfillment of the promise of the "glorious spread of the Kingdom of God" (Brown 129). While Spener remained optimistic, Brown argues that he tried to find a middle ground between "a utopianism based on the hope for an actual earthly kingdom on the one hand and a despair of any improvement in the world on the other" (129). Nonetheless, Spener was convinced that the "kingdom, which will be completely realized only in the future, must begin to penetrate present history through the renewal of church, evangelist endeavors, and various philanthropic and social missions" (Brown 130). The fulfillment of God's kingdom required Pietists to work to liberate the world of its evil conditions. Oppression and poverty were the two key evils that were identified, but Brown lists many conditions that were considered to be in opposition to attaining God's kingdom and therefore needed to be cured: "reform the prison system, abolish slavery, break down rigid class distinctions, establish a more democratic polity, initiate educational reforms, establish philanthropic institutions, increase missionary activity, obtain religious liberty, and propose programs for social justice" (131). These charitable causes supported by Pietists gave momentum to a newly emergent class in German society in the eighteenth-century: the bourgeoisie. However, the initial development of these charitable

causes was a direct result of the much-earlier Thirty Years' War, with the goal of nurturing and helping in the recovery processes after the war (131). Brown argues that movements concerned with personal spiritual salvation and growth were not divided by social class. This is emblematic of Pietism and the educational institutes in particular, because they extensively included laymen of all social backgrounds, highlighting that there is no such thing as predestination (Brown 131).

While Pietists were preoccupied with philanthropic service to a society that also advocated for social justice, Brown describes a fixation on religious Pietist principles that kept Pietists from being aware of the actual social injustices and political exploitation (132). Thus, Brown describes Pietism as having served as an "opiate for the people," because Pietists were committed to making tangible social change by working within Pietist circles and on programs and practices that were meant to address and fight the very evil that they no longer recognized (132). Having been pacified by an illusion of "doing good" and having a purpose in serving and changing the communities they lived in, Pietists were kept in the dark and were unaware of the structural, political exploitation. In addition, Pietism was grounded in the core value of servanthood for Christianity in order to achieve a better society. Brown alludes to Beyreuther, who has studied Francke's sense of responsibility regarding the social order and society extensively (134). Beyreuther understands Francke to have been a firm believer in conversion and changing one's ways: "Conversion and regeneration should lead man into service on behalf of the social betterment of the world" (Beyreuther qtd. in Brown 134). In this sense, both Spener and Francke saw their contributions and influence to be of a religious and thus moral nature. In fact, Francke and Spener ascribed to the two-kingdom theology, as had Luther before them, which designated a clear cut between earthly and Godly kingdoms. Pietists were mostly concerned with their

personal and individual relationship with God and their charitable servanthood in the earthly domain that maintained and kept this relationship flourishing, as well as a promising afterlife in God's kingdom. For this reason,

> the Pietist expression has focused less on the legislation of morality for all and more on each individual's adoption of a Christian lifestyle. . . . Spener and Francke were often bold in their utterances to the governmental authorities. Spener's belief in religious freedom resulted from his conviction that a ruler has the power to rule over earthly things and the external person only; conscience and the inner person remain free, and the ruler has no power over them. When rulers attempt to gain authority over the inner person, the subjects are not bound to obey. (Brown 135)

Brown states that the Enlightenment was understood as a byproduct of Pietism due to a seemingly effortless transition "from the belief in the Spirit as the autonomous guide for life to the rational guidance which everyone has by the possession of reason" (152). Halle and its university were notable because their reputation preceded them regarding groundbreaking, innovative, and novel academic research activities. Francke's Pietistic teaching institutions (*Halle Anstalten*) had also gained a strong foothold in Halle. Thus, Halle was often considered to be the birthplace of German Pietism and Pietist missionary work. Brown identifies the university of Halle as having been the first institution to engage with and adopt the conceptual framework of rationalism within an enlightened understanding (152-53).

Both Gawthrop and Brown highlight that the Enlightenment and Pietism are not to be mistaken as identical. They emphasize that Pietism is a predecessor movement to the Enlightenment (Gawthrop 276-77). As a product that is understood to have emerged from Pietism, the Enlightenment movement is fundamentally different from Pietism in its views on the "original sin, revelation, the source of piety, and the Bible" (Brown 153). Brown clearly states that Pietism implicitly assisted in creating the pathway to German

Enlightenment. Gawthrop echoes Brown's statement by noting that enlightened ideology was heavily indebted to Pietism (276). Brown discusses Pietism and Enlightenment as having appeared in response to severe suffering and misery after the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648. Both movements directly react to the "clerical, legalistic, and institutional Christianity of the day" (Brown 153). They center and focus on religious freedom and individualism, but it was primarily "the focus on life and ethics in an atmosphere of tolerance which did the most to prepare the way for the dogmatic indifference of the Enlightenment and the pluralism of modern times" (Brown 153). Brown clearly demonstrates the ideological transformation into Enlightenment ideals as having originated from Pietistic core values.

Within the political and economic context of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, the intersections between the Enlightenment and Pietism are indicative of the "ideological continuity" in reign between King Frederick William I (1713–1740) and his successor and son, Frederick the Great (1721–1786). Both kings serve as examples of ascribing to and living by ideological principles that are in opposition to each other within personal and political realms. Despite these seemingly contradictory viewpoints, Gawthrop illustrates a smooth and successful ideological transition from principles centering on ecclesiastical Pietism and enlightened absolutism (273, 275, 276).

In this sense, Gawthrop discusses Francke's impact on political and governmental structures through his close relationship to the Hohenzollern King Frederick William I:

> In terms of spirituality, Frederick William was no more a carbon copy of Francke than the latter was of Spener. Nor was it inevitable that Frederick William would assume the role of promoting Halle Pietism within his kingdom. But the course finally taken by the king had far-reaching consequences for the propagation of Pietist ethical values. By subjecting the *Anstalten* to tight regulation and acting as the chief employer of theological graduates from the University of Halle, Frederick William I effectively harnessed the still considerable energies of Halle Pietism to his own cause. Although in this process the Pietists lost some of their freedom of action, the

> extent to which they could influence the society as a whole increased considerably. Thanks to the far greater coercive powers of the state, the king could enforce "milieu control" over his entire country. Using pedagogical methods similar to Francke's own, Frederick William I would create from the disparate territories of Brandenburg-Prussia a political unity organized around a Pietist ethos and known to prosperity as Prussia. (Gawthrop 198-99)

According to Gawthrop, Frederick William I felt the need to build a closer relationship with God by being completely dependent on God and thus experiencing his favor and grace (205). His desire to experience God resulted in him dedicating his work and his life to God (Gawthrop 206). He considered the proper practice of his profession to be fulfilling his responsibility to God as well as ridding the world from evil in true Pietist fashion. Thus, Frederick William I also ascribed to the two-kingdom theology, which required him to do right by his subjects and in his office in order to be rewarded once he entered the Godly kingdom (Gawthrop 206). In accordance with the Pietist pillar of doing good and charitable work within society, Frederick William I was determined to work on behalf of the country and specifically "for the good of the country" (Gawthrop 210). As a so-called "administrator for God," Frederick William I fully took on the responsibility of assuring the welfare of his subjects and thus took charge of all matters at hand. He conceived of his authoritative positionality as king as an affirmation of being in "good standing" with God due to properly, justly, and thus Godly executing his office (Gawthrop 211).

Frederick the Great succeeded his father after Frederick William I's death in 1740. Frederick the Great ascribed to a non-ecclesiastical mindset and understanding and thus possessed views that were almost contrary to his father's principles. But he was able to vitally expand on his father's rule and thus overall Prussian polity and ethos (Gawthrop 273). Thus, Gawthrop characterizes Frederick's reign as the "routinization, enlargement, and the combination of the Prussian state created by his father and the Lutheran Pietists" (274). In

fact, Frederick the Great benefitted greatly from the ecclesiastical condition and utilized religion in his favor. Here, the rift in the Pietist movement that occurred in the 1730s brought about the "ascendancy of the Enlightenment as the official ideology of the Prussian state" (275). Among the Pietists in favor of the king were a number of individuals who exhibited attitudes that were open and accepting of Enlightenment ideals and ideas (275-76). Gawthrop argues that Frederick William I became increasingly more influenced by the Enlightenment. He states that "the Aufklärung ideology so assiduously promoted by Frederick was very heavily indebted to its Pietist predecessor" (Gawthrop 276).

Here, Gawthrop illustrates intersections between Pietist and Enlightenment ideas that are applicable to the larger economic and political context. While both movements were not the same, there existed striking similarities in these so-called spiritualities that served well in a political context, too:

> Both positions in practice excluded no one from the prospective ranks of the saved and concentrated most of their energies on how Christians could achieve a moralistic kind of inner-worldly perfection. Politically, this common emphasis on external behavior and the concomitant de-emphasis on doctrine made both groups equally useful to Frederick William I and his son, each of whom sought to minimize the consequences of doctrinal disagreements between Lutheran and Reformed faiths by placing the state on a non-confessional ideological basis. (Gawthrop 277)

In order to achieve political unity in Prussia, a concord of action was required and foregrounded, rather than an accord of religious beliefs (Gawthrop 277). Gawthrop describes this viewpoint as having resulted in a bridging of Pietism and Enlightenment as well as ecclesiastical differences.

In both reigns, the Prussian state took center stage while the relationship between the state and its subjects was determined by the actual ruler. Both regimes were based on a utilitarian notion of legitimacy. Because both Frederick the Great and his father considered

the state to be the supreme institution, it is understood to typify the most ethical ideals that command respect and subservience by the subjects. In its ethical duty, the state promises to uphold and enhance the welfare of the population (Gawthrop 277). Gawthrop labels Frederick the Great's reign as emblematic of an almost-secular social contract theory in which he was conceived of as the "first servant of the state" (277-78).

Gawthrop states that the spread of enlightened values and principles throughout the German lands as having stemmed from Frederick the Great's impact and thus Prussia's popularity. Frederick was well known for his victories in the Silesian war.[11] Prussian strength and governance were extremely respected and admired, especially in terms of the Prussian army, which had been reformed by Frederick William I. Many other states in the German lands tried to imitate the Prussian model of governance and superior wartime efficiency, which required taking on and even absorbing the Prussian spirit and mentality, which was heavily influenced by Enlightenment principles. Ultimately, Gawthrop describes the Prussian character by the 1760s as a "de-confessionalized" and "enlightened" form that was also fundamentally Protestant, north German, and bourgeois in culture. This character proliferated in significant courts as well as ecclesiastically Catholic-ruled regions and nobility during the second half of the eighteenth century (Gawthrop 279).

The spread of the Enlightenment is especially essential in understanding the circumstances that led to critical reflections on slave-like conditions within the context of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. Specifically, the Enlightenment prompted discussions of German serfdom (Leibeigenschaft) in the context of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery within the borders of the Empire more broadly. Here, John K. Noyes

[11] This also, at the same time, heralded the end of the mighty Habsburgs' political domination within the Empire (Gawthrop 278).

discusses serfdom as having been challenged, critiqued, and subject to reform proposals to terminate its practice due to its barbaric nature and offense to human dignity (75). Noyes characterizes this push for reform in terms of Central and Eastern European contexts on the shores of the Baltic Sea, specifically, Livonia and Latvia (75). This includes countries and states such as Prussia, Latvia, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Austria, Estonia, Hungary, and the Russian Empire. Noyes thematizes Latvia as an example of having had a long history of "German colonization suppressing local customs and exploiting the local peasant population" during the eighteenth century (76). German individuals as well as nobles resided in many of these states and even owned serfs, as will be demonstrated throughout this work. Noyes writes that the momentum of critique and reform derived from ideals inherent to the pan-European Enlightenment and was often visible among German individuals who experienced the graphic nature of serfdom in Europe. This was reflective of cosmopolitan European writers who detested slavery and serfdom, including Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803). Further tracing the origins of antislavery thought, the following section discusses slavery and serfdom more broadly within the German principalities.

Slavery and Serfdom in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation

The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation is not considered to be among the slaveholding states in the Euro-American space. Nonetheless, oftentimes Black Africans were brought into these German contexts by German missionaries, soldiers, or envoys by way of other European colonies or countries. In these cases, similar to the proceedings of

high-profile cases and the Sommersett trial in Britain,[12] the legal status of these trafficked people had to be determined through court cases in which enslaved and trafficked individuals sought legal arguments and precedents for liberation within the empire, which had no contemporary laws that pertained to slavery in the context of the transatlantic slave trade (von Mallinckrodt 347).

The historian Rebekka von Mallinckrodt explores German court cases filed by enslaved Black Africans who sued their traffickers and slave holders while in the empire and highlights the ensuing discussions and stakes of linking serfdom and slavery in German-language contexts (347). As von Mallinckrodt chronicles a number of court cases in the German principalities in which enslaved and trafficked Black Africans tried to assert their legal liberty, keep their owners from reselling them to a third party, or, in some instances, sue for back payments for their labor, she highlights the harsh and seldomly divergent verdicts given. She alludes to the scarcity of documents recording these kinds of cases, which was initially considered to be linked to scholarship that claims trafficked people were baptized and thus considered equal and absorbed/assumed into domestic servitude (von Mallinckrodt 348). In addition, oftentimes scholarship presents German merchants as having readily engaged in buying the freedom of enslaved people, which would then not need to result in any legal discussions about the status of trafficked Black Africans in the German lands. Enslaved Africans were also frequently just assumed into a household as domestic Gesinde (servants); in cases like these, any questions regarding their legal status were not raised at all (von Mallinckrodt 348-49).

[12] In this case, James Sommersett (c. 1741–c. 1772), a slave from Virginia who was brought to Britain by his master, sued successfully for his liberty in 1772.

Pater Martin takes up von Mallinckrodt's discussion by illustrating distinct legal statuses assigned to Black Africans during the time of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (129). Accordingly, there existed three different groups of Black Africans: those who were enslaved and who lived at court, but were treated well (and were not treated as being enslaved because they didn't have to perform hard labor); free Africans who had resided within the borders of the empire for quite a while and thus were legally considered free; and Black Africans who were trafficked into the empire in order to be resold to the highest bidder or even gifted (Martin 129).[13] Martin characterizes these different statuses as follows:

> Die rechtlich-soziale Lage der vielen "Mohren", die bis zum Ende der Monarchie in Deutschland gelebt haben, war in der Regel auf eine merkwürdige Weise unbestimmt: Sklaven und dennoch auf eine für Sklaven ganz und da uncharakteristische Weise privilegiert, lebten sie gewissermaßen im Niemandsland zwischen Freien und Unfreien. . . . Wie die gesellschaftliche Position dieser Schwarzen begrifflich zu fassen ist, ob sie überhaupt eine einheitliche Gruppe bildeten oder einzeln — je nach Stellung und Absicht ihrer Herren — schon vorhandenen Schichten, Ständen und Gruppen zugeordnet wurden, sind allerdings angesichts der Unterschiede in ihren Lebensgeschichten durchaus offene Fragen. (129)

While there clearly existed a diversity in social statuses of Black people in the German lands, one thing was quite certain: All enslaved individuals who crossed the border into the empire for whatever reason were treated like slaves, though there was no law in place designating

[13] Martin mentions that many of the children who grew up in the custody of nobility at court lived a lavish and very privileged lifestyle that allowed for an exquisite education, room and board, and a solid and well-paid employment at court or elsewhere. They also had permission to get married and raise families while still being financially supported by their patron and benefactor or, in some cases, were even liberated after their owners' demise (136-47). This rather positive experience had its downsides, too. Many of these "Mohren" oftentimes felt displaced and foreign, which in some instances resulted in them returning to their homeland, being committed in mental institutions, or taking their own lives (148-56). A rapid change in spending and at times changing patrons among nobility resulted in many of these "Kammermohren" having to become dependent on themselves, moving away, or being let go from their positions at court and being forced to earn money elsewhere, which included various vocational training offers (157-80).

them as such (Martin 129, 132).[14] Martin describes that there was rarely the opportunity to be freed against one's owners' will, and he reiterates the fact that there was no legal basis for the liberation of slaves while in the empire. He adds that slaves had been present throughout history in German society in many different capacities and their social status was never seriously questioned or challenged. Thus, slavery was part of the culture in one way or another, especially in the context of nobility (Martin 132).[15] Von Mallinckrodt confirms that research has shown that trafficked Black Africans existed not only in port cities, but also in the interior of the empire serving white German residents in "Residenz- und Hauptstädten genauso wie in der hintersten Provinz . . . und sozial keineswegs auf die Fürstenhöfe beschränkt waren" (357). She debunks scholarship claiming that enslaved Africans were liberated from their status as slaves through baptism, marriage, or having their freedom bought by white Germans. Instead, the slaves could be sold or resold and even gifted at any given time. Thus, von Mallinckrodt clearly states that there existed no "pauschale Aufhebung des Sklavenstatus für das Alte Reich" (349).

Neighboring jurisdictions such as Britain and France were faced with similar issues; many trafficked Africans were brought across the border into these nation-states. Sue Peabody investigates the French case in her 1996 work *"There Are No Slaves in France": The*

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[14] Von Mallinckrodt clearly states that "obgleich im 18. Jahrhundert zunehmend Menschen auf diese Art und Weise ins Alte Reich gelangten, fehlte zur Bestimmung ihres Status jegliche Gesetzesgrundlage. Der Gutachter musste bis ins 16. Jahrhundert zurückgehen, um einen Gesetzestext aus dem Aten Reich zu finden, in welchem die Frage der Sklaverei behandelt wurde. Ein Reichsabschied von 1542, der im Kontext der Türkenkriege enstanden war. . . . 'Gegen jene finden also noch heut zu Tage alle Würkungen der strengsten Herrschaft statt; sie können verkauft, verschenkt und vermachet werden'"(347-48).

[15] Martin claims that many of these enslaved Black Africans were especially popular among the nobles and aristocrats (130). In this, Martin mentions several aristocrats that were given, gifted, or participated in the purchase of Africans (131). The custom of having a Black African slave was very common among the nobles and aristocrats. Here, Martin mentions the following slaveowners, among others: the Bavarian Duke Wilhelm V, who acquired a slave in 1570; the duke of Holstein, who purchased a slave in 1733; the Hessian landgrave, who added a slave in 1771; and Duke August Wilhelm of Braunschweig Wolfenbüttel, who acquired a slave to gift to his Duchess Elisabeth Juliane in 1685.

Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Régime. Peabody discusses the so-called freedom principle that allowed nearly all enslaved Africans who reached French shores in the eighteenth century to obtain "their freedom, particularly in the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Paris" (3). Nonetheless, Peabody mentions the contradictory condition that the freedom principle operated under. The principle of freedom and liberty initially applied to enslaved Africans as soon as they reached the shores of France accompanied by their slaveholders and owners (Peabody 3). Here, Peabody mentions Louis XIV, who granted freedom to slaves who appealed "for the recognition of their new free status upon arrival in France" in the beginning of the eighteenth century (6).

Expanding the discussion of the freedom principle to the European nation-state context, Peabody identifies Britain and the Netherlands as having adhered to similar freedom principles (4-5). Here, too, Peabody centers on the conflicting notions of liberty and freedom, because all these nations had deeply rooted investments and dependencies on colonial slavery (5). The French, Dutch, and British grew accustomed to and reliant on the supply of colonial goods such as cocoa, cotton, indigo, and sugar, among others, which naturally supported the continuation of the capture and enslavement of Black Africans in order to keep colonial slavery and the importation of these goods going. However, Peabody mentions these countries as having had no agrarian slavery-like conditions and systems, different from the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, and sees this particular constellation as having resulted in the emergence of early "liberal political discourses that celebrated the notion that their nation bore a special relationship to the principle of liberty" in both Britain and France (5).

In the spirit of liberal political discourses, von Mallinckrodt brings forth the famous British Sommersett case that resulted in a legal verdict granting freedom to James

Sommersett due to there not being any legal and binding law or framework that addressed slavery in Britain in 1722 (352). Von Mallinckrodt notes that before and after the Sommersett verdict, other judges had decided differently in these kinds of cases. Enslaved Africans were also expected to agree to their voluntary journey to Britain because they were forced "vor Abreise aus den Kolonien einen Vertrag zu unterzeichnen, dass sie 'freiwillig' in die Karibik zurückkehren würden beziehungsweise indem man sie einfach kidnappte" (von Mallinckrodt 353), which was still considered to be a major improvement and a step in the direction of abolition. The historian Kathleen Charter precisely summarizes the legal ambiguity that resulted from the initial verdict being limited by the Commentaries in the Laws in Britain in 1769, stating: "I would conclude that slavery did not exist as an institution in England and Wales, though there were individuals who were regarded by their masters as slaves" (Charter qtd. in von Mallinckrodt 354). Von Mallinckrodt notes that trafficked slaves in Britain were increasingly treated better and were in better legal condition after the Sommersett trial as the abolitionist movement began to gain strength (354).

Von Mallinckrodt mentions that the situation in France and the Netherlands drastically changed as both countries became more heavily involved with the slave trade and slavery, which meant that enslaved Africans were more likely to be trafficked to both countries. Granting freedom to all those slaves who had reached either one of these countries caused owners to lose large amounts of money, while a constant pattern of granting freedom had a destabilizing effect on conditions in the French and Dutch colonies (von Mallinckrodt 354). To avoid any further slave revolts in the colonies, France and the Netherlands put an end to the freedom (free soil) principle. The Netherlands no longer operated according to the freedom principle starting in 1776. Instead, slaveholders were now required to register incoming slaves after they had spent six months in the Netherlands; this

enabled the slaves to remain for an additional six months. Here, incoming Black Africans could only be considered free if their owner did not register them or had indeed manumitted them before entering the country (von Mallinckrodt 354). Generally, the colonial law was attached to colonial subjects, though they resided on Dutch soil (von Mallinckrodt 355).

The Edict of October 1716 stated that colonial property brought to France for educational purposes "to receive instruction in the Catholic faith" was allowed so long as they were registered by their colonial slaveholders (Peabody 6). If slave owners neglected to register their so-called property, slaves were to be granted freedom, meaning the freedom principle would take over by default (Peabody 6). The Declaration of December 15th, 1738 "reiterated the provisions of the 1716 Edict requiring colonial governors' permission and registration with French admiralty clerks. . . . [It placed] a limit of three years on the slaves' stays in France and . . . stipulated that slaves held in violation of these conditions would no longer be freed to live in France [but] . . . returned to the colonies" (Peabody 6). Here, Peabody mentions, however, that the declaration and the edict were not officially registered with the Parliament in Paris, which was the most powerful court. Thus, a flood of petitions were filed with the court in Paris, all of which resulted in slaves being freed or even being paid backdated wages for their services, according to the freedom principle (Peabody 7). Von Mallinckrodt states that it was only during the French Revolution in 1791 that the free soil principle was actually cast in a legislative mold (355).

Von Mallinckrodt investigates specific cases in the German lands that speak to particular practices applied to enslaved Africans that were adopted from how serfs were often treated (361). She gives the example of two enslaved Black African boys owned by Christoph Adam Carl von Imhoff (1734–1788) (360). Von Imhoff was no longer in a position to finance the upkeep of his slaves and desperately tried to sell them. This proved

very difficult due to them having reached a certain age, so von Imhoff decided to gift his slaves to Carl Ludwig von Knebel (1744–1834) in order to finally get rid of the financial responsibility of caring for them (von Mallinckrodt 360-61). Von Mallinckrodt suspects that gifting one's property—in this case, slaves—derived from the illegal but prevalent practice that allowed "Leibeigene auch unabhängig von Grund und Boden zu verschenken oder zu verkaufen" (361). Von Mallinckrodt indicates that this illegal practice was customary and thus considered natural, plus it was never really problematized within the context of the empire and thus self-evidently understood as being practiced in the context of slavery, as well. Moreover, it needs to be kept in mind that these slaveholding individuals had almost always just returned from jurisdictions that had legalized and thus normalized slavery, which they had become accustomed to. Thus, this mindset often remained while these slaveholders were back in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (von Mallinckrodt 361).

In this sense, von Mallinckrodt presents a case that was investigated based on a petition filed and directed to Frederick the Great by a Black African slave in 1780. The enslaved African begged the king to order his owner to manumit him. The slave had been purchased in Denmark and had already served as a slave for eight years there. Thus, he was under the impression that he had just two more years left to serve. After the slave was brought to the empire, he served his German owner for another seven years, during which time he was brutalized and forbidden from receiving any instruction in Christianity. The slave asked to be freed based on having been treated badly as well as having served past his time (von Mallinckrodt 362-63). The slave owner claimed to have purchased the slave without any contract that may have restricted his labor and service in any form. Von Mallinckrodt mentions that while investigating the legitimacy of this claim, Frederick the Great had just ordered two enslaved African boys for his court, while many Black Africans

also joined the Prussian military. The very nature of possessing an African slave at court was conceived of as fashionable, and Frederick's brother participated in this practice, too (von Mallinckrodt 364-65). Furthermore, Frederick had engaged in locating a Black servant who had run away a few years prior to this investigation (von Mallinckrodt 365). Von Mallinckrodt describes Frederick's support in locating the runaway servant as his kingly duty that would also be extended to him in the same manner should any of his servants or slaves ever escape (365).

In fact, von Mallinckrodt mentions Frederick the Great as having spoken out and called for the abolition of serfdom, or at for the placement of limitations on the practice of serfdom, while equating this practice to slavery (366). In this sense, he had expressed that the negative effects of customary serfdom applied to the entire state of Pomerania and wished that it could be entirely abolished in 1754. In 1772, he similarly responded to a petition from a male serf by saying that slavery had ended, and that this serf should be protected. In his 1777 "Regierungsformen und Herrscherpflichten," Frederick the Great wrote:

> Von allen Lagen ist dies die unglücklichste und muß das menschliche Gefühl am tiefsten empören. Sicherlich ist kein Mensch dazu geboren, der Sklave von seinesgleichen zu sein. Mit Recht verabscheut man diesen Mißbrauch und meint, man brauche nur zu wollen, um die barbarische Unsitte abzuschaffen. Dem ist aber nicht so; sie stützt sich auf alte Verträge zwischen den Grundherren und den Ansiedlern. Der Ackerbau ist auf der Bauern Frondienste zugeschnitten. Wollte man diese widerwärtige Einrichtung mit einem Male abschaffen, so würde man die ganze Landwirtschaft über den Haufen werfen. Der Adel müßte dann für einen Teil der Verluste, die er an seinen Einkünften erleidet, Entschädigung erhalten. (Frederick the Great qtd. in von Mallinckrodt 366)

Frederick the Great's contributions to these overall discussions about slave-like conditions within the Empire does confirm and reflect his enlightened and progressive approach to governing and ruling within his rights as king. Frederick was concerned with the well-being of his subjects and operated according to rational Reason in terms of an Enlightenment

understanding. His opposition to serfdom—and slavery by extension—does indeed demonstrate the successful ideological transition that had taken place after his ascendance to the throne in 1740 and his commitment to human rights within his absolutist regime. In this sense, he condemns this practice by calling it a barbaric and deplorable custom that was based on old contracts. Frederick the Great mentions these contracts and the fact that an abolition of this very system of serfdom would require the nobles to suffer financial losses. This reasoning hints at there having been some form of pushback among the nobles regarding any plans of his to reform the agricultural sector to reflect any releasing or abolishing measures in terms of serfs and serfdom.

Despite Frederick the Great's progressive and enlightened attitude, which he often and openly demonstrated, von Mallinckrodt alludes to Frank Göse's scholarship that has in fact uncovered misgivings and suspicions from Frederick regarding the lower estates, which ultimately clouded his reform judgment alongside pushback from the nobles: "Friedrichs Reformprogramm [ist] nicht nur am preußischen (rechtlichen) Regionalismus und am adligen Widerstand [gescheitert], sondern in der Haltung des aufgeklärten Herrschers selbst Grenzen fand, die von einer zunehmenden Skepsis gegenüber den unteren Ständen geprägt war" (von Mallinckrodt 366). Based on Göse, von Mallinckrodt asserts that Frederick's actual willingness (or readiness) to institute reform was de facto limited compared to other rulers and nobles. He was also very much determined in his viewpoint by receiving the overall protection of the nobles, which von Mallinckrodt describes using the term "Adelsschutz" (366-67). The case of Frederick the Great presents the economic and political complexities inherent in such discussions because there were often many issues and interests at stake in terms of monetary claims and investments. At the same time, it needs to be kept in mind that Frederick the Great did operate within an absolutist regime that was heavily

dependent on and influenced by the nobles and other wealthy property owners. Frederick's method of governing Prussia was indeed, in spite of his views on following through on reform, quite progressive and enlightened within this socio-cultural context.

To circle back to the petition of the African slave from Denmark, the judge had ultimately determined that there were indeed four instances under which slavery was considered legitimate (von Mallinckrodt 367). While stating that all humans are naturally free, people can be enslaved when captured by the opposite side during war; when contracted to serve as a slave, which often occurred in severe cases of poverty; when a person is born to enslaved individuals; and when an individual is being punished for committing a crime. These cases were in no way compared to the condition of the petitioner; instead, the judge just determined his status as a slave to be legitimate and concluded that it was indeed legal per the law of nature to purchase a human being (von Mallinckrodt 367). The judge took the transnational legal discussion in neighboring jurisdictions into account and argued on the basis of them when giving his statement of reasons:

> Mit der Ablehnung des free soil principle als „nicht mit hinreichenden Gründen unterstützt" und der ebenfalls abgelehnten Vorstellung einer Befreiung durch die Taufe (außer bei jüdischen Eigentümern) wies er außerdem zwei Argumentationsmuster grundsätzlich zurück. Auf diese Weise widerlegte der Gutachter nicht nur potenzielle Gründe, um den Sklaven freizulassen, sondernzog zusätzlich eine scharfe Trennlinie zwischen Sklaverei und Leibeigenschaft, um mögliche Wechselwirkungen auszuschließen. Unter Rückgriff auf die eingangs vorgebrachte naturrechtliche Argumentation kam er deshalb auf sein Urteil zurück, dass von Arnim seinen Sklaven rechtmäßig weiterverkaufen könne. (von Mallinckrodt 368)

Under these circumstances, the petition was denied, and it was deemed legitimate to resell enslaved Africans in the Empire. Thus, it was almost impossible to be legally manumitted as an enslaved African. At the same time, this verdict made sure that the practices of slavery and serfdom were no longer legally equated with each other. Furthermore, the free soil

principle was completely dismissed within the context of German lands. Here, it becomes clear that the judge was well aware of the change in laws and previous verdicts regarding trafficked peoples, which also guided his decision making. Mentioning France, Britain, and the Netherlands demonstrates that people, enslaved Africans, subjects, and professionals were informed about these issues.

Von Mallinckrodt highlights the significance of denying the validity of the free soil principle for the German lands: in this case, Prussia. This move is as important and strategic as was the legal separational practice of slavery and serfdom in order to maintain the Prussian agricultural sector (von Mallinckrodt 369). As Peabody had emphasized when discussing the free soil principle regarding France, the Netherlands, and Britain, "none of these countries had agricultural slavery within its borders" (5). In this sense, this principle presented a danger to the serfdom in Prussia and thus could have brought about the collapse of the agricultural sector. For this reason, it was essential for the verdict to determine differences in slavery and serfdom as well as relinquish any discussions of applying the free soil principle within the borders of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (von Mallinckrodt 369). In this sense, Frederick the Great clearly stated that manumission was not an option in Prussia as he vehemently repudiated the free soil principle and insisted that "Nur ein einschränkender Vertrag könne . . . Grundlage für eine solche Freilassung sein" (von Mallinckrodt 369). Here, the enslaved individual must present proof of being liberated, which made being "unfree" the actual norm (von Mallinckrodt 370).

Von Mallinckrodt's scholarship is indicative of the nature of discussions of slavery and abolition in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. These discussions of a controversial nature emerged from a number of petitions filed by enslaved Africans in hopes of being granted manumission, as had happened in other cases in neighboring jurisdictions

such as Britain, the Netherlands, and France. Von Mallinckrodt demonstrates the transcultural nature of debates centering slavery and abolition as well as slave-like conditions through agricultural slavery (serfdom) in German contexts, which created a second layer of relevance for abolitionism because serfdom was often equated with slavery. Thus, the two were often discussed and critiqued together and equally. Here, von Mallinckrodt claims that during the eighteenth century, "extreme Formen persönlicher Unfreiheit zunehmend als moralisch fragwürdig und ökonomisch dysfunktional wahrgenommen wurden" (379). In this context, enslaved Africans were not necessarily only talked about, but they also took action and demonstrated agency by challenging their conditions of being trafficked transnationally in European contexts, which included the German lands.

Discussions of slavery and abolition were relevant in the German territories due to a number of reasons: 1. Enslaved and trafficked individuals were brought within the borders of the Empire, which resulted in a legal engagement with the laws of slavery, manumission, and abolition; 2. The empire was well aware of the transatlantic slave trade and the practice of slavery regarding Black Africans in the New World because there existed transnational communication across national borders, which is indicative of German individuals' involvement in slavery and the trade in slaves in the New World by way of the very people who also trafficked slaves into the Empire; 3. The German territories were often expected to rule according to other verdicts or legal outcomes in neighboring jurisdictions; 4. Serfdom was considered to be a slavery-like practice and thus was heavily critiqued and even equated with slavery within the transatlantic context; and 5. Many serfs had hoped that manumission granted to enslaved Africans would provide a pathway to the abolition of serfdom, which was ultimately barred from occurring in order to not provide the serfs with a basis for more critique, questioning, and protest.

It is in this sense that slavery and the petitions filed based on being enslaved made "Versklavungspraktiken im Alten Reich . . . sicht- und greifbar [als auch] Interferenzen mit anderen Formen der Unfreiheit" (von Mallinckrodt 380). Thus, transnational discussions about slavery and abolition were present in the German context, as were these same discussions based on state-sanctioned agricultural slavery and its heavy similarities to the transatlantic institution of slavery. Von Mallinckrodt emphasizes the dynamism within the larger European context:

> Auf dieser mittleren Ebene erscheint das Alte Reich nicht losgelöst vonwesteuropäischen Entwicklungen, sondern eingebettet in praktische Fragen von Sklaverei und Abolition. Die mittlere Ebene erlaubt überdies eine multiperspektivische Untersuchung dieser Phänomene und schärft den Blick für den strategischen Gebrauch von Argumenten. Sklaverei und Leibeigenschaft haben deshalb nicht nur eine wissenschaftlich-konzeptionelle beziehungsweise rechtliche Dimension, sondern wurden von Zeitgenossen je nach Interesse gleichgesetzt oder gegenübergestellt. (von Mallinckrodt 380)

As already touched upon, Noyes highlights the importance of discussions on serfdom in a European context because "the question of serfdom and chattel slavery in Europe was easily transposed onto that of slavery outside Europe" (76). Rainer Koch understands the debates around slavery and abolition in anglophone and francophone contexts to have enabled "die Auseinandersetzung mit der Sklavenfrage von ihrem Gegenstand im engeren Sinne, der Negersklaverei, abzulösen und zum Vorreiter der Kritik an den gesellschaftlichen, ökonomischen und politischen Verhältnissen in Deutschland selbst zu machen" (533) in his 1976 article titled "Liberalismus, Konservativismus und das Problem der Negersklaverei. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des politischen Denkens in Deutschland in der ersten Hälfte des 19.Jahrhunderts." Thus, any textual engagements with issues of slavery and abolition could be understood to be speaking to the condition of serfdom faced by many peasants in Europe, including in several German territories. Texts that took up the first subject were

accordingly interpreted as also discussing the other context, extending their reach and relevance in German-speaking lands. Koch mentions German literary contributions, which he terms political poetry, to this transcultural debate on slavery and abolition by alluding to three German-language authors of slave plays as well as Herder's contribution to this larger discourse, *Neger-Idyllen* (Negro Idylls) (532).

The historian Katrin Schüller also notes that in the German principalities, slavery functioned as a metaphor for serfdom (612). In those German lands, as well as those that were occupied by German-speaking individuals in a colonizing manner and forced into serfdom, German enlightened intellectual discourses are understood to have pushed reforms in order to terminate the practice of slavery (Noyes 76). Peabody identifies a similar development in the French context, in which "members of France's intellectual and judicial elite appropriated the symbol after slave to criticize perceived excesses of royal authority" (10). The metaphorical use of slavery and slave characters was not limited to intellectual discussions, but was also visible in literary cultural productions during the the eighteenth century.

Sander L. Gilman discusses the symbolism and significance of the image of Black African slaves in French literature. He mentions European writers who depicted the Black African in the context of slavery during the second half of the eighteenth century. This portrayal was tied to questioning the legitimacy of slavery overall. Gilman states that this imagery stemmed from the French genre *literature négrophile* (36). Belinda Elizabeth Jack describes this genre as presenting both fictional and theoretical texts that are aimed at getting the European public to pay attention to the horrors of slavery that befall African individuals when they are enslaved and transported to the New World (16). While these works are often highly romantic in nature—evident through novels such as Aphra Behn's *Oronoko* (1688) or

Saint Lambert's *Ziméo* (1769)—they depict enslaved African lovers who face obstacles in the form of slavery, the trade in slaves, and the violent nature of both. Thus, they still articulate a clear critique of slavery (Jack 16). Gilman highlights the centrality of the figure of the Black African in bondage in this genre (36). Jack writes that to further show slavery in a critical light, *literature négrophile* presents

> detailed descriptions after violence of slavery. There are frequent and full accounts of the manner in which slaves were captured, after voyage across the Atlantic, off life in the colonies, including the conditions of work on plantations, and accounts of slave revolts. The brutality of slavery is thus depicted with grim realism, and a comprehensive view of the life of the slave often given. (16)

Gilman states that these works surfaced during and leading up to the American Revolution, in which French thinkers showed concern about the African slave as an individual while also critiquing and raising concerns about the institution of slavery and the trade in slaves overall (36). Gilman suggests that the French-language context heavily influenced German literature because "the second half of the eighteenth century saw a radical change in the approach of European writers to the figure of the Black and to the question of slavery. … It is the influence of … works produced in France during the second half of the eighteenth century which reshaped the manner of viewing the Black in contemporary German literature" (36). The German-language versions of these works in the form of stage plays is then indicative of the metaphorical use of images related to slavery and enslaved Black Africans to protest, contest, or critique oppressive slavery-like institutions within the German lands.

Equality and Human Rights

Koch describes engaging critically with slavery and the transatlantic slave trade as the "Speerspitze der Aufklärung im Kampf um die allgemeine Durchsetzung der

Menschenrechte" (531). He mentions that these deliberations, while some were missing engagements with serfdom in Germany, resulted in the emergence of what he calls a camp of early German liberalism (533). Koch points to early liberals as having defined slavery in a broader context, according to Montesquieu. Here, slavery was also understood to include contexts such as "bürgerliche Sklaverei, Haussklaverei und politische Knechtschaft" (Koch 534). Koch suggests that the nature of the different feudal dependent power relations was understood to present the general political mechanism of being gagged by absolutism (534). As mentioned before, these are the reasons that debates on the legitimacy or illegitimacy of slavery caught fire in a German context, because there were similarities in terms of slavery-like oppressing institutions that people were burdened with and sought to critique or even terminate by way of discussions about slavery and the transatlantic slave trade in the German lands.

Within the context of liberalism, Koch distinguishes between two camps specifically: He defines the radical liberals as those influenced by rationalized Reason and Rousseau's anthropological understanding, which also meant there was no sensible or logical way to justify any slavery-like conditions overall—including within the German context. Thus, this group instantly demanded the abolition of slavery, the emancipation of slaves, and overall equality between Black and white people. The second camp that Koch mentions also considered themselves somewhat liberal. However, he describes them as having been led by an understanding of the Christian law of nature. While these people were also in opposition to slavery, they did not advocate for an immediate abolition or emancipation of slavery and slaves (Koch 534). Instead, they were proponents of an ameliorationalist approach to slavery, considered the issue to be related to property rights rather than slavery per se, and thus were not committed to making drastic overall changes (Koch 353).

Koch writes that the radical liberals engaged enlightened rationalist philosophical, political, and legal debates in the German-language context and thus drove the conversation about slavery and serfdom into a larger discussion indicative of early tenets of understandings of universalist human rights. Here, it may come as a surprise to see Immanuel Kant listed among those conceived of as radical liberals. Koch describes Kant's legal understanding of the impossibility of both slavery and serfdom within the context of rationalization (538). Kant addresses this by way of discussing the so-called Gesinde, the German term for domestic servants. In his reasoning, Kant refutes some of the points brought forth by judges in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation that were used to justify the status of slaves and dismiss petitioners' requests to be granted liberty in non-slaveholding states. Here, Kant specifically identifies inheritance law and parental law.

Kant uses those legal examples to establish that every human is born free. He gives the example of being deprived of one's freedom in the sense of being enslaved due to having committed a crime. In this case, the enslavement is solely meant to burden the actual criminal and not be applied to any other individuals. Along these lines, Kant negates the possibility of making any claims to the enslaved individual's progeny being born as slaves and thus constituting property as well. He takes the same stance regarding war prisoners who are then turned into or conceived of as slaves or serfs (Koch 539). He also argues similarly in the context of serfdom, stating that since every human being is born free, domestic servants can only contractually and temporarily enter into a relationship in which the domestic servant relinquishes their liberty in favor of another person, due to the human liberty principle (Koch 538). Thus, Kant does not conceive of the practices of slavery and serfdom as legitimate overall. Koch mentions that most of those radical liberals were proponents of Smith's national economy. In this sense, they not only found slavery morally

reprehensible, but also thought that it was economically unreasonable to own a slave. In fact, they believed that slave owners would be at an economic disadvantage to people with traditional employees (Koch 540).

The professor and economist August Ferdinand Lueder addressed the issues of slavery and serfdom from a larger economic context in his 1802 book *Ueber Nationalindustrie und Staatswirtschaft. Nach Adam Smith bearbeitet*. He identifies economic, societal, social, and international consequences of slavery (Koch 541). Lueder discusses Germany's classic national economy in the context of slavery and serfdom, but also branches out into other transcultural contexts of these practices globally. Lueder brings forth a number of arguments that highlight the harmful qualities of the institutions of serfdom and slavery in an agrarian plantation context. He points to a higher cost of production when using slave labor rather than free individuals. He believes that paid, free laborers would put in more effort due to being compensated, whereas unpaid slave laborers would not because the success of the crops has no bearing on their situation—they lack individual motivation to work harder (Koch 542). Lueder elaborates on this point by saying that slaves expected to be maltreated whether they performed well or not; brutalization was part of their daily lives. Even unpaid, free laborers would be less cost-intensive, Lueder writes, because these workers would be provided for by the landowner and thus motivated to put in the effort to work hard (Koch 542). Lueder also mentions the possibility of enslaved laborers damaging production equipment as a method of expressing their grievances, thus sabotaging the entire operation, which again would require the investment of extra funds (Koch 554).

Furthermore, in order for production to run smoothly and for there to be an increase in the products the farm yields, the landowner needs to utilize more enslaved laborers than he would free laborers due to the conditions the slaves are held in (Koch 546).

Lueder sees this as ultimately resulting in an economic decline because the enslaved laborers are aware that their work is not appreciated and thus lack any motivation to sustain or improve production (Koch 547). The consequent decline in production is tied to the slaves no longer wanting to improve or develop as human beings who are a vital part of the agricultural industry. Therefore, the mental condition of enslaved laborers is also understood to contribute to the moral, ethical, and cultural deterioration of societies that are built on unfree labor (Koch 547).

These conditions have an impact on the social class of landowners, too. There is no moral or ethical contract that both the enslaved individual and the slaveowner have to abide by. In this sense, the slaveholder fully depends on his slaves to ensure the smooth progression of his entire family's daily routine, including activities such as breastfeeding and childrearing. Here, Lueder specifically alludes to the West Indies and calls out the psychological impact of families growing accustomed to the institution of slavery being a natural circumstance of life. Over time, the social class of owners becomes inherently brutal, Lueder writes, and they learn to despise Black African peoples, which ultimately develops into just a part of the larger culture. Lueder asserts that the slaveowners become depraved individuals, which is indicative of the decay of society on a large scale that encompasses the entire white ruling social class. In this sense, there are two types of deterioration that are detectable: First off, the physical and mental deterioration of the enslaved Africans, who are subjected to regular inhumane treatment at the hands of slave holders; and secondly, the moral deterioration of the slaveowners, who solely foreground their own economic growth (Koch 547).

Lastly, Lueder sees the very condition and institution of slavery as having a global impact even on countries and states that do not practice slavery, which ultimately leads to

the destruction of prosperity on an international level (Koch 548-49). Here, Lueder speaks about how Black individuals are further captured and abducted from the African continent in order to maintain a steady flow of incoming free and exploited labor to slaveholding societies at large, which places the entire African continent in service of Euro-American capitalistic structures. In an economic context, there are consequences for the entire world economy. National gross domestic product is often lower in slaveholding societies, according to Lueder, which ultimately then limits those societies' opportunities to import goods. These limitations result in a slowdown of international traffic in goods and wares, a network that is then unable to reach its full potential. Lueder condemns slavery for its negative and deteriorating effect globally, and declares that any peoples, states, or countries that tolerate or accept slavery are at war with all of humanity (Koch 549). In this sense, Lueder states that all it takes is one country violating human rights by way of legitimizing slavery to have a larger impact that ripples outward to affect the entire world. He considers attempts to implement paid labor to be a losing battle in the face of the continued existence of slavery and the trade in slaves. Lueder conceives of slavery and serfdom as standing in the way of efforts to civilize and moralize humanity (Koch 549).

In his global discussion of slavery, Lueder circles back to the era of Las Casas and mentions Europeans as having borne the responsibility for expanding the practice of agricultural slavery beyond their national borders to the extent that it now burdens all of humanity (Koch 549). Lueder gives detailed descriptions of the maltreatment and torture of enslaved Black Africans and contrasts this to the white European notion of superiority in order to dismantle it by laying out the magnitude of the brutality enacted upon slaves (Koch 550). In order to foreground the humanity of Black Africans, Lueder alludes to their talents in music and poetry and even considers African political constitutions to be quite similar to

those in Europe. While Lueder argues quite rationally in terms of abolishing slavery and slavery-like systems and seemingly understands there to be an equality between Black Africans and white people, he still shows some biases that may speak to an internalized notion of African inferiority. For example, he writes:

> Folgen wir der Natur, so ehren wir den Menschen im Menschen; so ist jeder Mensch ohne Rücksicht auf seine Farbe, auf den Boden, den er bewohnt, auf den Himmel, unter dem erlebt, und auf der Stufe der Kultur, auf der er steht, ein Vernunftswesen; ein Wesen, das nur den Gesetzen der Vernunft unterworfen ist; das die Freiheit hat, alles zu tun, was Niemandes Rechte beeinträchtigt. (Lueder qtd. in Koch 551)

Lueder indicates that people from different parts of the world may be at different cultural levels or stages, yet he does not believe that varied position nor any external features to be grounds for inhumane treatment. Nonetheless, Lueder seemingly believes in hierarchical cultural structures, which also automatically presumes there to exist a superior cultural expression.

Furthermore, Lueder's understanding echoes Herder's notion of cultural relativism, which Lueder may have been influenced by in his liberal views. Koch defines Lueder's perspective as ethically liberal and influenced by jurisprudence. In this sense, Lueder considers any arbitrary constraints or restrictions of liberty by one individual to another to be legally baseless due to a lack of rights. That includes any serfdom in Russia, Poland, or Denmark as well as "grundherrliche Hörigkeit in Deutschland und gutsherrliche Erbuntertänigkeit und- pflichtigkeit in den preußischen Provinzen . . . [sowie] . . . die Sklaverei in Nordamerika und Westindien und die antiken Sklavenhaltergesellschaften" (Koch 551). While Lueder states that he has no expectations or hopes regarding human justice, he does note the economic significance of overthrowing and abolishing slavery (Koch 552).

Lueder's discussion of slavery and serfdom as well as any legal deliberations based on petitions filed by enslaved Black Africans demonstrates a paradigm change in dealing with the issues at hand. As von Mallinckrodt mentions, Christian affiliations[16] by way of having received Christian instruction or having been baptized, are no longer grounds to grant Black Africans liberty or interfere with them being resold in the German context. In fact, von Mallinckrodt highlights that this was never even truly the case. Other than during the era of Las Casas and George Fox, as well as some exceptions in the German states, debates on slavery have now turned out to be of a secularist, political, and fiscal nature, in the context of the emerging capitalist economy. In this sense, Lueder examines the cases of slavery and serfdom within a comparative transcultural economic context that is indicative of a rational and thus enlightened and unbiased investigation and that shows early traces of universalist understandings of human rights within a German-language context. This larger debate

[16] Interestingly, the Christian theologian Katie Geneva Cannon identifies what can only be described as a Christian gatekeeping technique in eighteenth century America in her 2004 chapter "Slave Ideology and Biblical Interpretation." Due to a prevailing understanding of human beings being free by nature and thus bestowed with natural rights, Black people were not considered part of the human realm. This designation was needed because the idea of the oneness of humanity would have let Black people a part of the concept of all humans being equal in God's eyes. For this reason, Black people had to be robbed of all human privileges (Cannon 414). The denial of basic humanity gave Black Africans the identity of an inferior species, a precondition that made it impossible for them to be redeemed. According to Cannon, this positionality was rationalized by the biblical doctrine of the perpetual inferiority—and thus condemnation to slavery—of Black Africans through the curse of Ham (414). This white legitimization of African damnation was still considered true in the late nineteenth century. In a 2003 study on race and religion titled *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity and Islam,* David Goldenberg describes the curse of Ham as having been especially prominent in discourses in Great Britain and North America during the transatlantic slave trade (175). Cannon asserts that the story of Ham in Genesis 9.25-27 was used in proslavery efforts to legitimize the overall practice of slavery. It was also used by white supremacists specifically to justify the enslavement of Black Africans (414). Cannon states that Ham became widely known as "the progenitor of the Black race, and the story of the curse that Noah pronounced against Canaan, the son of his son Ham, was symbolically linked to the institution of racial slavery" (414). Cannon refers to a "faulty exegesis and social pressure that depicted people with black skin as demonic, unholy, infectious progenitors of sin, full of animality and matriarchal proclivities" (415). In the eighteenth century, there was a similar understanding in the German that Black people descended from Cain. Goldenberg shows that the curse of Cain is also often mentioned in European literature of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, but he detects inconsistencies in this narrative because Cain's mark was that of the first murderer (179). Tying together both curses, people at the time claimed that "Ham must have married a descendant of black Cain. This way Ham's descendants . . . would be both black and enslaved, conveniently coinciding with the situation current at the time" (Goldenberg 178).

demonstrates that German intellectuals and writers were able to make use of the overarching condition of transatlantic slavery by drawing on a variety of Euro-American discourses, such as those highlighted by Gilman, in order to take a political stance against the oppression that serfs suffered by rightfully highlighting the similarities between serfdom and slavery. Koch's scholarship demonstrates the secularized manner in which these issues were increasingly addressed during the second half of the nineteenth century.[17]

Leading up to the emergence of those discourses, principles of freedom and social equality were starting to form toward the end of the eighteenth century in response to slavery-like conditions (Peabody 8). It is in this sense that Lynn Hunt establishes that understandings of human rights emerged from new attitudes and notions about punishment and torture, which I believe can be considered alongside the enslavement of Black Africans.[18] Hunt states that these newly emerged attitudes, which were transculturally proliferated, surfaced around the 1760s. She states that these understandings were not only present in France, "but also elsewhere in Europe and the American colonies. King Frederick the Great of Prussia abolished judicial torture in his lands in 1754" (Hunt 15). I argue that these changing understandings made it possible for enslaved Africans to question the laws of the lands by filing petitions to be granted freedom, thus asserting their agency and human

[17] In his article, Koch also mentions Johann Friedrich Eusebius Lotz (1770– 1838), who was an economist as well. Lotz specifically discusses the disadvantages of serfdom in a larger European context. Moreover, Koch refers to Gustav Hugo (1764–1844), who was a jurist and further discussed the issue of transatlantic slavery and enslaved Black Africans in the context of serfdom from a judicial perspective.

[18] The historian Thomas L. Haskell identifies a similar development as he demonstrates how capitalism's prevalence beyond borders and cultures ultimately resulted in the nature of abolitionism (342). Haskell argues that humanitarianism emerged through an understanding of the linkage between the consumption of colonial goods and the enslavement of Black Africans in the New World. Haskell understands this awareness as having given rise to abolitionist sentiments. Therefore, this transnational social movement cut across classes, races, nationalities, genders, nation-states, and regions.

rights.[19] In some cases across Europe, these demands for freedom were actually granted. Due to the changing climate, these legal discussions became increasingly more present in literature, as well: "Titles that included some mention of rights . . . then steadily rose until the 1790s, when the number literally exploded, quadrupling in the 1790s as compared to the 1780s or any other decade in the eighteenth century. Human rights had entered the discourse" (Hunt 7).

While Hunt, like Peabody, asserts that the origin of discussions about human rights is contradictory because they emerged from oppressive inhumane conditions,[20] David Zaret centers modern revolutionary uprisings as being crucial to the formation of human rights discourses (Hunt 17; Peabody 8) because he deems these eras brought forth cultural

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[19] Similary, David Zaret describes human rights to be "the basis for claims by individuals that impose limits on other claims arising from legislation, policy or advocacy. Against laws, administrative rulings, or political agendas, human rights are trump cards that override gross threats to the rule of law, rights to life and property, and freedom of association, communication and conscience" (48). Furthermore, Zaret considers the option to express grievances publicly and personally by addressing the head of state to be both a communicative act and a right that is foundational to the modern conceptual notion of human rights, because each petitioner had the right to be heard (58).

[20] Hunt describes the emergence of debates on human rights as well as the attitudes of human rights advocates as equally paradoxical. She discusses the momentum during the era of the French Revolution that resulted in the national maxim of liberty, equality, and brotherhood and the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which assures "liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression" (Hunt 15). Yet at the same time, "the rights of free blacks and slaves were . . . up for discussion . . . but as the experience of the new United States showed . . . rights could be declared even as slavery was maintained. In March 1790 the Assembly voted to exempt the colonies from the constitution and to prosecute anyone who attempted to prompt uprisings against the slave system" (Hunt 16). This vote echoed and solidified the 1685 sanctioned code noir. Hunt also alludes to Abbé Henri Grégoire, whom she puts in the category of people who would be contemporarily conceived of as religiously bigoted and racist. Grégoire advocated broadly and persistently for the rights of Black people and Jews; however, he described Jews as "parasitic plants who eat away the substance of the tree to which they are attached" (Grégoire qtd. in Hunt 16). Grégoire's insult stands in stark contrast to the initiative he showed when he and other revolutionaries felt "compelled to grant Jews the same forms of citizenship enjoyed by other French men. Nowhere else in the world, not even in the new United States, did Jews have full civil and political rights" (Hunt 16). Hunt emphasizes the originality of this gesture within the ever-present context of anti-Semitism during the eighteenth century. This is similarly expressed by Peabody, who mentions that French advocates for freedom contributed to the end of the Ancien Régime and thus also despotic tyranny (8). Yet at the same time, Peabody characterizes these attorneys and magistrates as not standing for "universal social equality or access to equal rights" because some of those defending Black rights showed "patronizing and racist" behaviors regarding their Black clients and Jewish owners (Peabody 8).

innovations that advanced arguments regarding human rights (49). Intellectual curiosity and experimentation resulted in byproducts that took on a reactionary and revolutionary nature, both intentional and unintentional. In the past, these included:

> Temporary disabling of agencies of social control that limited oral and written discourse, turn over and a ranks of clerics, educators, and other officeholders who controlled the levers of cultural production, and growing opportunities for popular participation in political discussions and debates as contending elites issued appeals to public opinion in competitive efforts to mobilize fiscal and human resources for sustained, violent conflict. (Zaret 49)

As already addressed, the revolutionary milieu was conducive to debates around human rights. It needs to be noted that the changing climate and attitudes, including a paradigm shift in discussing matters of slavery, were not welcomed and practiced by all individuals. In this sense, Koch, for instance, mentions two liberal groups in German lands that were proponents of antislavery thought on the basis of distinctive and opposing maxims that demanded different approaches altogether. Similarly, both in slaveholding and serfdom-practicing societies, nobility, landowners, and slaveholders were often not in agreeance with the cultural innovations by intellectuals as well as their subjects.

It is along these lines that I understand Noyes's description of opposition to serfdom in German lands to have come from a camp of German intellectuals. It is important to understand that people had different agendas, including sustaining personal wealth, while survival and being granted human rights were two sides of the same coin. Thus, any changes should not be understood to present a monolithic narrative of a paradigm shift. There exist nuanced responses that are indicative of the complexity that Peabody and Hunt address when identifying contradictory behaviors and contexts. Different measures are taken, especially in terms of centering slavery and abolition, due to the stakes being so high transculturally as well as in the specific German context of serfdom. While slavery and the

trade in slaves were abolished in the second half of the nineteenth century within the Euro-American space, which presents a win for the human rights of Black African peoples and could speak to an acceptance of African humanity overall, Paul Gilroy emphasizes a resultant understanding of ethnic absolutism that still bars contemporary people of African descent from being considered part of the European sphere.

Gilroy states that the notion of enlightened universality is grounded in the premise of the inclusion of all of humanity. But he negates that notion through his discussion of how race, racialization, and nationality originated from ethnic absolutism, which assigns Black diasporic people the status of non-human and/or non-citizen (Gilroy 6). In arguing that the institution of racialized slavery is an inherent part of Western civilization, Gilroy describes the slave/master relationship as being central to Black diasporic critical debates on modernity. He claims that the fundamental nature of philosophical and literary modernity lies in a sense of purposeful perpetuation and participation in "racialist reason and white supremacist terror" (Gilroy x). Gilroy states that the notion of ethnic exclusivity denies Black diasporic people entry into European nation-states and disallows identification within this nationalistic conceptual framework. The boundaries of nation-states are seen as protecting and preserving ethnic purity at all costs. The cultural plurality of the Black Atlantic is considered to be actively trespassing by way of identifying as Black or as an innate part of the larger ethnically pure citizens (Gilroy 7). The idea of trespassing also extends to physically residing in particular Euro-American nation-states designed to only be populated by individuals who match the ethnic makeup of the majority of the nation (Gilroy 7).

German Intellectual Engagements with Black Africans

John Noyes discusses German-language responses to the expanding world of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which he defines as the "first signs of globalization," by focusing on philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) in his 2015 work *Herder: Aesthetics Against Imperialism* (3). The expansion that Noyes addresses is the enlargement of the European world that is indicative of entanglements as well as direct connections to imperialism, slavery, the transatlantic slave trade, and colonialism. In this transnational as well as transatlantic context, vital questions and assumptions of human communal life and cohabitation arose (Noyes 3). This is due to a rapidly changing environment and atmosphere:

> Brutal conquests of previous centuries are making way for new forms of economic and political interaction, with their own characteristic modes of exploitation. The discovery of the world is rapidly approaching completion, and the conquest and enslavement of other cultures is meeting with ever more vociferous opposition, while at the same time the world market is becoming increasingly consolidated, and the diversity of the world cultures is rapidly becoming a fact of life. (Noyes 4)

The beginning of these global processes had an impact on understandings of the subject and subjectivity, which was understood to incorporate all of humanity and resulted in a global consciousness as a response to shifting economic and political structures (Noyes 6). Writers and thus cultural productions were impacted by this changing environment.

I deem an engagement with Herder's conceptual notion of humanity to be beneficial at this point because it provides an understanding of the views of non-Western people in the context of Western discussions. Herder's views on humanity are vital in establishing his foundational stance on notions of human inferiority and, by extension, his view on slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Hans Adler thoroughly discusses Herder's concept of

Humanität[21] in his 2009 chapter "Herder's concept of Humanität." Adler explains the etymological origin of the word humanity, as axioms indicative of a paradigm shift, in its relation to fairness and Reason as well as a historical concept. The discussions relevant to our understanding of slavery and abolition within the context of the Enlightenment are humanity as a quantitative term and in regard to Reason. Adler concludes that the inception of Herder's concept of humanity is a symptom of its time as an "urgent need . . . to change his time [that did not apply to or comply with the workings of Humanität, which resulted in] the greater . . . desire for it (113). Thus, humanity is in and of itself a product of its time and circumstances, as was the abolitionist movement alongside abolitionist sentiments. The notion of humanity prompted by social conditions and circumstances resonates with the African American scholar Ashraf H. A. Rushdy's concept of intertextuality regarding the emergence of Neo-slave narratives. Rushdy discusses topical links in cultural productions. He posits that cultural productions emerge from and simultaneously contribute to social conditions in his chapter "Master Texts and Slave Narratives: Race, Form, and Intertextuality in the Field of Cultural Production" (1999). While Rushdy addresses intertextuality, he asserts that "the ways texts mediate the social conditions of their formal production" (14). Cultural productions are thus explored as emerging from and contributing to a particular social condition (14). In this context, Rushdy states that "to read intertextually is to discern how a given text creatively alludes to and possibly rewrites a predecessor text, evokes the political dynamic in the field of cultural production, and inscribes into that dialogue its concerns with the social relations in the field of power" (14). Cultural productions should therefore be considered social and material because they clearly reveal

[21] I will refer to this as humanity.

"the way a culture thinks about itself, articulating and proposing solutions for the problems that shape a particular historical moment" (Rushdy 16). Rushdy refers to links between socio-cultural conditions and cultural productions and points to the significance of self-perception through cultural productions. In this sense, Rushdy puts emphasis on the circumstances that lead to the emergence of specific cultural productions that are symptomatic of budding discourses of the time.

With what constitutes humanity shifting depending on context, scholarship has struggled to offer an exact meaning for the term, despite its prominence as one of Herder's core concepts, as Adler notes (94). Adler provides an entry point into the discussion of humanity by drawing on Robert T. Clark's discussion in his 1955 biography of Herder titled *Herder: His Life and Thought*. Clark signifies the importance of differentiating between Herder's concepts of humanity (Humanität) and mankind (Menschheit) in order to gain a better understanding of both terms. Mankind and humanity are conceptually related to one another. In this sense, mankind constitutes the entirety of human individuals—past, present, and future—in terms of physical tangibility. Humanity refers to an attainable and ideal state of mankind and classifies mankind's inherent potential for achieving this ideal of humanity. "Hence 'humanity' is both an ideal condition and a definable real quality" (Clark qtd. in Adler 94). Clark notes that this process was inspired by the Aristotelian philosophy of becoming and then was "transferred to the field of eighteenth-century humanitarian thought" (Clark qtd. in Adler 94).

When Herder uses humanity as a quantitative term, it comprises all human beings: "They are all equally endowed with it, as different as their respective development may have been so far" (Adler 104). Adler notes that Herder's understanding of humanity clearly reflects global equality, which is indicative of Herder's strong critique of slavery,

colonization, racism, and Eurocentrism. Though Herder doesn't explicitly state his aversion to western (specifically European) world domination, it can be inferred from the time period he writes in as well as the topics he addresses in his works (Noyes 9). Herder critiques the mechanisms of oppression and conquest with regard to the foreign policies that "European nations and their trading companies" employ (Noyes 9). In this sense, Herder states that if nations were to stay within their own boundaries and thus solely utilize what is considered theirs by nature without longing for or demanding other nations' and people's natural resources, then perhaps nobody would "need to trade the citizen's birthright of his fatherland for foreign advantages" (Herder qtd. in Noyes 9). Herder accuses and at the same time condemns European imperialism by way of asking rhetorical questions:

> Has not Europe been troubling itself and the world for long enough? Has it not for long enough waged senseless wars of religion and hereditary succession? Is not every continent dripping with the blood of those whom is slaughtered? . . . And furthermore, what is to be said of "the culture that the *Spanish*, *Portuguese*, *English* and *Dutch* brought to the East and West Indies, to the Negroes of Africa, the peaceful Islands of the South Sea? Do not all the lands cry out—some more, some less—for revenge?" (Herder qtd. in Noyes 10)

In this context, imperialism is seen to be a self-serving act or a misunderstanding of natural laws that results in a subjugation of peoples as well as a severe devastation of their environments (Noyes 10-11).

In contrast to this self-serving European mission, Herder values all cultures, which is inherent in his notion of humanity. It is along these lines that Adler emphasizes Herder's cultural relativism: Though equal in value, not all humans occupy the same standards. Individual differences come into play because human beings are considered diverse in their very nature, which is representative of variety and cultural differences, Thus, humanity is not exactly the same around the world, yet the potential to attain humanity is equal among all

human beings. Adler explains that humanity "is the purpose of history and leads to the evolution of the greatest variety in the species [and] the individual specificity of *Humanität* is what constitutes historical reality" (104). There is an actual succession of events, and anything that has not yet occurred will happen in the future. Within this concept, humanity is a quality that every human possesses, which refers to all "persons, as well as ethnic groups, regional social organizations, [and] nations" (Adler 104).

Bringing these perspectives together, Noyes explains that Herder's notions of humanity, cultural diversity, and cultural relativism were matters of human rights within the global economy in Herder's eyes (75). For this reason, Herder was critical toward not only slavery but also serfdom, by extension (Noyes 76). He understood both practices as "extreme examples of the domination of one people by another more powerful one" (Noyes 76). Herder viewed slavery and serfdom as wrong primarily based on a human developmental standpoint, which classified slavery as unnatural (Noyes 76). In fact, Herder makes an inherent connection between European serfdom and international slavery in his examination of the rapid globalizing expansion spurred by Western conquest: "There is no doubt . . . that slavery in the non-European world is a product of the expanding world economy, a displacement of the slavery that Europe requires economically, but morally cannot tolerate to witness at home" (Noyes 76).

Considering Herder's understanding from the perspective of his time in Riga (Latvia), where he worked as a teacher, it becomes clear Herder was facing a dilemma that was indicative of his notion of cultural relativism. While Herder advocated for cultural diversity in the sense of developing on a culture's own terms and pace, humanity is a quality rather than an achievement. The nature of shared human values in contrast to practices as part of local traditions presented an incompatibility in his understanding of humanity. Here,

the illegitimacy of serfdom was addressed by reform movements initiated by German-speaking intellectuals, a group Herder belonged to. Yet, the very fact of critiquing this local practice, let alone abolishing it, was problematic because it looked like "both a colonizing and civilizing project . . . [especially] as a member of the [German] colonizing elite. These difficulties underlined the duplicity involved in supporting both Enlightenment reform and the expansion of the world economy" (Noyes 76). Herder's predicament is indicative of his overall awareness of the historical and globalizing factors that he tries to negotiate as well as defy in his philosophical scholarship, while reflecting and being aware of his dominating positionality in some instances (Noyes 76). It is along these lines that Herder had further dealt with slavery to ultimately define it as a sign of having failed to reconcile the principles of local customs and the necessity of promoting humanity. He specifically expresses his condemnation of the transatlantic slave trade and the trade in Black African slaves as he envisions a "history of the trade in negroes banned and of slavery abolished in all parts of the world . . . [as] a beautiful monument in the entrance to the temple of universal humanity" (Herder qtd. in Noyes 76).

Herder's understanding of these global economic processes points to a new constellation of globalized subjectivity that affects "imaginary relationships between local and global phenomena" (Noyes 6). Herder's works can be read directly in context with the reorganization of the world because he identified positive as well as negative outcomes that are traceable in his philosophy. The negative developments that Herder delineates here are typified by the transatlantic slave trade and the annihilation of indigenous populations in the New World (Noyes 6).

Herder's discussion of aesthetics as a form of cultural and artistic expression mirrors his notion of humanity as a quality and is used as a lens to discuss his anti-imperial

convictions (Noyes 7). In this context, artistic expression should be considered to be universal and to have a specific place in human life; therefore, it is meant to be particular to a culture. However, a German philosophical rationalist understanding can limit universalized artistic expression to a fixed set of rules, which is ultimately related to a concept that allows a dominant culture to impose their social structure, economy, and value system on those of another culture. This is because there are no standards as to how artistic expression, regardless of culture, is supposed to look to be considered ordinary and thus appreciated (Noyes 7). Noyes understands Herder's reaction to the increasing imperial ideology to be noteworthy and mentions this ideology as having prompted Herder to reformulate the questions created by rationalist philosophy, shifting them into a domain of aesthetics, anthropology, and history (7). In this way, Noyes emphasizes Herder's premise that "all cultures need to develop in the manner that is appropriate for their own particular environment, their history, their traditions and their understanding of the world" (8). Because this can be viewed as some sort of natural law, Herder objected to any subjugation that is a violent intervention: "Nature is everywhere a living whole, and it wants to be gently followed and improved, but not violently dominated" (Herder qtd. in Noyes 9).

This domination also extended to scholarship indicative of the imperial subjugation of peoples and their customs through literary philosophical rationalist understandings. One example documenting that contemporary intellectuals were aware of the implications of biased scholarship is that Herder reacted harshly to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's (1749–1832) translation and adaption of Voltaire's play *Le Fanatisme ou Mahomet le Prophète* (1736), according to Berman (*German Literature on the Middle East* 176). As commonly understood at that time, Voltaire offered criticism of any kind of fanaticism, which was amplified by Goethe's changes to the original and resulted in a portrayal of the prophet Muhammed "as a

questionable and lecherous character" (Berman, *German Literature on the Middle East* 176). Herder's outrage aligns with his understanding of humanity and is described as follows: "I would have never believed Goethe capable of such sinning against history (he turned Mahomet into a rough simplistic fraud, murderer, and lecher) and against humanity" (Herder in Mommsen qtd. in Berman, *German Literature on the Middle East* 176).

Addressing the specific context of slavery and abolition, it is already known that Herder severely condemned crimes committed against humanity by virtue of European interventions in other parts of the world because natural laws were violated and thus resulted in a hinderance of the natural progression of indigenous cultures (Noyes 280). This violent inference can be considered to be a disregard for and destruction of the principles of the natural laws of diversity in unity. In this context, humanity can only be understood to operate universally by way of a concept that allows for various manifestations of humanity (Noyes 282). The idea of natural diversity, which ultimately demonstrates unity, is what drives Herder to propose "a new model for understanding history, geography, and anthropology; and in doing so he hopes to develop guiding principles for international law and human rights" (Noyes 281).

Herder lists like-minded allies with regard to his anti-imperialist discourse in his letters, among which are "a number of European writers, philosophers, and travellers … such as Bartolomé de las Casas, François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon, Charles-Irénée Castel, the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, William Penn, Reinhold Forster, Montesquieu, Giambattisto Vico, and others" (Noyes 282). Georg Forster, who was Reinhold Forster's son, was critical of slavery, as was his wife, Therese Huber, after having experienced serfdom in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Lentz 193). Herder

also mentions Quakers by way of William Penn and thus takes a critical stance regarding slavery:

> Die thätigsten [sic] Bemühungen zu Abschaffung des schändlichen Negerhandels und Sclavendienstes [sic] sind ihr Werk; wobei indes; überhaupt auch Methodisten und Presbyterianern, jeder schwachen oder starken Stimme jedes Landes ihr Verdienst bleibt, wenn sie taubsten Ohren und härtesten Menschenherzen, geizigen Handelsleuten, hierüber [sic] etwas zurief. Eine Geschichte des aufgehobenen Negerhandels und der abgestellten Sclaverei [sic] in allen Welttheilen [sic] wird einst ein schönes Denkmal im Vorhofe des Tempels allgemeiner Menschlichkeit sein, dessen Bau künftigen Zeiten bevorsteht; mehrere Quackernamen werden an den Pfeilern dieses Vorhofes mit stillem Ruhm glänzen. In unserm Jahrhundert schein's [sic] die erste Pflicht zu sein, den Geist der Frivolität zu verbannen, der alles wahrhaft Gute und Große vernichtet. Dies thaten [sic] die Quacker. (578)[22]

Herder acknowledges tireless abolitionist efforts by the Quakers as he describes slavery to be a disgraceful and nefarious practice. He identifies similar efforts by the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, which also stood up against the injustice of slavery. Herder calls humanity, especially in this particular century, to task because he sees it as his duty to condemn slavery and thus preserve the goodness of humanity, as did the Quakers. In this way, any accomplishment of the lawful abolition of slavery is considered to be a testimony to humanity. This dedication signifies Herder's anti-slavery, abolitionist stance. Thus, it is not surprising but rather confirming that he composed free-verse poems under the title *Neger-Idyllen* that illustrate the European brutality inflicted on indigenous peoples and cultures through the enslavement of Africans.

These poems were inspired by St. John de Crèvecœur's anti-slavery tales called *Letters*

[22] The most strenuous efforts to abolish the disgraceful Negro trade and bond service are their work, wherein meanwhile, whether Methodists or Presbyterians, every weak or strong voice of every land will remain to their credit when it shouts something about it to the deafest ears and the hardest human hearts, stingy tradespeople. A history of the repealed Negro trade and the suppressed slavery in every part of the world will one day be a beautiful monument in the vestibule of the temple of universal humanity, whose construction is pending; several Quaker names will shine with quiet luster on the pillars of that vestibule. In our century, the principal duty seems to be to dispel the spirit of frivolity that destroys all that is truly good and great. The Quakers have done this. All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are mine.

of an American Farmer (1782) and were dedicated to Abbé Henri Grégoire. These poems illustrate the bravery slaves possess through their tough choices to mutilate themselves instead of their fellow slaves, take their own lives rather than kill their slave owners, and pledge allegiance to their slave owners rather than taking revenge by way of joining slave rebellions. Herder contrasts the cruel inhumane conduct of the Europeans while at the same time creating narratives that evoke a deep admiration for the daily trials and tribulations slaves are faced with (Noyes 284). This admiration is illustrated by a portrayal of the severe violations of human rights that are presented to the poems' readers; thus, this collection of poems seeks "to establish an alternative discourse of human rights to augment the anecdotal narratives on which they are based" (Noyes 285). In this context, Herder does not believe in applying the same practices of authority used by perpetrators of crimes against humanity to remedy or resolve this condition of inequality. Thus, an alternative narrative must be established as "violence and power may be able to hold sway over that which they command, but not over *the principles of what is just and unjust in the history of humanity*" (Herder qtd. in Noyes 285).

While Herder's views seem to align with an abolitionist agenda, he criticizes the twisted notion of progress that the Enlightenment seemingly proposes (Noyes 166). An alleged spread of tolerance and wisdom is considered to be the pretext for a dominance of "economic utilitarianism and the exploitation it brings with it" (Noyes 166-67). In this sense, Herder reads a supposed abolition of slavery as operating along the same lines. The abolition of slavery due to tolerant and enlightened views can make space for different forms of violent exploitation and imperial ways by virtue of hypocritically outsourcing slavery to other parts of the world (Noyes 167). Thus, Herder does not see pure and true intentions, because he states:

> Only one thing we have still permitted ourselves: *to use as slaves*, to *trade*, to *exile* into silver mines and sugar mills, *three parts of the world*—but those are not *Europeans*, not *Christians*, and in return we receive silver and gemstones, spices, sugar and—secret disease; thus for the sake of trade and for the *reciprocal brotherly help* and *community* of the lands. (Herder qtd. in Noyes 167)

This viewpoint shows Herder as a true supporter of human equality that does extend to all human beings in the world. In this way, abolitionism is not enough of an attitude and practice for him if it leaves room for the exploitation of humans in other ways, which here include colonialist and Christianization missions. While Herder's works show anti-imperialist tendencies that can be married with his anti-slavery sentiments, it is of interest to explore his intellectual influences and thus a larger circle of German-language scholars and interactions that demonstrate a strong discursive force of anti-slavery and anti-imperialism in German territories during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In efforts to successfully bypass imperial structures, Herder suggests intercultural communication to be key, which can only take place by accepting the notion of all humanity being equal by nature. Herder thematizes this by representing the authentic nature of human life with his notion of aesthetics. Because aesthetics is considered to be a form of cultural and artistic expression that is basic to human life and thus proves the existence of humanity as one single species, Herder defines these expressions by way of customs, languages, and environments (art and aesthetics) to be kept "alive" by a natural force (Noyes 191). Drawing on Baruch Spinoza's (1632–1677) concept of *conatus*, Herder describes a form of the drive to self-maintain, which is considered to be of universal nature to one's body and mind (Noyes 192). In this sense, any positive features in the social relations of individuals and therefore positive effects of this force of self-preservation demonstrate that morality is already existent in nature and isn't brought forth by civilization. Hence, there is no division between natural and civilized forms of life because aesthetic activity is partial to the natural drive of self-

preservation. "The tendency to see natural forces as driving the positive and moral sides of social life also affected the understanding of the formative drive in nature—*Bildung*" (Noyes 192). Thus, *Bildung* is contradictory to any imperial and Eurocentric ideals of expansion. In fact, it enunciates ties between social and natural principles (Noyes 193).

Blumenbach

Herder as well as Goethe carefully studied the works of the physician and naturalist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1754–1840), who is known to have been one of the founders of biological anthropology. Political science critic Sankar Muthu, in his 2003 work *Enlightenment Against Empire,* details the origins of race theory as being rooted in the writings of eighteenth-century European thinkers (182). In this, Muthu mentions Blumenbach alongside Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707–1788) and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) (182). German studies critic Sara Eigen similarly alludes to Blumenbach's popularity regarding European discourses on "taxonomic categories like 'race' and 'species'" linked to humans in her 2005 article "Self, Race, and Species: J.F. Blumenbach's Atlas Experiment" (277). For this reason, Blumenbach is often associated with the invention of the concept of race.[23] However, Eigen maintains that while Blumenbach did indeed classify humankind into five distinct races, racial categorization was not understood to have any effect on collective or individual human capabilities. In fact, and contrary to popular belief, Blumenbach was

[23] In *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth Century Spain* (1995), Benzion Netanyahu argues that the Spanish Inquisition was based on an early pronounced racial hatred toward the Jewish population in 1480. Netanyahu discusses the condition of the *conversos* and presents evidence that these descendants of Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity had in fact practiced the new religion wholeheartedly. Nonetheless, the *conversos* were accused and charged with having practiced Judaism in secret. Netanyahu argues that the *conversos* were targeted based on their race and thus claims that the Spanish Inquisition had an early anti-Semitic agenda. Netanyahu's extensive work presents examples of the mistreatment and exclusion of formerly Jewish Christians in proving his overall thesis.

praised by contemporaries of his time for his pioneering academic contributions in opposition to the institution of slavery as well as for being an ardent supporter of Black humanity. Philosophy scholar Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze is critical of non-racist readings of Blumenbach, but acknowledges that Blumenbach produced several works that object to the idea of Black people's innate incapability of "excelling in the arts and the sciences" in his 1997 work *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader* (79).

Historian and scholar of life sciences Thomas Junker echoes Blumenbach's prominence and reiterates that his works had a significant impact on one of the most important political debates of the eighteenth century in his chapter titled "Blumenbach's theory of human races and the natural unity of humankind" (2019). Blumenbach scientifically explored the possibility of the relatedness of all human beings by belonging to the same biological species in his 1775 dissertation *Über die natürlichen Verschiedenheiten im Menschengeschlechte* (Junker 96). Junker examines Blumenbach's translated and third edition of his dissertation, *Über die natürlichen Verschiedenheiten* (1795), to prove Blumenbach's opposition to slavery during the height of the transatlantic slave trade in the the eighteenth century. Nonetheless, Blumenbach is often linked to his racial—mostly considered hierarchical and racist—classification of human varieties. Junker argues that these attributes are only partially true and understands Blumenbach's categorization to be of an ephemeral and superficial nature (98).

German studies critic Wendy Lou Sutherland, among others,[24] foregrounds and critiques Blumenbach's categorization of the Caucasian, Mongolian, Malayan, Ethiopian, and Native American races in her 2016 work *Staging Blackness and Performing Whiteness in Eigtheenth-*

[24] Peter Martin and Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze to mention a few.

Century German Drama (19). In Blumenbach's model, the white Caucasian race is considered original, while all other races derive from it by mutation (Sutherland 19-20). Sutherland describes how Blumenbach, based on his collection of skulls, the most beautiful one being that of a Georgian woman, locates the original and most beautiful race in the Caucasus region of Georgia (19-20). Having coined the term Caucasian, Blumenbach links beauty and perfection to this specific skull due to its symmetrical facial shape, which models the sculptures of ancient Greece (Sutherland 20). He further associates this skull structure and whiteness of skin, here a clear marker of beauty, as having developed due to a non-extreme and moderate climate. Sutherland notes that Blumenbach used the Caucasian race to refer to Europeans, based on his belief that the Biblical Noah's ark rested on Mount Ararat, which is in the Caucasus Mountains. In *Über die natürlichen Verschiedenheiten*, Blumenbach writes, "Diese Race [sic] erhielt ihren Namen von dem Berge Kaukasus, weil die ihm benachbarten Länder, und zwar vorzüglich der Strich nach Süden, von dem schönsten Menschenstamme, dem georgischen bewohnt sind . . . und weil alle physiologischen Gründe darin zusammenkommen, daß [sic] man das Vaterland der ersten Menschen, nirgends anderswo suchen könne, als hier" (Blumenbach 1798 213).[25] While Blumenbach creates a hierarchical system based on perfection in beauty that could be understood to imply the existence of an ideal physiognomy—beauty reflective of white European features—he emphasizes that all races are equal in capability (Sutherland 20). Here, Sutherland foregrounds the importance of the Caucasian race being placed as superior to other races due to an understanding of its

[25] This race receives its name from the Caucasus Mountains, because the adjacent lands, namely, above all, the stretch to the south, is populated by the most beautiful human tribe, the Georgians … and because all physiological reasons converge in the fact that the fatherland of the first people cannot be sought anywhere else but here.

originality, thus creating "a hierarchy and an intrinsic system of superiority and inferiority among races" (20). Similarly, Eze highlights the fact that Blumenbach places the Caucasian race first because its stock supposedly exhibits the most beautiful race of men, which in turn indicates a degeneration of other races from the ideal Caucasian stock (79). In this very context, Blumenbach debunks the myth of any peculiarity unique to Black Africans, but at the same time asserts that Black Africans (Ethiopians) are in some form more "related" to or nearer to apes than other races (Eze 87). Blumenbach introduces this notion as an assertion, but ultimately confirms it:

> daß die Aethiopier [sic] keine so bleibende und charakteristische Eigenheit [sic] haben, die man nicht hie und da auch unter andern Menschenracen [sic] fände. . . . Was man aber von den Aethiopiern [sic] behauptet hat, daß [sic] sie sich den Affen mehr nähern, als die andern Menschen, das gebe ich in dem Sinne sehr gern zu, als man z. B. sagen kann, daß [sic] sich jenes Race [sic] von Hausschweinen mit Hufen . . . dem Pferde mehr nähere, als die übrigen Schweine. (Blumenbach, *Über die natürlichen Verschiedenheiten* 1798, 216-17)[26]

Junker softens Blumenbach's fixation on and accentuation of the Caucasus by centering the significance of Christianity and the Bible, echoing Sutherland regarding the Biblical legend of Noah's ark that was said to have landed at Mount Ararat (Sutherland 105). The Bible signifies that repopulation by both humans and animals, according to the narrative of Noah's ark, commenced at this very location. Thus, Junker understands this particular location to be place of the origin of the human species. He further argues that Blumenbach's understanding of degeneration "suggested that populations remaining close to the original habitat of the species would closely resemble the original forms, because degeneration was

[26] The fact that the Ethiopians do not have such an enduring and characteristic singularity that can be found here and there among other human races. … But what is claimed about the Ethiopians, that they more closely approximate monkeys than other humans, I will gladly concede in the sense that it can be said, for example, that the race of domesticated pigs with hooves more closely approximate … horses than other pigs.

thought of to be caused by the environmental change that happened during migration" (Junker 105). The idea of degeneration should be understood as departing from the original standpoint, "birthplace" or initial form of humanity by migration which then ultimately leads to slight changes or modifications that can indeed be understand as flawed or deteriorating (Junker 105). In this way, Blumenbach may have attempted to present an egalitarian view of humanity, but his centering of the white Caucasian race as being the most beautiful and original confers privilege upon Caucasians. Meanwhile, he links all other races' very existence to degeneration, which provides a negative connotation. Nonetheless, Blumenbach understood humanity to be a single species, regardless of his fivefold division of humankind into races (Noyes 194).

In this, Junker details how Blumenbach's division of humanity served a larger purpose (98). Along these lines, Blumenbach's racial classification is to be understood as secondary or transient in the larger context of his scientific work. Junker alludes to Blumenbach's *Handbuch der Naturgeschichte* (1814), contending that the differences among humans is arbitrary, as is Blumenbach's classification of races. In that book, Blumenbach writes:

> Es gibt nur eine Gattung (Species) im Menschengeschlecht; und alle uns bekannte Völker aller Zeiten und aller Himmelsstriche können von einer gemeinschaftlichen Stammrasse abstammen. Alle National=Verschiedenheiten [sic] in Bildung und Farbe des menschenlichen Körpers. … Alle diese Verschiedenheiten fließen aber durch so mancherley [sic] Abstufungen und Uebergänge [sic] so unvermerkt zusammen, daß [sic] sich daher auch keine andere, als sehr willkürliche Gränzen [sic] zwischen ihnen festsetzen lassen. Doch ich habe das ganze Menschengeschlecht noch am füglichsten unter folgende fünf Rassen zubringen geglaubt. (67)[27]

[27] There is only one species in the human race and all the peoples of all time and all climates known to us can descend from a common ancestral race. All national differences in formation and color of the human body. … All of these differences flow together through various gradations and transitions so unnoticed that no more than very arbitrary delineations can be established between them. Yet I believed I had placed the entire human race under the following five races in the most justifiable way.

This section, indeed, demonstrates a singular and common origin of all mankind. In addition, Blumenbach addresses variations among humans such as skin color, which alludes to the notion of degeneration, as being of an arbitrary nature. This in turn makes it a delineation Gränzen[28] (limits, bounds, boundaries) that is absolutely random. Blumenbach proceeds with this classification based on races and thus skin color, which is in no way considered solid, legitimate, rightful, or structural. This is merely the way Blumenbach tries to make sense of human variety. Eze primarily criticizes this categorization because the Caucasian race is presented as the primeval one, while Blumenbach considers the others to be of a transitionary nature or at the extremes of the color spectrum, which suggests a superiority in the sense of originality (84). This would indeed weaken Junker's argument, as Blumenbach proceeds and concludes the section (above):

> Von diesen fünf Haupt=Rassen [sic] muß [sic] nach allen physiologischen Gründen die caucasische [sic] als die so genannte Stamm= [sic] oder Mittel=Rasse [sic] angenommen werden. Die beyden [sic] Extreme, worin sie ausgeartet, ist einerseits die mongolische, anderseits die äthiopische. Die andern zwey [sic] Rassen machen die Uebergänge [sic]. Die americanische [sic] den, zwischen der caucasischen [sic] und mongolischen, so wie die malayische den, zwischen jener Mittel=Rasse [sic] und der äthiopischen. (*Handbuch der Naturgeschichte* 69-70)[29]

Junker emphasizes the actual point of departure in *Über die natürlichen Verschiedenheiten* when quoting Blumenbach:

> Jetzt sind wir dem eigentlichen Zwecke der ganzen Abhandlung näher gekommen, denn wir werden untersuchen, welche und welch eine große natürliche Verschiedenheit unter den Völkern und mancherley [sic] Nationen der Menschen selbst statt finde, und erwägen, ob diese Verschiedenheit durch Verartung habe entstehen können, oder ob sie so groß sey [sic], daß

[29] Of these five main races, the Caucasian must be accepted as what is known as the ancestral or middle race according to all physiological reasons. The two extremes into which they degenerate are, on one side, the Mongolian and, on the other, the Ethiopian. The other two races make up the transitions. The American, which is between the Caucasian and the Mongolian, and the Malayan, which is between the middle race and the Ethiopian.

> [sic] man eher mehrere ursprüngliche Spezies des Menschengeschlechts annehmen müsse. (Blumenbach 1798, 58)[30]

It is noteworthy that Blumenbach questions the validity of monogenism versus polygenism, which could also have political implications regarding the legitimacy of slavery (Junker 99). Monogenism was believed to have served as a valid scientific argument opposing the institution of slavery, which Blumenbach sought to prove and confirm. Thus, the actual question at hand was whether "geographical populations of humankind belong[ed] to a single species," because Blumenbach was certain that scientific proof of a common origin of humanity would convince people more than moral appeals to abolish slavery (98, 100). Blumenbach was certain that once a common origin was proven and spread, people would be less likely to further engage in slavery and the transatlantic slave trade because it would essentially mean enslaving one another, due to humanity being bound as one by science. Because nobody would want to enslave their next of kin, Blumenbach considered his studies to be substantial in ultimately abolishing slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Thus, it can be argued that this particular discussion was motivated by Blumenbach's convictions and stance on slavery.

Blumenbach's positionality within this discourse was applauded by contemporaries such as Karl Marx (1818-1883), who spoke fondly of Blumenbach's scientific achievements and acknowledged his pioneering viewpoint:

> Zur Zeit als die Neger und Wilden noch für halbe Thiere [sic] galten und der Gedanke der Emancipation [sic] der Sclaven [sic] noch nicht einmal angeregt war, erhob Blumenbach seine Stimme, um bermerklich zu machen, wie ihre psychischen [sic] Anlagen denen der Europäer nicht nachständen, wie zwischen jenen Stämmen selbst die grössten Verschiedenheiten obwalteten,

[30] Now we have come closer to the actual purpose of the entire treatise, because we will investigate what and how great a natural variety even exists among the peoples and various nations of humans and consider whether this variety could have emerged through degeneration or whether it is so great that one must rather assume several original species of the human race.

> und wie ihren höheren Vermögen einzig die Gelegenheit zur Entwicklung mangle [sic]. (Marx 10)[31]

Blumenbach's convictions were echoed in the preface to *Über die natürlichen Verschiedenheiten im Menschengeschlechte* (1798) by his contemporary, the literary historian Johann Gottfried Gruber (1774–1851), who translated Blumenbach's original dissertation from Latin into German. Gruber writes that Blumenbach's research contributed to a discourse by scholars that sought to raise awareness among slaveholders by exploring the subject matter of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade from a biological and thus scientific perspective. In this way, Blumenbach hoped to change the course of history, as Gruber's words illustrate:

> Indeß [sic] ist nichts so schlimm . . . und es gab noch immer Mittel, die Sklavenhändler . . . aus ihrem Schlummer zu erwecken. Genug es bestätigte sich auch hier, daß [sic] man eine Wahrheit nur bezweifeln oder abläugnen [sic] dürfte, wenn sie über kurz oder lang sich in einem neuen Glanze, und von einer vorher vielleicht übersehenen Seite zeigen soll. Unter den mancherley [sic] Gelehrten von verschiedenen Nationen, welche die Einheit des Menschengeschlechts zu verteidigen suchten . . . trat unter uns auch Herr Hofrath Blumenbach auf. (Gruber qtd. in Blumenbach, *Über die natürlichen Verschiedenheiten* 1798, VIII-IX)[32]

Thus, Blumenbach's scholarship is an early testament to scientific advocacy in efforts to free enslaved Black Africans as well as criticize slavery overall. Blumenbach emphatically argues the unity of humanity regardless of positionality and categorization within his fivefold racial division of mankind, which he describes as arbitrary. This demonstrates an egalitarian understanding of different cultures and defies an understanding of slavery based on African

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[31] At a time when the Negroes and the savages were still considered to be half animal and the notion of emancipating the slaves had not yet been conceived, Blumenbach raised his voice to point out how their mental abilities were not inferior to those of Europeans, how even among those tribes the greatest disparities prevail and only the opportunity was lacking for the development of their higher faculties.

[32] However, nothing is so bad … and there were always means … to rouse the slave trader from his slumber. Here too, it proved to be true enough that one could only doubt or deny a truth if it should shine like new over the short or long term or appear from what had perhaps previously been an overlooked side. Among the several scholars of various nations that sought to defend the unity of the human species … Mr. Hofrath Blumenbach appeared among us.

inferiority. Blumenbach surely conceived of his views as being opposed to racism and slavery, which he demonstrates throughout his works as a common thread. Nonetheless, Blumenbach draws on, echoes, and even confirms scholarship and stereotypical assertions that can be read and understood as racist in nature. Feeding into some of the dominant stereotypical depictions of Black Africans (such as being close in relation to apes) casts an ambiguous light on Blumenbach's viewpoint, which he seemingly intended to be an egalitarian description of humanity.

To highlight his findings in favor of Black Africans, Blumenbach illustrates Africans merits (positive attributes) in the "XIII. Ueber die Neger insbesondre" section of his 1806 treatise *Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte.* In this, Blumenbach reiterates the scientific unfoundedness of differences, both physically and mentally, between Africans and people of other races based on his observations as well as accounts by scholars, travelers, traders, and explorers worldwide from various time periods who are then mentioned throughout his discussion:[33] "Eigne Beobachtung, verglichen mit den Nachrichten glaubwürdiger präjudizloser Zeugen, haben mich aber längst vom Ungrund dieser beiden Behauptungen überführt" (*Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 73).[34] He refers the reader to his previous scholarship that confirms his point of view: "Ich brauche nicht alles das zu wiederholen, was ich anderwärts ausführlich zur

[33] "Jean Barbot, Fuller, Shaw, Francisco de Ulloa, Abba Gregorius, Anders Sparrman (verbindung zu Forster und Cook), Kaiser Joseph II, Heiss 1691 nach van Sand, 'crispos capillos ut caeteri aethiopes habebat' – sagt sein Freund Ludolph in der Schilderung die er von ihm gibt, evtl. Nikolaus Joseph von Jacquin,, The Voyage of the Sieur Le Maire, to the Canary Islands, Cape-Verde, Senegal, and Gambia, Adanson, d'une beauté parfaite, 'the mildness of the Negro character' lucas, Carsten Niebuhr or Karsten Niebuhr, certain Mr. Lucas in the Proceedings of the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa (1788), Jean Baptiste Christophore Fusée Aublet, refers to Wieland's Democrit, Mungo Park (1771-1806), Jean Barbot Barbot on Guinea: The Writings of Jean Barbot on West Africa 1678-1712, Hornemann's Tagebuch seiner Reise von Cairo bis Murzuk."

[34] First-hand observation, compared with the reports of credible, unprejudiced witnesses, have long since converted me away from the abyss of these two assertions.

Widerlegung derselben gesagt habe" (Blumenbach, *Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 73-74).[35] However, Blumenbach feels the need to recount vital information. Blumenbach states that no physical markers exist that are unique to Black Africans:

> Ich kenne z. B. keinen einzigen auszeichnenden körperlichen Character [sic] der den Negern eigenthümlich [sic] wäre, und sich nicht auch bey [sic] manchen andern noch so entfernten Völkerschaften finden sollte: keinen, der den Negern in gleichem Grade [sic] gemein wäre, und worin sie nicht wiederum mit andernVölkern durch unmerkliche Uebergänge gleichsam zusammenfliessen sollten, so wie jede andre Menschenvarietät mit ihren benachbarten Völkerschaften zusammen fliesst. (*Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 74) [36]

In fact, according to Blumenbach, Black Africans are made in God's image, as are white people (*Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 73). He mentions the use of ebony in God's craftmanship of Africans in particular. In this, Blumenbach addresses and acknowledges the dark-skinned complexion and worth of African peoples,[37] saying, "Auch Gottes Ebenbild … wenn gleich aus Ebenholz gearbeitet" (*Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 73).[38] The reference to Africans having been created in God's image is crucial here because it, again, highlights the significance of human monogenism from a religious Christian perspective of a common origin.

While I acknowledge Blumenbach's fivefold racial division to be problematic when married to notions of aesthetics that categorize, marginalize, and override the physical

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[35] I do not need to repeat all that I have said elsewhere in detail as a rebuttal.

[36] I do not know of, for example, a single distinctive physical characteristic that would be peculiar to the Negroes that would not also be found among some other peoples, even some that are very far removed: none that would be common to the Negroes in equal measure and in which they would not, in turn, flow together, so to speak, with other peoples through imperceptible transitions, just like any other variety of humans flows together with their neighboring peoples.

[37] The tropical origin and the material value of ebony signifies the distant yet valuable origin and thus nature of African peoples. In a contemporary context, ebony is often allegorically read and self-affirmingly associated by and with Black people and thus accentuates values such as beauty and worthiness in white majority societies.

[38] God's own likeness … albeit wrought from ebony.

features of Black African peoples, it needs to be noted that the study of physical features that differ from person to person (within specific ethnic groups of people) isn't in and of itself racist or degrading. The study of these differences becomes racist when they are categorized within a context of an a priori notion of cultural inferiority that is then used to legitimize the mistreatment of entire peoples. There clearly exist physiognomic differences between people from continental Africa and, let's say, West Europe. But these physical differences do not correspond with variations in mental and intellectual capacities, and accordingly do not legitimize any unequal treatment of peoples, though they have been applied this way. For this reason, I do not consider Blumenbach's approach racist per se, regardless of its racialized implementation that has been appropriated in racist thinking.

Blumenbach continues with an assessment of physical features specific to Africans such as skin color, hair texture, and facial features as well as so-called character traits he deems natural to Africans (*Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 75-80), but he also illustrates scholarly achievements of Africans (enslaved and otherwise) in the circum-Atlantic, which speaks to a undiminished mental and intellectual capacity regardless of racial categorization or positionality. Blumenbach's discussion of African individuals shows striking similarities to the writings of Henri Jean-Baptiste Grégoire (1750 -1831), also referred to as Abbé Grégoire, who was a French Roman Catholic priest and abolitionist scholar. This suggests that Grégoire was heavily influenced by Blumenbach's work. In his 1808 work *De la littérature des nègres, ou Recherches sur leurs facultés intellectuelles, leurs qualités morales et leur littérature; suivies de Notices sur la vie et les ouvrages des Nègres qui sont distingués dans les Sciences, les Lettres et les Arts*, Grégoire makes mention of Black Africans who have distinguished skills.[39] In the

[39] *Concerning the literature of Negroes, or research on their intellectual faculties, their moral qualities and their writing*s; *followed by accounts of the life and works of Negroes who have distinguished themselves in the sciences, letters, and arts*. This work was

introduction to the 1996 translation by Jean-François Brière and Thomas Cassirer "On the Cultural Achievements of Negroes," the translators describe Grégoire as having ascribed to "universalist and philanthropic principles of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment" in terms of his understanding of humanity and society (Brière and Cassirer in Grégoire xxxii). In this

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translated into both German and English by the Swiss Paulus Usteri and the American David Ballie Warden and subsequently published in French, German, and English (Cassirer and Brière xi). Cassirer and Brière laim that Grégoire's move to have his work translated and published in languages other than French circumvented Napoleon's strict censorship that may have prevented publication in France. It also demonstrates the matter of abolitionism and anti-racism to have been one of "international" and thus transnational importance and suggests that Grégoire "was working in concert with the international intellectual community to whom he dedicated his book" (xi). It needs to be mentioned that Grégoire was born in the duchy Lorraine, which is "the linguistic boundary between the French and German languages cut across Lorraine: northern Lorraine was German-speaking while southern Lorraine (where Grégoire was born) was French-speaking" (Brière and Cassirer xvi), which may explain his ties to German-language collaborations. In this sense, Grégoire was in correspondence with Therese Huber while his dedication specifically goes out to "men who have had the courage to plead the cause of the unhappy blacks and mulattoes, whether in their writings or by their speeches in national assemblies and in societies devoted to the abolition of the slave trade, in order to relive the sufferings of the slave and to free them" (1). These men include a number of German scholars among which are Blumenbach, Kotzebue, Sprengel, and Usteri (3). The very fact that there exists a column that lists German-language scholars speaks to the involvement of German scholars in abolitionist efforts. It needs to be added that individuals listed as Danes also include scholars that published on this subject matter in German, such as Isert. Different than how it has been portrayed in contemporary scholarship on German abolitionist contributions, Grégoire mentions a lack of Spanish and Portuguese efforts, stating: "Let us not be surprised at not finding here the name of any Spanish or Portuguese writer, except Avendano. None but he, as far as I know, has taken the trouble of proving that the Negro belongs to the great family of the human race, and that consequently he ought to fulfil all the duties and exercise all the rights pertaining to this family" (Grégoire 3). Blumenbach also references a number of international scholars to verify his claims, which are also found in Grégoire's dedication. It is, under these circumstances, indeed possible that Grégoire had been inspired by Blumenbach's work, which was then somewhat incorporated into his book. It is without a doubt true that Grégoire was aware of Blumenbach and his work in favor of abolitionism, which led him to honor him in his dedication. This cross-referencing speaks to the transnational nature of abolitionism that encouraged and welcomed wide-spread correspondences and conversations by way of publications and letters in various languages. It further emphasizes the significance of German-language publications, discourses, and thus contributions within larger conversations about abolitionism and anti-racism. This is especially exemplified by the fact that parts of Blumenbach's discussion within this very work ended up in an anti-slavery and abolitionist work by the British author Wilson Armistead (1819–1868) called *A Tribute for the Negro: Being a Vindication of the Moral, Intellectual, and Religious Capabilities of the Colored Portion of Mankind; with Particular Reference to the African Race* (1848). Armistead mentions Blumenbach in his fourth chapter (44) and mentions content that can be found on pages 78 and 79 in Blumenbach's original treatise: Blumenbach's examinations as well as his encounter with a so-called "creole" woman of Congolese descent in St. Domingo whose facial features he said he would consider to be beautiful if they were attributed to a white female. Armistead goes on to mention some scholars to whom Blumenbach refers, but seems to present the content as Blumenbach does (44). He further refers to Blumenbach's craniological experiments on pages 47 and 51-52. In this context, the German-language contribution by Isert is also mentioned (Armistead 45), which demonstrates the importance of German-speaking scholars and their work to this discourse. It is in this sense that Grégoire's book was published by the leading German publishing house (Johann Friedrich) Cotta, under whom Huber worked while editor in chief at the *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände*. The first German translation was titled *Über die Literatur der Negr, oder Untersuchungen über ihrer Geistesfähigkeiten* (1809), while the second translation by Saul Ascher appeared that same year under the title *Die Neger, ein Beitrag zur Menschen- und Staatskunde, aud dem Französischen von Saul Ascher*.

sense, Grégoire argued for an essential unity of humanity and its perfectibility. His unity comprises the entire human race and is all-encompassing. This is derived from an understanding of all individuals as children of God. Thus, unity extends to the realms of the physical, spiritual, moral, and cultural. Grégoire deems civilization to be a progress attainable through the inclusion of all forms. The existence of one God and human race warrants Grégoire 's notion of one attainable civilization on earth. In this sense, civilization does not promote diversity because it is in and of itself a process of unification—it ultimately makes people the same and not different. Culturally, humanity becomes one, while unity is also physically driven through the practice of mixed marriages, for instance. Thus, the outcome would be a humanity indicative of a unity of essence.

The vital part of Grégoire's thinking is that this essence is not entirely based on a western superior understanding of culture, but rather, a universal one that every human can contribute to freely (xxxii). Grégoire is aware that that has not been the case all throughout history and thus highlights that civilization is not exclusively linked to specific regions, nation-states, or varieties of mankind (xxxiii). He points to civilization by way of cultural productions in the context of progress in the arts and sciences, which also includes moral and social progress (xxxiv). For this reason, Grégoire does not believe the enslavement of Black African and Native American peoples has any basis or justification (xxxiii). Instead, he demands that slaves be freed from this institution of torture so that they can contribute to the unity of humanity and, most importantly, be treated as human beings in possession of the same rights as white Europeans (Grégoire xxxiii). In this way, Grégoire asserts that "the natives of Africa and America would long ago have risen to the highest level of civilization if this good purpose would have been supported by a hundredth part of the efforts, the money and the time that have been given over to tormenting and butchering many millions of these

unfortunate people, whose blood calls for vengeance against Europe" (Grégoire in Brière and Cassirer xxxiii).

In his account, Blumenbach relies specifically on sources that he defines as unsuspicious, which refers to the fact that they are not biased (*Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 80). These sources confirm the intellectual capabilities of Black people and reveal their kindhearted nature, as well: "Was so viele unverdächtige Zeugen von den guten Geistesanlagen und Fähigkeiten dieser unsrer schwarzen Brüder versichern, als worin sie so gut wie in der natürlichen Gutherzigkeit schwerlich einer andern Rasse im Menschengeschlechte im Ganzen genommen nachstehen" (Blumenbach, *Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 80).[40]

Blumenbach characterizes Black Africans as kindhearted by nature, echoing Las Casas, and is astonished that this character trait has remained in them despite having been enslaved, which he refers to by way of the Middle Passage, slave ships, and sugar plantations in the West Indies. He alludes to the cruelty of the institution of slavery in terms of calling white plantation owners coldhearted executioners who demand obedience and gratitude from their slaves:

> *natürliche* Gutherzigkeit, die nämlich nicht auf dem Transportschiff und in den Westindischen Zuckerplantagen durch die Brutalität ihrer weissen Henker so betäubt oder erstickt worden, dass diese weissen Henker, so wie ohne Herz so auch obendrein ohne Kopf seyn [sic] müssten, wenn sie bey [sic] einer solchen Behandlung noch treue Anhänglichkeit und Liebe von diesen armen gemisshandelten Sclaven [sic] verlangen wollten. (Blumenbach, *Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 81)[41]

[40] What so many unsuspicious witnesses to the good intellectual abilities and skills of these our black brothers, as in which they, taken as a whole, just as in their natural kindheartedness, are hardly inferior to another race in the human species.

[41] *natural* kindheartedness, they specifically were not so dazed or suffocated on the transport ship and in the West Indian sugar plantations by the brutality of their white executioners that those white executioners must

Blumenbach identifies a number of works critiquing and opposing the institution of slavery that circulated widely during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These texts appeared in English, German, and French and were referenced by many antislavery advocates. Specifically, Blumenbach mentions the Scottish explorer Mungo Park (1771–1806), who had traveled to West Africa, among other places, and from whose account Blumenbach draws his characterization of Africans from: "Viele sprechende Beyspiele [sic] von der treuen Erkenntlichkeit und überhaupt vom humanen Character [sic], so wie von den guten Fähigkeiten unsrer [sic] schwarzen Brüder finden sich z. B. in folgenden drey [sic] Werken, deren verdienstvolle Verfasser sämtlich lange in West-indien gewesen und zu den fähigsten und präjudizlosesten Beobachtern der Neger gehören" (*Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte*, 83).[42] Blumenbach alludes to three more works that he deems essential in terms of exploring the African character.[43] Blumenbach refers to the French merchant Jean Barbot (1655–1712) to confirm the power of Africans' intellectual abilities even when faced with the adversities of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. He mentions a sharp mind and strong memory that comes in handy when managing und undertaking their own affairs (Blumenbach, *Beyträge zur*

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have been heartless as well as mindless if they wanted to use such treatment to demand loyalty and love from these poor, abused slaves.

[42] Many descriptive examples of the true gratitude and generally of the humane character as well as of the good capabilities of our black brothers can be found, for example, in the following three works, whose meritorious author was in the West Indies for a very long time and who is among the most capable and unprejudiced observers of the Negroes.

[43] While one of these works, *Geschichte der Mission der evangelischen Brüder auf S. Thomas ꝛc.* (1777), was written in German by Christian Georg Andreas Oldendorp (1721–1787), who was a Moravian missionary, the other two works were written by British writers: *Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves* (1784) by the abolitionist and Anglican priest James Ramsay (1733–1789) and *The Capacity of Negroes for Religious and Moral Improvement* (1789) by Richard Nisbet. These authors, mentioned by Blumenbach and classified as worthy of reading, are also listed among the ones that Grégoire dedicates his work to (Grégoire 2-3). This further corroborates my suggestion that Grégoire may have heavily borrowed from Blumenbach when working on *De la littérature des nègres, ou Recherches sur leurs facultés intellectuelles, leurs qualités morales et leur littérature* (1808).

Naturgeschichte 84). Their order of things is especially admired in terms of being illiterate: "Die Schwarzen haben grösstentheils [sic] Kopf und Verstand genug; sie fassen leicht und richtig, und ihr Gedächtniss [sic] ist von einer fast unbegreiflichen Stärke: denn ob sie schon weder lesen noch schreiben können, so bleiben sie doch selbst in der grössten Eile der Geschäfte und des Handels in ihrer Ordnung, und werden selten irre."(Barbot qtd. in Blumenbach, *Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 84).[44] Barbot praises Africans for skillfully inspecting and cleverly handling any negotiations with European merchants due to them having been defrauded by merchants multiple times before (Barbot qtd. in Blumenbach, *Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 84-85). While he mostly assigns positive attributes, Barbot does use European trading standards as the yardstick for measuring African conduct. He compliments Black African peoples by equating their knowledge to that of European merchants. This comparison clearly valorizes Europeans and their conduct, which demonstrates that this characterization is not based on Black Africans in their own right but rather calling out and refuting stereotypical representations of African peoples. Barbot goes on to criticize Europeans' greed and evil machinations while again indirectly confirming European superiority: "so viel Klugheit und Geschick als irgend nur ein Europäischer Handelsmann es thun [sic] kann" (Barbot qtd. in Blumenbach, *Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 85).[45]

Touching on African examples of talent in the arts, Blumenbach highlights musical performances. He claims that Black Africans are known for their musicality in the United States and have been able to attain liberty through it (*Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 87). He

[44] For the most part, the blacks have enough mental capacity; they comprehend easily and correctly and their memory is almost unfathomably strong: if they can neither read nor write, they nonetheless continue to be in the greatest state of urgency of affairs and trade in their order, and they seldom go mad.

[45] As much cleverness and skill as only a European merchant could do it.

mentions a Black African Viennese virtuoso by the name of Freidig: "Der Neger Freidig in Wien war als ein meisterhafter Conzertist [sic] auf dem Violon und der Violine und als ein sehr braver Zeichner bekannt, der sich auf der dortigen Academie [sic] unter Schmutzer gebildet hat" (Blumenbach 86).[46] In terms of mathematic skill, Blumenbach alludes to the African slave Thomas Fuller as well as Benjamin Banneker, who was praised for his astronomical skills (87-88). Drawing on a British work by James McHenry, Blumenbach relates that Banneker was praised for his brilliance: "Diesen Neger als einen neuen Beweis an, dass sich die Geistesfähigkeiten nicht eben nach der Hautfarbe richten" (McHenry qtd. in Blumenbach, *Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 88).[47] Blumenbach makes references to African doctors and slave narratives written by Ignatius Sancho and Gustav Vassa,[48] which are indicative of artistic autobiographical writing. He also alludes to Phillis Wheatly's poetic skills (Blumenbach 89-90). Blumenbach refers to the dissertations of Anton Wilhelm Amo and Elisa John Capitein, who were both from the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) and resided in Germany (Amo) and the Netherlands (Capitein) (90). This treatise demonstrates Blumenbach's thorough research and consultation of various works of different languages that truly reflect the transnational nature of the African diaspora during the eighteenth and late nineteenth century, including German-language sources from the territories that these individuals resided in (91-94). Blumenbach's treatise speaks to his understanding of humanity and Black African individuals place within. His explorations largely tried to debunk and critique the legitimacy of slavery as well as prove the mental and physical capacity and

[46] The Negro Freidig in Vienna was known as a master soloist on the violin and the violin and as a very good illustrator who had studied at the academy there under Schmutzer.

[47] This Negro as new evidence that mental ability is not determined by skin color.

[48] Olaudah Equiano, also known as Gustavus Vassa

capability of Black Africans and can therefore be understood as part of a larger anti-slavery and anti-colonial discourse. Blumenbach proves their humanity by way of discrediting ideas of innate Black African inferiority:

> Ueberhaupt [sic] aber sollte ich nach allen den angeführten mannichfaltigen Beyspielen [sic] von fähigen Negern denken, man könnte wohl ganz ansehnliche Provinzen von Europa nennen, aus deren Mittel man schwerlich vor der Hand so gute Schriftsteller, Dichter, Philosophen und Correspondenten [sic] der Pariser Academie [sic] zu erwarten hätte: so wie mir hingegen anderseits kein sogenanntes wildes Volk unter der Sonne bekannt ist, das sich durch solche Beyspiele [sic] von Perfectibilität [sic] und selbst wissenschaftlicher Culturfähigkeit [sic] so ausgezeichnet hätte und sich da-durch so zunächst an die gebildetsten Völker der Erde anschlösse, *als die Neger*. (Blumenbach, *Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte* 96-97)[49]

This statement by Blumenbach is quite powerful as Blumenbach concludes his discussion in this way and ultimately asserts anew that Black Africans are in no way inferior to white Europeans based on scientific evidence.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the intellectual debates that provide the framework for the emergence of slave plays. Herder's and Blumenbach's scholarship clearly demonstrate rational and enlightened understandings of humanity at the end of the eighteenth century in the German lands. This scholarship could then be categorized among contributions that present a paradigm shift in the depictions of and debates on Black Africans. Blumenbach is often associated with having pioneered race theory in a German-

[49] But if I should think at all of all the cited, varied examples of capable Negroes, one could well name entirely respectable European provinces from whose midst one could scarcely have expected such good writers, poets, philosophers, and correspondents from the Paris Academy: so I, by contrast, do not know of any so-called savage people under the sun that has distinguished itself as much through such examples of perfectibility and even scholarly cultural capacity and thereby become attached to the most educated peoples on the earth as *the Negroes*.

language context and thus has often been understood as reflecting racist or biased thinking. While Blumenbach's fivefold racial categorization is frequently foregrounded, the purpose of his scholarship is often not. Thus, my discussion highlights the significance of Blumenbach's scholarship to the larger transcultural debate on slavery and abolition. Blumenbach saw his scientific scholarship as contributing to the ultimate abolition of slavery by proving the common origin of humanity, which he hoped would in turn help all humans realize the harmfulness of the institution of slavery. It needs to be noted that Blumenbach scientifically examined his opinions on Black people in order to provide larger proof of his thesis. It is along these lines that he presented scholarship that summarized the intellectual abilities of Black Africans and noted that common understandings of African inferiority were invalid. Blumenbach's extensive scholarship was transculturally drawn on by Abbé Henri Grégoire, who similarly displayed views in opposition to slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Thus, Grégoire's understanding of humanity did not foreground or favor any European influences, but was rather an amalgamation of all human beings, including Black Africans.

Similarly, Herder's notion of humanity reflects an inclusivity of all human beings regardless of cultural background or skin color. While humanity is more of a quality that all human beings are bestowed with, according to Herder, and there do not exist any categorizations in the context of superiority and inferiority, Herder's cultural relativism paints a picture of cultures and peoples frozen in time without development or progression in any shape or form. Herder does not judge any cultural practices, but respects them in their own ways, which could be considered belittling considering his positionality as a white Western male intellectual. Nonetheless, Herder clearly takes a stance against slavery and European imperialism and alludes to the destruction caused by colonization and slavery. Along these lines, Herder takes up transcultural discourses of abolition by directly addressing

these issues and naming them, while Blumenbach's approach is less direct and becomes clearer through a thorough engagement with his work.

In this sense, Blumenbach and Herder should be included among the intellectuals who demonstrate late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century liberal understandings of European dominating global processes. One such example is Lueder, who contributes to transcultural abolitionist discourse by way of a comparative economic viewpoint. These intellectuals are examples of German-language individuals who were aware of the transcultural dimension of slavery and abolition, which was also heavily discussed within the context of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation due to trafficked slaves having resided there and petitioned for their freedom. It is known that Herder and Lueder were specifically aware of the oppressive nature of serfdom, which they tried to curtail by way of transcultural debates on the legitimacy of slavery. All of the intellectuals from this time period could be criticized from a contemporary perspective for the notions of white Western superiority embedded in their work. However, their contributions to changes in the political and social climate remain significant and worth of study within their individual contexts.

Therefore, this discussion highlights the contexts in which these German-language slave plays were produced. As Gilman discusses, it is very likely that the French genre *literature négrophile* served as an inspiration and predecessor for the German plays to draw on. These German-language plays followed the transcultural trend of contributing to the larger debates on slavery and the transatlantic slave trade and thus also discourses about Black Africans. These debates carried over into different forms of cultural productions, as thoroughly discussed here. Debates on the legitimacy of slavery in a critical or at least skeptical manner were thus also negotiated by way of these stage plays. Within the German-language context, however, previous scholarship has identified a duality in discussions

challenging controversial and oppressive structures by way of these slave plays. The European and thus also German practice of serfdom was critiqued and questioned by German-language writers, oftentimes especially by those who experienced this practice and German involvement in it.

These entanglements with serfdom were accompanied by direct ties to slavery. As highlighted earlier, Black Africans were trafficked to the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, which oftentimes involved German merchants who provided German nobility with the so-called court Moors. Underscoring this, Heike Raphael-Hernandez and Pia Wiegmink state that the processes of slavery, colonialism, and empire-building that many Germans thought took place far away from the empire were in fact embedded in the nation's history as fundamental components of German history and culture (419). These entanglements included German trading companies as well as individual German entrepreneurs (422-24).[50] Still, serfdom may have seemed to be a more-pressing issue to some German individuals due to its visible presence directly within the empire. However, involvements by German individuals and trading companies further exposed the German-language public to details about slavery and the trade in slaves, which alongside the existing transcultural discourses provided a fruitful context and motivation for these plays to come into being.

[50] Raphael-Hernandez and Wiegmink point to, among others, the German trading companies Fugger and Welser (named for the Fugger and Welser families), which held economic titles to slave plantations, as well as Heinrich Carl von Schimmelmann (1724–1782), who served as the financial counselor to the Danish monarch Frederick V. Schimmelmann and was involved in "trading by shipping German manufactured goods such as cotton, weapons, and alcohol to West Africa where he bought captured Africans destined for the slave market in the Americas; his returning ships brought goods produced by slave labor such as sugar and tobacco to Europe. In addition, he himself owned large plantations with more than a thousand slaves in the Danish West Indies" (423-24).

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CHAPTER 3

ABOLITIONIST LITERATURE AND GERMAN-LANGUAGE CONTRIBUTIONS

> [The abolitionist network that emerged in the late eighteenth century was first and foremost a communication network that stretched across vast distances and involved a number of interactions, some of them formal (in the sense that they involved printed texts), others informal. Along its lines, activists circulated a variety of media and genres—letters, books, pamphlets, newspapers, prints and artefacts—that overlapped and intersected in a number of different milieux: coffee shops, taverns, bookshops, wharves, salons and private parlours. (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 42)

> Sie [Abolitionsdebatte] war eine der ersten übernational geführten, moral-politischen Debatten, die unter Einsatz moderner Printmedien die Massen erreichte, mobilisierte und plötzlich für eine Thematik interessierte, die zwar globale Dimensionen besaß, deren Bezüge zur eigenen Lebenswelt der Europäer jedoch auf den ersten Blick nicht ohne weiteres erkennbar waren. (Riesche 10)

> Currently, there is a wide range of publications addressing the transatlantic dimension of American slavery and abolitionism as well as the African/African American diaspora in Europe. Although "transatlantic" in many of these Anglo-American-based projects still almost exclusively refers to contacts between the Americas and Britain, and rarely to those with the European mainland or Germany. (Paul 115)

A Discrepancy in Enlightenment Scholarship

German abolitionist literary contributions have been explored from a Euro-American perspective for quite some time. However, an equal scholarly engagement of German- and English-speaking contributions prompted by the transnational nature of the transatlantic slave trade, slavery, and abolitionism by authors working in German-speaking contexts and serving a German audience has not yet been developed.[51] Thus, this chapter

[51] While these topics have been explored from various perspectives, scholarship addressing abolitionist and anti-slavery sentiments in German-language works hardly exists. Notable exceptions Notable exceptions are: *On Blackness without Blacks: Essays on the Image of the Black in Germany* by Sander L. Gilman (1982), *Der Mohr auf der deutschen Bühne des 18. Jahrhunderts* by Uta Sadji (1992), "Black Skin, White Skin and the Aesthetics of the Female Body in: Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Ziegler's Die Mohrinn" by Wendy Sutherland (2004), "Deutsche

explores German literary abolitionist discourses that should be considered within the larger transnational and transcultural discourse of abolition and provides a rationale for why including the German debate is important. Through this approach, I illustrate how German literary contributions provide socio-critical commentary and take up transatlantic abolitionist discourses.

These discourses are intrinsically tied to the Enlightenment as an intellectual, philosophical, and transnational European movement that was dominant primarily during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as stretching into the early nineteenth century. A categorization of Enlightenment thought allows for contextualized classifications of antislavery views. Johnathan Israel's *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (2001) identifies differences in what he labels the mainstream moderate Enlightenment and the Radical Enlightenment. The mainstream moderate Enlightenment refers to thinkers who tried to integrate faith into reason and maintained inseparable ties to Christianity through "battling ignorance and superstition" while also offering innovation in

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Abolitionisten in Göttingen und Halle: Die ersten Darstellungen des Sklavenhandels und der Antisklavereibewegung in der deutschen Historographie des ausgehenden 18. und beginnenden 19. Jahrhunderts" by Karin Schüller (2004), *Schöne Mohrinnen, Edle Sklaven, Schwarze Rächer: Schwarzendarstellung und Sklavereithematik im Deutschen Unterhaltungstheater (1770-1814)* by Barbara Riesche (2010), "Beautiful Black Soul? The Racial Matrix of White Aesthetics (Reading Kotzebue against Kleist)" by Sigrid G. Köhler (2013), "'On the Brain of the Negro': Race, Abolitionism, and Friedrich Tiedemann's Scientific Discourse on the African Diaspora" by Jeanette Eileen Jones (2013), *Staging Blackness and Performing Whiteness in Eighteenth-Century German Drama* by Wendy Sutherland (2015), "Abolitionists in the German Hinterland? Therese Huber and the Spread of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in the German Territories in the Early Nineteenth Century" by Sarah Lentz (2016), "Menschenrecht fühlen, Gräuel der Versklavung zeigen—Zur transnationalen Abolitionsdebatte im deutschsprachigen populären Theater um 1800" by Sigrid G. Köhler (2017), *Transculturality and German Discourse in the Age of European Colonialism* by Chunjie Zhang (2017), "Ein 'Historisches Gemälde' Gegen Sklaverei. Kotzebues Dramenästhetische Bildpolitik und die Abolition im ausgehenden 18. Jahrhundert" by Sigrid G. Köhler (2018), "Matthias Christian Sprengel (1746–1803): Slavery, the American Revolution, and Historiography as Radical Enlightenment" by Chunjie Zhang (2018), "Slavery, Sympathy, and White Self-Representation in Dutch Bourgeois Theater of 1800" by Sarah Josephine Adams (2018), *Die Negersklaven: Ein historisch-dramatisches Gemählde in drey Akten* by August von Kotzebue (2019 edition), "Drastische Bilder: Journalnachrichten auf der Bühne Versklavung und Abolition als Gegenstände moderner Geschichtsreflexion in deutschsprachigen Journalen und Theaterstücken um 1800" by Sigrid G. Köhler (2019), and "Democratizing Abolitionism: Anti-Slavery Discourses and Sentiments in August von Kotzebue's Die Negersklaven (1796)" by Sarah Josephine Adams (2020).

"administration, government, medicine, education, technology, or reforming the legal system" (Israel, *Radical Enlightenment* 9). The Radical Enlightenment is particularly relevant with regard to abolitionism. This is presented by Martin Mulsow and Guido Naschert in the introductory article "Radikale Spätaufklärung in Deutschland: Einzelschicksale – Konstellationen –Netzwerke" (2012) to their special issue in the journal *Aufklärung*. They discuss a shift in scholarship toward discontinuing teleological conceptualizations and foci on elite Enlightenment philosophers (8). Instead, they had "sich den Sozietäten, den Lesezirkeln, den Repräsentationsformen und sogar den Kleidermoden zugewandt, um dort verkörperte Ideen zu finden, auf einer alltäglichen Basis und ohne den Anspruch der Hochkultur" (Mulsow and Naschert 8). Mulsow and Naschert highlight the importance of the radical wing of the German Enlightenment because these thinkers and ideas have not been thoroughly explored in scholarship. In this context, Israel characterizes the Radical Enlightenment as a pan-European movement that

> rejected all compromise with the past and sought to sweep away existing structures entirely, rejecting the Creation as traditionally understood in Judaeo-Christian civilization, and the intervention of a providential God in human affairs, denying the possibility of miracles, and reward and punishment in an afterlife, scorning all forms of ecclesiastical authority, and refusing to accept that there is any God-ordained social hierarchy, concentration of privilege or land-ownership in noble hands, or religious sanction for monarchy. From its origins in the 1650s and 1660s, the philosophical radicalism of the European Early Enlightenment characteristically combined immense reverence for science, and for mathematical logic, with some form of non-providential deism, if not outright materialism and atheism along with unmistakably republican, even democratic tendencies. (*Radical Enlightenment* 11-12)

Radical Enlightenment philosophers are known to have articulated initial impulses of republicanism and democracy. Israel traces these ideas to the polemic and widely proliferated French work *Histoire philosophique des deux Indes* (1778) by Guillaume Thomas François Raynal (1713–1796) and Denis Diderot (1713-1784). He characterizes this work as "the Radical

Enlightenment's—indeed the whole Enlightenment's—most devastating single blow to the existing order" (414) and highlights its antislavery trajectory.[52] In *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750-1790* (2013), Israel foregrounds Raynal's line of argument as a defense of the oppressed, a revelation of the causes of poverty and exploitation, and a call for action by way of revolting (416, 424). In this sense, Israel states that a complete condemnation and aversion to slavery is one characteristic of Radical Enlightenment thought.

In the chapter "Matthias Christian Sprengel (1746–1803): Slavery, the American Revolution, and Historiography as Radical Enlightenment" (2018), cultural critic Chunjie Zhang argues for an inclusion of historiographic expressions in Radical Enlightenment thought articulations. To shed light on German Radical Enlightenment thinkers, Mulsow and Naschert organize their special issue according to what Zhang labels as "geographical centers in order to display networks and . . . local constellations in the areas around Hamburg/Bremen, Göttingen/Gießen, Berlin, Halle, Weimar, and Mainz/Stuttgart/Tübingen/Würzburg" ("Matthias Christian Sprengel" 166), some of which are examined in relation to the production of German-language works indicative of abolitionist sentiments. Quite a few of these locations and associated Enlightenment thinkers have not necessarily been acknowledged in the context of abolition and the mainstream moderate Enlightenment.

In my analysis, I classify scholars of German-language literary material as being in favor of amelioration, in favor of abolitionism, or taking an ambivalent stance. I first discuss

[52] Furthermore, the Radical Enlightenment is considered to have been a great influence regarding political and social transformations in Europe and beyond, including European colonies in North America and South America, as well as the revolutions in America and France.

scholars who articulate viewpoints critical of slavery and the trade in slaves in radical and mainstream moderate ways that can be tied to some of the above listed locations. Then, in order to further delineate these articulations and discourses critiquing slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, I label them as supporting either amelioration or abolitionism, or neither. Ameliorationist views are part of the larger spectrum of abolitionist thinking, but in this work I distinguish them from perspectives focused more on emancipation or a complete end to slavery and the transatlantic trade in slaves. Arguably, works in accordance with amelioration could be considered to ascribe to Israel's notion of the mainstream moderate Enlightenment, while works exhibiting abolitionist tendencies can be seen as products of the radical wing of the Enlightenment. In this, I also address works that have been classified as abolitionist or advocating for amelioration, but that turn out to be of ambivalent nature or that even present stereotypical viewpoints about Black Africans, slavery, and the transatlantic slave trade. Additionally, I categorize material presented in a periodical and news-like manner according to Horst Dippel's discussion of Germany as a recipient of public information regarding American and British (political) current affairs in his work titled *Germany and the American Revolution, 1770-1800: A Sociohistorical Investigation of Late Eighteenth-Century Political Thinking* (1977). Dippel's classification of periodical print media can then be applied to my discussion of newsprint media addressing issues of slavery and abolition, which is situated in the same period that Dippel explores. These categories are subject to overlapping in terms of both content and style of presentation.

It is along these lines that I continue to call into question the notion that German abolitionist awareness did not exist in Europe during the Enlightenment. This examination is motivated by the German eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century dramatic genre *Sklavenstücke* (slave plays). These plays, are largely unaddressed in scholarship, express

nuanced critiques of slavery, the transatlantic slave trade, and racism, and thus represent an early German-language discourse. Here, I focus on the years 1775 through 1815, in which these plays were produced. I include discourses and contributions that constitute the tail end of this period and that represent material essential for further analysis of these plays. It needs to be noted that these discussions of and engagements with critical discourses around slavery and the trade in slaves do not abruptly cease with the conclusion of my investigation.

Despite the transnational nature of the abolitionist movement, scholars have generally suggested that it operated only within specific European nation-states and the Americas (Paul 115). In this regard, literary scholar Heike Paul pinpoints a primary scholarly focus on Anglo-American contacts and networks surrounding abolitionism in which German-language contributions are largely absent. She contends that the interest in circum-Atlantic abolitionist scholarship that includes German-language material is a recent phenomenon: "Although 'transatlantic' in many of these Anglo-American-based projects still almost exclusively refers to contacts between the Americas and Britain, and rarely to those with the European mainland or Germany, there is also a more sustained effort these days to include Germany in the scholarship of the black Atlantic" (Paul 115). This includes a series of events and exhibits at the Haus der Kulturen in Berlin in 2004. This series covered issues of the Black Atlantic in Germany, which were included in the 2004 volume *Der Black Atlantic* (Gilroy et al.) in cooperation with the Haus der Kulturen, Tina Campt, and Paul Gilroy. In order to address this gap in scholarship, I highlight the transatlantic significance of this historical era by analyzing late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century German-language cultural productions that contribute to the transnational, transcultural, and transatlantic abolitionist agenda while also discussing the functions, ideas, and forms of

abolitionist literature overall. First, I review features of the anglophone and francophone abolitionist discourse and then turn to the German-language archive.

Dissemination of Anglophone and Francophone Abolitionist Discourse across Europe

In *Abolition: A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (2009), the historian Seymour Drescher examines the collective effort on both sides of the Atlantic that enabled a widespread opposition to slavery and the transatlantic slave trade: "In the course of little more than a century, between the 1770s and the 1880s, that vast transoceanic extension of slavery created after 1450 was dismantled. The transatlantic slave trade that had once loaded more than 100,000 Africans per year was abolished" (x). Roger Anstey explores the genesis of antislavery impulses in Britain by way of their religious and intellectual origins in the eighteenth century in his chapter "The Pattern of British Abolition in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" (1980). Anstey detects two factors that he deems to have promoted, encouraged, and fostered the antislavery agenda in Britain: Firstly, "a compatibility between the teachings of moral philosophy and of revealed religion . . . [and secondly] the emphasis on benevolence" (20). There existed a strong belief in a moral order that aligned with an understanding of a providential order, which was solidified by a condemnation of the institution of slavery by guiding moral philosophers of that time. Furthermore, tenets of nature and utility encouraged understandings of necessities to effect change in the context of "natural, civil, and political liberty, by legislative action" (Anstey 20).

Anstey elaborates on the correlation between the two factors he introduces as follows:

> The relevance of mainstream theological developments to anti-slavery reform lay in the theological origins and religious dimensions of the powerful idea of benevolence; in the reinforcement of belief in a providential moral order as a

> sanction on conduct; and in that important root of the idea of progress which consisted in the belief in revelation as progressive, with the necessary corollary that the Christian was called to new commitment, as he received new revelation. Eighteenth-century literature . . . mainly for the anti-slavery implications after noble savage theme, and through its reflexion—appropriation even—of ideas of liberty and benevolence, sharpened and extended awareness of the problem of slavery, and made its own contribution to the emergence of anti-slavery conviction. (20)

In this context, Anstey establishes that the enslavement of Black Africans through the machinery of the transatlantic slave trade does not operate according to the moral and social order and thus went against what Anstey terms "the principles of nature" (20). The enslaved are positioned as being of an innocent nature, which responds to the benevolent feelings of mankind that illustrate the correlation between philosophical morality amplified through religious Protestantism. In this, the impulse of benevolence is considered to be an inherent element of humanity (Anstey 20). Thus, religious advocacy was especially represented among antislavery advocates, which is emblematic of the pioneering abolitionist efforts of the Quakers. Craton et al. state that religious abolitionist critiques were promoted through publications, pamphlets, speeches, and notable correspondence in their 1976 book *Slavery, Abolition, and Emancipation: Black Slaves and the British Empire: A Thematic Documentary* (231).

It should be noted, however, that before the far-reaching dissemination of abolitionist thought and the emergence of the formal organizational structures of abolitionism, abolitionist sensibility had appeared among educated men who subscribed to the philosophical and theoretical approaches of the Enlightenment, and some women. Here, Craton et al. refer to larger intellectual debates on human rights, which were expressed in Scottish and French Enlightenment writings "by Montesquieu, Hutcheson, Ferguson Wallace, Beattie and others" who were supported by religious sects from 1760 onward (231). As abolitionist thought was distributed more widely during the 1760s and 1770s, various

media channels that promoted antislavery thought worked toward building the "unity of anti-slavery sentiment" by reaching many citizens (Craton et al. 231). In the chapter "Introduction: The Bonds of Sentiment" (2013), Stephen Ahern states that these philosophers of moral sense as well as evangelists and reformers believed the primary essence of human nature to be benevolence, an innate and fundamental affect (2). Thus, compassion was often targeted and centered on by abolitionists, as well: "As part of a drive to achieve concrete reforms . . . social activists, journalists, philosophers, politicians, poets, novelists, and dramatists produced texts that anatomized the ills of the unfortunate individual so as to cure the body politic writ large" (Ahern 2).

Thus, antislavery thought was captured and emphasized through, for example, religious abolitionist (literary) cultural productions. These cultural productions heavily relied on graphic accounts of the horrors of slavery to evoke and engage the audience's pity (Craton et al. 231). Literary scholar Sigrid G. Köhler, in her 2009 chapter "Drastische Bilder: Journalnachrichten auf der Bühne Versklavung und Abolition als Gegenstände moderner Geschichtsreflexion in deutschsprachigen Journalen und Theaterstücken um 1800," mentions the simple and fine-grained detailed description as being strategic because it allows for an effective representation of the horrors of slavery that rigorously, yet subtly, conveys the antislavery message through an instant human reaction of detest ("Drastische Bilder" 382). Köhler mentions Sanchino Esteban Martinez's discussion of aesthetics and foregrounds an emphasis on the levels of intensity rather than comprehensively clarifying the need for abolition. Instead, "ein 'Vor-Augen-Stellen', ein Zeigen erreicht . . . das deutlich und direct" ("Drastische Bilder" 382). She documents an instant feeling of discomfort or uneasiness when confronted with details about slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

Köhler emphasizes the impact of accounts of slavery by way of quoting Terezia Mora, who discusses the drastic as a theme in her 2006 chapter "Über die Drastik" and states: "Ein wahrhaft drastischer Satz ist einer, der mir keine Chance lässt, die in ihm enthaltenede Wahrheit zu leugnen" (Mora qtd. in Köhler, "Drastische Bilder" 382). For this reason, antislavery works often centered on the daily suffering and brutalization of the enslaved. Ahern discusses the workings of affect—"the fleeting, volatile registers of embodied subjectivity"—with regard to abolitionism and points to abolitionist accounts in which "invoking the language of feeling might wield a political force beyond appeals to mere reason" (1). Thus, written works on the abolition of the slave trade and the emancipation of slaves appealed to the audience's emotions in a sentimentalist manner through displays of the unstable, ephemeral nature of the lives of the enslaved.[53] By heavily playing on the emotions of the audience, abolitionists aimed to suggest thought-provoking options to terminate the suffering and agony that the racial "Other" is subjected to. Abolitionist works sought to generate sufficient sympathy to encourage the reader "to try to relieve the

[53] Van Sant distinguishes between the words sentiment/sentimental and sensibility. In this, sentiment and the sentimental are associated with the mind, while sensibility refers to the body (Van Sant 4). Accordingly, there is a difference in "physical sensitivity and the processes of sensation . . . [and the actual] refinement of thought" (Van Sant 4). Both terms are connected to aesthetic and moral responsiveness. Van Sant alludes to an early use of the term sensibility as an "intensely felt humanity" in the sense of an "'inward pain' in response to the sufferings of others" (5). Van Sant ultimately defines sensibility in the context of affect as "a causal relation between mind and body" (14). Germanist Jane K. Brown identifies "Empfindsamkeit, or sensibility . . . [to] designate the aspect of 18th century culture concerned with feeling [and] secondarily . . . refers to sentimentality as a cultural phenomenon in later periods" (248). It is an eighteenth-century literary strand that "extends the values of the Enlightenment to the realm of the emotions" (Brown 248). There is a focalization of the human and what is considered part of the natural human world in the secular context of European culture, which allows for discourses of emotion and virtue to no longer be rooted in religious contexts. Thus, Empfindsamkeit is "concerned with the emotional faculties of imagination and intuition and with the combinations of emotional and rational faculties that result in sympathy, taste, and virtue. These interests were discussed under the rubrics of epistemology, moral philosophy, aesthetics, and literature and constitute an important strand of what the 18th century meant by 'humanity'" (Brown 248). As a strand, Empfindsamkeit is visible across a number of genres in Germany and in drama is indicative of a protagonist's extreme sensitivity. The word *sentimental* first appeared in German in 1773 and bears a resemblance to the French use of the word; both were associated with "moral and physical delicacy and with the themes of friendship, love, and sensual capacity" (Brown 249).

conditions that produced the pain" (Ahern 2). This strategy was understood to be achieved by capturing the pain of another person in minute detail.

Furthermore, this visual rhetoric was used to "engage in imaginative identification with the plight of the victim" (Ahern 5). The required identification was based on the assumed inherent capability of humans for benevolence, which made appeals to "a shared human capacity for affective response, especially for a fellow-feeling that wells up in encounters with the suffering of others," the foundation of Enlightenment culture (5). Thus, it was imperative to evoke the maximum affective impact among the reading middle-class. Ahern draws upon conventions of sentimentalism by alluding to Samuel Richardson's method of "writing the moment," which was to develop a sense of verisimilitude in order to compel the reader in terms of the trials of virtue faced by the protagonist (6). This method was especially used by Black African abolitionists in slave narratives that were written to appeal to the morality of readers to ultimately abolish slavery. These truthful firsthand accounts of slavery and the slave trade were either written directly by slaves or were dictated to abolitionist friends who then put pen to paper (Davis and Gates, Jr., xiv-xv). Charles T. Davis and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., discuss the significance of slave narratives' appeals to morality, humanity, and pity in the introductory chapter of *The Slave's Narrative* (1985) through a review of *Henry Bibb's Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave, Written by Himself* (1849): "This fugitive slave literature is destined to be a powerful lever. We have the most profound conviction of its potency. We see in it the easy and infallible means of abolitionizing the free States. Argument provokes argument, reason is met by sophistry. But narratives of slaves go right to the hearts of men" (xvii).

The graphic and detailed portrayal of the institution of slavery paints a picture of the horrors endured by fugitive slaves that resonates with the French philosopher Denis

Diderot's (1713–1784) notion of the dramatic tableau. In the 2010 article "From Prose *peinture* to Dramatic *tableau*: Diderot, Fénelon and the Emergence of the Pictorial Aesthetic in France," Romira Worvill addresses the affective responses drawn out by detailed and minute literary descriptions. In an attempt to engage the senses and emotions of the audience, sequences of lifelike authentic scenes are used, resulting in a susceptibility to the moral agenda of the play (Worvill 152). Thus, drawing on authentic pictures in the form of a painting elicits a linkage between the spectator, the events of the plot, and the characters on stage. This amplifies appeals to the senses, imagination, and morality (Worvill 152). I deem this to also be applicable to written works, as Ahern confirms:

> To signify the immediacy of experience and authenticity of emotion that is the ground condition of the sentimental ethos, writers make use of a storehouse of elements. These include the *linguistic*, with interjections and hyperbolic constructions used to signify intensity of affect; the *typographical*, with dashes and ellipses to indicate spontaneity of expression; and the *visual*, with tableaux of bodies frozen in attitudes of affective excess to capture moments of intense communion with the other. (6)

The linguistic and typographical can paint a clear picture of the suffering enslaved Black African, which allows for a visual imagination and identification. An explicit description of the condition of slavery can function along the lines of a visual tableaux, as shown through the slave narrative. In the hope of calling the legitimacy of slavery into question, the incompatibility of slavery and Christian beliefs is expected to emerge, for which the key factor is an emotional bond between the audience and the suffering slave. This portrayal sought to emotionally and sentimentally shock people into antislavery awareness and propel them to fight for the liberation of enslaved Black Africans in the New World.[54]

[54] This approach aligns with Köhler's notion of *Schockästhetik*, discussed in her 2017 book chapter "Menschenrecht fühlen, Gräuel der Versklavung zeigen. Zur transnationalen Abolitionsdebatte im populären deutschsprachigen Theater um 1800." Köhler uses this term to address the horrific and inhumane passages directly illustrating the treatment of African slaves through narration and on stage within slave plays. This move

An Expansion: Tangible Abolitionist Content

The historian John Oldfield addresses the expansion of the market and increasing consumerism in eighteenth-century Britain in the context of antislavery in his 1995 work *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery: The Mobilization of Public Opinion Against the Slave Trade, 1787-1807*. Oldfield discusses the potential and impact of the market, which allowed for a commercialization of abolitionism: "The consumer revolution of the eighteenth century not only affected the household economy, moulding tastes and preferences within the private sphere, but created a market in politics, the public sphere" (*Popular Politics* 155). In exploiting the growing market for the purposes of antislavery objectives, abolitionists adopted strategies introduced twenty years prior by the commercialization of politics. This profit-oriented thinking resulted in the abolitionist movement beginning to "acquire its own visual culture" that can be described as "a culture that was at once dynamic, immediate, and malleable" (Oldfield, *Popular Politics* 155). Efforts to make antislavery thought fashionable correlated with a time period in which "social emulation and emulative spending already had a powerful hold over the lives of many middle-class men and women" (Oldfield, *Popular Politics* 155-56). Thus, modern means of promotion were used to expand the reach of antislavery discourse alongside antislavery influence on the public's understandings of slavery and to convince people to take up arms against slavery (Oldfield, *Popular Politics* 155).

In this context, cultural historian Brycchan Carey describes the various forms of communication abolitionists employed to spread their message in his chapter "To Force a Tear: British Abolitionism and the Eighteenth-Century London Stage":

> Eighteenth-century British abolitionism was acted out on many stages. From the mid-1760s, when the new and, at the time, rather eccentric antislavery

results in an aesthetics, naturally shocking to the audience, that reinforces the urgency of abolition (Köhler, "Menschenrecht fühlen" 77-78).

> ideals of American Quakers began to reach the British public, to 1807, when parliament voted to outlaw the trade in human beings in British ships, the reading public were bombarded with thousands of poems, pamphlets, novels, tracts, sermons, articles, treatises, and essays offering reasons why, or why not, the slave trade should be abolished. Some of these were performed: essays read out at public meetings, speeches delivered to parliament, poems and novels shared among family members, sermons intoned before pious congregations, tracts read aloud to illiterate village swains. (109)

Carey's descriptions are indicative of a discursive public sphere in eighteenth-century Britain. Oldfield highlights the impact of the market on the private sphere, specifically in regard to the commercial connections between slavery, the transatlantic slave trade, and the colonial goods that were popularly consumed in Britain. This awareness was even present among children, according to the British abolitionist Thomas Clarkson (1760–1846), who referred to having dined with the grandson of a fellow abolitionist who no longer consumed sugar after having read about slavery and the trade in slaves (Oldfield, *Popular Politics* 158). The historian Jürgen Osterhammel confirms this to have been true for the predominantly white middle class, as he addresses the first consumerist protest that resulted in a so-called "sugar boycott" in support of abolition in his 2001 work *Geschichtswissenschaft jenseits des Nationalstaats: Studien zu Beziehungsgeschichte und Zivilisationsvergleich*. This shows how abolitionism became a public matter that the white middle class, in particular, was concerned with. In this context, abolitionist protest became part of everyday life. Stopping the consumption of sugar in many households evoked and thematized the unjust treatment of Black African slaves on sugar plantations in the West Indies all over again. Osterhammel notes:

> Die Sklavenemanzipation ging nirgends (außer 1861 in Rußland und 1886 auf Kuba) auf die Einsicht von Regierungen zurück. . . . [Die Sklavenemanzipation war] das Resultat revoluntionärer Selbstmobilisierung der Farbigen oder der Mobilisierung außerpalamentarischer Öffentlichkeiten durch anfangs kleine Gruppen entschlossener Sklavereigegner. Die Massenresonanz, die diese auch infolge neuartiger Agitationstechnicken fanden, vor allem in Großbritannien, verdankte sich nicht zuletzt dem Appell an moralische Empfindsamkeit und Schuldgefühl des Bürgers und vor allem

> auch der Bürgerin. . . . Als mit jedem Löffelgriff in die Zuckerdose das Seufzen der fernen Sklaven zu ertönen schien. Die Zuckerabstinenz, die radikale Abolitionisten sich auferlegten, ist das erste bekannte Beispiel für den politisch motivierten Komsumboykott. (356-57)

The new abolitionist visual culture drew on the knowledge of antislavery's impact to expand its reach in advocating for abolition. Thus, the visual culture had been primarily focused on portraying the suffering indirectly caused by the consumers of colonial goods. This was significantly impacted and reinforced by polemic imagery. In this, Oldfield mentions Josiah Wedgwood (1730–1795), who was said to have understood "the commercial value of abolition" (155). Wedgwood was supportive of the abolitionist cause, which has been confirmed by his attendance at meetings held by the British Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, established in 1787 (Oldfield, *Popular Politics* 155). Wedgwood created the seal for the society in 1787, of which Oldfield says, "whatever its precise origins, the whole concept was brilliantly conceived, drawing on existing images of kneeling black figures as well as religious and secular beliefs in the inequality of mankind" (*Popular Politics* 156). Oldfield signifies the congeniality of this imagery, which shows a kneeling slave together with the slogan "Am I not a Man and a Brother?" by alluding to Hugh Honour, who states that this image "neatly encapsulated ideas already widely accepted while giving them a more specific meaning" (Honour qtd. in Oldfield, *Popular Politics* 156). Wedgwood's famous image of an enslaved and chained Black African on a medallion became part of an anti-slavery campaign in 1787 that served the purpose of appealing to the emotions and conscience of slaveholders. Illustrations and images intensified the depiction of the daily trials and tribulations of enslaved Black Africans.

Oldfield highlights the groundbreaking impact of Wedgwood's image by discussing its wide distribution and many uses in the abolition context. He further mentions the

influence of abolitionist paraphernalia, which raised awareness and encouraged people to take immediate action after being confronted with a visual representation of the suffering caused by the institution of slavery:

> The first . . . cameos appeared early in 1788—a small consignment was sent to Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia on 29 February—and thereafter they were produced in their thousands. Many of them were distributed to Wedgwood's friends and sympathizers with the abolitionist cause. But others were marketed in the usual way, that is, through Wedgwood's trade catalogues, his various showrooms, and his small team of travelling salesman. Cameos . . . were already fashionable consumer goods. Wedgwood's . . . advertised [in 1779] a range of designs 'fit for rings, buttons, lockets and bracelets; and especially for inlaying Cabinets, Writing Tables, Bookcases' etc.' By 1788 . . . cameos were highly collectable. (Oldfield, *Popular Politics* 156-57)

Köhler similarly classifies this image as having served as an identifying marker among abolitionists, and it was synonymous with abolitionist activity, according to Oldfield (Köhler, "Drastische Bilder" 382; Oldfield, *Popular Politics* 159). In this, Oldfield highlights, "Not only did Wedgwood make abolition fashionable, he also helped to fix in the public's mind an image that would be forever associated with the abolition of slavery and the slave trade" (*Popular Politics* 163). Köhler attributes the wide distribution of Wedgwood's image to it having been attached to colonial goods, mentioning the tobacco, sugar, and coffee dishes that made the transatlantic slave trade visible and present at all times ("Drastische Bilder" 382-83). Oldfield adds trade tokens and the production of medals to the list. These had, however, graduated to other mottos and imagery being depicted:

> One, struck and white metal with milled edges, has on the obverse only 'Wilberforce for ever' and on the reverse 'Humanity is the cause of the people.' . . . Another medal from the same period carries the motto 'We are all brethren', together with a design depicting an 'Englishman' proffering a hand to a native African, while in the background five (black) figures dance jubilantly around a tree. Underneath is the legend 'Slave trade abolished by Great Britain 1807.' (Oldfield, *Popular Politics* 162)

Generally, objects for everyday use, such as dishes, trade tokens, bracelets, and hair pins, visualized what Köhler refers to as "Handelsdreiecks von Handel, Konsum und Versklavung" ("Drastische Bilder" 383). This triangle of trade was often visually reinforced by adding printed images. Oldfield states that printed images were the "most important means of giving abolition visual identity" (*Popular Politics* 163). In particular, abolitionists made use of slave ship blueprints. This printed image showed the "lower deck of a slave ship, as if viewed from above, 'with Slaves stowed on it, in the proportion of not quite on to a ton'" (Oldfield, *Popular Politics* 163). This plan was provided in 1788 and originated with members of the antislavery committee in Plymouth alongside William Elford. The plan was fashioned after the slave ship the *Brooks* of Liverpool. The British surgeon Alexander Falconbridge (c. 1760–1792) gives detailed information about this ship in his 1788 *Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa* (Oldfield, *Popular Politics* 165). The depiction of this ship was a further amplification of the inhumanity and cruelty of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery itself. Oldfield describes this print as shocking, though it did not depict any graphic or sentimental scenes per se. Instead, the print alludes in its diagrammatic form to how "human beings [were] reduced to the levels of inhumane objects, treated as so much merchandise and stowed on board ship in the most appalling conditions" (Oldfield, *Popular Politics* 165). In this sense, abolitionists had to have entrepreneurial knowledge of the market in order to ensure that antislavery "became a commodity to be purchased and possessed" for the larger cause (Oldfield, *Popular Politics* 161). The mobilizing effect of printed images and artifacts represented a substantial part of abolitionist literature and not only touched British audiences, but also extended to other European countries. A similar effect was seen with written texts.

Communication Network: Print Media

Oldfield illustrates the importance of communication among abolitionists in the eighteenth century in his 2013 work *Transatlantic Abolitionism in the Age of Revolution: An International History of Anti-slavery, c. 1787-1820*. Oldfield identifies a communication network that was actively involved in the production and circulation of antislavery media and genres such as "letters, books, pamphlets, newspapers, prints and artefacts" that were systematically distributed to places like "coffee shops, taverns, bookshops, wharves, salons and private parlours" (*Transatlantic Abolitionism* 42). Oldfield refers to Robert Darnton and confirms the necessity of exploring the nature of the circulation of abolitionist sentiment in terms of its "amplification and assimilation" as well as its reverberation through society as meaningful (*Transatlantic Abolitionism* 42). Oldfield explains that methods of copying, adapting, and recycling antislavery materials were part of the process of assimilation. A constant exchange of ideas as well as flow of information resulted in the emergence of a language and set of motifs particular to the abolitionist cause.

Abolitionist modes of communication signal attempts to gain an antislavery following that actively advocated "not just within narrow national boundaries but also across and within the Atlantic world" (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 42). In this sense, Oldfield foregrounds the importance of letter writing and defines ongoing correspondence through letters as vital for holding antislavery networks together (*Transatlantic Abolitionism* 42). Often, private letters among abolitionists resulted in friendships that helped sustain a wider level of antislavery communication and a distinct "sense of community" (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 43). Nonetheless, letter communication was determined by the content being announced and decided on or requiring specific authorization, such as signatures of approval, which in turn depended on regular abolitionist society meetings (*Transatlantic*

Abolitionism 43). For this reason, communication was intermittent and intervals of up to six months "between sending a letter and receiving a reply," especially in terms of transatlantic correspondence, were common (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 43). Formal letters served as a channel for discussing new antislavery strategies and initiatives while also offering words of encouragement and support in the face of antislavery opposition (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 45). Furthermore, letters provided information and commentary pertinent to the abolitionist cause and detailed accounts of society efforts, as well as proceedings in the British House of Commons (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 44).

In this sense, Oldfield discusses a specific correspondence from the French abolitionist Jacques Pierre Brissot de Warville (1754–1793), who "provided American abolitionists with . . . reports on the French campaign, assuring [the American Quaker and abolitionist] Miers Fisher [(1748–1819)] that the liberality of sentiments is spreading more and more, & that many people are now ashamed of the hellish trade of Negroes" (Brissot qtd. in Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 45). In this context, Oldfield establishes that

> from what we can gather, most . . . letters would have been read aloud at meetings or else circulated among society members. The nearest thing to instant communication, they complemented and extended the many face-to-face conversations that went on between abolitionists on both sides of the Atlantic, whether in coffee shops, committee rooms or private parlours. Simultaneously, their contents were often copied and recycled, thereby ensuring that they received a much wider audience. (*Transatlantic Abolitionism* 47)

The American Quaker James Pemberton (1723–1808) and de Warville were actively involved in the process of widening their abolitionist audience. Both worked closely with their respective local newspapers by passing on correspondence in order to circulate antislavery media as widely as possible (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 48). The inclusion of letters allowed for abolitionist discourse to penetrate different domains, which ultimately helped

"shape public debates about slavery and the slave trade" (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 48). In their various functions, letters were an essential part of transatlantic abolitionist culture.

Oldfield claims that books had a similar impact on advancing the antislavery agenda transnationally. He refers to specific British imprints by Thomas Clarkson (1760–1864) that gained popularity in America and galvanized antislavery activity via books that were distributed to all of the American governors. These texts can be partially credited for spurring a law that prohibited the exportation of slaves in Delaware. The impact of Clarkson's *Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* (1786) resulted in enthusiastic anticipation for his second work, which was advertised in newspapers around Pennsylvania and endorsed by Dr. Richard Price (1723–1791), who projected that this work would be "the finishing blow to this diabolical traffic" (Price qtd. in Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 49-50). For this reason, Clarkson's *Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave Trade* (1788) became part of a larger joint abolitionist imprint effort while it was translated and published in France by the Société des Amis des Noirs.

> The NYMS [New York Manumission Society], for instance, ordered 300 copies, some of which they arranged to be distributed among the members of the New York State legislature, but just as significant was the fact that Clarkson' s essay was issued together with an English translation of Brissot's *Discours sur la nécessité d'établir à Paris une société pour* [*Concourir, Avec Celle de Londres, À*] *l'abolition de la traite* (1788), the whole making a bound volume, "stitched and blue", of about 160 pages. There was perhaps no better demonstration of how abolitionism fashioned itself as a genuinely international or transatlantic movement: an American imprint containing works by an Englishman and a Frenchman. (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 50)

Oldfield points to the profitability of abolitionist discourse as having allowed joint projects, such as those by the NYMS. Abolitionist titles gained popularity as the expanding market

received theatrical plays, novels, and poems that were either indirectly or directly related to antislavery themes (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 51). This public domain also welcomed women writers who expressed their dismay with slavery and wrote against the slave trade (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 51).[55]

Abolitionists recognized and fully took advantage of the rising numbers of newspapers alongside the growing importance of the press on both sides of the Atlantic (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 53). Newspapers were vital for procuring information about "domestic and foreign affairs, fashion, gossip and the changing fortunes of trade and business" (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 53). This environment allowed for British and French abolitionist content to be circulated in American newspapers (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 53). French contributions abroad were especially significant due to the royal privileges and censorship that fiercely regulated content in France (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 54). While French newspapers surfaced rather late, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen along with the freedom of press propelled aspiring printers and editors, such as Brissot, to establish newspapers. In 1789, he published the first edition of *Le Patriote français,* which he declared to be national, free, and impartial (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 54). Abolitionist content finally began to be disseminated in French newspapers when members of the Société es Amis des Noirs were able to gain access to potential newspapers through the right connections. Details on American and British antislavery campaigns and efforts were circulated, also through the first French daily newspaper *Le Journal de Paris* (1777). Oldfield argues that "most newspapers during the critical first phase

[55] Oldfield alludes to Doris Kadish's work and states that "slavery was widely perceived to be a 'woman's issue,' a circumstance that enabled them to acquire 'a voice in the public sphere they would undoubtedly not otherwise have had'" (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 51).

of the movement (1787–92) carried some news from Britain and, with it, some further indication of the strength of international feeling against the slave trade" (*Transatlantic Abolitionism* 56). Oldfield identifies this global feeling based on abolitionist networks operating in Britain, France, and America. Further, he discusses the role of the Caribbean in this international mesh that ultimately led to an empowering effort and wave of slave revolts in the West Indies. In this sense, newspaper reports appeared in Barbados in April 1788 that reported on the growing critique of slavery in Britain and Europe more broadly (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 63). "News and speculation spread quickly through the Caribbean, thanks in no small part to the inter-island and the movements of runaways, free blacks and deserters from military service" (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 63).

The dissemination of abolitionist content as well as reports about the nature of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade had a significant presence in German territories, too. Translated reports were published by German-language journals and periodicals that provided information on current affairs and larger transatlantic discourses of the time. This coverage shaped opinions among the German-language reading public and allowed for the formation of independent and versatile German discourses on the subject matter. Yet there is often hardly any mention of German-language contributions or viewpoints in discussions of an apparent internationalism regarding abolitionist efforts.

The circulation of this material was not restricted to Great Britain and in fact traveled across state lines and principalities into various European territories, which also included the German-speaking realm. There, it was distributed through frequent reports and coverage by traveling newspapers that catered to readers of different ethnic, linguistic, and geographic backgrounds and often included languages such as German, English, and French. The translations of various modes of cultural productions such as "poems, pamphlets,

novels, tracts, sermons, articles, treatises, and essays offering reasons why, or why not, the slave trade should be abolished" (Carey 109)[56] then appeared in numerous languages and contributed to the larger transnational discourse of abolitionism, even in countries that were not directly politically and economically involved in the transatlantic slave trade. A considerable number of these works were translated into German, as well. With regard to the impact of these works, Riesche states:

> Die mobilisierende Wirkung dieser Werke beschränkte sich nicht nur auf die britische Bevölkerung. Gerade auch im europäischen Ausland fand die britische Abolitionsliteratur ein breites Publikum: Übersetzungen der erfolgreicheren Texte erschienen in zahlreichen Sprachen und trugen mit ihren bewegenden Schicksalsberichten von tragischen schwarzen Helden maßgeblich dazu bei, dass die Abolitionsthematik auch in Ländern, die nicht am Sklavenhandel beteiligt waren, Interesse weckte, rezipiert und diskutiert wurde. (16)

Köhler confirms this by stating that "von den Gräuel des Sklavenhandels und der Sklaverei in der Karibik, von der Abolitionsbewegung wie auch von den wirtschaftlichen Zusammenhängen des dahinter stehenden transatlantischen Handelsdreiecks ist in den deutschsprachigen Journalen zeitgenössisch immer wieder ausführlich berichtet worden" ("Drastische Bilder" 379). In this sense, people in the German territories were aware of political and economic developments in European nation-states, oftentimes through news-

[56] Riesche's work is indicative of the transnational nature of the abolitionist movement, which, although it originated in Great Britain, also affected German understandings of slavery and the slave trade. Riesche discusses the abolitionist movement as one that aimed to terminate the slave trade and the ongoing enslavement of Black Africans (9). In Riesche's analysis of slavery and Black bodies in German theater, titled *Schöne Mohrinnen, Edle Sklaven, Schwarze Rächer: Schwarzendarstellung und Sklaventhematik im Deutschen Unterhaltungstheater 1770-1814,* she further notes that the leading principle of the abolitionist movement was the termination of the slave trade in the Caribbean and the Americas (9). In this way, Riesche identifies a total of 21 theater plays that explore the legitimacy of the slave trade and slavery as well as that of armed, violent slave rebellions and uprisings. She discusses these plays as belonging to the long-lost genre "das Sklavenstück" that increasingly featured plays with black lead characters on eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century German theater stages. The protagonists were shown in environments of trials and tribulations as well as slave rebellions as part of plantation life. Some accompanied their white liberators to their home countries in Europe. These storylines occur amidst the bourgeoisie in the Caribbean as well as on the African continent, where Africans were known to be sold into slavery (Riesche 1).

like coverage in journals and periodicals that offered translations and contextual explanations in an effort to keep the German-language reading public updated on current affairs.

Furthermore, German-language travelogues that addressed issues of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade played a significant role in the awareness of the German-language reading public. Cultural critic Susanne Zantop establishes that

> almost from its inception, individual Germans took part in the conquest of the new territories—as adventurers or mercenaries in Spanish or Portuguese expeditions (e.g., Ulrich Schmidl, Hans Staden); as merchants outfitting and equipping ships or trading in slaves (e.g., the Welsers); as scientists, explorers, or interpreters in the service of German, Dutch, or other officials or companies. . . . Thousands of German men went to the Americas, irresistibly drawn by stories of unheard-of adventures and riches—or pushed out by dire economic conditions at home. (18)

Some of these expeditions and travels led to encounters of German individuals with the transatlantic slave trade and various forms of slave systems that were in some instances critically reflected on. Some of these German-language reflections emerged from encounters with the New World, specifically the American colonies. An increased interest in the New World developed, which was especially noticeable in German-language cultural productions and news coverage. The German-language reading population had access to multiple sources reporting on entanglements of New World and European political affairs that are essential for understanding the influx of information being provided and its impact on the literate and illiterate population in the German principalities in the larger context of transatlantic (discursive) interactions and activities.

Anglophone Discourses in German Territories

The historian Horst Dippel explores the impact of the American Revolution in Europe and specifically examines the reception of discourses pertaining to America and the

Thirteen British Colonies in eighteenth-century Germany. He further discusses the demand for as well as the generation of literary cultural productions regarding the American Revolution among the aristocracy and the German middle class in his work titled *Germany and the American Revolution, 1770–1800: A Sociohistorical Investigation of Late Eighteenth-Century Thinking* (1977). In the foreword to Dippel's book, the historian Robert Roswell Palmer signifies the importance of this research and states that

> in Germany there was more variety of opinion than in France. Partly because the electorate of Hanover, with its very active University of Göttingen, was still associated with the British Crown, there were intelligent Germans who took the official British side in discussing the affairs. And besides the partisans, there were others of more scientific bent who had hard-headed and informed knowledge of the United States. (Dippel viiii)

Palmer states that Dippel addressed international communication and includes the German territories in the larger, often mostly triangular (Britain, France, the Americas) discourse in terms of the role played by the "press and other 'media,' such as traveler's reports, and the timing and dissemination of news" (in Dippel viiii). While Dippel does not address slavery and the transatlantic slave trade per se, one can assume that the populations in the German principalities were aware of the factors that led to the conflict between Britain and the Thirteen British Colonies, as well as the following abolitionist efforts by the British and Americans. In this, the historian Karin Schüller discusses engagements with America as having provided an entry point into dealing with issues of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade in her chapter "Deutsche Abolitionisten in Göttingen und Halle: Die ersten Darstellungen des Sklavenhandels und der Antisklavereibewegung in der deutschen Historographie des ausgehenden 18. und beginnenden 19. Jahrhunderts" (2004). Schüller writes, "Das Thema des Sklavenhandels und der Sklaverei stand in engstem Zusammenhang was mit dem Thema Amerika" ("Deutsche Abolitionisten" 612). Köhler confirms this line of

thinking by stating that the theme of slavery and abolition was present "'in so vielen Reisebeschreibungen, in Raynal und unzähligen andern Schriftstellern' . . . 'in den von Wilberforce by dem Englischen Parlament und in Frankreich beym Nazional-Konvent vorgefallenen [Debatten]' diskutiert und 'durch die teutschen Journale' berichtet worden ist, 'hinlänglich bekannt [ist]" ("Drastische Bilder" 376-77).[57]

In this context, Dippel notes a sudden German interest in North American colonies and their dealings with Britain when the conflict between both ensued (8). Both sides recruited troops in different parts of the German realm, which resulted in a direct involvement in this larger conflict. In this, Dippel describes the revolution in America as having become a matter of the civilized world that therefore concerned European citizens overall. The population in the rural parts of the German principalities had no knowledge about North America and yet made up the largest number of auxiliary troops: "Lower classes of the population [were] directly confronted. . . . Six states had concluded treaties with Great Britain, and the troops recruited according to those treaties drew attention to the events in the New World" (Dippel 9, 44). The demand for information about North America grew and was also driven by a lack of knowledge about the specifics of the conflict, as well as the geographical dimensions and distance from Europe. Here, Dippel brings up the German professor of history August Ludwig Schlözer at the University of Göttingen, who established that it was essential to educate the "German reader of newspapers but also .

[57] Riesche's work is the first to present an engagement with contemporary German-language coverage on slavery and abolition. Köhler draws on databases from Bielefeld and Göttingen in terms of the *Zeitschriften der Aufklärung* bzw. *Gelehrte Journale* and *Zeitungen der Aufklärung* ("Drastische Bilder" 379).

. . the German courts of law, to have available a geography of North America" (Schlözer qtd. in Dippel 10).

The demand for information about the conflict between England and the North American colonies was reflected after 1775 in governments of larger territories as well as bourgeois circles observing and following any developments of the conflict carefully. Dippel states that "the desire for news was . . . intense among the bourgeoisie [and the governing bodies of the various principalities], but the sources of information generally available before 1775 proved . . . inadequate to satisfy their demand for knowledge" (12). Various German-language publications on North America tried to fill the void and "supply the prevailing deficiency," among them a 1777 work by the German historian Matthias Christian Sprengel titled *Briefe den gegenwärtigen Zustand von Nord was Amerika betreffend*. Sprengel had written these letters in service of the public and to educate interested readers on the specifics of the conflict: "These letters go to the public, for whom North American affairs are becoming increasingly interesting, in the hope that they contain some things that will make the conflict between Great Britain and its colonies easier to understand" (Sprengel qtd. in Dippel 13). Dippel confirms the interest in North America by referring to an increase in the number of books written in German or translated from English.

Here, Dippel refers to the importance of so-called readers' societies that provided periodicals, newspapers, and books of general interest to interested readers for a small membership fee. These societies catered to those willing to educate themselves further on the subject matter within the upper and literate classes. Dippel explains these *Lesegesellschaften* as having been the beginning stages of conventional and contemporary libraries (20). The illiterate population was provided with information through the practice of reading

newspapers out loud in village taverns, which also fulfilled an important function (Dippel 20-21).

Dippel discusses first-hand reports from America as having been present in newspapers and magazines when provided by members of the German auxiliary troops, travelers, or Germans who had migrated to America at a later point in time (16). Oftentimes, information was also copied from various other newspapers because reports by American authors seldom reached the German territories in a direct manner: "News from America was received in London, Paris and The Hague and passed on in newspapers, broadsides, or government reports" (Dippel 16). The respective countries of these cities were involved in the American conflict, and thus it was crucial for their governments to be provided with information about these topics. This information about North America, once received, was also translated into German, while the British news market, including its court newspapers, was deemed the most important due to its direct link to the American colonies (Dippel 17). This information was often very delayed and at times even incomplete, sometimes taking months to reach the German territories (Dippel 17).

Dippel mentions "a great number of newspapers, periodicals, books that could serve the interested citizen as sources of information. Within certain limits . . . they were suited in form and content to their function of providing information" (19). Many educated Germans had a command over the French language, which was widely known. For this reason, French works were often published in the German territories in their original language. This applied to French works on America as well as French works in general. English was less known and spoken, except for in the circles of Hanover, Switzerland, and northwestern Germany, leaning toward England (Dippel 19-20).

Dippel mentions political newspapers that he states were of great importance locally. These newspapers provided their readers with significant information between 1770 and 1783 and addressed political, constitutional, and social matters (Dippel 21, 23).[58] Some of these papers were issued between one to five times per week and had a large following (Dippel 22). Dippel describes the *Hamburgischer Correspondent* as having been popular in all of Europe and states that it was an international paper (22). Though considered political in nature, these newspapers merely presented factual information rather than analyzing and commenting on the content: "The center of the news was occupied by actions of the Americans and reactions of the English government, including occasional reports of the political opposition in Great Britain. But a thorough airing of the arguments on both sides and of their political and juridical basis was missing" (Dippel 23). By 1774, America had become the most-discussed topic in German-language political newspapers (Dippel 22-23). As discussed by Oldfield in an anglophone context, most German newspapers maintained impartiality by presenting passages in support of America and England side by side (Dippel 23).

Dippel investigates the coverage of North American matters based on reports in periodicals from 1770 to 1800 and identifies 3,000 of those that were published (24). Many of these journals were short-lived and served local communities. The last third of the eighteenth century brought about a change in the nature of these journals, which now operated according to Enlightenment principles. Dippel explains that these moralizing weeklies were fashioned after the English *Spectator* with the purpose of "the general propagation of the ideas of the Enlightenment" (25). Dippel mentions another form of

[58] Dippel also refers to newspapers that mostly comprise official announcements. These newspapers were of a limited number and were called *Intelligenzblätter* (Dippel 22).

periodical journalism, the political review, which first emerged in 1773 "with the establishment of Christoph Martin Wieland's [(1733–1813)] *Teutscher Merkur* (Weimar). Its new and still unusual function, namely, to report and comment on events and situations in public affairs and politics, soon found followers and emulators" (25). This new form of reporting helped Wieland's political review achieve an unprecedented circulation of 1,200 to 2,500 copies up to 1800 (Dippel 26). Here, Dippel discusses a number of variations regarding the topical content and style of presentation in journals during the last three decades of the eighteenth century (27-28).[59] When the conflict began openly, essays and letters that spoke on "aspects of domestic matters, especially finance, economics, and foreign affairs" grew popular (Dippel 29). However, the political documents imperative for an enhanced understanding of the conflict between Britain and America were hardly ever reprinted. Dippel mentions two examples of media figures who did disseminate texts of this nature: the Swiss philosopher Isaak Iselin (1728–1782), who published a German translation of the Declaration of Independence, and the editor Johann Wilhelm von Archenholz (1741–1812), who provided a German translation of "the federal Constitution of 1787 and of Franklin's famous speech before its ratification by the Constitutional Convention" (29).

Dippel describes these private sources of information as invaluable and mentions the 30,000 German soldiers that fought in service of the English in America (42). He further mentions a small number of Germans who lived in America before and after the war, which also included German soldiers and officers who remained in America and returned to their

[59] Dippel expands his categorization by addressing scholarly journals that dealt with issues related to geography, economics, and ethnology, while another group of journals focused on reviews of scholarly publications and books (27). A third group of periodicals discussed historical and political content. These journals were disseminated either locally or supra-regionally (Dippel 28).

homes at some point. The information presented by these individuals comprises letters as well as diary entries that provided substantial information about the happenings in the New World. British and French military generals who either traveled through German lands or decided to stay there, such as Marquis de La Fayette (1757–1834) and Charles Cornwallis (1738–1805), offered similar information (Dippel 43). Another example of these private sources of information that Dippel discusses is the widely known and proliferated church groups of German heritage. Dippel mentions the Moravian church, Halle Pietists, and the Helmstedt theologians, which all "had special means of obtaining information, that is, through their organizational links with their brethren in North America" (44). The actual information was either communicated through members of the different congregations or released to the public in printed form (Dippel 44).

As demonstrated, the engagements with and the information on the American colonies and Britain belonged to a variety of genres with different foci. The political and economic discussions must certainly have mentioned conflicts between both parties based on slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, the impact of which some German individuals likely experienced firsthand while in America. Circling back to Zantop's establishment of German individual travel far and wide, encounters with the transatlantic slave trade and various forms of slave systems were in some instances critically reflected on. These German-language reflections could be deemed early abolitionist or ameliorationist expressions; I examine them within the larger context of literary contributions.

German Abolitionist Contributions: The Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries

The coverage of debates in Britain, as well as slave revolts in the French Caribbean, was frequently used as inspiration for literary works and even theoretical theses. When

cultural critic Susan Buck-Morss published her article "Hegel and Haiti" in 2000, her persuasive connection between Hegel's philosophy and political events on Haiti amounted to a substantial breakthrough for German postcolonial studies. In the following section, I demonstrate that Hegel's thoughts about slavery were preceded by a larger debate on slavery and abolition in German-language contributions. To illustrate this point, I chronologically present German-language writers and works indicative of ambivalent, ameliorationist, and abolitionist viewpoints. First, I focus my discussion on an academic contribution produced by a scholar educated in the German context of Göttingen and Halle.

Ambivalent

An important figure in terms of the popularization of the topic of abolition in German-speaking states is Matthias Christian Sprengel. Schüller examines German-language contributions on slavery and the transatlantic slave trade by focusing on Sprengel, who was a professor in Göttingen and Halle. Schüller foregrounds the geographical and political significance of both Göttingen and Halle, which gave rise to research on America, its colonies, and the revolution. Specifically, Schüller explores

> Werke der drei ersten deutschen Historiker . . . die im wesentlichen ohne vordergründige politische Absichten den Sklavenhandel und die Antisklavereibewegung darstellten und durch die Auseinandersetzung mit den Argumenten der nordamerikanischen, britischen und französischen Abolitionisten zu einer eigenen, ablehnenden Haltung gegenüber dem Sklavenhandel kamen. ("Deutsche Abolitionisten" 612)

In this context, Schüller identifies Sprengel as the first German scholar who engaged issues of abolitionism and developed an aversion to the slave trade ("Deutsche Abolitionisten" 612). I, however, deem Sprengel's scholarship and stance on slavery to be in no way

sufficient to be considered abolitionist or having a tendency toward amelioration, which I discuss in the following sections.

Geographer Bruno Felix Hänsch discusses Sprengel's biography in relation to his contributions to the fields of geography and history in his work *Matthias Christian Sprengel, ein geographischer Publizist am Ausgange des 18. Jahrhunderts* (1902). According to Hänsch, while studying at the University of Göttingen, Sprengel was strongly influenced by the historian August Ludwig von Schlözer (1735–1809), who was well-known for his lectures and scholarship on colonial history, such as that of the French colonies in North America (15). Zhang describes the University of Göttingen as a hub for Enlightenment thought that was known for its research on non-European places and cultures ("Matthias Christian Sprengel" 168). As Sprengel's interest in world history and European colonialism grew, he devoted his studies mainly to the history of the Thirteen British Colonies (Schüller, "Deutsche Abolitionisten" 613). Zhang credits Sprengel's birth and upbringing in Rostock and its residentiary harbor activities for his interest in colonial history ("Matthias Christian Sprengel" 168). Sprengel put his fluency in English, French, and Italian to use by writing numerous translations of travel reports and early ethnographies, "which immensely enriched Germans' knowledge about the global world" (Zhang, "Matthias Christian Sprengel" 169). His histories also included works on European colonialism in India and the Americas, while his friendships with Georg Forster and Johann Reinhold Forster allowed for a broader and enhanced viewpoint in terms of literary academic understandings of colonialism and travel (Zhang, "Matthias Christian Sprengel" 168). As a result, Sprengel co-edited the journal *Beiträge zur Völker- und Länderkunde* from 1781 to 1790, in fourteen volumes, and *Neue Beiträge zur Völker- und Länderkunde* from 1790 to 1793, in thirteen volumes, with Johann Reinhold Forster (Zhang, "Matthias Christian Sprengel" 169).

When Sprengel became a professor in Göttingen in 1778, he taught a class on current affairs in the Thirteen British Colonies in America. Schüller notes that Sprengel's research, which evaluates the legitimacy of slavery and abolitionism on both sides of the Atlantic, made these debates accessible to German-speaking audiences ("Deutsche Abolitionisten" 614). Because of his critical stance toward slavery and the slave trade, Schüller considers him to be the first German abolitionist ("Deutsche Abolitionisten" 614). In 1779, Sprengel received a call to Halle, where he accepted a professorship in history and statistics. He presented his research on slavery in an inaugural lecture titled "Vom Ursprung des Negerhandels: Ein Antrittsprogramm" that was later published (Schüller, "Deutsche Abolitionisten" 613). Considering his extensive work, Hänsch argues that Sprengel was considered the most knowledgeable scholar in his field. Sprengel compiled source material related to travel:

> In mehr denn fünfzehn Aufsätzen, zum Teil eigenen Arbeiten, zum Teil Übersetzungen von ausländischen Reisebeschreibungen, Essays, über den Negerhandel—darunter die berühmtesten und einflussreichsten Schriften, die in England erschienen sind—bietet er dem Publikum Stoff zur Erörterung der Frage und lenkt das Urteil desselben durch seine eigenen Einleitungen und Amerkungen in die rechten Bahnen. (Hänsch 52)

Sprengel's extensive study on the origins of the slave trade from the Middles Ages onward is based on numerous travel sources and aims to present a complete historical picture of slavery. In an article titled "The Experienced Traveller as a Professional Author: Friedrich Ludwig Langstedt, Georg Forster and Colonialism Discourse in Eighteenth-Century Germany" (2010), the historian Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi highlights Sprengel's thorough engagement with travel literature and authoritative knowledge, which allowed for the inclusion of various European sources that spoke to the multitude of "literary activity related to travel" (5). Sprengel refers to this source material in footnotes throughout the

written version of his inaugural lecture. In a scholarly attempt to give a factual and complete overview of the origins and conditions of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, Sprengel admits some limitations with regard to the scarcity of his sources, which did not allow him to study the material and situation in its entirety. He critiques the lack of systematic and analytical discussions of debates on the legitimacy of the transatlantic slave trade and decides to fill in this gap in scholarship himself:

> Aber eine vollständige Darstellung aller Veränderungen des Negerhandels von seinem Ursprunge an, und der heutigen Verfassung der Negersclaven [sic] in den europäischen Pflanzorten, ist bey aller Menge der Materialien noch nicht möglich. Keiner von allen, die Africa [sic] beschreiben, hat den Negerhandel besonders und von seiner Entstehung an behandelt. Alles was über diesen wichtigen Gegenstand der neuesten Geschichte vorhanden ist, sind Episoden, kurze Ausführungen verwandte Materien zu erläutern, oder Fragmente in weitläufigen, seltenen und verlegenen Werken zerstreut. Was ich aus diesen gröstentheils [sic] ungebrauchten Quellen zusammengelesen, liefere ich hier als seine Einleitung zu einer vollständigen Geschichte dieses allgemein verhaßten [sic] und allgemein getriebenen Handels. (Sprengel 2)[60]

The introduction to Sprengel's work establishes a critical and abolitionist point of view that he argues through his juxtaposition of the migration of Westerners and the migration of Africans:

> Daß [sic] schwarze Africaner [sic] in Westindien Zucker pflanzen, oder in Virginien Taback [sic] bauen, hat freylich [sic] für den Menschenbeobachter nicht viel auffallendes mehr. . . . Allein der so sehr verschiedene Zustand dieser weissen und schwarzen Colonisten [sic], und das bisher nie ganz aufgelöste Problem, der ersten Veranlassung, Africa [sic] auf Kosten der neuen Welt zu entvölkern, unterscheidet die freiwilligen Auswanderungen der Europäer, so sehr von den gezwungenen Reisen der Neger, daß [sic] der

[60] However, the complete discussion of all changes in the Negro slave trade from the beginning, and today's condition of the Negroes in the places to which they were brought by Europeans is not yet possible, given the amount of the material. None of the scholars who describe Africa have discussed the Negro slave trade in particular, nor from the beginning. The only information available on contemporary history is accessible as episodes, brief discussions of related materials, or fragmented and dispersed across extensive, rare, and lost volumes. I present what I have found in largely unused sources as an introduction to a complete history of this generally hated and generally operated trade.

> so oft beschriebene, bestrittene und beseufzte Negerhandel immer noch eine neue Untersuchung verdient. (1-2) [61]

Sprengel positions himself as a knowledgeable scholar who critically reflects on the transatlantic slave trade as a forcible and violent practice that exploits Black Africans for the sole purpose of cultivating plantations in the New World and, by extension, the lifestyle of white settlers.

Nonetheless, Sprengel does not level further critique against the institution of slavery. Instead, Sprengel presents a historical picture of the origins of slavery, in which he identifies the crudest form of slavery as having emerged among Black Africans (11-13). Sprengel's characterization of Black Africans indicates an eighteenth-century prejudice: "Nichts übertrift [sic] die Grausamkeit, mit welcher die Neger nach den Berichten aller Reisenden gegen einander wüten, mit welcher unerhörten Barbarey [sic] sie Menschenblut vergiessen, und wie oft sie den Werth [sic] eines Menschen weit unter dem Werth der verworfensten Thiere [sic] erniedrigen" (12).[62] He ascribes to stereotypical depictions of Black Africans as barbaric and brutish by nature, which may be a byproduct of his early engagement with the forms of oppression and violence inflicted on Black Africans in *Vom Ursprung des Negerhandels: Ein Antrittsprogramm*.

Zhang, however, detects an "emotionless, documentary and detail-driven" style in this account that she terms historical realism ("Matthias Christian Sprengel" 170). This style

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[61] The fact that Black Africans are planting sugar in the West Indies, or tobacco in Virginia does no longer seem extraordinary to observers of humankind. . . . The different conditions among white and Black colonists alone, as well as the hitherto unsolved problem of depopulating Africa at the cost of the New World, differentiates the voluntary migration of Europeans from the forced migration of Africans to the extent that the frequently described and bemoaned slave trade still warrants a new examination.

[62] Nothing supersedes the cruelty with which Negroes fight against each other, as can be seen in the reports of all travelers, nor the incredible savagery with which they spill human blood, and the ways they subjugate that value of a human being far below that of the lowest animal.

avoids ideological reflections and offers a genealogy of the slave trade alongside an understanding of European colonial slavery as a result "of the historical tradition not only in Europe but also in Africa and other places as well" (Zhang, "Matthias Christian Sprengel" 171). Referring to Sprengel's *Lussmans Briefe über die westindische Insel Antigua*, Zhang foregrounds Sprengel's critique of the living conditions of Black African slaves and his call to end the slave trade. Zhang recognizes this seemingly inconsistent stance on slavery as a strategy that aims to align with "political censure yet, at the same time, spread antislavery ideas among German readers" ("Matthias Christian Sprengel" 172). In this sense, historical realism provides readers with insight into historical events and context, which allow for readers' assessments with their "own power of judgement" (Zhang, "Matthias Christian Sprengel" 173). These assessments are assisted by Sprengel's engagements with charts, statistics, and translated travelogues that constitute a larger narrative and are based on facts that have contributed significantly to a genealogy and global consciousness of German-language readers (Zhang, "Matthias Christian Sprengel" 174). In this sense, Sprengel was the first scholar to explore the American Revolution in order to help explain North American affairs to and arouse interest among German-language audiences (Zhang, "Matthias Christian Sprengel" 174-75).

Zhang foregrounds Sprengel's interpretative perspective on the American Revolution in his *Geschichte der Revolution von Nord-Amerika* (1785). Sprengel sees the concepts of freedom, tolerance, and democracy realized in the American Revolution. This engagement with the Thirteen British Colonies in America had implications for his political understanding of the German states: "The notion of freedom in American political and religious life . . . indirectly airs his dissatisfaction with monarchy. Democracy and religious tolerance can only be possible if a quotidian freedom is secured and respected" (Zhang, "Matthias Christian

Sprengel" 176). In the chapter "German Immigrants and African-Americans in Mid-Nineteenth Century America" (1997), Hartmut Keil emphasizes a larger interest in German states in the American Revolution through interconnected European and American Enlightenment thought:

> An intense exchange of ideas that crossed the Atlantic in both directions. Between the German states and North America a transatlantic intellectual network evolved. . . . It was on the North American continent that the Enlightenment tradition first went beyond intellectual circles, left behind purely philosophical implications, and assumed an immediately practical impact. Europeans saw the Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution as a victory of Enlightenment thought as it had emerged on the old continent. Even before the Fourth of July, 1776, the German educated public closely followed developments in England's North American colonies. (139)

Principles of tolerance and freedom through a democratic constitution were seen as emblematic of enlightened visions and portrayed the United States of America as a safe haven "for those in search of a better world" (Zhang, "Matthias Christian Sprengel" 141). Zhang writes, "Sprengel idealizes the American Revolution to express his indirect critique of monarchy and aristocracy" ("Matthias Christian Sprengel" 183). She claims that Sprengel takes up the American case to endorse democracy among German readers (Zhang, "Matthias Christian Sprengel" 183). Sprengel associated the American democratic constitution with values such as "equality among all social groups and individuals," which Zhang argues is a significant characteristic of the Radical Enlightenment. This notion of equality would then ultimately apply to enslaved Black Africans, too (Zhang, "Matthias Christian Sprengel" 182). This viewpoint has been thoroughly disputed by Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich Alexander von Humboldt, who heavily criticized the United States almost a decade after the Declaration of Independence regarding the institution of slavery and the overall treatment of Black people in America.

Toward the end of her discussion, Zhang concedes that Sprengel's idealistic obsession with American independence in the name of democracy did not result in an assured abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. Therefore, I am not convinced that Sprengel's argument upholds abolitionist sentiments. Sprengel lacks a detailed engagement with the positionality of Black African slave populations at that time and after the War of Independence. Therefore, he is unable to articulate the remote possibility of a practiced equality among populations in America and under the American constitution. Sprengel expresses neither abolitionist tendencies nor tendencies that represent amelioration.

Amelioration

Painstakingly detailed in his critique of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, Paul Erdmann Isert (1756–1789) could be mistaken for an antislavery advocate at first glance. Isert was a Danish chief surgeon who wrote a German-language travelogue titled *Reise nach Guinea und den Caribäischen Inseln in Columbien: in Briefen an seine Freunde beschrieben* (1788). This text chronicles Isert's travel to the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana) and the formation of his aversion to slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. By taking advantage of the triangular trade (which connected ports and regions in West Africa, the West Indies, and Europe), Isert traveled between Guinea and the West Indies. He was appointed surgeon to the Danish establishments on the Coast of Guinea and sailed to the West Indies on the *Christiansborg* ship that carried slaves who ended up revolting in 1786. His experiences in the West Indies made him determined to end slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Selena Axelrod Winsnes translated Isert's text into English in 1992 as *Letters on West Africa and the Slave Trade: Paul Erdmann Isert's Journey to Guinea and the Caribbean Island in Columbia (1788)*. She considers this travel account "notable for its attempt at objectivity and a scientific approach" (Winsnes

9), which is exemplified by the extensive meteorological data arranged in tables in the appendix (Isert IX-LXX). Letters 11 and 12 recount Isert's encounters as chief surgeon to the Danish establishments on the Guinean Coast and the West Indies, where he witnessed the inhumanity of slavery and the slave trade (306-10). In response to his experiences, Isert devised the idea for a plantation "on the Gold Coast, where he would raise the same crops as those cultivated in the West Indies and the black workers could remain in their own land, thus making the trans-Atlantic slave trade redundant" (Winsnes 4; Isert 338-40). Isert's compassion for the inhumane treatment that enslaved Black Africans endured is captured in the following passage, which is emblematic of his experiences in the West Indies:

> Diese entsezlichen Strapazen und Schläge, verbunden mit einer elenden Diät, tödtet [sic] sie entweder bald, oder entstellt, die, sonst so vortheilhaft [sic] gebildeten Neger gänzlich. O! was waret ihr? und was seyd ihr nun? Diese traurigen Fragen habe ich mir nicht selten gemacht, wenn ich einen Trupp dieser Elenden mit ihren Treibern sehe. (Isert 336)[63]

Isert's descriptions are among the most graphic testimonials I have discovered in my research. On multiple occasions, he provides his readers with explicit insights into the daily trials and tribulations of Black African slaves and makes sure to convey that the suffering he observed is indeed the norm, namely "gewöhnliche Behandlung" (everyday treatment) (Isert 332). Isert details both the physical and emotional suffering of slaves. As Ahern states, Isert aims to demonstrate the "enslaved African's capacity to feel intensely . . . as proof of a human dignity deserving of respect" (1). For example, Isert describes the heavy whippings of slaves that "das Fleisch mit Geisseln zerfezzen [sic] [lassen]" (tore the flesh with whips)

[63] The terrible hardships and beatings, combined with a wretched diet, will either kill them soon, or disfigure them, the Negroes, who were otherwise so well-made, entirely. O! What were you? And what are you now? These sad questions I have often asked myself when I see a squad of these miseries with their drivers. A Negro slave has absolutely no rights!

(333). As Ahern emphasizes, Isert thus makes his case for abolition by capturing "in minute detail the pain of another" to evoke pity and sympathy among his readers, who then try to "relieve the conditions that produced the pain" (Ahern 2). This can be observed, for example, in Isert's description of the brutal behavior of the slaveholders:

> Zu den meisten Vergehungen der Neger, sind die Weißen selbst Schuld. Sie verlangen, die Neger sollen ihnen treu seyn [sic], nicht weglaufen, und doch geben sie sie selbst Gelegenheit dazu, indem sie ihnen theils [sic] zu schlechte Nahrung, theils nicht einmal genug geben. Es geschiehet nicht selten, daß [sic] ein Neger zu seinen Meisterknecht kommt, seinen Bauch zusammen faltet, und um Lebensmittel bittet, da dieser für die Dreistigkeit tyrannisch genug seyn [sic] kan [sic], ihn ein Duzzend [sic] von der Reitpeitsche zuzählen zu laßen [sic]. Diese Monstra von Grausamkeit, geben ihnen oftmals nicht einmal das, was ihnen der Principal [sic] zustehet [sic], sondern bereichern sich auf die Weise von dem Magenbellen [sic], der Unglüklichen [sic], die außer Stand gesezt [sic] sind, sich auf eine andere Weise ihre Nahrung zu verdienen. Es ist ein melancholischer Anblik [sic], wenn man diese Unglüklichen [sic] auf Arbeit treiben siehet [sic], die schon vor Sonnen-Aufgang ihren Anfang nimmt, und sich erst spät in die Nacht endigt [sic]. (335)[64]

To engage the emotions of his readers, Isert offers descriptions of sequences of authentic scenes to foster the readers' susceptibility to the moral agenda of this work. He draws on authentic pictures in the form of detailed scenes that elicit a connection between the reader, the events described, and the suffering enslaved people. As Worvill argues, this approach amplifies appeals to the senses, imagination, and morality while highlighting slavery as unjust (152). Similarly, English scholar Jane K Brown discusses the affective power of the suffering of another as a tool in the context of sensibility—Empfindsamkeit as an "aspect of 18th century culture concerned with feeling" (Brown 248)—and asserts: "Because sensibility

[64] Whites are at fault themselves for most of the Negroes' offenses. They demand that Negroes are loyal, that they do not run away, but drive them to do so by providing subpar food, and often not enough of it. It is not a rare occurrence for a slave to go to his master with an empty stomach and to ask for food, the master may be tyrannical enough to make him count twelve lashes with the whip for the audacity of his request. These cruel monsters often do not provide what they owe to their subjects but enrich themselves through the growling stomachs of the unfortunate ones, who are unable to earn food in any other way. It is sad to observe the unfortunate ones, whose work often starts before dawn and not done until late at night.

was the basis for an immediate, almost involuntary sympathy, it was easily incorporated into a traditional framework as an explanation for that passional capacity to which rhetoricians, dramatists, or ethical writers appealed (248-49). In this context, sentimentalism—Empfindsamkeit as a "cultural phenomenon in later periods" (Brown 248)—identified an innate and overall human capacity to feel that can be associated with Jessie Ann Van Sant's descriptions of early uses of sensibility as an "intensely felt humanity" (5). In this sense, a moral consciousness was deemed to be an intrinsic part of human nature that was accessible to all human beings if brought to light through Isert's visual rhetoric. Brown foregrounds the significance of eighteenth-century affections in moral life and thus highlights the grounds for reinforcing "appeals to emotion for ethical purposes" (249). Accordingly, detailed descriptions of human suffering were understood to evoke feelings of sympathy, or even empathy, that enabled a feeling of shared humanity, which in turn displays morality. Ahern describes the focalization of affect as characteristic of eighteenth-century writers "arguing for abolition of the slave trade and for emancipation of those in bondage" in his chapter titled "Introduction: The Bonds of Sentiment" (1).

Overall, Isert argues against the legitimacy of the institution of slavery, which deprives Black Africans of humanity. He remarks that "Ein Negersklave hat durchaus kein Recht. Ein Weißer, der ihn gar nichts angehet, kan [sic] ihn ohne Ursache halb todt prügeln, und der Sklave darf sich nicht im mindesten wehren. Thäte [sic] er es, so hätte er unwiedersprechlich [sic] sein Leben verwirkt" (Isert 336).[65] As opposed to Sprengel, Isert also adamantly deems white Europeans responsible for this misery: "Doch, wozu nüzt es,

[65] A Negro slave has no rights. A white person that has no affiliation with him can beat him to death for no reason, and the slave may not defend himself. If he did, he would have definitively destroyed his own life.

daß [sic] ich meine Klagen über die unnatürlichste und ungerechteste Traffik [sic] mit den Seufzern wakkerer [sic] Philosophen, über das grosse [sic] unauslöschbare Laster der Europäer. . . .Vereinige [sic]!" (338).[66]

While Isert is appalled by the brutal treatment of slaves and criticizes European involvement, he does not necessarily consider abolition per se to be the solution:

> Wäre doch nur ein Mittel möglich diesen fortdaurenden Uebel [sic] Einhalt zu thun [sic]? An Wiederersezzung [sic] ist freilich nicht zu gedenken! Solten [sic] wir uns abgewöhnen Zukker [sic], Caffe [sic], Chokolade [sic], und andere . . . zum Luxus in Europa nun so nothwendig [sic] gewordene Artikel zu gebrauchen? Nein! das würde nur eine eben so grosse [sic]—Anzahl Europäer unglüklich [sic] machen, wie dadurch vielleicht Neger glüklich [sic] würden. (338)[67]

Isert refuses to give up the use of colonial products such as sugar and chocolate because this would only sadden Europeans and might not even make slaves happy (338). Hence, he suggests a plantation system in Africa that would avoid the Middle Passage. Isert sounds quite optimistic about Africans generously sharing their land with Europeans: "Gern, werden die Schwarzen uns die besten und grösten [sic] Ländereien, die seit Jahrtausenden wüste gelegen haben, einräumen, wenn wir mit den Oelzweig in der Hand, statt des Mordstahls zu ihnen kommen" (339-40).[68]

A similar advocate for a reform in slavery in terms of alleviating pain among enslaved Black Africans is Johann Ernst Kolb and his 1789 work *Erzählungen von den Sitten*

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[66] But what is the purpose of combining my complaints regarding this most unnatural and unjust traffic with the sighs of brave philosophers, about the unremovable habit of Europeans!

[67] If only there were a way to put an end to this continuous evil? Of course, resistance is out of the question! Are we to give up sugar, coffee, chocolate and other . . . products that have become so crucial to luxury in Europe? No! This would only result in the same numbers of unhappy Europeans as numbers of pleased Negroes.

[68] Gladly, will the blacks grant us the best and largest estates that have been deserted for millennia, if we come to them with the oil branch in hand instead of the murder steel.

und Schiksalen der Negersklaven: Eine rührende Lektür für Menschen guter Art. As Zantop establishes in *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770-1870* (1997), this Swiss anthology contains information on slavery and the slave trade in the West Indies drawn from newspaper articles and periodical contributions composed by European writers (149). These periodical contributions are made up of British, American, and French source material, which includes eyewitness reports, letters, travelogues, geographical works, and narrations.[69] In this sense, Kolb takes on the function of an editor putting together a collection of source material on slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

The anthology has 33 entries in total,[70] one of which is the introductory chapter on the transatlantic slave trade. This chapter provides insight into the transnational literary archive on slavery and the trade in slaves and is titled "Etwas über den Sklavenhandel" (Something about the Slave Trade). An annotation on the first page of this section refers to the literary periodical *Deutsche Merkur* (1773–1789), which was published by Wieland. *Deutsche Merkur* operated like a news source on current political current affairs: "Von den Politschen

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[69] *Voyage à l'Isle de France, à l'Isle de Bourbon, au Cap de Bonne-Espérance* by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1773), See "Ephemeriden der Menschheit oder Bibliothek der Sittenlehre, der Politik und der Gesetzgebung" (1780), *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies* by James Ramsey (1784), *Voyage d'un Suisse dans Differentes Colonies D'Amerique* (1785), "Litteratur und Völkerkunde: ein periodisches Werk" (1788), *Slavery No Oppression; Or, Some New Arguments and Opinions Against the Idea of African Liberty: Dedicated to the Committee of the Company that Trade to Africa* (1788), and *Deutscher Merkur* published by Christoph Martin Wieland.

[70] In a thorough discussion of the abolitionist features in Kolb's anthology, Logan also uncovers the French origins of some of the tales, particularly the story titled *Ziméo,* which appeared in the anthology (Logan 396). According to Gilman, *Ziméo* was written by the French poet Jean François de Saint-Lambert (1716–1803) in 1769. *Die Negersklaven: ein historisch-dramatisches Gemählde in drey Akten* by August von Kotzebue is based on a short story called *Zimeo,* which appeared in the anthology *Erzählungen von den Sitten und Schiksalen der Negersklaven: Eine rührende Lektür für Menschen guter Art* (Zantop 149). This short story shows significant similarities to Freyherr von Nesselrode zu Hugenpott's play titled *Zamor und Zoraide: Ein Schauspiel, in drey Aufzügen* (1778). Because there are striking similarities and at times identical dialogue sections in Kolb's anthology, I argue that *Zimeo* and *Zamor und Zoraide* have a common origin. Logan argues that Kolb's preface on the history of slavery is "based largely on an earlier work on the slave trade, *Vom Ursprung des Negerhandels* (1778), by Heinrich Sprengel" (389-90). Though referenced in a footnote, Logan is mistaken, because Kolb uses Matthias Christian Sprengel (1746–1803)—a confusion of first names—as a source in parts of his inaugural lecture titled *Vom Ursprung des Negerhandels: Ein Antrittsprogramm* (*On the Origins of the Negro Slave Trade: An Initial Program*).

Begebenheiten in Europe wird das Neueste und Wichtigste in einen zusammenhängenden Erzählung jederzeit einen besondern Artikel des letzten Stücks eines jedes Bandes einnehmen" (Wieland 8).[71] Furthermore, Wieland mentions the coverage of historical events as well as "Naturkunde und Moral-Philosophie [sic] . . . Literatur und Critik [sic] Stoff" (9).[72] These subjects were considered beneficial to the reading population due to reader engagement with the mentioned areas (Wieland 9).

The first narration in the anthology, called *Zimeo,* is by the author Georg Filmer and is a first-person narration that contrasts "good" and "evil" slaveholders. Those considered "evil" are known to exhibit hardened faces and speeches and ferocity: "Ich sah' sie mit Sklaven umgeben, die sie barbarisch behandelten. Ich erkundigte mich um die Kost und die Arbeiten dieser Unglücklichen, und ich mußte [sic] über den Grad von Grausamkeit knirschen, zu dem der Geiz das Herz der Menschen verleiten kann" (Kolb 7).[73] On the other hand, Paul Wilmouth, who is introduced by the first-person narrator as a friend who is originally from Philadelphia (Kolb 6), is considered to be a "good" and generous slaveholder, as the following quote shows:

> Wilmouth forderte von seinen Sklaven keine unmäßige Anstrengung ihrer Kräfte. Zween [sic] Tage in der Woche durften sie für sich arbeiten, wozu er jedem von ihnen ein Stück Landes abgetreten hatte, das er nach seinem Gefallen bebauen, und wovon er die Früchte für seine eigne Rechnung verkauffen [sic] konnte. Ein Neger, der sich 10 Jahr lang gut aufgeführt hatte,

[71] The latest and most important developments in the political situation in Europe are always included as a connected narrative in a special article of the last part of each volume.

[72] Natural history and moral philosophy . . . literature and criticism contents

[73] I saw them handle slaves, whom they treated barbarically. I asked about the food and work of these unfortunate beings and was shocked by the severity of the cruelty to which greed can seduce the hearts of people.

> durfte versichert seyn [sic], daß [sic] er seine Freyheit [sic] erhalten werde. (Kolb 8)[74]

The narration portrays suffering slaves who endure unbearable conditions, a tactic that was often used as an abolitionist strategy.[75] In an ensuing slave revolt, Wilmouth's slaves remain steadfastly loyal at his side while other plantation owners are killed and brutalized by revolting slaves (Kolb 10-15). Friendships and love develop between revolting slaves and slave owners described as "good and generous." The former leader of the slave revolt becomes especially fond of Wilmouth and his friend and thus promises: "Hierauf reichte er mir und Wilmouth die Hand. 'Von nun an, sagte er, werde ich zween [sic] Weisse [sic] lieben, ja ich will von nun an zween [sic] Weisse [sic] lieben,"' contrasting this with the unjust and violent treatment by slave owners: "Und straf die Barbaren, die uns verachten und behandeln wie wir nicht die Thiere behandeln" (Kolb 18).[76],[77]

Along these lines, the eleventh entry in the anthology is an anecdotal account titled "Der edle Sklave, oder Was ist der Mensch, und was kann er durch Umstände werden?"[78] that addresses the essence of humanity through an anecdote about a slave who murdered another. When accused and charged in court, he remorsefully expresses his deepest regrets and accepts a possible death sentence as God's will, which would allow him to die and return

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[74] Did not require excessive exertion from his slaves. Two days of the week, they were able to work for themselves, for which he gave each of them a piece of land that they could cultivate to their desire and from which they could sell fruit for their own proceeds. A Negro who behaved well for 10 years could be sure to receive his freedom.

[75] Zantop states that Kolb sought to evoke sympathy and to encourage Europeans to ameliorate the suffering of slaves in his work, which is subtitled *A Touching Reading for Kind- Hearted Men* (Zantop 149).

[76] Then, he gave me and Wilmouth his hand. "From now on, he said, I will love two Whites, yes love two Whites." "And punish the barbaric people who despise us and treat us in ways we do not even treat animals."

[77] The storyline of this narrative bears a resemblance to both Freyherr von Nesselrode zu Hugenpott's play *Zamor und Zoraide: Ein Schauspiel, in drey Aufzügen* (1778) and August von Kotzebue's *Die Negersklaven, ein historisch-dramatisches Gemählde: in drey Akten* (1796).

[78] "The Noble Slave, or, What is Man and What Can He Become Due to His Circumstances?"

to God, his creator (Kolb 114-15). His wholeheartedness is described as "auf seinem Gesichte war nicht die Miene eines Boshaften oder eines Mörders zu sehen; alle seine Züge zerstossen [sic] in Wehmuth [sic], und zeigten das innigste Mitleiden und die schmerzhafteste Empfindung seines Herzens, daß [sic] durch ihn vielleicht ein Unschuldiger getödet sey [sic]" (Kolb 115).[79] This context addresses how the conditions of slavery impact behavior and limit the cultivation of mind, reason, and heart (Kolb 116). This is considered to be the reason why enslaved Black Africans are known among benevolent philanthropists (Kolb 116). Thus, one has no right to despise them because they

> empfinden nur die Lasten des Lebens, ohne unsere Freuden zu schmecken; sie scheinen gleichsam dazu bestimmt zu sein, für unsern [sic] Ueberfluß [sic] zu sorgen, und indem wir ihn durch sie erhalten, beschämen sie uns durch ihre Genügsamkeit. Werden sie aber nicht auch dadurch unserer Werthschätzung und Liebe empfohlen, daß [sic] sie denselben Ursprung, ähnliche Hoffnungen und gleiche Aussichten mit uns haben! (Kolb 116)[80]

Remorse and unwavering obedience, as demonstrated by the accused slave, confirm an ability of dainty sentiments and good deeds (Kolb 116). It is noted that "ihre Treue für ihre Gebieter, ihr Eifer in der Religion, die Einfachheit ihrer Sitten, und selbst die Art ihrer kleinen Freuden, in welchen sie sich so treu an der Natur halten" (Kolb 117)[81] are reasons that will ultimately allow readers to hope for a time in which "die Rechte der Menschheit allgemein anerkannt und geltend gemacht werden, und wo alle ohne Unterschied der

[79] his face did not reflect the expression of an evildoer or murderer; all of his features were broken by wistfulness and showed the innermost compassion and most painful sentiment in his heart that because of him, an innocent man may have been killed.

[80] feel only the hardship of life without tasting our joy; they seem to be destined for the provision of our excess, and while we receive it, thanks to them, they make us ashamed of their modesty. But are they not also the object of our appreciation and love, because they share our origin, similar hopes, and perspectives!

[81] their loyalty to their masters, their religious fervor, the simplicity of their custom, and even the nature of their small pleasures, in which they behave so according to nature.

Freyheit [sic] als des größten Vorzuges geniessen können, die dem Menschen von der Natur zu Theil [sic] geworden ist!" (Kolb 117).[82] This anecdote highlights the benevolence and kindness of slaves, which in turn makes them appear deserving and worthy of freedom or being manumitted. By foregrounding an unwavering understanding of obedience tied to Christian ideals, as echoed by the slave in the anecdote, the text perpetuates the trope of white Christian superiority and paternalism often present in abolitionist viewpoints. This is also expressed in the first section of the preface:

> Diese zerstreute Geschichte und Anmerkungen über den Zustand der Neger, sammelte ich in der Absicht, die Bürger unsrer Staaten aufmerksam auf das Glük [sic] zu machen, das uns Erziehung, Religion und Politik gewähren— Zugleich aber auch wird es sichtbar, wie drückend die europäischen Despoten in fremden Welttheilen [sic] herrschen, und die Menschheit zu Füßen treten, wo nicht eine Gewalt die andere in Respekt hält. (Kolb 3)[83]

Kolb's words demonstrate the importance of being educated on slavery and the transatlantic slave trade in order to self-identify as superior by drawing a comparison between German-speaking peoples and Africans. The Western constructs of the nature and "Sitten" (customs) of Black Africans uphold the authority and superiority of white (German-speaking) people and allow for seemingly legitimate acts of paternalism, such as rightful enslavement, as well as slaves willingly living under the necessary supervision of good and generous slaveholders. By depicting Black African ways as presumably cruel and thus stereotyping them, Kolb "remains within the paradigm established by contemporary natural

[82] the rights of humanity are generally accepted and enforced, and where everyone can equally enjoy freedom as the greatest privilege bestowed upon man by nature!

[83] I collected this scattered history and commentary on the condition of Negroes to draw the attention of the citizens of our nations to the fortune provided to us by our upbringing, religion, and politics—At the same time, however, it also becomes apparent how oppressive European despots rule over foreign parts of the world and tread on humanity, where one power does not respect the other.

histories" (Zantop 149). In this sense, Black Africans are depicted as devious and cunning and are said to love playing and dancing (Kolb xi-xii).

By engaging discourses of white superiority and presenting voices both in favor of the enslaved Africans and in favor of the white slavers (Logan 390; Kolb 288), Kolb is able to paint an ambivalent picture of his convictions, especially because he claims to be impartial in the afterword of the anthology. It is certainly possible that Kolb was indeed trying to present both sides of this debate. These critical voices could then, in the context of his time, be viewed as progressive in a way. They would not exclude the possibility of Kolb having been a passionate supporter of the abolition of slavery, either, because he encouraged Europeans to help alleviate the sufferings of slaves. Nonetheless, Kolb clearly reveals his stance on slavery and the transatlantic slave trade toward the end of his anthology by emphatically asking for amelioration. He is not foregrounding the termination of the slave trade and slavery, but rather, a change in the treatment of Black African slaves, which he has portrayed as less deserving of harshness throughout the selected works in the anthology:

> Man wird bey [sic] der Uebersicht [sic] der verschiedenen Kapitel dieses Werkchens bemerken, daß [sic] ich unpartheyisch [sic] gesammelt habe. Stimmen für die Neger und für die Weissen [sic]. Das Resultat bleibt dem Menschenforscher überlassen, und die Summe guter Empfindungen zur Milderung des Elendes auch unter den Sklaven, wird diese Schrift bey [sic] allen wohldenkenden Europäern gewiß [sic]vermehren. Wer helfen kann, der helfe! (Kolb 288)[84]

It must be noted that Kolb harshly denounces European explorers and expeditioners, addressing them in the preface to his work as despots who do not respect the boundaries of

[84] Upon reviewing the titles of the various chapters, it will be apparent that I have collected unbiasedly voices in favor of the Negroes and voices in favor of the whites. The conclusion remains to be drawn by the researcher of humans, and the overall positive sentiments in favor of the alleviation of misery among the slaves, will surely increase with this writing among most prosperous Europeans. Who can help, shall help!

humanity in their exploitative and abusive practices: "Sammelte ich in der Absicht, die Bürger unsrer Staaten aufmerksam auf das Glük [sic] zu machen, das uns Erziehung, Religion und Politik gewähren—Zugleich aber auch wird es sichtbar, wie drückend die europäischen Despoten in fremden Welttheilen herrschen, und die Menschheit zu Füßen treten, wo nicht eine Gewalt die andere in Respekt hält" (3).[85] Here, Kolb seems to launch a critique of slavery while considering German citizens to be superior to other Europeans due to their religious affiliation, upbringing, political views, and lack of participation in European wrongdoings on a national level in "fremden Welttheilen [sic]"(foreign parts of the world) (3). Thus, Kolb's anthology demonstrates a critical engagement with slavery and the slave trade, indicative of sentiments in accordance with amelioration, as early as 1789.

This section is emblematic of the ambivalent nature of abolitionism, which represents a spectrum of strategies and approaches that includes amelioration. The discussions of both Isert and Kolb are exemplified this often seemingly indecisive and contradictory antislavery position. Both writers clearly condemn the institution of slavery in its raw and brutal forms. However, they present the reader with options to improve the institution of slavery. In Kolb's case suggestions for improvements are indicated and hinted at by way of presenting a narrative that depicts a good and generous slaveowner who does not brutalize his slaves and ultimately develops a friendly and loving relationship, even with slaves who had initially set out to revolt and take revenge. Kolb offers a spectrum of possibilities here that the reader is left to engage with. His claim of remaining unbiased

[85] I collected to draw the attention of the citizens of our nations to the fortune provided to us by our upbringing, religion, and politics—At the same time, however, it also becomes apparent how oppressive European despots rule over foreign parts of the world and tread on humanity, where one power does not respect the other.

seems, nonetheless, somewhat biased because it is clear that this is not a straightforward presentation of a condemnation of slavery. Instead, he requires the reader to think for themselves by engaging the reading and the supposedly limitless possibilities and options. This in and of itself casts doubt on Kolb and his supposed antislavery convictions.

Isert clearly laments the brutal treatment of enslaved Black Africans and mentions this in lengthy sections throughout his work. His lamentations are positioned in a way to appeal to the morality and emotions of the reader so that they are affected by the slaves' pain, too. He is harsh in his opinions and blames white Europeans for the inhumane enslavement of Africans. Nonetheless, Isert is not willing to demand any concessions on the part of white Europeans regarding their enjoyment of luxurious living conditions. In this view, principles of capitalist consumption and the quality of life of the white Western middle class is to be maintained at the expense of the enslaved Black Africans' freedom. For the sake of European wealth and luxury, he suggests a so-called humanely run plantation system on the African continent. It becomes clear that Isert is ultimately also led by Western understandings of superiority and expansion because he assumes the right to develop new European slavery structures in Africa as a means to a European end.

Abolitionism

Christian Georg Andreas Oldendorp (1721–1787) was a scholar and Pietist preacher who traveled for the Moravian church. His travelogue engages the topic of slavery and reflects the ambivalent nature of his perspective on slavery. Historian Anders Ahlbäck examines Oldendorp's attitudes toward slavery based on his history of the Moravian mission to St. Croix and St. Thomas in his chapter "The Overly Candid Missionary Historian: C.G.A. Oldendorp's Theological Ambivalence over Slavery in the Danish West Indies" (2015).

Oldendorp was commissioned to write a German-language report to present the history of Moravian missionary activities in the Danish West Indies (Ahlbäck 191). His observations, a 3,000-page manuscript including "a scathing critique of the West Indian slave society and a passionate appeal for the human dignity of its African and African Caribbean victims" (Ahlbäck 191-92), had been shortened by an editor from the Moravian church and systematically rewritten, while his critique of slavery had been completely cut out. This is said to have happened due to a deviation in official Moravian policy on the matter of slavery, as well as a supposed inability to condense the material collected during his travels (Ahlbäck 191-92). Oldendorp heavily discussed slavery and the Black African slave population, displaying views in opposition to the institution of slavery. But the history lacked Oldendorp's extensive and relevant first-hand accounts based on his experiences in the Danish islands of St. John, St. Thomas, and St. Croix in the years 1767 and 1768 (192). Oldendorp's history, in the editor's redacted version, served the purpose of enhancing the public reputation of the Moravians, who were also known as the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde, and their evangelizing missions.

Both versions of the history still exist. The original and uncut version is called *Historie der Caribischen Inseln Sanct Thomas, Sanct Crux und Sanct Jan: insbesondere der dasigen Neger und der Mission der Evangelischen Bruder unter denselben, vol. 1-2* (2000–2002), while the edited version is called *Geschichte der Mission der evangelischen Brüder auf den caraibischen Inseln S. Thomas, S. Croix und S. Jan, vol. 1-2* (1777). As Ahlbäck explains, after a tumultuous period of "ecstatic excesses in the 1740s and a financial crash" (192) due to excessive spending in 1753, strict handling and control of international Moravian promotional materials and missionary activities were overseen by the Unity Elder's Conference (UAC). In an effort to respect secularism and the already-existing power structures, slavery was accepted and its structures

were supported. As Ahlbäck argues, centering on "turning heathens into 'civilised' and humble 'real Christians' was important for [Moravian] rehabilitation and rise to a model for the modern missionary movement toward the end of the eighteenth century" (192). Ahlbäck, who compares the original work to the edited and authorized work, describes Oldendorp's original observations as having demonstrated an emotional and theological struggle of coming to terms with his experiences in the West Indies and the default Moravian worldview (193). This view had transatlantic implications because the Moravian church sought to virtually preach the gospel wherever possible, making it a global enterprise:

> Moravian settlements and societies were formed in Germany, the Netherlands, England, Pennsylvania, Switzerland, Scandinavia and the Baltic states . . . [while] the Moravian community rapidly established mission stations in the colonies of the protestant colonial powers Denmark, England and the Netherlands: on the Caribbean island of St, Thomas in 1732, on Greenland in 1733, in Georgia 1734, Guyana in 1735, South Africa in 1736, Suriname in 1738, Pennsylvania in 1740, and Labrador and Jamaica in 1754 . . . [focused on] . . . black slaves in the West Indies as well as natives of North America, Greenland and South Africa. (Ahlbäck 194)

Ahlbäck shows that the Moravian church, in order to assure the slaveholders that it did not intend to interfere with their monopolizing positions and slavery, decided to take a stance in which evangelization and thus spiritual salvation were not tied to any bodily liberation from slavery and plantation life (195). As one of the unchanging guidelines, this stance was in agreement with the views of founding leader Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf (1700–1760) and other leading members (Ahlbäck 195). Oldendorp demonstrates this by including a speech that Zinzendorf gave to Black Moravian converts in St. Croix in 1739. In this speech, Zinzendorf urges the converts to humbly remain in the place they were assigned by God, while foreshadowing heavenly providence:

> Viertens, daß [sic] ihr euren Herren und Frauen getreu, und euren Meisterknechten und Bombas gehorsam seyn [sic], und alle eure Arbeit mit Liebe und Emsigkeit [sic] thun [sic] möget, als ob es für euch selbst geschähe

> [sic]. Ihr müßt [sic] wissen, daß [sic] Christus einen jeden seiner Kinder selbst an die Arbeit stellet [sic]; denn der Herr hat alles selbst gemacht, Könige, Herren, Knechte und Sclaven [sic]; und jeder muß [sic], so lange wir in der Welt leben, gern in dem Stande bleiben, darein ihn Gott gesetzt hat, und mit Gottes weisem Rathe [sic] zufrieden seyn [sic]. Denn der hat den Tod allen Menschen zur Strafe gesetzt, und die Kinder Gottes müssen auch sterben: aber es ist ihnen nur ein Schlaf; sie gehen mit Freunden dem Leibe nach ins Grab, und mit der Seele in den Himmel zum Heiland. Gott hat die ersten Neger gestraft, daß [sic] sie Sclaven [sic] seyn [sic] solten. Die Seelenseligkeit macht euch dem Leibe nach nicht frey [sic], sondern nimmt alle böse Gedanken, Arglist[sic], Faulheit und Untreuen weg, und alles, was euch verdrießlich darüber macht, daß[sic] ihr Sclaven [sic] seyd [sic]. Denn unser [sic] Herr Jesus hat sich selbst, so lange er in der Welt gewesen, zu einem Knecht hingegeben. (Zinzendorf qtd. in Oldendorp, *C.G.A. Oldendorps Geschichte* 594-95)[86]

This excerpt from Zinzendorf's farewell speech in St. Croix clearly demonstrates his stance on interfering with already-existing social structures in territories in which the Moravian church carried out missions. Zinzendorf urges Black African slaves to be content and happy in their positionality as slaves. He refers to a Christian afterlife that they are to humbly await, because it will bring redemption and salvation. In this sense, Zinzendorf reinforced imperial and colonial structures through his religious and theological teachings to enslaved Black Africans. In essence, the Moravian church considers the enslaved Black Africans in the West Indies to be children of God, which somewhat indicates notions of equality under God. Yet, enslaved Black Africans are still supposed to carry the burden of slavery and remain in bondage as part of God's plan.

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[86] "Fourth, you men and women shall remain obedient to your overseers and Bomba's and do all work with love and diligence, as if you were doing it for yourselves. You must know that Christ puts each of his children to work himself; because God has made everything himself, including kings, masters, servants, and slaves; and everyone shall, as long as we live on this earth, happily remain in the place which God has assigned to them and be content with God's wise counsel. Because death shall punish all people and God's children must also perish; but for them it will only be sleep; they happily enter the grave with the bodies, while their souls ascend to heaven. God punished the first Negroes that they should be slaves. The soul salvation does not make you free according to the body, but takes away all evil thoughts, malice, laziness and unfaithfulness, and everything that makes you vexed that you are slaves. Because our Lord Jesus gave himself to be a servant for as long as he was in the world."

This interpretation of God's plan, which in effect legitimizes slavery and other forms of exploitation, is in fact an important argument in Christianity. Martin Luther (1483–1546) makes use of this reasoning and solidifies this perspective by consulting the Bible as an authoritative manuscript in his writing about the German Peasants' War (1524–1525), "Wider [sic] die Mordischen [sic] und Reubischen [sic] Rotten [sic] der Bawren [sic]" (1525). In his work, Luther condemns the peasants and their revolutionary actions as murderous in bringing forth their grievances about the socio-political and theological structures inherent in the practice of "Leibeigenschaft" (serfdom). In response to the upheaval, Luther provides interpretative readings from the Biblical books of Romans, Peter, Matthew, Genesis, and the Epistles of Paul to justify a world order in which peasants are expected to serve, submit, and respect the authority of the nobility.

In so doing, Luther takes a stance and pledges his allegiance to the nobility. Based on Romans (*New International Version Bible* 13.1-2), Luther argues for the rightful submission of peasants. These verses define an expected submission to governing authorities that were put in place, institutionalized, and recognized by God: "Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves" (Rom. 13.1-2). Luther criticizes the peasants for having breached a divine treaty that they swore to uphold: "Dz sie irer oeberkait trew vn hulde geschworen haben/vnderthenig vn gehorsaz zusein/wie soelchs Got gebeut . . . den Got wil trew vnd pflicht gehalten haben [sic]" (Luther 1-2).[87] Luther draws upon the book of Peter because it

[87] That they have sworn loyalty and grace to their authority/ to be subservient and obedient/ as such God demands . . . for God wants loyalty and duty to be kept.

further establishes the authority of the governing entities and calls for dedication on the part of the subjects, noting: "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority" (Pet. 2.13). Overall, Luther alludes to an order that is sanctioned by God and is therefore expected to be upheld. Zinzendorf and thus the Moravian church recognize a similar order that applies to the positionality of Black African slaves. On earthly terrain, slaves are to obey and endure injustices while emancipation is promised to them after death. In this sense, Oldendorp was bound to operate according to these principles in his interactions with Black African slaves in the Caribbean.

Serving as a private tutor for a noble family in Livonia on the shores of the Baltic Sea between 1753 and 1759 exposed Oldendorp to the Eastern European context of serfdom, which allowed him to articulate an informed and thorough comparison of slavery and serfdom (Ahlbäck 196). This viewpoint was confirmed through interviews he conducted with converted slaves in the West Indies (Ahlbäck 196). As Ahlbäck shows, the time he spent at the Moravian colony in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, exposed Oldendorp to antislavery thought, which is proven by his references to the works of the abolitionist Anthony Ebenezer (known as Anthony Benezet). In this context, historian Jacqueline Van Gent examines the depiction and construction of "savagery" in Oldendorp's mission ethnography. In her article "Rethinking Savagery: Slavery Experiences and the Role of Emotions in Oldendorp's Mission Ethnography" (2019), Van Gent explores Oldendorp's break from and thus questioning of the overall Moravian theological understanding of "savagery" through his close encounters with the various forms of violence that enslaved and converted Black Africans in the Danish West Indies endured. In this article, Van Gent describes Oldendorp's accounts as illustrating an emotional sense of urgency to dismantle slavery (4).

Oldendorp identifies the nature of slavery as being a necessity to the so-called *Blanken* (white slave owners): "Der größte Teil der Einwohner der Inseln besteht aus schwarzen Sclaven oder Negern, ohne welche die Blanken nicht bestehen können, die ihnen zur Bedienung unentbehrlich und bei der Feldarbeit anstatt der Pferde und Ochsen sind" (Oldendorp, *C.G.A. Oldendorps Geschichte* 381-82, 365).[88] Oldendorp gives insight into the specific punishments and violence that enslaved Black Africans suffered while also revealing his stance on these in the original manuscript:

> Die Strafen der Schwarzen nebst der Art, wie sie solche empfangen, und der großen Macht, die die Blanken [sic] über sie haben, müssen einem Menschen, der aus einem von Sklaverei freien Lande nach Westindien kommt, grausam und schrecklich zu sein scheinen. Ja es kann einem solchen, wenn er das Heulen der Gepeitschten oft einige Morgen nacheinander stundenlang von einer Plantage erschallen hört, diese Lebensart als ein Vorspiel der Hölle vorkommen. (*Historie Der Caribischen* 2000, 581)[89]

This section illustrates Oldendorp's critical viewpoint regarding the treatment of enslaved Black Africans. Van Gent considers this to be pointing to foundational conflicts, which Oldendorp demonstrates through the violence inflicted on slaves (6). This fundamental incompatibility is explicitly addressed when Oldendorp thematizes reasons for slavery and "supposed" natural and common human opinions on the institution of slavery:

> Der Hauptgrund, den man für die Sklaverei der Schwarzen anbringet [sic], ist die Notwendigkeit, weil ohne diesselbe die Pflanzungen nicht bestehen könnten und der Zuckerhandel zu Grunde gehen oder doch einen großen Stoß leiden würde. Dieser Grund ist wohl unter allen der schwächste, ob er gleich der eigentliche und vornehmste. In Gesprächen vom Menschenhandel läßt man diese Rechtfertigung des Sklavenwesens als eines immerwährenden

[88] The largest portion of the islands' inhabitants are Black slaves or Negroes, without whom the white slave owners are unable to exist, they are essential for their operation and for use in field work in the place of horses and oxen.

[89] To a person that visits the West Indies from a country that does not engage in slavery, the punishment for Blacks and the way in which they receive it, as well as the great power the white slave owners have over them, must appear cruel and awful. Upon hearing the cries of those receiving lashings coming from the plantation for hours on end for several mornings, this person may even perceive this way of life as a type of prelude to hell.

> Trauerspiels von Grausamkeiten nicht gelten, sondern behauptet, daß [sic] er verboten und abgestellet werden sollte. (*Historie Der Caribischen* 2000, 526)[90]

Oldendorp seems well-versed in the debates around slavery and mentions the Pennsylvanian Quaker society and their efforts in abolition, which he considers to be an act of love of liberty and in turn a celebratory undertaking: "Mit der Freilassung der schwarzen Sklaven haben die Quäker in Pensilvanien [sic], wie in öffentlichen Nachrichten gemeldet worden, im Jahr 1770 würklich einen Anfang gemacht und damit von wahrer Freiheitsliebe und Abneigung von Sklaverei ein feierliches Merkmal gegeben" (*Historie Der Caribischen* 2000, 527).[91] In this, Oldendorp reveals his antislavery stance because he thinks all genuine and true friends of humanity should feel a certain way about unnatural and unjust institutions such as slavery and its horrors, which are at the same time incompatible with enlightened ideals:

> Wenn ein Menschenfreund seine Gedanken unparteiisch und nach der Wahrheit von dem Sklavenwesen, wie es unter den Schwarzen ist, eröffnen soll, so wird er wohl bekennen müssen, daß [sic] es mit der in unsern erleuchteten Zeiten so gepriesenen Menschenliebe nicht übereinkommt und nicht viel Liebliches und Löbliches dabei anzutreffen ist. Es gibt gewisse Sachen, zu deren Entscheidung weiter nichts gehört als ein Herz, das menschlich und nicht durch Verstockung schon verhärtet und fühllos geworden ist. Ein solches empfindet gegen alle unnatürliche, von Gott nicht herstammende und das Bild Gottes schmähende Dinge- als gegen Betrug, Grausamkeit, Mord, Teufel, Hölle und dergleichen—einen Abscheu, empöret sich dawider und braucht weiter von der Häßlichkeit [sic] derselben keine Beweise. Eben so etwas fühlet ein solches Herz allemal gegen die

[90] The primary reason brought forth for the enslavement of Blacks is its necessity, because without slavery, plantations could no longer exist and the sugar trade would be destroyed, or severely impacted. This reason is the weakest one, even though it is the real and most sophisticated one. In discussions on the slave trade, this justification of the slave's existence as a never-ending series of cruelties is not deemed valid, but the claim is made that it should be stopped and abolished.

[91] As announced in public reports, the freeing of Black slaves in 1710 by the Quakers of Pennsylvania was a fortunate beginning, by which they made a celebratory mark of a true love of freedom and the aversion to slavery.

> Sklaverei, sowohl in Ansehung seiner selbst als anderer Menschen. (*Historie Der Caribischen* 2000, 527-28)[92]

Oldendorp exhibits early abolitionist tendencies through his condemnation of the practice of slavery and its brutality. He considers it human nature to be opposed to slavery because there exists no convincing reason to continue this—in his view—dehumanizing practice. As an informed opponent of slavery, demonstrated by his knowledge of the antislavery convictions, efforts, and history of the Quakers, Oldendorp deems notions of an agricultural necessity for slavery "weak" and contrary to enlightened and humanistic ideas of altruism.[93]

As established by Dippel, numerous German-language periodicals and newspapers also participated in the larger contemporary debates on Britain and America in the German

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[92] If a philanthropist shall open his thoughts impartially and according to the truth of the slave's existence as it is amongst Blacks, then he will have to recognize that it does not align with the brotherly love of our enlightened times and that there is nothing lovely or laudable about it. There are particular matters whose decisions require nothing but a heart that is human and has not yet hardened and lost all emotions. This kind of heart has an aversion to anything that is not of God, and things that revile the image of God, such as fraud, cruelty, murder, the devil, hell, and others, which upset it and do not require any additional evidence of their ugliness. A heart like this one feels this way about slavery, both in regard to oneself and others.

[93] Oldendorp is knowledgeable about historical viewpoints on slavery, which demonstrates an understanding taken up from either original or translated literary materials on the subject matter. Tzoref-Ashkenazi alludes to the importance of original British and French sources related to travel literature versus actual travel during the German Enlightenment in his 2010 article "The Experienced Traveller as a Professional Author: Friedrich Ludwig Langstedt, Georg Forster and Colonialism Discourse in Eighteenth-Century Germany." Based on the works by the German translator and author Friedrich Ludwig Langstedt (1750–1804), Tzoref-Ashkenazi shows not only the wide proliferation of both French and British travel writing, but also how the viewpoints of these works potentially led to unquestioned reproductions in German-language works, thus highlighting "the relationship between knowledge gained from experience and from reading" (5). During that time, it was customary to prepare for a journey by reading any literature pertaining to the travel of a particular place. Thus, Langstedt's journey to India was preceded by extensive readings on descriptions of India (Tzoref-Ashkenazi 8). Tzoref-Ashkenazi alludes to Langstedt's work *Grundriss der allgemeinen Welt-Völker- und Erdkunde* (1791), which was written after his travels to India, being an adaptation of the Scottish writer and historian William Guthrie's (1708–1770) *New Geographical Historical and Commercial Grammar* (1770). Tzoref-Ashkenazi describes the choice of source as "motivated by Langstedt's proficiency in English and resulted in a strong emphasis on English history in a work that was a universal history for German readers" (10). Consequently, there is the danger of modelling and mimicking sources' understandings and histories by being well-read and including these understandings in works meant for German-language readers. Specifically, when slavery was mostly condemned by writers and thinkers during the Enlightenment, Tzoref-Ashkenazi refers to Langenstedt offering an economically driven and British interest regarding plantation slavery in the West Indies in his discussion on the production of commodities such as sugar, coffee, and tea in his account, mainly drawn from British works (12). It needs to be considered that the transcultural distributions of original source materials may have resulted in uncritical German-language cultural productions among the many critical works on slavery and colonization discussed in this chapter.

principalities. These included discussions of "the possible effects of the Revolution on colonialism, and especially on the future of the European domains in Latin America" (Dippel 201). Here, Dippel says the colonial structures mattered more than what he terms "the opaque problems of black slavery" (201). The specific coverage of slavery and the trade in slaves in newspapers and periodicals presents a different picture than that portrayed by Dippel. Although discourses on slavery often served the purpose of uncovering and critiquing slavery-like institutions and systems in the German territories, the coverage was detailed and strongly abolitionist in many cases, for which credit should be given here. In this, various German-language periodicals reported on issues related to the transatlantic slave trade and often mentioned the importance of their coverage for enlightening the German readership and presenting a noteworthy and thus abolitionist cause to the people. Though many of these articles and their commentary often originated from other parts of the transatlantic world through translation, it needs to be noted that these texts take up and disseminate antislavery views through sentimental reporting on current debates around slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

The periodical *Deutsches Magazin* featured a translated article in 1795 on the lost abolition vote in the British House of Commons in 1791. The article is titled *Beschwerde, in einer Adresse an das Englische Volk, über die merkwürdige Entscheidung gegen die Abschaffung des Sclavenhandels im Jahre 1791* and was written by the English author Junius. In this article, Junius tries to bring attention to the injustices Black African slaves suffer and speaks directly to his fellow countrymen while providing information on the political efforts to end slavery in Britain. Junius foregrounds the enslavement of Africans as "höchst ungerecht" (highly unfair) and mentions that this touched many hearts (193). In speaking to his countrymen, Junius argues that there are people who are overcome by their self-interest, which has

hardened their hearts (193-94). Thus, these people have closed their minds to what Junius calls "die Stimme der Gerechtigkeit" (the voice of justice) (194). He challenges these people to trade places with the enslaved Africans, because this would change their hearts. Junius poses several rhetorical questions, asking what his readers would do if they were to be captured, jammed in the hold of a ship, sold, whipped, and branded (194). He points out that these descriptions are facts and have been sufficiently confirmed (Junius 195).

Junius blames white monsters in human guise for this injustice. He appeals to his countrymen who are capable of sympathy and presents principles that were considered of importance to live by and thus specifically addresses "die ihr die ewigen was Grundsätze der Gerechtigkeit, die angebohrnen [sic] was Eindrücke der Menschlichkeit, und die höheren Verpflichtungen was der christlichen Religion erkennt" (Junius 195).[94] He then poses another rhetorical question about whether slavery and the trade in slaves could be tolerated. In this, he refers to the vote at the House of Commons, which he considers to have mocked justice with its non-abolition outcome. Junius laments how the House of Commons does not reflect public opinion (196). He blames the loss of the vote on nefarious self-interests. Junius's article can be read as a call for action, because he considers the time for abolition to be now and states that all those who do not stand in solidarity are "Zerstörer der Ordnung" (destroyer of order) and should no longer be tolerated by society (196-97). Lastly, he mentions that Britain missed its chance to gloriously lead the way in terms of abolishing slavery: "Hatte hier die schönste Gelegenheit in dieser . . . Sache andre Nationen zu leiten, und benachbarten Völkern, ja der ganzen Welt ein glänzendes Beyspiel [sic] der Tugend und

[94] those who recognize the eternal principles of justice, who are born with impressions of humanity, and the higher obligations which the Christian religion recognizes.

Gerechtigkeit zu geben" (Junius 198).[95] He then challenges France to now take on this task by alluding to the ongoing and early stages of the revolution in France led by the Count of Mirabeau (1749–1791), who, according to Junius, argued for French slaves in the West Indies (199).

This article is indicative of the thorough engagements with issues of slavery and abolition in a German-language context. The editors of *Deutsches Magazin* considered Junius's report to be newsworthy with its explicit call for action and abolitionist tendency of appealing to the emotions of the reader, which could have had, in translation, a similar effect on the German reading population. Junius's article provides detailed insight into the larger transnational abolitionist debate by way of mentioning specific stakeholders and the contemporary widespread self-interest of the triangle of trade. One could argue that this detailed information was indeed presented to further educate the reading public on the ongoing political entanglements of antislavery efforts.

Another antislavery commentary is presented in a short review in the 1793 issue of the German periodical *Neue allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*. The article-like review is anonymous and titled *Interessante Anekdoten über Sklaverei und Lehns Tyranney. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Menschheit*. In this brief paragraph, the anonymous writer seems to review a work that covers the transatlantic slave trade, slavery, and the feudal system in Europe. The reviewer says the work discusses the origin of slavery, the slave trade in Africa, the fate of Black African slaves, and the Middle Passage to the New World (*Interessante Anekdoten* 412). These topics are addressed by way of specific examples given in the actual work. The reviewer then

[95] Had the most wonderful opportunity in this . . . to lead the cause of other nations, and to give neighboring peoples, indeed the whole world, a brilliant example of virtue and justice.

critiques the work for lacking sufficient information and giving little attention to the feudal system in Europe, which is referred to via the use of the word slavery and described as being in many regions as inhumane as the transatlantic trade: "Von der Sklaverey [sic] in Europa, die in manchen Gegenden nicht viel menschlicher ist, sagt er nichts" (*Interessante Anekdoten* 412).[96] The reviewer takes issue with what is called feudal tyranny, which refers to the oppressive nature of serfdom, only being discussed in a general manner, anecdotally, and in the last eight pages of the reviewed work: "Zuletzt noch auf acht Seiten einige Anekdoten über Lehnstyranney oder eine allgemeine Beschreibung der Lehnssklaverey [sic] in verschiedenen Ländern Europens" (*Interessante Anekdoten* 412).[97] The reviewer expresses that the topic of feudal slavery was only mentioned on the sidelines and concludes by establishing that this anecdotal information is certainly and undeniably of interest to those who are unaware of the feudal system in Europe (*Interessante Anekdoten* 412).

This review openly links discussions of slavery in the New World to the struggles of serfdom in a specifically German context. It demonstrates a critique of slavery-like systems overall and makes use of the widely discussed topic of slavery and the trade in slaves to put emphasis on the sufferings caused in a European context. This linkage confirms the existence of scholarship that acknowledges the use of the themes of transatlantic slavery to point to issues of a domestic nature that were criticized by way of condemning slavery and the trade in slaves. Schüller writes that debates on slavery in German territories were utilized to reflect and illustrate actual German conditions ("Deutsche Abolitionisten" 612). The

[96] He says nothing about the slavery in Europe, which is not much more human in some areas.

[97] Finally, on eight pages some anecdotes about feudal tyranny or a general description of the feudal slavery in different European countries.

abolition of serfdom was often brought up when engaging issues of New World slavery and the trade in slaves. Schüller mentions slavery as having served as a metaphor for serfdom in the German principalities ("Deutsche Abolitionisten" 612). Riesche appropriately adds:

> Ein weiteres Reizthema war die Abhängigkeit und Benachteiligung des Bauernstandes, dessen "Befreiung" sich in den deutschen Ländern etwa zwischen 1780 und 1810 schrittweise in zahlreichen Einzelreformen vollzog. Bezeichnenderweise wurden bei der Beschreibung ihrer Lage und ihres Verhältnisses zu den Grund- und Gutsherren ebenfalls häufig Nebeneinanderstellungen mit der Sklaverei als rhetorische Stilmittel verwendet. In den deutschen Zeitschriften erschienen in dieser Zeit zahlreiche Artikel, die schon im Titel explizite Bezüge zwischen Sklaverei und der Situation der deutschen Bauern herstellten. (37)

The journal *Hannoverisches Magazin* (1763–1850) similarly presented material in favor of the abolition of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. The preface to the first issue of *Hannoverisches Magazin* defines it as a "Vorraths-Kammer [sic], in der man allerley [sic] Gedanken findet, die zum Nutzen und Vergnügen der menschlichen Gesellschaft gereichen" (1).[98] This categorization is further articulated in the subtitle of the magazine: "Worin kleine Abhandlungen, einzelne Gedanken, Nachrichten, Vorschläge und Erfahrungen, so die Verbesserung des Nahrungs-Standes [sic], die Land- und Stadt Wirtschaft, Handlung, Manufracturen [sic] und Künste, die Physik, die Sittenlehre und angenehmen Wissenschaften betreffen, gesamelt [sic] und aufbewahret [sic] sind" (first issue of *Hannoverisches Magazin* 2).[99] The variety of genres and topics alluded to by the subtitle is addressed by the author in terms of reader mindfulness and reveals the audience's large and diverse makeup:

> Nur bittet man einen jeden billigen Leser, daß [sic] er es nicht für einen Fehler halte, wenn etwa nicht alle Aufsätze nach seinem Geschmack seyn [sic] solten. Dieses hiesse eine Unmöglichkeit verlangen. Ein Wochenblatt

[98] a pantry of all kinds of thought suitable for the purposes and enjoyment of human societies.

[99] In which brief essays, individual ideas, news, suggestions and experiences regarding the improvement of the standard of sustenance, agriculture and municipal economy, trade, manufacturing and crafts, physics, ethics and genteel sciences are summarized and kept.

> wie das Magazin, das so viele Leser von so verschiedener Denkungsart [sic], Wissenschaft, Alter und Fähigkeit hat, kan lediglich durch die Abwechslung des Inhalts und des Vortrages gefallen. Diese hat man zu erhalten gesuchet [sic], um bald diesen bald jener Leser solchergestalt zu vergnügen, daß [sic] ein jeglicher etwas finde, das ihm angenehm ist. (first issue of *Hannoverisches Magazin* 2)[100]

In order to maintain this variety in genres, topics, and viewpoints, the preface includes an active call for papers: "Einsendung brauchbarer und wohlgefasseter Beyträge [sic]" (first issue of *Hannoverisches Magazin).*[101] Works from several fields are welcome (as highlighted in the subtitle of the magazine), including "Sittenlehre" (ethics, morals), which identifies ethical conceptualizations. Theological discussions, poetry, abstract artistic articulations, and book reviews are excluded from this call and the magazine overall, but are occasionally accepted. In this function, the author assigns *Hannoverisches Magazin* to operate like magazines in the French, English, and Dutch contexts (first issue of *Hannoverisches Magazin* 1).

Slavery and the Middle Passage are covered in the magazine on five different occasions between the years 1788 and 1789. This coverage is based on eyewitness travel reports and news and opinion pieces that are, on occasion, in response to previous accounts. One account that discusses the transatlantic slave trade, titled "Einige den Negerhandel betreffende Nachrichten und Schilderungen,"[102] comes with German commentary and was published on December 12, 1788 (1570). An introductory paragraph informs the reader of

[100] It is asked of every approving reader that he does not consider it a mistake if he does not find all essays to his liking. This would be an impossible expectation. A weekly paper, such as the magazine, which has readers from so many different schools of thought, sciences, ages and abilities, may only be enjoyed for its diverse content and representation. Contributions are selected to please all types of readers so that everyone may find something which pleases him.

[101] Submission of usable, well-written contributions.

[102] "Several News and Accounts of the Slave Trade"

the genre and origin of the following account, which is provided in parentheses with a subheading revealing the French newspaper *Journal de Paris* (1777–1840) as its source:

> "Wir erhielten, sagen die Herausgeber in einer Note [sic], Auszüge verschiedener schriftlicher, den Sklavenhandel betreffenden, Aufsätze, welche an die Societät [sic] in Manchester gerichtet waren. Diese Fragmente, aus dem Englischen übersetzt, schienen uns wegen ihrer genauern [sic] Erzählung sowohl, als auch wegen ihrer guten Schreibart gleich schätzbar." Zuerst folgen Auszüge verschiedner an die Societät in Manchester gerichteter Briefe über den Negerhandel. (December 12, 1788, issue of *Hannoverisches Magazin* 1570)[103]

The reference to the French newspaper and also the English-language context illustrates the transnational proliferation of abolitionist discourse in Europe. The act of translation makes the content accessible to a German-language audience, which speaks to an interest in developments regarding slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. These translations of current affairs support Zhang's notion of contributions to the establishment of a German-language global consciousness ("Matthias Christian Sprengel" 174). This awareness is advanced through transnational abolitionist circles, such as the French Société des Amis des Noirs,[104] which was founded in 1788 and is mentioned as having a British assembly branch in Manchester. This site is representative of additional abolitionist manifestations through discursive organizational structures in a transnational manner.

The accounts speak to a larger transnational mesh and discourse in terms of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. In this sense, critical and detailed letters, travelogues, and anecdotal eyewitness reports are presented and summarized as "Nachrichten der

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[103] We received, the publishers claim in a note, excerpts of various written essays that were directed to the Society in Manchester. These fragments, translated from English, seemed equally valuable due to their precise narrative and well-written nature. First to follow are excerpts from letters directed to the society in Manchester regarding the slave-trade.

[104] Society of the Friends of the Blacks

Reisebeschreiber" (*Hannoverisches Magazin* 1572).[105] This information contains minimal data and gives insight into the specifics of the transatlantic slave trade overall: "Die folgenden Auszüge enthalten einige Data [sic], die, wenn sie gleich nur als Bruchstücke einer ausführlichern Schilderung des Sklavenhandels anzusehen sind, dennoch Aufmerksamkeit verdienen" (*Hannoverisches Magazin* 1572).[106] The German comment on the actual accounts seeks to make note of the overall European involvement in the acts of capturing and enslaving Black Africans before introducing them to plantation slavery in the New World.

While drawing on a table that factually provides the number of Black Africans that were captured by imperial powers in 1768, the commentator stresses regretful, painful misery in relation to the trade in slaves. The title confirms British, American colonial, French, Dutch, Portuguese, and Danish participation and illustrates the enormous number of Black African slaves stolen from West Africa through specific figures alongside the mentioned imperial powers:

> Man kan [sic] sich ungefehr [sic] einen Begriff davon machen, welch eine zahllose Menge der bedaurungswürdigen Schwarzen unter den Händen unempfindlicher Wütriche [sic] seit dem Anfange des sträflichen Unternehmens . . . das ist seit ungefehr zweihundert Jahren, mögen geseufzet haben, wenn man nur die Ausfuhr der Negern für das einzige Jahr 1768 betrachtet. Freilich sind nicht immer, am wenigsten in den erstern Jahren, jährlich so viele weggeführt worden, aber in den letzten Jahren ist diese Zahl nicht sehr viel geringer gewesen.
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Die Engländer kauften in dem eben genannten Jahre für ihre Inseln | 53100 |
> | Ihre damaligen Kolonien in Amerika | 6300 |
> | Die Franzosen | 23500 |
> | Die Holländer | 11300 |
> | Die Portugiesen | 8700 |
> | Die Dänen | 1200 |

[105] "News from Travel Writers"

[106] The following excerpts contain several data points, which are deserving of attention, although they should be regarded as fragments of a comprehensive discussion of slave trade.

> Gesetzt auch, die Hälfte dieser großen Zahl, also ungefehr 50000, würden jährlich nur in die Hände grausamer Europäer geliefert—welch ein schweres Gewicht in die Wageschaale [sic] des menschlichen Elendes!!! (*Hannoverisches Magazin* 1574)[107]

The table offers specific numbers, which paint a convincing picture of the multitudes of horrors of slavery. The data provided is likely of non-German origin and once again typifies the consultation of readily available transnational Euro-American sources in the context of discussing the subject matter. The table alone could serve as an example of historical realism, according to Zhang's line of argument, that provides a German-language audience with the freedom to shape their own opinions based on evaluative data. While actual antislavery accounts and this commentary are in favor of abolitionism, *Hannoverisches Magazin* aims to provide a variety of perspectives, which includes proslavery accounts by the German plantation director E. C. Noltemeyer, who lived in Suriname for about 16 years (Haarnack 125).[108]

The actual accounts of slavery and the slave trade are of abolitionist nature and present a wealth of information that intends to present slavery as an inhumane institution that needs to be terminated. In this vein, the reader is informed about European capitalistic agendas and greed, British abolitionist policies, Christian benevolence, the capture of Black Africans, the Middle Passage, the conditions of New World plantation slavery, and the treatment of Black African slaves dating back as far as 1570. These accounts are set in various locations in the West Indies and Africa and are discussed in a three-part series in

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[107] Even if only half of this large number, approximately 50,000, were delivered into the hands of cruel Europeans—this would weigh heavy on the scale of human suffering!!!

[108] Haarnack describes Noltemeyer's account: "In 1789 he wrote an article . . . in which he claimed that he could prove that the treatment of slaves was much better than is believed in Europe" (125).

December 1788. The accounts in *Hannoverisches Magazin* illustrate a variety of source materials by and about French, British, American, Dutch, and Danish colonies throughout 1788 and 1789.

The German-language commentary, published in the December 12, 1788, issue, refers to a variety of messages that have been received "beim Lesen der mannigfaltigen Nachrichten, mit denen uns die Zeitungen bisher in einem so reichhaltigen Maaße unterhielten" (1570).[109] This sentence indicates the varied nature of debates about slavery and the transatlantic slave trade in German-language magazines and newspapers, which demonstrates an interest in current affairs—in particular, slavery and abolition on a political terrain. In this, Black African slaves are humanized in their suffering, which is contrasted by the characterization of white European residents. Black Africans are described as suffering from "Schlachtopfer des Geizes und der Habsucht der Europäer" (December 12, 1788, issue of *Hannoverisches Magazin* 1572).[110] The commentary refers to Black African slaves as an oppressed population and argues that the enslavement of Black Africans equals an oppressive suffering of humanity. The condition of Black Africans is regarded as an issue of humanity and, thus, they are empathically advocated for. In this article, that advocacy is credited to the British Parliament:

> Wem verursachte es beim Lesen der mannigfaltigen Nachrichten, mit denen uns die Zeitungen bisher in einem so reichhaltigen Maaße unterhielten, wohl nicht angenehme, süße Augenblicke, als auch endlich einmal im brittischen [sic] Parlemente die Sache, der unglücklichen [sic] Negersklaven zur Sprache kam? Wahrlich! kein Menschenfreund wird jenen braven, von Mitleiden gerührten Britten [sic], die sich der Sache der unterdrückten leidenden Menschheit mit so vieler Wärme annehmen, seinen innigsten Beifall versagen; er wird sie segnen, und ihren edlen Bemühungen den

[109] while reading the manifold news with which the newspaper had been entertaining us so comprehensively.

[110] the sacrificial lambs of the greed and avarice of Europeans.

> verdientesten, besten Erfolg wünschen. (December 12, 1788, issue of *Hannoverisches Magazin* 1570)[111]

The use of a rhetorical question signifies an assumption of a mutual understanding of abolitionist views. In this, it is expected that all readers will be equally delighted about the British opposition to slavery. This perspective is solidified by the extension of blessings and well-wishes to the British and their endeavors to abolish slavery and the transatlantic trade in slaves.

This commentary seeks to evoke feelings of empathy among readers through the authoritative guidance of the commentator, who presents the voice of reason. In this sense, the author models an outburst of emotions that is classified as a human and thus moral response to being confronted with the horrors of slavery—an emotionally driven path: "Die Betrachtung, der Gedanke stürmt mit unaufhaltsamer Macht auf die Empfindungen des Mitleidens und der äußersten Indignation" (December 12, 1788, issue of *Hannoverisches Magazin* 1574).[112] Graphic descriptions of the pain inflicted upon and endured by Black African bodies are positioned to enhance compassionate sentiments among readers: "um in ihren westindischen Pflanzungen ihren Rücken und ihre Arme mit Lasten zu erdrücken, sie ärger, als das Vieh zu behandeln, und sie beinahe als Wesen ganz andrer, leider nur niedrer [sic], Art anzusehen" (December 12, 1788, issue of *Hannoverisches Magazin* 1572).[113] These

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[111] Who did not experience pleasant, sweet moments when there was finally talk of the unfortunate Negro slaves in British Parliament in the manifold news with which the newspapers had been entertaining us so comprehensively? Truly! No humanitarian shall fail to provide heartfelt applause for the British, who have been moved by pity, and attended to the oppressed and suffering with so much warmth; rather he will bless them and wish them the greatest deserved success in their noble efforts.

[112] The consideration, the thought encroaches with unstoppable force onto the sensibilities of compassion and extreme indignation.

[113] to crush their backs and arm with loads on their West-Indian plantations, to treat them worse than livestock, and to see them almost as beings of a different, unfortunately, even lower kind.

emotional impulses are the outcome of appeals to humanity and morality that directly seek to address a common sentimental essence of human nature through detailed accounts of suffering: "Nicht anders, als mit Entsetzen kan [sic] man die einmüthigen [sic] Nachrichten der Reisebeschreiber lesen von der Brutalität und unerbittlichen Grausamkeit, mit der in jenen unglücklichen Erdstrichen Menschen gegen Menschen wüthen [sic]" (December 12, 1788, issue of *Hannoverisches Magazin* 1572).[114] The author is certain that this visual rhetoric can only be considered indisputably inhumane, which is established early on in the commentary. Here, the transatlantic slave trade is defined as "unstreitig eins der auffallendsten, aber auch traurigsten Phänomene in der Geschichte der Menschheit" (December 12, 1788, issue of *Hannoverisches Magazin* 1570).[115] In this manner, Christian altruism is alluded to by the use of the word "brother," while at the same time, it is contextualized within the horrors of slavery. This could be considered to be an accusatory strategy that is intended to evoke feelings of guilt among proponents of slavery: "mit welchen schreienden Ungerechtigkeiten die christlichen Europäer gegen ihre schwarzen Brüder verfahren" (December 12, 1788, issue of *Hannoverisches Magazin* 1572).[116]

Presenting a factual and academic work on slavery and the trade in slaves and foregrounding the importance of abolition, the scholar Johann Jacob Sell (1754–1816) was educated in Halle and studied previous contributions debating the subject matter. Sell was aware of Sprengel's contributions to the field of research and built on Sprengel's work and "legte . . . mit seinem rund 250 Seiten umfassenden Buch die erste vollständige Darstellung

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[114] The news of the travel writers can only be read with shock, as they describe the brutality and unrelenting cruelty that humans inflict upon humans in these lands.

[115] undoubtedly one of the most remarkable, but also one of the saddest phenomena in human history.

[116] the screaming injustices the Christian Europeans inflict upon their Black brothers.

des Sklavenhandels in deutscher Sprache vor" (Schüller, "Deutsche Abolitionisten" 614).[117] Unlike Sprengel, Sell's *Versuch einer Geschichte des Negersclavenhandels* (1791) discusses the history of slavery and thoroughly thematizes anti-slavery thought (614). Sell's preface illustrates his convictions and stance on anti-slavery and abolitionism. He highlights the necessity of educating his readers on this subject matter, because he observes diminished interest in the abolition of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade overall in eighteenth-century Germany:

> Die große Angelegenheit der Menschheit, den Negersclavenhandel [sic] gänzlich abzuschaffen, hat in England allgemeine Sensation erregt, und so wie Verbindungen zur Beförderung dieser Absicht, so auch eine Menge von Schriften und Pamphlets für und wider diese Sache hervorgebracht. In Deutschland, wo man kein besonderes Interesse für diese Sache haben konnte, hat man weniger davon geschrieben und geringern Antheil [sic] daran genommen. Diese Begebenheit, an welche die Zeitungen bei Erwähnung der Parlaments-Debatten [sic] über diese Sache öfters erinnerten, ermunterte den Verfasser zuerst, zu seiner eigenen Belehrung den Negerhandel historisch und statistisch zu untersuchen. . . . Es scheint, als wenn auch in der bisjährigen Parlamentssitzung diese wichtige Sache nicht zum Abschlusse kommen werde; Herr Wilberforce hat zwar dem Parlamente schon angekündigt, daß [sic] er nächstens einen Antrag zur Fortsetzung dieser Untersuchung thun werde. (Sell VII-VIII)[118]

In this preface, Sell exhibits a transnational awareness of debates on abolitionism in Great Britain. This becomes apparent when he mentions and acknowledges the abolitionist key player William Wilberforce (1759–1833) and his activities in the British House of Commons. Thus, Sell considers the debates on abolitionism to be essential, and describes

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[117] with his roughly 250-page book, he provided the first complete discussion of the slave trade in German.
[118] The great affair of humanity to completely abolish the Negro slave trade has caused general sensation in England, and just as connections to promote this purpose have produced a great deal of writings and pamphlets for and against this cause. In Germany, where there was no particular interest in this matter, less was written about it and less interest was taken in it. This event, which the newspapers often recalled when the parliamentary debates on this matter were mentioned, first encouraged the author to examine the Negro trade historically and statistically for his own instruction. . . . It seems as if this important matter will not come to a conclusion in the parliamentary session so far; Mr Wilberforce has already announced to the Parliament that he will soon make an application to continue this investigation

them as "wichtig" (important), which also emphasizes the necessity of educating German-language readers about these events. In this sense, Sell describes German attitudes toward this subject matter through a political lens by using the word "konnte" ("kein . . . Interesse . . . haben konnte" (was unable to show interest) (VII-VIII). This suggests that the lack of interest in slavery and the transatlantic slave trade on a national level could be attributed to the fact that the German-speaking realm had not yet been consolidated into a nation-state and thus did not actively participate in the transatlantic slave trade as many of its neighboring European countries did. Thus, slavery, the transatlantic slave trade, and abolitionism were not discussed as much. However, some newspapers addressed these debates in Great Britain, which is what ultimately piqued Sell's interest. This confirms a transatlantic exchange of political information that was reflected and presented in German-language cultural productions. For this reason, Sell was aware of the specifics of the ongoing debates and stated that abolitionism was still being argued in the House of Commons. Sell thought of the slave trade as a matter of significant importance, which is why he described it as "große Angelegenheit der Menschheit" (a matter significant to humankind, an important matter for humankind) that involved humanity and humans in general and was therefore of importance to Europe, which also included the German-speaking territories (Sell VII). In this sense, Sell includes, discusses, and references works of German-speaking scholars who were also critical of the transatlantic slave trade, such as Sprengel and Isert (Sell 63-67, 187-90).

In the last chapter of *Versuch einer Geschichte des Negersclavenhandels*, Sell presents additional reading material that addresses both sides of the debate: "Anzeige der Schriften

für und wider die Abschaffung des Sklavenhandels" (Sell 226).[119] This section shows debates around the transatlantic slave trade to have been recorded and reported on in English-, French-, and German-language sources, such as newspaper and journal articles, reports, stories, and treatises (Sell 226, 241, 243). Sell categorizes the nature of this material as he also refers to the context of amelioration: "Die menschenfreundlichen Bemühungen einiger Männer, entweder um die gänzliche Abschaffung des Negersklavenhandels, oder um die Milderung des Schicksals der unglücklichen Neger" (226).[120]

Sell is aware of efforts to abolish the transatlantic slave trade as well as those that demand a reformation of slave systems and a less-brutal approach in the treatment of slaves. His knowledge of the idiosyncrasies of abolitionism and amelioration demonstrate his extensive studies in this field. Sell deems both viewpoints to be humane and noble. In order to provide his readers with extra reading material, Sell provides sources in three languages that could also speak to the fact that some German individuals traveled extensively and thus showed command of various languages.[121] Sell selects materials that he considers important because they reflect "den Sklavenhandel von der philosophischen und politischen Seite" (226),[122] and he provides information on parts of Africa that are specifically affected in terms of the transatlantic slave trade. Sell provides extra information for many entries and

[119] Display of writings for and against the abolition of the slave trade.

[120] The humanistic efforts of several men, either with respect to the complete abolition of the slave-trade, or to ameliorate the situation of the unfortunate Negroes.

[121] Zantop alludes to various travels by Germans as merchants, scientists, explorers, and interpreters alongside the Dutch, Spaniards, and Portuguese during the time of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (18). This also included writers and correspondents in France, such as Archenholz.

[122] the slave trade's political and philosophical aspects

mentions any existing German translations, which shows that he relied on Sprengel's extensive archive of translations:

> Some historical account of Guinea, its situation, produce, and the general disposition of its inhabitants. With an inquiry into the rise and progress of the slavetrade. By Anhony Benezet. Lond. 1788.8. Diese Geschichte ist verschiedenemale aufgelegt worden. Der V. starb 1784 zu Philadelphia.
> An Essay on the treatment and conversion of the African Slaves in the British Sugar colonies. By the reverend James Ramsay, M.A. Lond. 1784.8 (übersetzt in Sprengels Beitr. 5. Th.)
> Considerations on the Negroe-Cause. Addressed to the Lord Mansfield by Sam. Estwick. Lond. 1788. 8. (dis ist die 3te verm. Ausgabe einer Schrift, die ohne Namen des V. 1772 auf Veranlassung eines berühmten Rechtshandels herauskam, wobei der V. behauptete, daß [sic] ein Sklave noch in der Sklaverei bleiben müßte [sic], wenn er gleich in ein freies Land käme. (Sell 227-28)[123]

These materials and the use of sources referenced in footnotes throughout his work certainly imply that Sell was fluent in a number of languages, which enhanced his quality of research.

Schüller emphasizes the originality of Sell's work in comparison to Sprengel's contribution: "Während Sprengel noch fast ausschließlich ausländische Reiseberichte und Artikel englischer Abolitionisten ins Deutsche übersetzte, war Sell der erste, der eine selbstständige Arbeit mit einem wissenschaftlichen Anmerkungsapparat vorlegte. Als Quellen dienten auch ihm im wesentlichen ausländische Reiseberichte und Schriften von Sklavereigegnern" ("Deutsche Abolitionisten" 615). Sell aligns himself with the German intellectuals who took an interest in these transatlantic developments and their larger impact. Sell's preface demonstrates stronger abolitionist convictions than were reflected in Sprengel's work. Schüller discusses Sell's contribution to scholarship in her book *Die deutsche Rezeption*

[123] This is the third edition of a paper, published without the author's name in 1772 upon the initiation of a famous lawsuit, wherein the author claimed that a slave must remain enslaved, even if he is brought to a free country.

haitianischer Geschichte in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts: ein Beitrag zum deutschen Bild vom Schwarzen (1992), remarking:

> Johann Jacob Sell hatte mit seinem Werk eine tatsächliche Lücke in Deutschland geschlossen. Es war die erste ausführliche und sachliche Darstellung des Sklavenhandels in deutscher Sprache, die gleichzeitig auf die zwangsläufig mit diesem Geschäft verbundenen Unmenschlichkeiten aufmerksam machte und darüber hinaus ein Kompendium der zeitgenössischen Antisklavereibewegung in sich schloß. (70)

Sell's knowledge of German discourses on slavery and abolitionism is matched by his information on the specifics of events in British and French contexts, which he discusses in his chapter titled "Anzeige der Schriften für und wider die Abschaffung des Sklavenhandels."

In this last chapter, Sell recounts Wilberforce's advocacy for enslaved Africans and his efforts to terminate slavery and the transatlantic slave trade (Sell 215, 233). Sell directly quotes Wilberforce on several occasions, including Wilberforce's speech in the House of Commons in 1789. In addition to praising many other speeches that were given on that day, Sell writes with a particular appreciation of Wilberforce's words: "Wilberforce, Pitt, Fox und eine Menge anderer redeten ganz vortrefflich, so daß [sic] es ihrem Verstande, ihrem Herzen und ihrer Beredtsamkeit [sic] Ehre machte" (Sell 245).[124] It becomes clear that Sell agrees with and honors Wilberforce's efforts on abolitionism, because he uses words such as "vortrefflich," (admirably or excellent) and "Ehre" (honor) (Sell 245). While providing the reader with facts on current affairs, Sell demonstrates a compassion regarding the conditions of slavery that is similar to Wilberforce's empathy, and appeals to the morality of his reader:

> Bei der Betrachtung . . . des Elendes und der Mishandlungen [sic] dieser Sklaven, schaudert freilich die gefühlvolle menschliche Natur, seufzt über die

[124] Wilberforce, Pitt, Fox and many others talked very admirably, so that their honor, their heart, and their eloquence were honorable.

> unnatürliche Härte und Gefühllosigkeit, wozu Geiz und Habsucht die Menschen abstumpfen kann, und findet nur in dem Gedanken, daß [sic] ein großer Theil [sic] der Menschen, vom wahren Mitleid gegen ihre Brüder gerührt, diese Ungerechtigkeiten haßt [sic], verabscheuet. (128)[125]

He finishes his work with an epilogue that reiterates his personal stance on slavery as he addresses the vote in the British House of Commons, which took place on April 19, 1791. In this epilogue, he seeks to answer the question of whether the slave trade should be abolished ("Soll der Sklavenhandel abgeschafft warden?") (Sell 245): "Aller Beredtsamkeit und aller Vorstellungen der Menschlichkeit und des gesunden Verstandes ungeachtet siegten gleichwol [sic], wie um halb 5 Uhr Mogens gestimmt wurde, 163 Beschützer des Sklavenhandels über 88 Menschenfreunde" (Sell 246).[126] Sell considers the minority vote, the 88 opponents of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, to be true humanists and "friends of humans."

Schüller argues that the increase in German scholarship on the anti-slavery movement stemmed from a growing interest in American history ("Deutsche Abolitionisten" 617). The universities of Göttingen and Halle specialized in American history, because Halle belonged to the Kingdom of Hanover, which was in personal union with Great Britain. Schüller argues that for this reason, topics such as "[die] [englische] Kolonialgeschichte in Nordamerika und . . . [die] Geschichte der Amerikanischen Revolutuion" ("Deutsche Abolitionisten" 612), as well as the legitimacy of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade in the Anglo-American space, were heavily explored at these

[125] In contemplation of the miseries and maltreatment of these slaves, of course, the sensitive human nature is perplexed by the unnatural harshness and insensibility of which avarice and covetousness can blunt men, and finds only in the idea that a great part of men, stirred up by true compassion for their brethren, hates these injustices.

[126] As it was voted at 5 o'clock in the morning, despite all eloquence and imaginations of humanity and common sense, 163 protectors of the slave trade outvoted 88 friends of humans.

universities ("Deutsche Abolitionisten" 617). Schüller adds that "themen wie der Sklavenhandel und die Sklaverei trugen mit zu einer Betrachtung des gesamten amerikanischen Kontinents bei, da es sich um ein den ganzen Erdteil betreffendes Problem handelte" ("Deutsche Abolitionisten" 612). Therefore, Sell's notable and pioneering scholarly contributions on antislavery originated in these parts of eighteenth-century Germany.

Another significant German-language contribution to the debate on slavery at the time was the concept of the master-slave dialectic, which Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) developed in *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807). In "Hegel and Haiti," Buck-Morss argues that Hegel's knowledge of the slave revolt in Haiti inspired his idea of the master-slave dialectic in *Phänomenologie des Geistes.* Buck-Morss draws on evidence from the periodical *Minerva: Ein Journal historischen und politischen Inhalts,* which was first published in 1792 by Archenholz. In her article, Buck-Morss discusses the contradiction of freedom being considered the highest attainable and universal political value during the eighteenth century, while the machinery of slavery (particularly the capitalist and systematic enslavement of Black African peoples) was established at an unimaginable magnitude. Buck-Morss addresses the dangers of treating historical events in disciplinary isolation because counterarguments and evidence may then be disregarded as insignificant: "The greater the specialization of knowledge, the more advanced the level of research, the longer and more venerable the scholarly tradition, the easier it is to ignore discordant facts" (822). She mentions disciplines such as African American studies or diaspora studies as being in particular danger of being disregarded as irrelevant and thus isolated. In this way, Buck-Morss understands her research connecting Hegel and Haiti to have no space within the rigid disciplinary structures of the university (822).

Discussing the specifics of slavery involving nation-states and monarchies such as the Netherlands, Great Britain, and France, Buck-Morss particularly highlights the Haitian Revolution as a "trial by fire for the ideals of the French Enlightenment" that the European "bourgeois reading public" was aware of (833-37). One periodical that provided a venue for the discussion of political events was *Minerva*, and Hegel was regarded as an avid reader of this important platform, which was circulated widely in late eighteenth-century Germany (Buck-Morss 842). Archenholz's journal

> borrowed freely from English and French sources so that his account reflected news widely reported to the European reading public, and the articles in *Minerva* were picked up in turn by 'countless newspapers' (a situation of cosmopolitan and open communication, despite intellectual property restrictions, that has perhaps not been matched until the early internet). (Buck-Morss 838-39)

In this sense, *Minerva* was already known for its political content by 1794, two years after its founding. As a political journal, *Minerva* considered "nonpartisan, objective, and factual" coverage key, while also presenting the "historical truth" (839). These principles were reflected in an increasing circulation of 3,000 copies by 1798 that then doubled by 1809.

Buck-Morss mentions an influential readership that included Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling and King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia as well as Hegel (842). She mentions Hegel's self-proclaimed habit of reading the news regularly in making her case and includes the following quotation: "Reading the newspaper in early morning is a kind of realistic morning prayer. One orients one's attitude against the world and toward God [in one case], or toward that which the world is [in the other]. The former gives the same security as the latter, in that one knows where one stands" (Rosenkranz qtd. in Buck-Morss 844). Buck-Morss shows that Hegel was inspired by these publications, as was evident in his newspaper reading habits and the subject matter of his

treatises during that time (Buck-Morss 843-44). Buck-Morss also mentions the political significance of specific years that coincide with Hegel's work: "the famous metaphor of the 'struggle to death' between the master and slave, which for Hegel provided the key to the unfolding of freedom in world history . . . which he first elaborated in *The Phenomenology of Mind* . . . [and was] written in Jena in 1805-6 (the first year of the Haitian nation's existence) and published in 1807 (the year of the British abolition of the slave trade)" (Buck-Morss 842-43).

As a popular source of knowledge for the likes of Hegel and his contemporaries, *Minerva* also centered the transnational exchange of information. This exchange is referred to in the first issue: "Dies Werk ist vorzüglich der neuesten Geschichte gewidmet, in so ferne die Schicksale naher oder ferner Länder, und Meynungen und Handlungen ihrer Bewohner für aufgeklärte Völker Interesse haben" (Archenholz, January 1792 edition of *Minerva* 1).[127] Archenholz mentions that his material and resulting articles had been carefully selected and would therefore be of importance for future chroniclers and historians (January 1792 edition of *Minerva* 1). Having covered the French Revolution since its founding in 1792, the journal also focused on events in Haiti. From 1804 to 1805, "*Minerva* published a continuing series, totaling more than a hundred pages, including source documents, news summaries, and eyewitness accounts, that informed its readers not only of the final struggle for independence of this French colony . . . but of the events over the previous ten years as well" (Buck-Morss 838). While Archenholz criticized the ongoing violence during the Revolution, he grew fond of Toussaint-L'Ouverture (1743–1803), who led the Black army to defeat the British army and was appointed governor of Saint-Domingue in 1796. Archenholz thus published the

[127] This publication is primarily dedicated to contemporary history, insofar as the fates of nearby or far away countries and the opinions and actions of their inhabitants are of interest for enlightened peoples.

translation of a manuscript by the British captain Marcus Rainsford (1758–1817), who commends Toussaint's leadership, character, and humanity (Buck-Morss 834, 838).

Enlightened and cosmopolitan ideas closely related to the idea of global citizenship (Dovifat 335) were reflected in the issues of *Minerva* that were published in 1810, which particularly featured articles about slavery and the transatlantic slave trade with regard to British involvement. The issues in January, February, and March of that year, for example, featured headlines such as "Sclaverei [sic] in Nordamerica [sic]" (572) and "Gegenwärtiger Zustand der Negersklaven im Britischen Westindien, besonders in den von Britten eroberten Holländischen Colonien [sic], nebst einer Apologie des Negersklavenhandels. Aus dem Englischen des Henry Bolingbroke" (Archenholz 1810, 572-73).[128] Through these publications, Archenholz informed German readers about developments that were newsworthy for true global citizens. These included the state of affairs in the New World with regard to slavery:

> Gemeinlich glaubt man der Sclavenhandel [sic] und die Sclaverei [sic] sei in den Nordamericanischen [sic] Freistaaten gänzlich aufgehoben. Blickt man aber auf die in diesem Lande erschienenen Tageblätter, so findet man Anzeigen, die diesem schnurstracks zu widersprechen scheinen. So sah man z. B. in den zu Charlestown herauskommenden Times, vom 17ten November voriges Jahr, unter der Ueberschrift [sic] Ranaway! (Entlaufene) zwei Bekanntmachungen. (Archenholz in *Minerva* 1810, 183)[129]

Archenholz resided in France during the French revolutionary wars (1792–1802). In the 1994 work *Johann Wilhelm von Archenholz als "Zeitbürger": Eine historisch-analytische*

[128] "Slavery in North America" and "The Current Condition of Negro Slaves in the British West Indies, Especially in the Colonies the British Conquered from the Dutch, In Addition to an Apology of the Negro Slave Trade. Translated from the English Language by Henry Bolingbroke."

[129] In general, it is believed that the slave trade and slavery have been abolished in the free states of North America. However, upon review of the country's daily newspapers, one will find advertisements that directly refute this notion. For instance, two announcements with the headline "Runaway"! were published last year, in the Times of Charleston on November 17.

Untersuchung zur Aufklärung in Deutschland (29), historian Ute Rieger identifies Archenholz's thirst for adventure as having been the driving force behind moving his entire family to France in 1791. However, it becomes obvious that Archenholz was rather eager to report on current affairs and thus present the German-language reading public with first-hand information from his German (but metropolitan) point of view. In this way, Archenholz explains his motivation in the second issue of *Minerva* in 1792: "Ich hatte den Ehrgeiz, als ich nach Paris kam, diese sich immer veränderte Lage der dortigen für die Welt so wichtigen Ereignisse periodisch nach der Wahrheit zu schildern" (Archenholz 525).[130] Thus, Archenholz devoted his time to the coverage of political current affairs, which is why he founded *Minerva* in 1792 (Rieger 29). Archenholz critiqued the French educational system in 1792 by comparing it to the German educational system, ending his examination by saying: "Dies sind die Bemerkungen, die ein Philantrop der Prüfung der französischen Gesetzgeber unterwirft, denen jetzt das Feld offen ist, auch in diesem Zweige neuer Schöpfung des Wohl ihrer Nation zu befördern" (Archenholz, 1792, 2nd edition of *Minerva* 444).[131] Archenholz was known for his open criticism, which Rieger characterizes as "Freimütigkeit" (Frankness), and which ultimately led to him having to leave France (30).

In the third issue of Minerva in 1792, Archenholz gives a lengthy explanation about initially relocating to France and ultimately returning to eighteenth-century Germany. Archenholz addresses that the changing political climate and the war impacted his ability to speak and write freely about any developments in France. His candidness in *Minerva* was not

[130] When I came to Paris, I had the desire to periodically describe the consistently changing situation of the local events, which were so important to the world based on the truth.

[131] These are the remarks that are made subject to French law in philanthropy, to whom the field is now open to promote the wellbeing of their nation in this branch of creation as well.

welcome and was deemed to be a negative portrayal of the French governing powers. Hence, he had been accused of being an enemy of the French and received threats. Though none of the threats made against him were acted upon, Archenholz is aware of the possibility of him being charged with treason, which prompted him to leave:

> Der Herausgeber dieses Journals war nothgedrungen [sic], Frankreich zu verlassen, wenn er anders seine schriftstellerische Laufbahn fortsetzen wollte. Er reiste daher in der Mitte des Juny [sic] nach einem zehnmonatlichen Aufenthalte von Paris nach Deutschland zurück.
> Es war keine Autor-Speculation [sic], die den Entschluß [sic] bey [sic] mir erzeugte, nach dieser Weltstadt zu gehen, noch weniger ein rascher Einfall, dort auf eine kurze Zeit das höchst interessante Schauspiel der Revolution zu sehen, sondern ein sehr überdachter Vorsatz, wo möglich den Rest meines Lebens in einem Lande zuzubringen, das für den Bewohner in der Ferne so viele Reize zeigte. Man ändert nicht einen Wohnort mit einer Familie auf einige hundert Meilen so wie man eine Lustparthie [sic] ändert. Der ausgebrochene Krieg zerstörte diesen Entwurf. Schon vorher stand ich bey [sic] vielen in Paris im Ruf durch meine freimüthigen [sic] historischen Nachrichten, in Deutschland der Sache Frankreichs zu schaden. Man wollte mich daher in den Pariser Journalen als einen Feind der Franzosen aufstellen; ein für mich nicht ganz gleichgültiger Umstand in einer Stadt, wo der politische Fanatismus täglich so viel Greuel [sic] als Tugenden erzeugte, und wo ich zwar bey [sic] dem Bewußtseyn [sic] meiner Mäßigung gegen Richter und Gesetze, aber nicht gegen den Pöbel und seine Laternen gesichert war. Ich erwartete mit Entschlossenheit die Folgen der Drohungen, die jedoch unausgeführt blieben. Indessen wurden von der gesetzgebenden Macht Thorheiten mit Thorheiten gehäuft, die der Geschichtschreiber erzählen mußte [sic], und sie auch nicht übergieng [sic], wie die Hefte der Minerva vom Maymonat [sic] zeigen. Der Krieg erregte jedoch bey [sic] mir andre [sic] mehr wichtige Besorgnisse. Eine jede tadelhafte Aeusserung [sic] von unüberlegten französischen Regierungs- und Kriegs-Maaßregeln wäre in der Mitte eines unglücksvollen[sic] Kriegs [sic] *) in Paris als Hochverrath [sic] ausgelegt worden. (Archenholz, 1792, *Minerva* third issue 108-10)[132]

[132] The publisher of this journal was forced to leave France, if he wanted to change his continued career as a writer. For this reason, he returned from Paris to Germany in the middle of June after a 10-month stay. It was not a speculation, on the part of the author, that resulted in the decision to move to this metropolis, nor a rash idea, but rather a well-thought-out resolution to spend the rest of my life in a country that is so attractive to visitors from abroad. One does not move hundreds of miles from one's family for one's amusement. The war that has erupted altered this sentiment. Even before, I held the reputation amongst many that my frank historical reports are damaging to French matters in Germany. There were attempts of painting me as an enemy of France in Parisian journals; this circumstance was not negligible, in a city in which political fanatism creates as much cruelty as virtue, and while I was protected against judges and laws due to knowledge of my restraint, I was not protected against the mobs and their torches. With determination, I expected the consequences of the threats, which were ultimately not executed. Instead, I was inundated with the follies of the lawmakers, which the historian had to tell and did not pass, as the May issue of the Minerva shows. The

During his stay in France, Archenholz heavily covered events occurring in and around France, as well as in the French Caribbean territories, such as slave revolts: "Da Frankreich nun in seiner jetzigen Lage die Aufmerksamkeit der Nationen mehr wie irgend ein Reich auf sich zieht, und der Herausgeber sich jetzt in diesem Lande aufhält, so wird er sich besonders bemühen Nachrichten von den Wirkungen zu geben, die aus den hier gemachten erstaunlichen Veränderungen entstanden sind, und noch entstehen werden" (Archenholz 1792, 1).[133] This helped German-speaking readers be well informed on issues of slavery and bondage in the Caribbean.

Archenholz specifically highlighted the necessity of unbiased reporting (1792, 2) and critical reflection with respect to the circumstances discussed in his articles. This becomes apparent, for example, in his coverage of the treatment of slaves in Saint-Domingue, where Archenholz reported on the unjust, domineering, and oppressive tactics that Black Africans in Saint-Domingue endured, which ultimately resulted in slave rebellions. Thus, he noted that it would be difficult to continue the subjugation of the enslaved population of Saint-Domingue:

> Hieraus ergiebt [sic] sich, daß [sic] ein Theil [sic] der farbigen Menschen bereits sehr viel zur Unterdrückung des Aufstandes der Neger beigetragen hatte, und gewiß [sic] würde man vieles Unglück verhütet haben, wenn die Weissen [sic] gegen diese Art Menschen weniger herrschsüchtig gehandelt hätten. So stehet es jetzt in Saint Domingo, aber der Aufstand der Schwarzen in dem nördlichen, und der Mulatten in dem westlichen Theile [sic] scheint noch nicht völlig gedämpft, und es wird sehr schwer seyn [sic], diese

war also caused other worries for me. Each critical remark of injudicious governmental and war penalties would be interpreted as treason in the midst of an unfortunate war in Paris*).

[133] Due to its situation, France has been drawing the attention of nations more than any other country and because the editor currently resides in there, he will make special efforts to offer news of the effects that have resulted and will continue to result from the astonishing changes that occurred here.

> Eingebornen durch die Geissel der Ausländer wieder so hart zu unterjochen, als sie gewesen sind. (Archenholz 1792, 318-19)[134]

Archenholz refers to the spirit of revolution that has extended to Saint-Domingue, as well. His choice in words does imply the wrongfulness of slavery overall, because he considers it to be of an oppressive nature and describes white people as domineering. Archenholz ultimately foresees that these revolts will not cease because the people will no longer accept this system. Archenholz may have hinted at an overall change in the sense of abolition or amelioration, which demonstrates his opposition to the manner in which slavery was conducted during that time.

Travelogues written in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that explored the actual places Archenholz reported on, such as the Americas and the African coasts, often chronicled explorations of the flora and fauna, demographics, cultural specifics, and overall geography. Yet the travelers often also collected personal experiences and developed their principles and opinions on social issues and other matters, too. Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859), for example, extensively traveled through the Americas from 1799 to 1804 and specifically commented on his encounters with slavery and the transatlantic slave trade in Cuba. His travels had a direct impact on his views of slavery and, by extension, the United States (Keil 144). His stance can be described as abolitionist in essence. Humboldt states that he had previously been critical of slavery and that his opposition to slavery had not changed as a result of having witnessed the condition of slaves during his travels: "Ich habe den Zustand der schwarzen Menschen in den Ländern

[134] The result is that a portion of the people of color has already contributed to the suppression of the rebellion by the Negroes, and it is certain that much of the tragedy could have been avoided, if white people had been less domineering toward these people. Currently, the rebellion of Black people in the North of Saint Domingue, and of mulattoes in the Western part has not yet been fully quelled and it will be difficult for the foreigners to suppress these people, who were born there, as vehemently as before.

beobachtet, wo die Gesetze, die Religion und die Nationalgewohnheiten dazu neigen, ihr Schicksal zu erleichtern; dessen unerachtet hat sich bei der Abreise aus Amerika mein Abscheu vor der Sklaverei, den ich aus Europa mitgebracht hatte, nicht vermindert" (Humboldt 155).[135] Humboldt argues that the association of slavery with serfdom serves as a diversion to downplay and justify the nefarious condition of slaves and the institution of slavery as a whole:

> "Indem sie die Namen . . . von *schwarzer Lehenspflichtigkeit* und von *patriarchalischer Protektion* . . . erfanden: Mann entheiligt die edlen Künste des Geistes und der Phantasie, wenn durch täuschende Zusammenstellungen oder gewandte Sophismen Unbilden zu rechtfertigen versucht werden, welche der Menschheit Unheil bringen und die heftige Erschütterungen herbeiführen müssen" (155).[136]

Humboldt's interest in this topic illustrates a sense of urgency for critical reflection among German-language writers and travelers from German principalities that were not directly or nationally involved in slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Humboldt's discussion of the detailed circumstances of slavery, such as the difference between slaves that served in the house of the slavemaster and those who worked on the plantations, reiterates the detriments of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade: "Ohne Zweifel ist die Sklaverei das größte aller Übel, welche die Menschheit gepeinigt haben. . . . Wie er [Sklave] seiner Familie in der Heimat entrissen und in die Schiffsräume eines für den Negerhandel zugerichteten Fahrzeugs geworfen wird" (156).[137]

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[135] I have witnessed the condition of Black people in the countries, in which laws, religion, and national behaviors tend to make one's fate easier; in spite of this, my view of slavery, which I had brought from Europe, was not assuaged when I left America.

[136] By giving the names . . . of black feudal duty and patriarchal protection . . . invented: men profane the noble arts of mind and imagination when deceptive compilations or agile sophisms attempt to justify ill-will that bring mischief to mankind and that must bring about violent tremors.

[137] Without a doubt, slavery is the is the greatest evil to have plagued mankind. . . . As he [the slave] is torn from his home and thrown into the quarters of a ship prepared for the slave trade.

Humboldt's comments reveal his knowledge of the actual procedures of slavery related to capture and transit to the New World. He demands what is essentially an improvement in the conditions of slavery, which demonstrates abolitionist sentiments that include tendencies associated with amelioration. On the one hand, he notes that it is not sufficient to merely reduce the brutalization of slaves and increase their food, for example, by feeding slaves a stock fish. He even argues that "eine wahrhafte Verbesserung der dienenden Klasse muß [sic] sich auf alle physischen und moralischen Verhältnisse des Menschen ausdehnen" (Humboldt 157).[138] On the other hand, while Humboldt stresses the importance of change, he implies that there exists a class of servants within society at large, and that this class should be treated better. This notion is very strongly aligned with an abolitionist demand that is rooted in acknowledging the horrors of slavery, rather than propagating the equality of Black and white people. In this vein, he proposes a "humanely" run system that should be governed by the law and include stipulations such as granting freedom to male slaves who have served for fifteen years or female slaves who have given birth to at least four children (Humboldt 158).

Humboldt foresees a gradual change in attitudes toward slavery through the court of public opinion, a continuous spread of Enlightenment ideals, and a positive impact from the recognition of Haiti as a sovereign state and independent nation by France, "sei es durch Beweggründe der Vorsorge und Furcht, sei es mittels edlerer und uneigennützigerer Gesinnungen, einen glücklichen Einfluß auf die Verbesserung der Lage der Neger in den übrigen Antillen, in Nord- und Süd-Carolina (USA) und in den verschiedenen Guayana und

[138] a true improvement of the serving class must be extended to all physical and moral conditions of the person.

in Brasilien ausüben" (161).[139] In this context, he suggests a mechanism that would ensure the abolition of slavery by punishing traders who failed to adhere to the newly implemented rules and regulations: "Die strengste Handhabung der Gesetze gegen den Negerhandel, diffamierende Strafen gegen die, welche dieselben verletzen, die Errichtung gemischter Gerichtsstellen und das nach gerechter Gegenseitigkeit angewandte Recht der Untersuchung der Schiffe" (Humboldt 161).[140]

Humboldt's suggestions are based on enlightened and progressive principles from the time period, particularly when he speaks of regulations by law, because he believes that a failure to implement these laws would lead to a "fortbestehen [der Sklaverei] neben den feinen Sitten, den gepriesenen Fortschritten der Aufklärung und allem Zauber einer Zivilisation" (168).[141] Yet Humboldt refers to Europeans as saviors and allies in fighting slavery: "Der Antrieb hierfür kann allerdings durch diejenigen europäischen Regierungen gegeben werden, welche ein Gefühl für Menschenwert haben und wissen, daß jede Ungerechtigkeit einen Keim der Zerstörung in sich trägt . . . um die völlige Aufhebung der Sklaverei in den Antillen zu erzielen" (157).[142] Humboldt seems to believe that any kind of improvement in the sense of abolition can only occur through European involvement. This point of view endorses the imposition of European governing structures on non-European people outside of Europe. It also suggests an understanding of further European

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[139] whether the motivation is precaution or fear, noble or selfish desires to make a positive impact on improving the situation of Negroes in the other Antilles, in North and South Carolina (USA) and in Guyana and Brazil.

[140] The strictest enforcement of laws against the Negro slave trade, defamatory punishment for those, who violate them, the establishment of mixed courts of laws and the mutually applied law of ship inspections.

[141] continuation [of slavery] next to sophisticated customs, the welcomed advances of the Enlightenment, and the magic of civilization.

[142] However, only those European governments can drive this, who have a regard for the value of humans, and know that every injustice carries a seed of destruction . . . in order to completely upend slavery in the Antilles.

interference and could be read in the context of the colonial trope of enslaved African inferiority and/or incapability through white paternalism, which is certainly problematic and counterproductive in this endeavor.

Humboldt's critique of slavery was further voiced through publicly published letters and interviews. This led to him being honored by the National Anti-Slavery Standard as well as the antislavery weekly newspaper that was tied to the American Anti-Slavery Society, which dedicated two of their issues to Humboldt's views on slavery (Keil 146-48). Humboldt reacted with an angrily written letter to the southerner J. S. Trasher, who had published an English translation of Humboldt's work, leaving out Humboldt's entire chapter on slavery. Trasher had a commercial interest in Cuba that was based on slavery and would conflict with Humboldt's condemning verdict of the institution of slavery in his translation titled *The Island of Cuba by Alexander Humboldt* (1856). Humboldt's letter restated and thus solidified his perspective on slavery and was published in both Germany and the United States (145-46). The *Spenersche Zeitung*, the *New York Tribune,* and the *New York Herald*, among others, printed his letter, and "Humboldt's indignation received the widest publicity" (Keil 146).

In the same vein, Humboldt intensely criticized the United States and its policies on slavery in an interview with the *Evening Post* that was printed in the German-language *Louisiana Staats-Zeitung* in 1855: "For 30 years you have not made any progress about slavery. You have gone backward, very far backward in every respect. I especially refer to the law of 1850, the Fugitive Slave Act. . . . In Europe you will also find bad things. But I tell you you will not find anything half as bad as your system of slavery, and I know what slavery is like in your country" (Humboldt qtd. in Keil 146). Humboldt's strong convictions remained intact until his death. His final statement regarding slavery was a commentary on the work of the

German geologist and journalist Julius Fröbel, in which he urged Fröbel to continue his critique of slavery:

> Continue to brand the shameful devotion to slavery, the treacherous importation of Negroes, under the pretense of their becoming free. . . . What atrocities have been witnessed by one who has had the misfortune to live from 1789 to 1858. My book against slavery . . . is not prohibited in Madrid, but cannot be purchased in the United States . . . except with the omission of everything that relates to the sufferings of our colored fellow-men who, according to my political views, are entitled to the enjoyment of the same freedom as ourselves. (Humboldt qtd. in Keil 147)

This quote by Humboldt emphasizes his convictions and his aversion to slavery, which he makes known regardless of how his views are responded to or reacted to in other parts of the world. He seems to be proud that his book is well-known for its anti-slavery stance and that it is so clear in its opinions that it is banned in certain countries or only available with commissions. This shows Humboldt to be very clear on the issue of slavery. In addition to this critique of slavery in the U.S., slave systems overall were further criticized through textual cultural productions in various fields and approaches in the nineteenth century. The next section discusses this continuation of discourse, particularly by highlighting the ways in which material objects, such as coins and medallions, as well as scientific research methods became means for further expanding the discourse on the legitimacy of abolition.

Continuation of the Discourse: Transatlantic Abolitionist Contributions in the Nineteenth Century

According to historian Sarah Lentz, the German writer and journal editor-in-chief Therese Huber (1764–1829) found a medallion with antislavery imagery that led her to take up the task of abolitionism (187). Lentz mentions the popularity of antislavery medallions as abolitionist paraphernalia in Britain. She notes that material objects with antislavery imagery

rarely reached the German principalities, yet states that this medallion became Huber's abolitionist motivation (Lentz 187). In "Abolitionists in the German Hinterland? Therese Huber and the Spread of Anti-slavery Sentiment in the German Territories in the Early Nineteenth Century" (2016), Lentz explores Huber's correspondence with the French abolitionist and revolutionary Abbé Henri Grégoire (1751–1831), as well as Huber's subsequent anti-slavery efforts as the chief editor of *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände,* "one of the most widely read German literary journals" (187, 193). It is likely that Huber had come across imagery similar to that featured on the popular Wedgwood medallion, which Lentz describes as a "medallion made of terracotta which showed a black slave chained and on his knees pleading to a white man who was holding a whip" (187). Lentz says this image impacted Huber greatly, quoting Huber's initial reaction as: "She [Huber] declared solemnly: 'my opinion took shape and ever since then the negroes are become my brothers" (Huber qtd. in Lentz 187). Moreover, it is assumed that Huber's stay during the 1780s in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with her then-husband Georg Forster (1754–1794) exposed her to the social practice of serfdom and led her to criticize "the situation of the men and women [who are] subject to feudal lordship," a slavery-like system (Lentz 193). As Lentz shows, this stance is mirrored in Huber's letters to Grégoire, which thematize slavery, the transatlantic slave trade, and current affairs in the French colony of Haiti (194).

Huber was vocal on the subject in *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände* (Lentz 196, 202, 204), where she used the label of editorial staff or the voices of male experts to disguise her identity as a woman writer and to remain anonymous about her convictions. She narrated the German-language discourse on slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, included discussions that highlighted scientific debates in the field of anthropology with regard to the human rights of Black and white people, and revealed Forster's stance on the equality of

races (Lentz 196). As Lentz shows, this advocacy began to flourish in 1823, when many of Huber's articles dealt with aspects of slavery and the slave trade (196-97, 200). By following the ideals of the Enlightenment, Huber considered it her duty to educate her readers, especially due to the pervasive prejudiced miseducation about Black African people in German territories, as well as the abolitionist movement (Lentz 197, 200, 203).

Lentz concludes that *Morgenblatt* discussed slavery in various forms, "generally . . . in apparently factual genres with little fictional treatment of the subject" (202). Thus, any information presented by Huber was always referenced and supported by reports from correspondents from Paris and other locations. The following excerpt acknowledges a source based in London: "All the communications that we are receiving here on the negro trade do agree that this inhuman line of business is still going on with the same indecent fervour, the same cruelty and most of the time with the same success as ever" (Huber qtd. in Lentz 205). As Lentz states, Huber's work bears witness to the use of a large array of "pamphlets, circular letters, and other sources which had been produced by opponents of slavery in France, Great Britain, Haiti and the USA" (206). Due to her position, she had access to publishing houses and bookstores, but also consulted her personal network, which included the British ambassador and Grégoire, who sent brochures and journals published by Black writers in Haiti as well as poems, among other things (Lentz 207). Lentz shows that as a mediator, Huber shared some of her materials and thus facilitated a critical engagement with these issues in small circles that worked to foster antislavery sentiments (208).

Similar convictions about serfdom and slavery can be found in the 1836 paper "On the Brain of the Negro, Compared with That of the European and Orang-Outang" by the German physiologist and anatomist Friedrich Tiedemann (1781–1861). In the 2013 article "'On the Brain of the Negro': Race, Abolitionism, and Friedrich Tiedemann's Scientific

Discourse on the African Diaspora," historian Jeannette Eileen Jones explores Tiedemann's writings as a case study and discusses German theoretical treatises about race in the light of an egalitarian current, as well as transatlantic anti-slavery sentiments. Tiedemann's treatise presents an anatomical approach; he used craniological methodologies, which "set out to prove false the reigning scientific theory that Negro brains resembled those of simians more than those of Europeans" (Jones 134). His research conclusions were based on examinations of 41 skulls of the "Ethiopian Race" that he had secured from hospitals and museums in Europe, which required him to travel to different parts of Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Kassel in Germany (Jones 141).

Tiedemann grasped the urgency of the moment, because scientific studies on race had severe political implications reflected in transatlantic discourses about the practice of slavery within the context of republicanism and liberalism, especially during the Enlightenment (Jones 135). The gravity and accessibility of this discourse is mirrored in Tiedemann's choice to write in English, rather than in German or Latin, especially during a time in which most of Tiedemann's German contemporaries resorted to writing in Latin (Gould cited in Jones 135). In this, Stephen Jay Gould suggests that Tiedemann wanted to include a British audience, and he illustrates Tiedemann's political discursive knowledge of the Slave Trade Act (1807), which was passed in Great Britain. Thus, Tiedemann chose English as the language in which to celebrate this event, which illuminates his anti-slavery views: "Great Britain has achieved a noble and splendid act of national justice in abolishing the slave trade. The chain which bound Africa to the dust, and prevented the success of every effort that was made to raise her, is broken" (526).

At the same time, Tiedemann references the controversies surrounding the apprenticeship system, which, according to historian James Latimer, was implemented in the

interval between slavery and emancipation to train slaves to take over everyday duties as freemen (Latimer 52). In his article titled "The Apprenticeship System in the British West Indies" (1964), Latimer further notes, "In accordance with the prevailing consensus of opinion, the Imperial Parliament was convinced that it should establish an interim period between abolition and actual liberation to expedite a scheme to ease the burden of mass emancipation. During this period the slaves' workload was to be reduced, thereby providing sufficient time for instruction and conversion" (52). As Jones demonstrates, Tiedemann criticizes the abuse of enslaved people in this apprenticeship system, which included physical abuse such as cruel whippings and floggings, regardless of the newly passed law (135). In this way, he considers the establishment of the apprenticeship system unnecessary, noting the capability of Black people to self-govern: "Hayti and the colony of Sierra Leone can attest that free Negroes are capable of being governed by mild laws, and require neither whips nor chains to enforce submission to civil authority" (Tiedemann 526).

Jones describes Tiedemann's concluding paragraph as a clear indictment of the apprenticeship system, which illustrates not only his anti-slavery sentiments, but also his dismissal of "slavery as a corruptive and impractical institution that could not be legitimated scientifically through fallacious arguments that Negroes were intellectually and morally inferior to whites" (136). Thus, Tiedemann may have hoped to transnationally address other slave-holding societies of this magnitude with this scientific treatise. In this sense, his work can be read as an appeal to slavers and proponents of slavery that foregrounds proper science, rather than focusing on morality and conscience based on religious doctrines.

As Jones suggests, Tiedemann's stance and research challenges notions of proslavery views and African inferiority brought forth by scholars such as Petrus Camper (1722–1789), Samuel Thomas von Sömmerring (1755–1830), and Georges Cuvier (1769–1832)

(Tiedemann 497). Thus, this scientific discourse is often seen as reflecting German notions of an egalitarian "tradition of theorizing race emerging in the late eighteenth century" (Jones 137). In this way, Tiedemann invalidates narratives of African inferiority based on the scientific research outlined in his paper, referring to them as "erroneous suppositions and false deductions from anatomy and physiology, or superficial observations . . . made by partial or prejudiced travelers" and noting that "very little value can be attached to these researchers" (520). Tiedemann blames these so-called researchers for the false and dangerous narrative about Africans that ultimately led to and supported a justification for the enslavement of Africans:

> Many of them deny that the Negro is a reasonable being, and they say that all Negroes are vicious, malignant, perverse, treacherous, and faithless. They observe, that the understanding of the Negro is not capable of improvement, that their temper and disposition are incorrigible, and that they are incapable of civilization. Some have even believed the falsely supposed natural inferiority of the intellectual and moral faculties of the Ethiopian race, to be an excuse for slavery. (521)

As Tiedemann describes the ongoing enslavement of Africans based on myths he scientifically debunks in his work, he condemns the institution of slavery as degrading by its very nature (Tiedemann 521). In this sense, he argues that intellectual and moral deterioration are the results of slavery and the slave trade: "For so degrading is the nature of slavery, that the fortitude of the mind is lost, and its free agency is restrained" (Tiedemann 521). While having scientifically based the initial part of his work on craniology, in the second part of his study, Tiedemann refers to a number of early writers, clergymen, and philosophers who expressed opposition to slavery and "official documents laid before the House of Commons" (521) as sufficient evidence of the accuracy and validity of his work.[143]

[143] Tiedemann refers to the following works: *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies. By the Reverend James Ramsay, M.A. Vicar of Teston, in Kent* by James Ramsay (1784); *An Essay on the*

He states that "the behaviour of the Negroes in a state of slavery accords with the treatment they receive from their masters" (Tiedemann 521).[144] Alluding to an observation made and published in the *Histiore des Antilles* (1600), Tiedemann discusses the nature of the African by noting the reaction to the "manner in which they are treated" (521). He states clearly that the good nature of Africans was corrupted and destroyed by the slave trade and the encounter with Europeans (522). He says that "the introduction of brandy and other spirits, and the immorality, dissipation, cruelty, rapacity and fraud of the slave traders, have made the Negroes indolent, cunning, dissolute, and thievish" (Tiedemann 522). Tiedemann considers his assumptions proven by testimony from travelogues and specifically alludes to Captain Phillip Beaver's *African Memoranda: Relative to an Attempt to Establish a British Settlement on the*

Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Particularly the African. Translated from a Latin Dissertation, Which Was Honoured with the First Prize in the University of Cambridge, for the Year 1785, with Additions by Thomas Clarkson (1786); *Remarks upon the Situation of Negroes in Jamaica, Impartially Made from a Local Experience of Nearly Thirteen Years in That Island, by W. Beckford* by William Beckford (1788); *Thoughts upon the African Slave Trade. By John Newton, Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth* by John Newton (1788); *Letters on Slavery, by William Dickson, Formerly Private Secretary to the Late Hon. Edward Hay, Governor of Barbadoes. To Which Are Added, Addresses to the Whites, and to the Free Negroes of Barbadoes; and Accounts of Some Negroes Eminent for Their Virtues and Abilities* by William Dickerson (1789); "The injustice of the African slave trade proved from principles of natural equity: A sermon preached in the Church of Charles, Plymouth, January 11, 1789" by Robert Hawker (1789); "The Horrors of the Negro Slavery Existing in Our West India Islands, Demonstrated from Official Documents Recently Presented to the House of Commons" (1805); and *Notes on the West Indies: Written during the Expedition under the Command of the Late General Sir Ralph Abercromby: Including Observations on the Island of Barbados, and the Settlements Captured by the British Troops, upon the Coast of Guiana: Likewise Remarks Relating to the Creoles and Slaves of the Western Colonies, and the Indians of South America: With Occasional Hints, Regarding the Seasoning, or Yellow Fever of Hot Climates* by George Pinckard (1806).

[144] Tiedemann refers to the Scottish philosopher and poet James Beattie as well as the following two works: *A Topographical Description of the Western Territory of North America: Containing a Succinct Account of Its Soil, Climate, Natural History, Population, Agriculture, Manners, and Customs. With an Ample Description of the Several Divisions into Which That Country Is Partitioned; To Which Are Added, the Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucky. And An Essay towards the Topography, and Natural History of That Important Country. By John Filson. To Which Is Added, I. The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boon, One of the First Settlers, Comprehending Every Important Occurrence in the Political History of That Province. II. The Minutes of the Piankashaw Council, Held at Post St. Vincent's, April 15, 1784. III. An Account of the Indian Nations Inhabiting within the Limits of the Thirteen United States; Their Manners and Customs; and Reflections on Their Origin. By George Imlay, A Captain in the American Army during the War, and Commissioner for Laying out Lands in the Back Settlements. Illustrated with Correct Maps of the Western Territory of North America; of the State of Kentucky, as Divided into Counties, from the Latent Surveys; and a Plan of the Rapids of the Ohio* by Gilbert Imlay (1793) and *The History, Civil and Commercial of the British Colonies in the West Indies* by Bryan Edwards (1819).

Island of Bulama, on the Western Coast of Africa, in the Year 1792. With a Brief Notice of the Neighbouring Tribes, Soil, Productions, &c. and Some Observations on the Facility of Colonizing that Part of Africa, with a View to Cultivation; and the Introduction of Letters and Religion to Its Inhabitants: But More Particularly as the Means of Gradually Abolishing African Slavery (1805).

As Jones shows, Tiedemann's approach to research was eclectic. He made use and mention of individuals who held opposing viewpoints—such as politicians, philosophers, professors, and anatomists—as well as accounts from travelogues in addition to his original craniological research and the historical accounts that are considered evidence of the intellectual achievements of Africans. Tiedemann lists contributions and efforts that confirm that "many of the Negroes possess a natural goodness of heart, warmth of affection, nobleness of character, and mildness of disposition; and it cannot be denied that they excel many Europeans who are most violent against them" (Tiedemann 524).[145] He further refers to anecdotes that illustrate the moral and honorable character of Black Africans that have been distributed in England by these[146] "and other philanthropists . . . to give . . . a

[145] Tiedemann lists the following contributions: *Histoire Naturelle Du Sénégal: Coquillages* by Michel Adanson (1757); *Nouvelle Histoire de l'Afrique Françoise : Enrichie de Cartes et d'observations Astronomiques et Géographiques, de Remarques Sur Les Usages Locaux, Les Mœurs, La Religion et La Nature Du Commerce Général de Cette Partie Du Monde Par M. l'abbé Demanet* by Abbé Demanet (1767); *Histoire de Loango, Kakongo, et Autres Royaumes d'Afrique: Rédigée d'après Les Mémoires Des Préfets Apostoliques de La Mission Françoise; Enrichie d'une Carte Utile Aux Navigateurs: Dédiée a Monsieur* by Liévin-Bonaventure Proyart (1776); *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa: Performed under ... the African Association, in the Years 1795, 1796, and 1797. By Mungo Park, ... With an Appendix, Containing Geographical Illustrations of Africa. By Major Rennell* by Mungo Park (1799); *Fragments d'un voyage en Afrique: fait pendant les années 1785, 1786 et 1787, dans les Contrées occidentales de ce Continent* by Sylvain Meinrad Xavier de Golbéry (1802); *An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighbourhood of Sierra Leone: To Which Is Added, an Account of the Present State of Medicine among Them* by Thomas Masterman Winterbottom (1803); *Narrative of an Expedition to Explore the River Zaire, Usually Called the Congo, in South Africa, in 1816* by James Hingston Tuckey (1818); *Narrative of Travels and Discoveries in Northern and Central Africa, in ... 1822, 1823 and 1824, by Major Denham, Capt. Clapperton and Dr. Oudney. With an Appendix* by Dixon Denham et al. (1828); and *Journal of a Second Expedition into the Interior of Africa, from the Bight of Benin to Soccatoo* by Hugh Clapperton et al. (1829).

[146] Tiedemann alludes to the British abolitionists William Wilberforce (1759–1833) and Granville Sharp (1735–1813), as well as the following works: *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies. By the Reverend James Ramsay, M.A. Vicar of Teston, in Kent* by James Ramsay (1784); *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Particularly the African. Translated from a Latin Dissertation, Which Was Honoured with the First Prize in the University of Cambridge, for the Year 1785, with Additions* by Thomas Clarkson (1786); *An*

favourable opinion of the poor oppressed Negroes" (Tiedemann 524). In fact, Tiedemann draws on research by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840) and Abbé Henri Grégoire (1750–1831). Like Tiedemann, Blumenbach was a German physician who applied similar biological methods, while Grégoire, who is referenced as Bishop Gregory, was in favor of acknowledging Black African humanity and equality, as illustrated in *On the Cultural Achievements of Negroes* (1808), which Tiedemann categorizes as "historical 'evidence' of Negro achievement" (137). Both are introduced as

> defenders of the intellectual powers of the Negroes . . . [who] mentioned . . . instances of Negroes who made a certain progress in the liberal arts and sciences, and distinguished themselves as clergymen, philosophers, mathematicians, philologians, historians, advocates, medical men, poets, and musicians. Many Negroes have distinguished themselves by their talents in military tactics and politics. (Tiedemann 524-25)

Tiedemann's interdisciplinary approach is indicative of his various interests. Jones writes that his use of "comparative anatomy and craniological measurements conveys an egalitarian position on matters of intellectual and civic equality" (137). In this way, Jones rightfully emphasizes the significance of Tiedemann's essay because it "must be inserted into the canon of transatlantic abolitionist literature in order to fully appreciate the ways in which continental Germans . . . contributed to the international campaign against slavery" (136). She adds that Tiedemann's liberal viewpoints may have been influenced by his presence at the University of Heidelberg, which was considered to be a liberal environment due to its

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Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa. By Alexander Falconbridge, Late Surgeon in the African Trade by Alexander Falconbridge (1788); *The Capacity of Negroes for Religious and Moral Improvement Considered: With Cursory Hints, to Proprietors and to Government, for the Immediate Melioration of the Condition of Slaves in the Sugar Colonies: To Which Are Subjoined Short and Practical Discourses to Negroes, on the Plain and Obvious Principles of Religion and Morality* by Richard Nisbet (1789); and *Notes on the West Indies: Written during the Expedition under the Command of the Late General Sir Ralph Abercromby: Including Observations on the Island of Barbados, and the Settlements Captured by the British Troops, upon the Coast of Guiana: Likewise Remarks Relating to the Creoles and Slaves of the Western Colonies, and the Indians of South America: With Occasional Hints, Regarding the Seasoning, or Yellow Fever of Hot Climates* by George Pinckard (1806).

faculty and "the political climate of the state of Baden" (142). This very climate may have resulted in his convictions regarding the importance of a "total abolition of the traffic in slaves" (Tiedemann 522).

Conclusion

This discussion demonstrates that critical discourses and literary cultural productions on slavery and the transatlantic slave trade (in abolitionist and ameliorationist fashions) were not limited to specific Euro-American nation-states. The emotional appeal of these literatures and debates also extended to non-nation-state territories that were not involved in these endeavors, which thus speaks to the transatlantic proliferation of discourses on slavery. The vast circulation of literary material critiquing slavery and the trade in slaves created a welcoming and unrestricted space that encouraged writers of all sorts in the Euro-American context to contribute to this larger transcultural discourse. As Ahern writes, "Bridging the gulf between self and marginalized other through affective identification may well be the first step toward grasping the lived reality of that other and may lead to action that could alleviate a situation. . . . By bringing closer the realities of this far-off trade, antislavery writers shocked their readers on both sides of the Atlantic into an awareness" (6). Thus, these literary contributions included works of different genres, languages, audiences, and even mediums.

Zantop establishes significant German involvement in the imperial era of conquest through adventurers, mercenaries, merchants, explorers, scientists, interpreters, and officials (18). Similarly, cultural studies scholar Klaus Weber discusses German involvement in terms of "deutsche Plantagenbesitzer sowie Produzenten und Lieferanten von Tauschwaren für Afrika Berücksichtigung . . . [und die] wachsende Menge der Konsumenten von

Plantagenerzeugnissen" (38) in his article titled "Deutschland, der atlantische Sklavenhandel und die Plantagenwirtschaft der Neuen Welt (15. bis 19. Jahrhundert)" (2009). This confirms a German interest in global enterprises that also brought forth a variety of literary genres engaging experiences of travel. Some of these were written in German, while many others originating from several European imperial contexts were made accessible to German-language readers by translation. Zhang highlights the importance of translation, which enabled the formation of a global knowledge among German readers ("Matthias Christian Sprengel" 169).

This knowledge was extended and reinforced by the coverage of political as well as individual debates about slavery and the transatlantic slave trade in German-language periodicals, moral weeklies, literary journals, and newspaper articles (Köhler, "Drastische Bilder" 379). The outlets informed the German-language reading public about British parliamentary debates on slavery, pending votes, minutes from the meetings of abolitionists in European contexts, personal viewpoints, and excerpts from travelogues and personal letters. These contributions were also often translated and taken from European news outlets from France or even Britain. Oftentimes, German commentary was added to contribute to the discourse. In this manner, readers were informed and aware of the proceedings of high-profile cases such as the Sommersett trial. James Sommersett (c. 1741–c. 1772), a slave from Virginia who was brought to Great Britain by his master, sued successfully for his liberty in 1772. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 1 German territories were similarly affected by abolitionist sentiments, discussions and understandings by way of transnationality and transculturality which encouraged enslaved Black Africans to petition to German courts to be liberated and debates on slavery and abolitionism having had been taken up in protest of agricultural slavery, serfdom. Archenholz's and Huber's

journalistic contributions through local, foreign, and letter correspondences took up material and thus discourses from European news outlets. Similarly, other European outlets also utilized German-language materials and correspondences (Buck-Morss 839).The collaboration between news outlets in terms of the procuring of information implies the significance of foreign correspondence, travel, and multilingualism, which allowed not only what Zhang defines as a global knowledge ("Matthias Christian Sprengel" 169), but also the navigation of these global contexts through literary cultural productions critical of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.

The variety of genres and languages of this source material similarly presented a variety of viewpoints regarding slavery and the trade in slaves that were especially visible in news outlets that would print out antislavery and proslavery material. Similar to Zhang's notion of Sprengel's work ("Matthias Christian Sprengel" 173), this allows the reader to assess the arguments presented in order to ultimately judge the topics for themselves. In this discussion, I was able to detect three large groupings that enabled me to contextualize German-language critical engagements with issues related to slavery and the trade in slaves: engagements with the subject matter that show ambivalence, those that advocate for a reform in slavery that results in the amelioration of the conditions faced by enslaved Black Africans, and those that criticize the institution of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade to an abolitionist extent that demands the termination of both. Each group showed a variety in genres and motivations, which can be contextualized in Israel's theorization of a moderate mainstream and the Radical Enlightenment. It needs to be noted that German-language contributions through criticisms of slavery and the trade in slaves were often of dual nature because German writers and intellectuals often tried to exert influence on their respective political and religious authorities with regard to local slavery-like conditions, such as

serfdom. In this sense, German-language sentiments have been expressed through a variety of channels and thus also by individuals of various occupations. Some have been articulated within a religious and Christian context, while others exhibit democratic and scientific impulses that demonstrate solidarity, vigilance, and activism in their own fashion.

In the context of academic engagements with slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, Sprengel presents one of the first discussions that addresses abolition and slavery in the German-language context. He aims to offer a complete picture of the debates around the legitimacy of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade (Sprengel 2). Sprengel provides an introduction to the subject matter of slavery and abolition that relies on a familiar and then-current context: He juxtaposes the forcible migration of Black Africans with the voluntary migration of Westerners (Sprengel 2). This critical and initial point of view makes the reader believe that Sprengel takes up either abolitionist or ameliorationist discourses. However, Sprengel mostly consults works on the history of slavery, which locate the African continent as the place of origin in the most gruesome practices of slavery and influence Sprengel's aversion to slavery in general (Sprengel 12; Schüller, "Deutsche Abolitionisten" 612). While Sprengel speaks critically of the practice of slavery, he also depicts a stereotypical and prejudiced understanding of Black African peoples (12). In this, one sees Sprengel's critique of slavery as merging with an aversion to enslaved Black Africans. Thus, Sprengel's work proposes neither an amelioration of the conditions of slavery nor the abolition of its institution or the trade in slaves, which allows for a categorization of ambivalent contributions to this discourse.

In contrast to Sprengel, Isert can be deemed to be an ardent supporter of amelioration. Isert's travelogue reflects an objective scientific approach within the context of letters and experiences of travel (Winsnes 9). In this, Isert presents data on the quantity of

slaves and what they would be traded in for as well as short language databases that incorporate different West African languages and German translations (Isert 122-23, 203-204). At the same time, Isert details and condemns the treatment of enslaved Black Africans. He depicts multiple instances that give insight into the nourishment of slaves, their daily routines, and the brutality they face, and deems Europeans responsible for this misery (Isert 335-36, 338). Isert's lamentations about slavery in line with detailed descriptions of the pain Black Africans endure daily operate according to the contexts of sensibility and sentimentalism. Isert tries to elicit empathy for the suffering of the slaves through his portrayal of the real-life situation of plantation slaves. Nonetheless, Isert does not consider the abolition of slavery to be a solution that would end the suffering of slaves. While being so critical of and mortified by the wrongdoing perpetrated by Westerners, Isert still places their (and, in turn, his) needs above those of the Black African slaves he encountered. He is not willing to refrain from enjoying the colonial plantation commodities such as sugar, chocolate, and coffee that he rightfully defines as expressions of luxury (Isert 338). Instead, he proposes a change of scenery and a takeover of African land strips in order to continue the cultivation of plantation crops in Africa, which would avoid the Middle Passage and the brutal treatment of plantation slaves in the New World altogether (Isert 339-40). In a show of Western and white superiority, Isert decides this for the already-enslaved Africans and assumes that Africans would be in agreement with such an "arrangement." Though Isert portrays an awareness of white colonial superiority and Black African submission, he does not condone the magnitude of violence inflicted on Black bodies. In an attempt to diffuse and ameliorate this practice, he suggests a humanely run plantation system in Africa, which aligns with an ameliorationist agenda (Isert 330-40).

Similarly, Kolb proposes an ameliorationist agenda in terms of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Kolb's anthology presents multiple genres that address slavery and the trade in slaves (Zantop 149). These genres give insight into the specific sources used throughout the compilation of the anthology and combine French, British, American, and German source material. The narrations in Kolb's anthology depict enslaved Black Africans as obedient, submissive, hard-working, and grateful "beings" deserving of humanitarian benevolence. In this sense, friendships between white Europeans and African slaves are shown (Kolb 18). A clear dichotomy between "good" and "evil" slaveholders in Kolb's content aims at an evaluation of the treatment of slaves. In line with a portrayal of the submissive African slaves, Kolb makes a larger argument for amelioration in the context of the deserving enslaved African. His stance is clearly articulated toward the end of the anthology in his written postscript. While Kolb includes a variety of content about the nature of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade both in favor of Africans and in support of white people, he claims to let the so-called human researcher decide which stance to take on the issue of slavery. Nonetheless, he assumes that all Europeans who think well will surely feel sympathy in terms of amelioration (Kolb 288). In this sense, he directly appeals to those capable of an ameliorationist reform for help (288).

It needs to be noted that the group of writers representative of ameliorationist viewpoints need to be especially scrutinized due to the ambivalent nature of their convictions. Abolitionism's goal is to end the institution of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Amelioration does not present a viable option for this termination. Instead, it simply presents slavery and preexisting condition of the trade in slaves in a new light. This approach is understood to center the well-being of the Black African enslaved population while still protecting the capitalist agenda. Thus, the living conditions of the white Western middle

class are upheld and Black Africans remain enslaved, ensuring the continued consumption of colonial goods in white, middle-class households. Accordingly, white abolitionist viewpoints should be treated skeptically because they often suggest self-serving solutions to the discussion at hand. This ambivalent nature of amelioration within the framework of abolitionism can be tied back to Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of the Enlightenment. Both movements, Enlightenment and abolition, are unstable, inviable, and weak. In the context of Nazism, scientific progress as well as growing understandings of human rights eventually just led to new forms of the conditions these efforts sought to reform. This can be said about some of the tactics on the spectrum of abolitionism, as well.

Intellectual discourses, also presented as research conducted in an academic context, included works by Sell and Tiedemann. Both Tiedemann and Sell convincingly presented their line of argument on the basis of historical, philosophical, scientific, cultural, and travel literary source material, as well as debates on current affairs. While Tiedemann initially primarily draws on craniology in terms of skull size and weight, for which he provides numerous charts, he also discusses philosophical intellectual contributions by Blumenbach and Grégoire and brings content from German, French, and British travelogues into his discussion (Tiedemann 498-520, 521-26). He systematically uses this material to debunk any prejudiced narratives about enslaved Africans. Tiedemann concludes that the institution of slavery has a degrading impact on Black Africans (523-24). Sell, too, uses historical sources that discuss slavery and the Middle Passage by way of travelogues (92, 97). These travelogues are based on eyewitness reports and personal experiences that support an abolitionist critique of slavery (Sell 47, 70, 80, 161-63, 227). He also follows current debates in England, mentions key abolitionist voices such as Wilberforce, and chronicles the outcomes of

Parliament votes that illustrate the existence of a strong opposition to slavery and the transatlantic slave trade in an abolitionist manner (Sell VII-VIII, 226, 245).

Both Humboldt and Oldendorp speak in the context of their travels, which significantly shaped their abolitionist viewpoints. Oldendorp seemingly betrays his mission in the West Indies and gets sidetracked by the interviews he conducted with the local enslaved folks and the treatment enslaved people endured (Ahlbäck 192). Oldendorp empathetically and bluntly describes his dislike for the institution of slavery and even alludes to initial antislavery discourses that demonstrate his knowledge and convictions in terms of slavery (*Historie Der Caribischen* 2000, 526-27). His accounts do not conform with the principles of the Moravian church, which agreed to not interfere with the existing structures of colonial plantation slavery in the West Indies while conducting their missions to convert the enslaved population (Ahlbäck 196). Ultimately, Oldendorp's criticism of slavery was cut from his church-commissioned work (Ahlbäck 191-92). Humboldt's account of his travels to Cuba show his already-existing critical viewpoint regarding slavery (155). His travels solidified his aversion to slavery, which only grows throughout his lifetime and becomes more visible in his critical examination of the United States (Keil 146-47). He heavily condemns the nature of slavery and mentions laws with specificity that demonstrate a thorough engagement with slave systems in the American context.

Similarly, drawing on travel experiences, Archenholz articulates his criticism of slavery through the German-language journal *Minerva* while residing in France in order to better report on the French Revolution. Initially, Archenholz focuses on the riots in France when he becomes aware, due to proximity to the actual debates and his life in the ruling nation-state, of the revolution in Haiti. In this, Archenholz frequently reports on any developments in the West Indies, becomes fond of Toussaint L'Ouverture, and ends up

printing one of L'Ouverture's speeches in *Minerva.* Archenholz's critique of the French dealings results in him having to leave France due to hostility and threats made against him. Also working in the context of print media, Huber's abolitionist agenda was traceable through her journalistic work that addressed slavery, often through the use of material and information provided by Grégoire (Lentz 196-97, 200, 206). Grégoire and Huber kept in touch, which ultimately resulted in her antislavery efforts, visible in her work as editor-in-chief of *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände* (Lentz 193). Huber was especially receptive to the abolitionist agenda because she had experienced serfdom, to which she was also opposed, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Lentz 193). Many of the sources used by these abolitionist German-language writers included original correspondence from foreign periodicals that reported on new developments in the debates on slavery and abolition, as well as presented translated source materials such as letters, meeting minutes, and detailed travelogues in favor of abolition. These were then also used in German-language periodicals, literary journals, and newspapers, as demonstrated in the section addressing a number of different news outlets.

With regard to Israel's categorization of different strands of the Enlightenment, this discussion has revealed that German-language abolitionist contributions are not necessarily situated only in the context of the Radical Enlightenment. Works by Oldendorp show the existence of Christian and thus religious entanglements and ties that are considered to belong to the moderate mainstream perspective of the Enlightenment (Israel, *Radical Enlightenment* 9). I believe that in Christianity, entrenched narratives or reports often reflect a compassionate angle due to the principle of altruism, which ultimately results in a critique of the institution of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. This criticism would then indicate either abolitionist or ameliorationist viewpoints. Some scientific explorations, however, by

scholars such as Sell and Tiedemann align with Israel's description of an "immense reverence for science, and for mathematical logic" (*Radical Enlightenment* 11-12), which is representative of the radical strand of the Enlightenment. Though scientifically oriented, Sprengel's contributions do not align with the radical narrative outlined by Israel. The discourses portrayed in various periodicals are dependent on the authors, which makes it nearly impossible to categorize them per se, especially because many news outlets presented both sides of the debates in order to give overall insight into, and understandings about, the nature of slavery. For this reason, Israel's discussion and classification is partially applicable while also somewhat ambivalent and narrow in its definition.

It also needs to be taken into account that some of these German-language articulations were especially driven by previous exposure to European slavery-like conditions such as serfdom. This is the case with Oldendorp and Huber. It is in this regard that Andreas Gestrich describes abolition as having been "a topic of prime importance for the debates on domestic political reform" (248) in his 2011 article "The Abolition Act and the Development of Abolitionist Movements in 19th Century Europe." Schüller seconds this by stating:

> So nutzten die verschiedenen politischen Strömungen Deutschlands Argumente für und gegen die Sklaverei, um Zustände in Deutschland zu diskutieren. So wurde die Negersklaverei zum Paradigma oder zur Metapher in der Auseinandersetzung um die Bauernbefreiung oder einfach zu einem grundsätzlichen Streitpunkt zwischen den unterschiedlichen Rechtsstandpunkten liberalen oder konservativen Denkens. ("Deutsche Abolitionisten" 612)

It becomes clear that "bridging the gulf between self and marginalized other through affective identification may well be the first step toward grasping the lived reality of that other, and may lead to action that could alleviate a situation" (Ahern 6). This also applies to abolitionist literature produced in German-language contexts at that time. Thus, given the

transnational connections through reports, correspondences, and travels that German-speaking individuals frequently engaged in, it is not surprising that German writers and scholars contributed to the causes of abolition and amelioration.

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CHAPTER 4

THE TRANSCULTURALITY OF SLAVE PLAYS

Historical and Theoretical Background and Summaries of the Slave Plays

To date, scholarship on German abolitionist contributions has rarely engaged the fields of Black German studies, Black studies, or postcolonial studies. Very few scholars[147] have addressed this lack of engagement by drawing on the theoretical models of Black studies and the transnational contributions of Black authors of slave narratives, which present an integral part of the discussion of abolitionism. As a result, many discussions on this subject matter in the field of German studies lack instances of Black voices, rely solely on white scholarly contributions, and include few frameworks rooted in Black studies, critical race theories, and other theories that are essential to discussions of works on slavery. These texts address not only the commodification of Black African bodies, but also the overall portrayal of Black African bodies within the transnational context of slavery.

My analysis, then, challenges the absence of these approaches both theoretically and analytically by moving approaches rooted in Black thought and theories to the center. I posit that these approaches and the concepts that emerge from them are necessary for engaging issues of slavery and abolition in order to expose white paternalist perspectives and gazes. I include postcolonial theory to further highlight and debunk white essentialist perspectives. I also make use of historical approaches through historical discussions of slavery as well as political and social insights into German-language contexts in Europe, which are part of the

[147] Those who have include: "Black Skin, White Skin and the Aesthetics of the Female Body in: Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Ziegler's *Die Mohrinn*" by Wendy Sutherland (2004), *Germany and the Black Diaspora: Points of Contact, 1250-1914* edited by Mischa Honeck et al. (2016), *Staging Blackness and Performing Whiteness in Eighteenth-Century German Drama* by Wendy Sutherland (2016), and "Slavery, Sympathy, and White Self-Representation in Dutch Bourgeois Theater of 1800" by Sarah Jospehine Adams (2018).

larger field of German studies. Furthermore, I apply theories tied to the field of gender and sexuality studies, which allows for intersectional character analyses in slavery historically and through German-language fiction on the transatlantic slave trade. In this chapter, I draw on philosophical approaches by way of eighteenth-century and late nineteenth-century understandings of race, specifically Blackness in the context of being Black African, that allow for a contextualization of popular and common knowledge in German-language fiction characterizing Black African populations. I thus point to discursively constructed viewpoints by white imperial powers. I include German literary studies approaches that facilitate a contextualization of literary strategies or themes visible in German-language fiction on slavery and the slave trade. Overall, I examine and apply notions of all-encompassing culturally hegemonic structures through the above-mentioned approaches.

The work of Black feminist scholar Hortense Spillers, for example, is relevant to broadening the discussion of German abolitionist literature. Spillers discusses slavery and its implications for American society in "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book" (1987). She characterizes slavery and the transatlantic slave trade as a form of original sin that continues to impact Black people in present-day America because the degrading practices of slavery have become enmeshed in the fabric of American society. Thus, manifestations of violence toward Black people in contemporary America are the result of historical violence toward enslaved African bodies in the New World. Spillers draws a direct line between the so-called original sin and the violence African Americans experience in the United States daily. The forcible dispersal of Black African bodies to the New World is not only part of American society, but also of many other slave-holding societies (Spillers 209). I argue that Spillers's notion of slavery's implications becoming deeply embedded in a society's fabric also extends to societies that benefitted greatly from an indirect involvement,

especially through trade, in the transatlantic slave trade, including German-speaking states.[148] Thus, Spillers' concept should be expanded to also include Black African diasporic peoples in the Western world and beyond, including within the German context. In order to explore this aspect more deeply, I will apply central concepts from Black studies to analyze German cultural discourses on slavery as they emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

In tracing the historic construction of Black African bodies as commodities subjected to historical violence, I first explore the depiction of the *theft* of the *body,* which is indicative of "a *willful* and violent . . . severing of the captive body from its motive will, its active desire" (Spillers 206). In the beginning of the transatlantic slave trade, this led to the erasure of gender difference as both male and female bodies became a terrain of cultural and political maneuvers (Spillers 206). Next, I turn to the discussion of the reduction of human beings to objects, to *being for* the captor. Third, I examine the paradigm of the transition into slavery, drawing on Orlando Patterson's understanding of rituals and marks that manifest the transformation and assumption into slavery. Here, I discuss slaves being stripped of their names and identities that existed before their capture and enslavement, which signifies the erasure of the previous self and confirms the violent transformation into slavery. Then, I investigate the portrayal of the Black African female slave within the framework of the bourgeois drama. I draw on Spillers here as well as civil rights activist and critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw's notion of intersectional feminism. Crenshaw identifies the socio-economic positionality of Black women in the societal structure and reveals that "feminist efforts to politicize experiences of women and antiracist efforts to politicize

[148] Here principalities, territories, lands, states, and contexts will be used interchangeably.

experiences of people of color have frequently proceeded as though the issues and experiences they each detail occur on mutually exclusive terrains"(Crenshaw 1242). Furthermore, I seek to bring Saidiya Hartman and her discussion of the Venus, an emblematic enslaved woman in the Atlantic world, into conversation with the slave plays. After that, I look at the concept of gender differentiation during slavery by discussing the conditions faced by Black African enslaved women, as well as the place of white women in the late eighteenth-century German literary tradition. Following that, I discuss the abolitionist literary dichotomy of good versus bad slave masters as an additional exploitative and commodifying layer of Black African bodies. Finally, I focus on historical violence as an essential part of the abolitionist narratives that are formed in white colonial paternalist paradigms.

Spillers traces these occurrences back farther than just the beginnings of the slave trade in the United States, describing the initial acts of systematic and historical violence as follows:

> [Violence in the form of the] "American grammar" begins at the "beginning," which is really a rupture and a radically different kind of cultural continuation. The massive demographic shifts, the violent formation of a modern African consciousness, that take place on the sub-Saharan Continent during the initiative strikes which open the Atlantic slave trade in the fifteenth century of our Christ, interrupted hundreds of years of black African culture. We write and think, then, about an outcome of aspects of African-American life in the United States und the pressure of those events. (209)

Spillers' understanding of violence is portrayed in the German-language dramatic genre *Sklavenstücke* (slave plays). My analysis of the genre of slave plays will address one play of each subcategory in order to discuss these plays widely. Slave plays were first categorized by literary scholar Barbara Riesche, who thoroughly examines them in her 2010 work titled

deutschen Unterhaltungstheater (1770-1814). Riesche identifies five different subgenres of slave plays: returnee plays, female Moor plays, plantation plays, revolution plays, and Africa-based plays (of which there is only one). Riesche's categorization gives insight into dramatic strategies, themes, and character developments in these plays, which conform to dramatic conventions of the time and bear resemblance to existing genres. These dramatic conventions speak to a reutilization or maintenance of specific genre conventional framings that allow for and facilitate an insertion, depiction, and resulting discourse on topics dealing with slavery, the transatlantic slave trade, and abolition in the context of Germany in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Riesche 118-19).

As mentioned before, Riesche names returnee plays, female Moor plays, plantation plays, revolution plays, and Africa-based plays as the subgenres of slave plays. These subgenres are each distinguished by distinct features regarding their plot and character development. Along these lines, Riesche categorizes returnee plays as taking place in Europe, mainly in German principalities. In these plays, white travelers often bring along Black African "companions" to stage dialogue about viewpoints on Blackness and slavery. The family members of the white characters are confronted with a change in perspective regarding slavery and the transatlantic slave trade through the presence of a Black African servant. These servants are then "othered" by way of highlighting cultural differences, reflected in language and behavior. In addition, they meet elated family members who had assumed that their traveling relative was lost (Riesche 119). The returnee play (Heimkehrerstücke) I explore was written by Friedrich Ludwig Schmidt and is titled *Die Kette des Edelmuths. Ein Lustspiel in zwey Aufzügen* (1792).

Female Moor plays (Mohrinnenstücke) ordinarily contain a Black African female, often a former slave, who is brought to Europe. Here, the former slave is confronted with a

number of prejudices in terms of her skin color, behavior, origin, and especially romantic relationship to the white returnee who brought her along. Questions of compatibility, European teachings, and, consequently, the education of the Black African female subject are portrayed as pivotal to the acceptance of their romance, which then becomes the focal point of the play. The female Moor play I address in this dissertation was written by Friedrich Wilhelm Ziegler and is called *Die Mohrinn* (1802).

The sub-genre that Riesche titles plantation plays (Plantagenstücke) mainly features locations in the West Indies. In this context, Black African slaves are in the majority and there are only a few white Europeans who take on positions of power through being slaveholders or plantation owners. Visiting Europeans, often merchants, are confronted with the horrors of slavery through their interactions with enslaved Black Africans. This different point of view compels them to work on behalf of the enslaved in order to facilitate family and love reunions while also making sure that the brutal treatment on the plantation ceases and thus instead makes way for the humane treatment of Black African slaves (Riesche 122-23). In this chapter, I examine a plantation play by August von Kotzebue titled *Die Negersklaven, ein historisch-dramatisches Gemählde: in drey Akten* (1796).

A similar scenario transpires in the sub-genre of revolution plays (Revolutionsstücke). In the face of slave revolts brought on by the unbearably brutal treatment of the enslaved by plantation owners and slaveholders, white characters are divided along the lines of their attitudes, sentiments, and convictions. In this sense, there exists a clear divide between, on the one hand, harsh and brutal slave and plantation owners and, on the other hand, good and generous slavers and plantation owners, who often embody enlightened and humanistic views. Black African slave characters in these plays are emblematic of the experience of the horrors of slavery (Riesche 123-24). The revolution play

I discuss here is by Freyherr von Nesselrode zu Hugenpott, titled *Zamor und Zoraide: Ein Schauspiel, in drey Aufzügen* (1778).

There is one play that is staged in Africa and provides insights into circumstances of the transatlantic slave trade from a presumed African perspective through the focalization of an African character. This play includes Black African characters who are aware of and critically reflect on the capitalist machinations of white European characters. This change in perspective, compared with all the other classifications, details the mechanisms between Black and Black-Brown ethnic differences. It also illustrates how white European slavers benefit from as well as capitalize on African ethnic conflicts (Riesche 125). Taken together, the play covers the triangle trade of Europe, Africa, and the West Indies and the Americas. This Africa-based play was written by Gustav Hagemanns and is titled *Seliko und Berißa oder die Liebe unter den Negern. Ein Schauspiel in vier Aufzügen* (1799). The following paragraphs provide a short summary of each play that highlights salient aspects of the plot and offers in-depth discussions of the storylines.

Die Kette des Edelmuths. Ein Lustspiel in Zwey Aufzügen by Friedrich Ludwig Schmidt (1792) is set in Madgeburg in eighteenthth-century Germany. Bremer, who is a merchant in Magdeburg, is overwhelmed by his finances because his son Eduard has been misusing money and has therefore put him in debt. Bremer decides to stop financially supporting Eduard by paying off his debt in Halle, where Eduard studies at the university. Having made this decision, Bremer is approached by the innkeeper Hagedorn in his house. Hagedorn reports on the severe debt that Eduard is in and has come to Bremer in order to collect the money (two hundred Thaler) that Eduard owes him as a result of being a gambler and drunkard. Bremer is shocked and disowns his son for having brought great shame upon him. It is revealed that Eduard has fled Halle in order to join the Prussian army. Thereafter,

Eduard appears, wearing the uniform of the Prussian army, and begs Bremer for forgiveness, while also asking for money (the two hundred Thaler) to pay off his debt to Hagedorn, who momentarily appears. Eduard appears again and begs his father, Bremer, to pay the amount of money he owes Hagedorn. Bremer gives in and orders for the money to be paid to the order of Hagedorn in Halle, to be received in eight days. In this very moment, Eduard admits that he has deserted the Prussian army. Hagedorn is as shocked as Bremer and refuses to take the money to be paid to his order, stating that Eduard better use it to buy his freedom after having deserted the army. Eduard is determined to face his fate by returning to the Prussian army.

At the same time that Eduard is on his way, Bernhard, Bremer's second son, returns to Magdeburg after trading in colonial goods, such as coffee from Martinique and unrefined sugar, which he is storing in a warehouse in Hamburg. During his travels, Bernhard has become acquainted with Jernrs, a Black African freed slave from Philadelphia. Jernrs decided to travel alongside Bernhard as a friend and beneficiary after having inherited his former slave master's fortune. Now in Magdeburg, Jernrs shares his experiences of being captured and sold into slavery with Bremer's servant, Friedrich. He also talks about the details of his experiences in Magdeburg, such as being mocked, ignored, and marginalized due to his Blackness. His non-German and Black African looks and behavior evoke emotions of fear, confusion, and mockery among the people in Bremer's neighborhood.

After being introduced to Bremer and openly welcomed by him, Jernrs disappears into the background. Bremer and Bernhard are approached by a sergeant, who brings news of Eduard and his precarious situation after having deserted the Prussian army. In this moment, Bernhard is able to resolve this situation by using a string of pearls from Jernrs's fortune, which Jernrs now considers their shared fortune, to pay Eduard's debt to Hagedorn.

Then, Hagedorn sends his own son Christian to enlist and join the army in Eduard's place. Amidst the reconciliation, they celebrate resolving this issue and becoming financially stable for life due to Jernrs's generosity, as well as Bernhard's engagement to Rieke, who is the daughter of his hauler in Hamburg. Jernrs is no longer part of the plot, but Bremer refers to him as the pearl of the chain of nobleness and generosity who resolved the overarching conflict through his very presence.

Die Mohrinn: Ein Schauspiel in 4 Aufzügen by Friedrich W. Ziegler (1802) is set in Great Britain. The natural scientist Georg Fleetwell returns to his native country of England after having lived abroad for six years. His father, Lord Fleetwell; his aunt Lucie; his uncle Major Tromber; and his fiancée and cousin, Aurelie (Major Tromber's daughter), have given up on ever seeing him again. Georg was pronounced dead after being on the ship Fortuna, which was in a shipwreck on the coast of America. Georg was saved and nursed back to health by siblings Toni and Zangi, who are two Black African slaves. Georg then proceeded to liberate both Toni by buying her from her former slave master. (It is unclear whether Georg also liberated Zangi, because Toni tells the story from her perspective only, so the reader is left to assume that Zangi was liberated, too.) Georg provides Toni with her paperwork as a newly liberated free slave, as well as money. He then asks her to leave him. However, Toni continues to follow Georg, staying up at night to protect him in his sleep by being ready to fight animals in the wilderness. So, Georg ultimately accepts Toni's presence.

From there on, Zangi and Toni accompany Georg on his adventurous travels. On these travels, Toni devotes herself to Georg and jeopardizes her own life by, for example, refraining from eating for seven days to provide Georg with food while they journey in the Arabian desert. Toni and Zangi ultimately accompany Georg to his father's estate in Great Britain. There, Toni quickly wins over Georg's relatives, apart from Lucie, who shows

extreme prejudice toward Toni and Jabazz, another Black African slave character in the play. Major Tromber, Lord Fleetwell, and Aurelie are delighted when Toni's role in saving Georg is revealed. Major Tromber urges his daughter, Aurelie, to call Toni her dear sister, because she has been accepted as part of the family.

Eventually, Toni and Georg fall in love with each other. However, Toni rejects Georg's repeated marriage proposals. She considers Georg already spoken for due to his promise to his cousin Aurelie. Also, and most importantly, Toni is convinced that Georg will not find happiness in marriage to a Black African liberated slave. For this reason, she continuously tries to convince him to move along with his plans to marry Aurelie. Determined, Georg vehemently argues his love for Toni and reveals these feelings to Aurelie and his uncle, Major Tromber. This fate is painful for Georg's uncle and Aurelie because Georg had financially taken care of them for many years prior to his travels, but they accept his decision. However, they are in utter shock because they consider Toni to be an ugly Black African liberated free slave. Toni wants no part in this, and she considers their love doomed and herself unworthy of Georg's nobleness and whiteness, so she sees no other way but to secretly leave Georg's father's house.

An intrigue perpetrated by Georg's aunt, Lucie, prevents Toni from leaving and she is accused of theft. She is suspected of having stolen money that Lucie thought had remained in a locked writing table drawer after violently demanding it from Lord Fleetwell's former Black African slave, Jabazz. However, Aurelie had taken the money and returned it to its rightful owner after it was handed over to Jabazz by Lord Fleetwell as a traveling fund and parting gift. Thanks to Aurelie's statement, the truth is revealed and Georg's aunt is unmasked as the mastermind. As Aurelie observes the selfless love that Georg and Toni have for each other, especially when Toni is accused of stealing, she renounces any claim she

has to Georg and makes way for the true love that ultimately results in marriage between Georg and Toni at the end of the play.

Die Negersklaven, ein historisch-dramatisches Gemählde: in drey Akten by August von Kotzebue (1796) is set on a British plantation in Jamaica. After the previous owner dies, the plantation and its wealth are left to his oldest son, John. John is now the owner of several slaves, with two of the Black African enslaved women living in his house. John gives Ada, one of his female slaves, an ultimatum to decide whether to become his mistress within fourteen days and indicates that he will otherwise force her to do so by inflicting violence upon her. Ada refuses his proposal because she is married and in love with her husband, with whom she lost contact when she was sold into slavery. William, John's younger and less wealthy brother, returns from Great Britain for a visit. Openly opposing the institution of slavery and John's role in its perpetuation, he investigates the conditions on the plantation and speaks with the Black African slaves about their daily suffering and brutalization at the hands of the plantation overseer, Paul.

One of the slaves, Ayos, voluntarily joined the slave traders to be reunited with his son Zameo, who had sold himself to slave traders in order to spare his father this fate. In fact, Ayos and Zameo reunite on John's plantation, and it is also revealed that Zameo is Ada's long-lost husband. John is displeased with these developments, demands that Ada become his mistress at once, and threatens to kill Zameo. Seeing Zameo one last time, Ada begs him to kill her so she can escape John's sexual harassment, thus also sparing Zameo's life. There are two published endings to this play: In the first ending, Ada is murdered by Zameo, who then takes his own life. In the second ending, William frees Ada, Zameo, Ayos, and Ada's Black African enslaved female friend from the plantation by buying them from John.

Zamor und Zoraide: ein Schauspiel in drey Aufzügen by Freyherr von Nesselrode zu Hugenpott (1778) is set on a plantation in Jamaica. In the play, the plantation belongs to the British citizen Sir Germin and his wife Miß Sara. At the beginning of the play, Sir Germin and Sir Thompson, who is a British merchant, discuss the unjust and inhumane treatment of Black African slaves in Jamaica, particularly describing a neighboring plantation owned by Jarvis and Levson. Sir Germin and Thompson agree that the maltreatment of slaves is the reason slaves resort to revolting as a form of protesting their conditions as well as taking revenge on their abusers. Both Sir Germin and Thompson sympathize with slaves that have been ill-treated and consider slave revolts under these circumstances justified. Sir Germin confirms the fair and just treatment his slaves enjoy on his plantation and expresses his trust in them.

Sir Germin has also taken in a Black African female slave called Zoraide, whom he bought from a Spaniard who was about to sexually assault her. Zoraide has been living in Sir Germin's house ever since. Sir Gemin and Miß Sara consider Zoraide to be their daughter and have been raising her as their own, because their biological son is suspected to have been abducted by someone unknown. Zoraide, who is described by Thompson as being able to pass for an Italian or British woman due to her beauty, is the daughter of a light-skinned minister and a white female slave. Zoraide is heartbrokenly in love with her husband, Zamor, whom she lost sight of when he was captured by slavers and brought to Jamaica.

In preparation for the upcoming slave rebellion, Sir Germin arms his slaves, and they loyally confirm their humility and devotion by pledging to keep him and his plantation safe. During the slave revolt, it is revealed that the ringleader is actually Zoraide's husband, Zamor, who has taken on the name Jones. It is also revealed that one of Sir Germin's most devoted and loyal slaves, Mahmud, finds his father, Abrucki, among the revolting slaves.

Mahmud had lost sight of his father after their captivity and enslavement. Abrucki had in turn protected, loved, and taken care of Sir Germin's son, Karl, and raised him as his own son. Zamor and Abrucki are arrested by radical plantation owners and sentenced to death. Before the verdicts are carried out and the riots escalate completely, the governor of the colony intervenes to mediate between the opposing parties. To celebrate the day, Sir Germin offers to free his slaves. Out of gratitude and affection, they decide to stay with him.

Seliko und Berißa, oder die Liebe unter den Negern. Schauspiel in 4 Aufzügen by Gustav Hagemann (1799) is set on the coast of Guinea in the fictional African kingdom of Juida, which has been devastated due to an ethnic war. At the beginning of the play, houses are still burning, and people's gardens and trees show signs of devastation and destruction. Amidst this chaos, the king of the Dahomai, who are the light-skinned "Schwarzbraune" (Black-Brown) occupiers, has forcefully taken control of Juida. The king sympathizes with the European slave traders, who seek to pursue big business in the face of many starving, desperate people.

In this context, the characters of the Black African Seliko and his brothers Telueh and Guberi see no other way to save their sick mother, Darina, from starvation than to sell one of themselves into slavery. Seliko insists on sacrificing himself. He thinks his beloved Berißa, who is missing, was captured and killed in the fighting. Thus, Seliko believes that there is no longer any value to his life. However, Berißa is not dead, but has been imprisoned by the king of Dahomai, who wants to make her his lover. Thus, the king keeps Berißa in his harem, where she is imprisoned in the dungeon. Berißa's father had heard about her capture. As the high priest of a holy temple, he knows his way around Juida better than the occupying soldiers and finds a secret pathway into the dungeon. As he attempts to free Berißa, the soldiers return, and he barely escapes without being caught.

The king's courtier, Dodoba, wants to incite the king against Beriβa and tells him that Beriβa has been visited by a lover. Because Beriβa is willing to die rather than be defiled by the king due to her commitment to Seliko, she confirms Dodoba's accusation. The king promises a reward of four hundred ounces of gold for handing over the alleged lover. This news reaches Seliko and Guberi as they negotiate Seliko's price with two white slavers on the market. After not being offered enough by the slavers and with Seliko's fear of being enslaved increasing, they abort their mission. Seliko finally persuades his brother Guberi to hand him over to the king for the sake of their sick and starving mother.

On the day of their execution, Beriβa and Seliko are both to be burned on piles when they finally see each other again—Seliko had been turned in as Beriβa's alleged lover, which is punishable by death, and Beriβa was sentenced to die for her refusal to sexually submit to the king. Although Seliko considers her unfaithful and renounces her when he learns of her time in the king's harem, Beriβa desperately tries to convince the king of Dahomai of Seliko's innocence without betraying her father. In that moment, the king asks for the verdict to be delayed. Darina, her two sons, and the high priest appear and intervene. Darina and the high priest beg for the lives of their children. The high priest admits to having visited his daughter in the dungeon while Darina begs for her son to be freed and offers the king back his reward of four hundred ounces of gold. Beriβa's selflessness in protecting her father deeply moves the king, so he releases both prisoners. However, he asks Seliko to choose between Beriβa and the lives of his mother and brothers. When he decides against Beriβa and when Darina reveals Seliko's act of self-sacrifice, the king of Dahomai finally understands Beriβa's love for Seliko. Having become aware of his unjust rule, he accepts Seliko and Beriβa's love.

These plays resonate with several historical events during the time of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, such as the inner African specifics of the trade in slaves. Michael Craton explores slave resistance in the West Indies and identifies traditional manifestations of resistance in his 2009 work *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies*. Craton echoes *Seliko und Berißa* as he emphasizes that the systematic establishment of the transatlantic slave trade afforded European traders and slavers the luxury of avoiding the African interior when they were in search of slaves. Instead, they benefitted from African ethnic wars and designated traders:

> Europeans found it no longer necessary (or indeed possible) to penetrate far inland in Africa. . . . They were clearly content to let African kings and traders fight wars and organize raids on their behalf and shared an interest with these assistants in establishing prisonlike barracoons on the coast . . . called forts or factories. However, once the slaves had been sold and transferred to the ships and the ships had set sail, resistance not only redoubled but became a daily nightmare to the European traders. (Craton 24)

Applicable to larger contexts, Craton typifies that resistance was not limited to the African continent alone. Instead, slave resistance occurred during the Middle Passage and also once slaves arrived in the New World. Due to many instances of slave revolts, Europeans, in anticipation of resistance, sought to protect themselves and the loss of their newly acquired commodities while they were headed to the New World. Thus, voyages were equipped with armories "of guns and chains plus . . . many white crewmen . . . to act as seaborne jailers" (Craton 24). Nonetheless, European slavers also underestimated the quick formation of uprisings and resistance, which could be identified as an element of surprise. Slavers and planters were unable to predict insurrections with certainty and were uninformed "about internal African conditions, the complexity of African cultures, and the general psychology of slave resistance" (Craton 24).

Drawing on this background, these plays also often reflect the details of historical slave rebellions. It needs to be noted that classifications and surveys on slave rebellions vary in terms of slave system, geographical location, time period, and approach (Gomez 159-61).[149] In the 1970 article "Ethnic Slave Rebellions in the Caribbean and the Guianas," Monica Schuler writes that slave revolts were a "usual rather than an unusual symptom of disorganization" in the Americas that embraced different slave systems (374). Schuler mentions entire Maroon settlements that were designated communities of runaway slaves (375). Conniff et al. discuss a long tradition of slave resistance in the Caribbean that "took complex, multidimensional, and ever-shifting forms" in their 1994 work *Africans in the Americas: A History of the Black Diaspora* (82). They define escape as having been the most common form of resistance that was prevalent in all slave societies. Many of these slaves sought refuge in Maroon communities after having deserted their masters. Though these communities served as sanctuaries to many runaway slaves, especially in Jamaica, they existed alongside repeated slave rebellions (Conniff et al. 84).

Conniff et al. describe the first slave revolt as having occurred in Hispaniola in 1522. The revolt was easily suppressed, but it paved the way for an increase in slave insurrections, which were indicative of growing habitual violent resistance against the system of slavery and slaveholders (Conniff et al. 84). Conniff et al. identify Jamaican society as having had "the most restless slave population, and rebellions occurred with great frequency after the 1670s.

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[149] Some influential works include: *American Negro Slave Revolts* by Herbert Aptheker (1943), *Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* by Gerald Mullin (1972), *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* by Eugene Genovese (1979),*Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* by Michael Craton (1982), *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration, and Betrayal* by Mavis C. Campbell (1988), *The Problem of Freedom: Race, Labor, and Politics in Jamaica and Britain, 1832-1938* by Thomas C. Holt (1992), *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* by John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger (2000), and *Caribbean Slave Revolts and the British Abolitionist Movement* by Gelien Matthews (2006).

The last and most serious rebellion on that island occurred at Christmas 1831, when about twenty thousand slaves in the western parishes rose up against their masters. The terrified planters responded with their full might but managed to reestablish control" (Conniff et al. 84). Correspondingly, two of the plays discussed in this analysis, *Die Negersklaven* and *Zamor und Zoraide,* take place in Jamaica. Because *Zamor und Zoraide* was published in 1778, it is very likely that Nesselrode was aware of and knowledgeable about the frequent slave revolts in the Caribbean and specifically in Jamaica.

Other noteworthy slave insurrections took place in Barbados in 1649, 1675, and 1692, Conniff et al. note (84). The slaves elaborately planned the last revolt, in particular, with the goal of taking control of the island. When the planned conspiracy was discovered, approximately 250 of the involved enslaved Black Africans were arrested and nineteen of them were executed (Conniff et al. 84-85). John Henrik Clarke further addresses these uprisings in his 1972 article "Slave Revolts in the Caribbean Islands," in which he refers to the Guyanese writer Sidney King. King chronicles Black African slave resistance specifically in the West Indies and describes the Caribbean tradition as revolutionary in his 1966 article "A Birth of Freedom." King alludes to several leaders of slave revolts in the Caribbean:

> It is the stage on which acted Cudgoe, and Cuffy, Accabreh and Accra, Toussaint, Quamina and Damon, Adoe and Araby (all leaders of slave revolts). Blows delivered against the European system in 1750 or in 1850 served to shake that system, sometimes to its foundations, and to cause it to make democratic concessions as a price of recovery. It was never the same again; and although financial exploitation became more intense and complicated, a constitutional superstructure was raised for dealing with human anger and for side-tracking revolution into peaceful, awe-inspiring chambers. (King qtd. in Clark 122-23)

King references Toussaint L'Ouverture (1743–1803), who emerged as a leader of "the most spectacular slave revolt ever in the Caribbean, and indeed the world, [which] occurred in St.

Domingue in the 1790s" (Conniff et al. 85). This insurrection ultimately led to the Haitian Revolution.

German-language readers were aware of current affairs in Haiti thanks to German news coverage. The German-language periodical *Minerva: Ein Journal historischen und politischen Inhalts* focused on events in Haiti. From 1804 to 1805, "*Minerva* published a continuing series, totaling more than a hundred pages, including source documents, news summaries, and eyewitness accounts, that informed its readers not only of the final struggle for independence of this French colony . . . but of the events over the previous ten years as well" (Buck-Morss 838). Johann Wilhelm von Archenholz (1741–1812), the publisher of *Minerva*, criticized the ongoing violence during the Revolution, but he grew fond of L'Ouverture, who led the Black army to defeat the British army and was appointed governor of Saint-Domingue in 1796. Archenholz thus published a translation of a manuscript by the British captain Marcus Rainsford (1758–1817), who commended Toussaint's leadership, character, and humanity (Buck-Morss 834, 838). It can be argued that German-language writers were somewhat inspired by real-life current affairs and developments regarding slavery and abolition.

Furthermore, regarding the origin and sources of these plays, Sander L. Gilman suggests that the French-language context heavily influenced German literature, because "the second half of the eighteenth century saw a radical change in the approach of European writers to the figure of the Black and to the question of slavery. . . . It is the influence of . . . works produced in France during the second half of the eighteenth century which reshaped the manner of viewing the Black in contemporary German literature" (36). Gilman states that the imagery of the enslaved Black African stemmed specifically from the French genre *literature négrophile* (36). Belinda Elizabeth Jack writes that this genre includes fictional and

theoretical texts that are aimed at forcing the European public to pay attention to the horrors of slavery that befall African individuals when they are enslaved and transported to the New World (16). These works—often highly romantic in nature—depict enslaved African lovers who face obstacles, including the violent nature of slavery and the trade in slaves (Jack 16). Jack references the novels *Oronoko* (1688) by Aphra Behn and *Ziméo* (1769) by Jean-François de Saint-Lambert.

Kotzebue's *Die Negersklaven* is based on *Ziméo,* which also appeared in the anthology *Erzählungen von den Sitten und Schiksalen der Negersklaven: Eine rührende Lektür für Menschen guter Art* (Zantop 149). *Die Negersklaven* shows significant similarities to Freyherr von Nesselrode zu Hugenpott's play titled *Zamor und Zoraide: Ein Schauspiel, in drey Aufzügen* (1778). There are striking similarities and at times identical dialogue sections in Kolb's anthology, so I argue that *Ziméo* and *Zamor und Zoraide* have a common origin. For example, within this genre, Gilman highlights the centrality of the figure of the Black African in bondage (36). Jack writes that to further show slavery in a critical light, *literature négrophile* presents graphic and detailed descriptions that are indicative of the horrors of slavery. The accounts depict the way Africans are captured and stolen from the African continent, the horrors and pain they endure while on slave ships en route to the New World, and the conditions of plantation life as well as slave rebellions and uprisings. These depictions are understood as giving the reader a glimpse into the life of the enslaved (Jack 16). Gilman states that these works surfaced during and leading up to the American Revolution, when French thinkers demonstrated concern about the African slave as an individual and also offered critiques of the institution of slavery and the trade in slaves overall (36).

It is likely that the German-language writers of these slave plays drew on a variety of fictional and nonfictional supplementary texts in writing their narratives. Scholars can't

pinpoint which English-language works these writers had access to, though it is possible to mention some sources that were available in the German lands, some of which have been addressed in the previous chapter. Works on slavery and abolition included theatrical plays, theoretical treatises, newspaper articles, academic writings, travelogues, diary entries, and journal articles. Literary scholar Sigrid G. Köhler mentions the blueprints of the slave ship Brooke as having been in printed in Thomas Clarkson's 1788 work *Society for Effecting the Abolition of Slave Trade*. She provides evidence that this blueprint was also published in the German journal *Magazin der Handels- und Gewerbskunde* in an 1804 article titled "Ueber den Negerhandel" (Köhler 379-80).

Köhler also mentions the graphic 1788 account of slavery and the Middle Passage by Alexander Falconbridge called *Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa*. She identifies three different translations of this travelogue in German-language journals (in the *Neuen Litteratur und Völkerkunde*, in the *Hildesheimer Magazin,* and in the *Beiträgen zur Völker- und Länderkunde*) between 1788 and 1790 (Köhler 381). This travelogue served as a source for the German academic Johann Jacob Sell (1754–1816), whose 1791 work *Versuch einer Geschichte des Negersclavenhandels* discusses the history of slavery and thoroughly thematizes anti-slavery thought (Schüller 614). Lastly, Köhler mentions Josiah Wedgwood's (1730–1795) famous image of an enslaved and chained Black African on a medallion, which became part of an anti-slavery campaign in 1787 that served the purpose of appealing to the emotions and conscience of slaveholders. Köhler notes that this, too, appeared in a German-language context, but there is no knowledge of how exactly the medallion reached the German territories (383). She states that the image appeared in the German translation and on the title page of the French work *Adonis ou le bon nègre* by Jean-Baptiste Picquenard, while a German discussion and description appeared in the German journal *Deutschen Magazin* in

1791 (Köhler 383). In the 2019 chapter "Drastische Bilder: Journalnachrichten auf der Bühne Versklavung und Abolition als Gegenstände moderner Geschichtsreflexion in deutschsprachigen Journalen und Theaterstücken um 1800," Köhler summarizes the German-language genres on slavery and abolition in the media between 1770 and 1810:

> Zu finden sind ausführliche Berichte über die Parlamentsdebatten vor allem in Großbritannien, historische Studien zum Sklavenhandel, naturrechtlich, moralphilosophisch oder naturgeschichtlich geleitete philosophische Abhandlungen über das Für und Wider von Versklavung (auch unter Berücksichtigung der Leibeigenschaft), die Schilderungen und Briefe von Augenzeugen, z. B. von auf Sklavenschiffen mitfahrenden Schiffsärzten, Übersetzungen und Rezensionen abolitionistischer Schriften aus Großbritannien und Frankreich, Statistiken über die Einfuhr von Kolonialprodukten und vieles mehr. (Köhler 379)

It is known that Kotzebue consulted various German and international sources that ultimately became part of his play. Hence, he aspired to contribute to the larger transnational debate on unequal power relations—especially those including German individuals—from a German perspective, which is why he mainly centered his play on sources that were based on historical accounts: *L'Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (1770) by the French writers Guillaume Thomas François Raynal and Denis Diderot, *Vom Ursprung des Negerhandels: Ein Antrittsprogramm* (1779) by the German geographer and historian Matthias Christian Sprengel, *Reise nach Guinea und den Caribäischen Inseln in Columbien, in Briefen an seine Freunde beschrieben* (1788) by the German botanist Paul Erdmann Isert, and *Versuch einer Geschichte des Negersclavenhandels* (1791) by the German historian Johann Jacob Sell. It is remarkable that three of the referenced scholars—Sprengel, Isert, and Sell—who all discussed the subject matter from a factual and historical angle are German.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Isert traveled to Guinea and the West Indies, where he experienced the treatment of Black African slaves firsthand. In his travelogue, he details

terrifying moments of punishments that he does not condone. He positions himself clearly when he alludes to the harsh and inhumane yet common treatment of slaves in St. Croix: "Die gewöhnliche Behandlung dieser Elenden . . . vorzüglich derer, die in die Pflanzungen kommen, übersteigt alle Menschlichkeit. Ich sahe [sic] es, o! daß ich es nimmer gesehen hätte!" (Isert 332).[150] Isert is appalled by the treatment of slaves. He is critical of both European involvement and the overall brutality, but he does not necessarily see abolition as a solution:

> Wäre doch nur ein Mittel möglich diesen fortdaurenden Uebel [sic] Einhalt zu thun? An Wiederersezzung ist freilich nicht zu denken! Solten wir uns abgewöhnen Zukker[sic], Caffe [sic], Chokolade[sic], und andere . . . zum Luxus in Europa nun so nothwendig gewordene Artikel zu gebrauchen? Nein! das würde nur eine eben so grosse – Anzahl Europäer unglüklich [sic] machen, wie dadurch vielleicht Neger glüklich [sic] würde. (Isert 338)[151]

Isert is unwilling to stop using colonial products such as sugar and chocolate. He claims that this would not necessarily make slaves happy, and states that it would sadden Europeans (338). His solution to the problems that he sees is the establishment of a plantation system in Africa, which would avoid the Middle Passage. Isert seems to think Africans would generously share their land with Europeans: "Gern, werden die Schwarzen uns die besten und grösten [sic] Ländereien, die seit Jahrtausenden wüste gelegen haben, einräumen, wenn wir mit den Oelzweig [sic] in der Hand, statt des Mordstahls zu ihnen kommen" (339-40).[152]

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[150] The common treatment of these miserable ones . . . especially those in the plantations, is beyond any humanity. I saw it, oh! If only I could unsee it!

[151] If only there were a way to put an end to this continuous evil? Of course, resistance is out of the question! Are we to give up sugar, coffee, chocolate and other . . . products that have become so crucial to luxury in Europe? No! This would only result in the same numbers of unhappy Europeans as numbers of pleased Negroes.

[152] Gladly, will the blacks grant us the best and largest estates that have been deserted for millennia, if we come to them with the oil branch in hand instead of the murder steel.

Unlike Isert, Sell did not have direct encounters with slaves in the West Indies. His interest in debates on the legitimacy of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade was piqued by coverage in German-language media (e.g., newspapers, periodicals, and published travelogues as well as academic works), especially with regard to England (Sell VII). In this, Sell draws on material by both Isert and Sprengel. Isert and Sprengel are alluded to by footnotes as well as mentioned in Sell's actual work: "Im J. 1786, als Isert in Guinea war" (Sell 63)[153] and "Nach Sprengels Geschichte der Europäer in Nordamerika" (Sell 187).[154] To educate himself on the subject matter through research of his own, he ended up writing a large history of slavery and the trade in slaves: "Ermunterte den Verfasser zuerst, zu seiner eigenen Belehrung den Negerhandel historisch und statistisch zu untersuchen; und so erwuchs ihm unter der Feder dieses Werk, das er jetzt dem Publico als einen Versuch zur Beurtheilung übergiebt" (Sell VII).[155]

Sell reveals his viewpoint in terms of emotions that allow him to take a stance and thus convince his readers. In discussing the specifics of the Middle Passage, he argues this to be a tragic destiny: "Das traurige Schicksal des Sklaven" (Sell 114).[156] He alludes to Black African slaves as "unlucky ones" and condemns slavers for being inhumane, citing the conditions on the slave ships: "Die Unmenschlichkeit der Sklavenschiffer" (Sell 116).[157] He typifies the brutality and violence inflicted on Black Africans by the planters and

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[153] In 1786, when Isert was in Guinea.

[154] According to Sprengel's History of Europeans in North America.

[155] Encouraged the author first to historically and statistically examine the slave trade; in this manner, his feather produced the paper submitted to the public as an attempt at evaluation.

[156] The sad fate of the slaves.

[157] The inhumanity of slave shippers.

slaveholders: "Oft steigt die Grausamkeit . . . aufs Höchste, und Geiz und Eigennutz ist oft die unreine Quelle. . . . Häufig sind es aber auch Vorurtheile, welche die Sklaven zum Vieh herabwürdigen, oder noch wol [sic] gar unter dasselbe erniedrigen . . . und Härte und Grausamkeit hat in ihren Herzen Platz genommen" (Sell 144-45).[158] Sell criticizes the treatment of Black Africans and openly speaks against it. He identifies capitalist mechanisms as propelling this inhumane behavior toward slaves. Ultimately, European planters and slaveholders become coldhearted and fixed in their ways.

Therefore, while Isert's work represents a perspective influenced by amelioration, Sell could be considered stronger in his convictions and therefore presenting fully abolitionist sentiments indicative of the termination of slavery by way of immediatism or gradualism. Sprengel, however, presents more of a literature review on the subject matter in which he expresses critique only once:

> Daß schwarze Africaner [sic] in Westindien Zucker pflanzen, oder in Virginien Taback [sic] bauen, hat freylich [sic] für den Menschenbeobachter nicht viel auffallendes mehr. . . . Allein der so sehr verschiedene Zustand dieser weissen und schwarzen Colonisten, und das bisher nie ganz aufgelöste Problem, der ersten Veranlassung, Africa [sic] auf Kosten der neuen Welt zu entvölkern, unterscheidet die freiwilligen Auswanderungen der Europäer, so sehr von den gezwungenen Reisen der Neger, daß [sic] der so oft beschriebene, bestrittene und beseufzte Negerhandel immer noch eine neue Untersuchung verdient. (1-2)[159]

[158] Often, the cruelty is . . . maximized, with greed and selfishness being the impure source. . . . However, often it is prejudice that reduces slaves to chattel, or even less than chattel . . . while harshness and cruelty have taken over their hearts.

[159] The fact that Black Africans are planting sugar in the West Indies, or tobacco in Virginia does no longer seem extraordinary to observers of humankind. . . . The different conditions among white and Black colonists alone, as well as the hitherto unsolved problem of depopulating Africa at the cost of the New World, differentiates the voluntary migration of Europeans from the forced migration of Africans to the extent that the frequently described and bemoaned slave trade still warrants a new examination.

In line with my key argument, German scholars exemplify abolitionist voices that have not been echoed. The variety of existing German-language texts suggests the political dynamics of cultural productions. It further illuminates the importance of the transnational social condition that was discussed on various levels, including in stage plays such as *Die Negersklaven*.

Kotzebue became inspired to take up abolitionism based on his engagement with these contextual sources as well as his personal life experiences. As German studies critic Chunjie Zhang suggests, Kotzebue's fascination with non-German and non-European settings can be tied to his biography. He was sent to Saint Petersburg as a Prussian envoy in 1781. In 1783, he was appointed assessor to the high court of appeals in Reval (present-day Tallinn), which was in Estonia, then a province of the Russian Empire. He was ennobled in 1785 and became president of the Magistrate of the Governorate of Estonia (Klingenberg 80). During his time in the Baltic region, Kotzebue articulated his aversion to slavery (Zhang 90). As part of the ruling class in the Russian province, in which German immigrants made up one-third of the entire Estonian population, Kotzebue became acquainted with the predicament of the Estonian peasants who served German aristocrats in a bondage relationship called *Leibeigenschaft* (serfdom). This exposure heavily impacted Kotzebue and illustrates that he was influenced and informed by European colonial endeavors as well as his stay in Estonia (Zhang 90).

Kotzebue worked to critique these severe and exploitative forms of governance. However, he also tried to avoid an explicit critique of European and German serfdom. Kotzebue did not want to be held accountable for critiquing German economically exploitative practices in Estonia, and thus uses Jamaica as a setting to state his critique in his play *Die Negersklaven* (1796). In the play, Kotzebue portrays slavery as inconceivably

murderous, gory, and distasteful. It is unlikely that Nesselrode was inspired by the same German-language sources that Kotzebue references, because *Zamor und Zoraide* was published in 1778. Nonetheless, both plays show similar salient plot changes centering on the portrayal of Black African slaves as intricate parts of the master-enslaver's households. In the next section, I will continue to discuss elements found in *Die Negersklaven* and *Zamor und Zoraide,* as well as the other slave plays, through the lens of Spillers's concept of the *theft* of the *body*.

In Captivity: Hortense Spillers's *Theft* of the *Body*

The inhumane and brutal practice of capturing Black Africans for the purpose of selling them on slave markets signifies the beginnings of the commodification of Black Africans and a violent formation of the African diaspora. Spillers's framework of the *theft* of the *body* is applicable, for example, to *Die Negersklaven* and *Zamor und Zoraide,* because these plays discuss the different methods and occurrences of ongoing thefts as vital to the progression and continuation of the storylines. Particularly, Kotzebue strives for historical accuracy, which is reflected in his description of the *theft* of the *body*. In the play, Ayos describes the stealing and transit of bodies as follows:

> Da lächelte er wild und höhnisch, und stieß mich hinab in einen engen Raum, wo mehr als vierhundert meiner Brüder neben einander geschichtet lagen; denn ein Schiff, das kaum 200 Menschen faßt, wird mit 452 Sklaven und 36 Europäern vollgepfroft . . . man zog überdieß [sic] eine lange schwere Kette durch und alle; keiner vermogte [sic] aufzustehen, ohne alle übrige [sic] mit aufzusagen, Milde und Kranke, Schlafende und Todte – ja Todte! denn nicht selten zwang uns die Verwesung, unsern Henkern zuzurufen: wir haben auch einen Glücklichen unter uns! (Kotzebue 75)[160],[161]

[160] He smiled wildly and mockingly, and pushed me into a narrow room, where more than four hundred of my brothers were layered on top of one another: because a ship with a capacity of no more than 200 people is stuffed with 452 slaves and 36 Europeans . . . further, a long, heavy chain was pulled through and on top of everyone. No one was able to get up without pulling everyone up, the tired and the sick, the sleeping and the dead- yes, the dead! often, decomposition required us to call on our executioners to say: we, too, have a lucky one among us!

This description of captured bodies en route to the New World is graphically emphasized by the image of layered bodies on overcrowded slave ships. Kotzebue includes this information in a conversation that transpires toward the end of the play, when Ayos shares his experiences with his son. Ayos had voluntarily joined the slave traders to be reunited with his son Zameo, who had sold himself to slave traders in order to spare his father this fate. Mentioning the exact number of slaves stresses the importance of historical information within this play and demonstrates the transformation of Black African individuals into commodities and beings that have become a means to a European end.

In *Zamor und Zoraide*, Nesselrode also addresses the *theft* of the *body*. Having appeared as the leader of the slave revolt under the name Jones, Zamor shares details of his capture. He had been lured onto a slave ship by white Portuguese merchants, who were aware of a "supposed" Black African natural inclination to make music and dance, and managed to convince Zamor and others to board the ship for an alleged concert (Nesselrode 61): "wir ließen uns also bereden, und folgten Ihnen mit einem Haufen von etlichen fünfzig jungen Leuten beiderley Geschlechts, aber kaum waren wir in ihr Schiff gestiegen, so wurde eine

[161] This description mirrors those presented in works such as: *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, The African: Written By Himself* by Olaudah Equiano (1789), *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* by Philip D. Curtin (1969), "The Dutch Slave Trade. A Quantitative Assessment" by Johannes Postma (1975), *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* by Herbert S. Klein (1978), *The French Slave Trade in the Eighteenth Century: An Old Regime Business* by Robert Louis Stein (1979), "Mortality on Long-Distance Voyages in the Eighteenth Century" by J. C. Riley (1981), *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* by Michael Craton (1982), "Deaths of Slaves in the Middle Passage" by Raymond L. Cohn (1985), *Middle Passage* by Charles Johnson (1990), "The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: A Forgotten Crime against Humanity as Defined by International Law" by Patricia M. Muhammad (2003), *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora* by Michael A. Gomez (2005), *If We Must Die: Shipboard Insurrections in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* by Eric Robert Taylor (2006), *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* by Stephanie E. Smallwood (2007), *The Atlantic Slave Trade* by Herbert S. Klein (2010), *Final Passages: The Intercolonial Slave Trade of British America, 1619-1807* by Gregory E. O'Malley (2014), and *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage* by Sowande M. Mustakeem (2016).

Canone [sic] losgebrennt [sic], das Schiff stach in die See, und ich und meine unglücklichen Brüder wurden an Ketten geschlossen" (Nesselrode 61).[162] While aboard, captured Africans are dragged through the ship like livestock and put together with other captives in order to be sold (Nesselrode 62). Almost famished, the enslaved Black Africans are instructed to eat one another as "ein Schwarzer dem andern [sic] zur Nahrung dienen sollte" (Nesselrode 63).[163] These conditions turn human beings into famished and desperate "Wölfe" (wolves) and "Tyger [sic]" (tiger) who have lost all control and resort to cannibalism:

> Zamor: Die ersten Schlachtopfer wurden unter denen ausgesucht, die der Hunger schon ganz abgemattet hatte, es waren zwei junge Mädchen. . . . ich höre noch das ängstliche Sterbegeschrey [sic] dieser Unglücklichen, und noch sehe ich die Thränen [sic] auf den Gesichtern ihrer ausgehungerten Gesellen, indem sie sie auffraßen [sic], hastich ihr ungekochtes Fleisch Brockenweiß hinunter schluckten, und sichs schmecken ließen. (Nesselrode 64)[164]

Both Nesselrode's and Kotzebue's descriptions specifically align with Spillers's concept of the *theft* of the *body*. This theft ultimately results in a loss of gender through the severe violence inflicted on Black African bodies, which "caused gender to evaporate" in the specific space of the Middle Passage (Morgan qtd. in Spillers et al. 304). Black African captives were crammed into slave ships, which represents a loss of dignity. This loss is reflected in the use of "bodies" when talking about the "mass" treatment and handling of enslaved Black Africans as goods and commodities. These commodities were then labeled according to European definitions, which further did not afford them the dignity of being

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[162] so we let ourselves be persuaded and followed them with a many as fifty young people of both genders; but as soon as we boarded the ship, a canon was shot, the ship set sail and my unfortunate brethren, and I were locked in chains.

[163] that one Black person should serve as nourishment for the other.

[164] The first victims of the slaughtering were selected among those who were already exhausted by hunger, two girls. . . . I can still hear the terrified death screams of these unfortunate beings, and I can still see the tears on the faces of their starved companions, while they ate them, quickly swallowing chunks of their uncooked flesh, relishing their meal.

viewed as either male or female. Rather, they were presented as weighted commodities, goods, and property. Spillers states that "under these conditions, we lose at least *gender* difference *in the outcome*, and the female body and the male body become a territory of cultural and political maneuver, not at all gender-related, gender-specific" (*Black, White, and in Color* 206).

Further exploring the Middle Passage, in the context of Spillers's notion of a loss of gender due to being marked as Western European property, Christina Sharpe expands on the Middle Passage by linking it to an understanding of birthing (74). As a scholar of English, Sharpe examines the aftermath of slavery and its impact on the lives of Black people in her 2016 book *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Sharpe thinks about being Black in the historical context of the transatlantic slave trade in the U.S. as a form of consciousness (13). She posits that "to be *in* the wake is to occupy and to be occupied by the continuous and changing present of slavery's as yet unresolved unfolding" (Sharpe 13-14). Sharpe equates this consciousness to remaining in the hold of the slave ship. Sharpe expands on her notion by bringing African American scholar Saidiya Hartman into the conversation and alluding to her biographical work *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (2007) through a linkage of past and present:

> If slavery persists as an issue in the political life of black America, it is not because of an antiquarian obsession with bygone days or the burden of a too-long memory, but because black lives are still imperiled and devalued by racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago. This is the afterlife of slavery — skewed life chances, limited access to health and education, premature death, incarceration, and impoverishment. I, too, am the afterlife of slavery. (Hartman qtd. in Sharpe 5)

Sharpe metaphorically connects the slave ship in the Middle Passage to a notion of Black maternity centering on a mass production through the womb. In this sense, the Middle Passage functions like a birth canal of Blackness as abjection through Black mothers mass-

producing offspring that will lead a life of "non/being-ness" (Sharpe 74). I find this concept to be especially reflective of Nesselrode's and Kotzebue's descriptions of the various horrific aspects of the Middle Passage that result in the outcome of Black African slave bodies being, once they arrive in the New World, nothing but commodities that are now assumed into the household of their owners in the sense of a downward transformation.

Some of the other slave plays offer different examples of the *theft* of the *body*. Schmidt's play *Die Kette des Edelmuths* centers on the actual action of being stolen away, rather than illustrating the horrors of the Middle Passage. Here, Schmidt stages the capture of Jernrs, a freed Black African slave who accompanies Bernhard to Magdeburg. Jernrs's capture is a decisive turning point. Jernrs recalls having spent a "herrlicher Morgen" (beautiful morning) playing near the ocean with his friends (Schmidt 30). Jernrs's description of his home country in Africa portrays a harmonious picture of nature, happiness, and peace: "Die Sonne blisterte so herrlich in die See und warf so warme Strahlen auf unsre schwarzen Leiber, daß wir wie von neuem auflebten. Wir scharrten uns ins[sic] warme Sand hinein, wie ehemals in der Mutter Schooß [sic], und waren so vergnügt, so vergnügt, daß [sic] wir kaum vor Freuden ein Wort reden konnten" (Schmidt 30).[165] This idyllic and picturesque scenery is quickly overshadowed by the appearance of white men, which Schmidt uses to contrast the "schwarzen Leiber" (Black bodies) and the peaceful interplay of serenity and joy. The white men present a threat that quickly unfolds into a catastrophe, according to Jernrs:

> Da kamen zwey [sic] große weisse Männer auf uns zu, die wir recht freundlich grüßten. Der eine ging hinter uns her und der andere vor uns, wir saßen ganz ruhig und sahen uns nicht mal nach ihnen um, bis wir unsre [sic] Unvorsichtigkeit zu spät gewahr wurden. Die beiden Kerls [sic] stürzten auf

[165] The sun shone so beautifully on the sea and its rays onto our Black bodies that we were rejuvenated. We cradled ourselves in the warm sand, like in a mother's womb, and were so happy that we could barely speak a word.

> mich zu, knebelten mir Hände und Füße, hielten mir das Maul zu und schlepten mich ans Ufer der See, und in ein großes Schiff welches segelfertig da stand. . . . Ich bat, ich flehete, nur noch einmal wollte ich meinen Vater sehen, sagte ich, sie mögten mich nur gehen lassen, ich wollte wieder kommen. (Schmidt 30-31)[166]

Schmidt also illustrates the *theft* of the *body* of young children. While Jernrs recalls the turn of events as an adult, Schmidt uses his capture as a child to describe the circumstances of children in captivity and during the Middle Passage and emphasize that only Jernrs was captured out of his group of friends that day (31).

Ziegler briefly addresses these conditions in his play *Die Mohrinn,* as the freed Black African female Toni shares the specifics of her past with Aurelie: "Ich bin eine Afrikanerinn — und wurde in meinem zwölften Jahre nach Amerika an einen Europäer verkauft" (44).[167] In *Seliko und Berißa*, Hagemann portrays the *theft* of the *body* from a different point of view, because his play takes place on the coast of Guinea in the kingdom of Juiba (2). Hagemann associates the *theft* of the *body* with white European slavers and the new king of Dahomai (16-17). The king and his entourage are introduced as having a Black-Brown complexion, which signifies their difference from the other characters in the play, who are described as being either dark-skinned or white (Hagemann 2). According to Riesche, light skin color is used to indicate differences in characters' positionality, as well as notions of racial ambivalence, in many plays. She notes that it points to "'zwielichtigen' Charakter und

[166] Then, two tall white men approached us, whom we greeted with friendliness. One walked behind us, and one in front of us. We sat still and did not even look after them, until we became aware of our lack of caution. The two men ran toward me, tied my hands and feet, held my mouth shut and dragged me to the shore and into a ship, which was ready to depart. . . . I begged, I pleaded, to see my father just once again, and asked them to please let me go, that I would come back.

[167] I am an African woman and was sold to a European man in America in my twelfth year.

doppelbödiges Verhalten: Oft sind sie die wahren Intriganten, die beide Seiten gegeneinander ausspielen" (Riesche 124).

Because the light-skinned characters are often understood to be the products of interracial relationships of some sort, they portray an in-between position and therefore do not belong to either the white or the Black side. This positionality represents an inherent conflict and thus suggests the incompatibility of Black and white characters and, by extension, interracial romantic relationships. In this sense, light-skinned or mixed-race characters are doomed to betray one side of their racial origin, which is often portrayed to be the Black African parentage, due to benefitting from the dynamics of white power over Black African enslaved bodies. In Hagemann's play, this ambivalence could thus be reflected in the king's connection with white European slave traders: "Guberi. Ihr wißt doch, daß die Europäer an unserer Küste mit Menschen handeln, und der neue könig [sic] soll ihren Handel sehr begünstigen" (Hagemann 16-17).[168] The play is fictional, but Hagemann gives historically accurate insights into the dynamics of the *theft* of the *body* from the African continent.

As Spillers shows, European and Black African entanglements regarding the transatlantic slave trade emerged as "European hegemonies stole bodies . . . in concert with the African 'middleman'" (206).[169] The African middleman is portrayed by the king of

[168] Guberi. You know that the Europeans on our shores trade in humans, and that the new king is favorable to their trade.

[169] Studies on African middlemen include: *Being the Journals of Two Missions to the King of Dahomey and Residence at His Capital in the Years 1849 and 1850* by Frederick E. Forbes (original 1851, reprinted 1966), *Dahomey and the Slave Trade: An Analysis of an Archaic Economy* by Karl Polanyi (1966), *West African Kingdoms in the Nineteenth Century* by Daryll Forde and P. M. Kaberry (1967), *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* by Philip D. Curtin (1969), *Die Entdeckung des schwarzen Afrikaners: Versuch einer Geistesgeschichte der europäisch-afrikanischen Beziehungen an der Guineaküste im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* by Urs Bitterli (1970), "On the African Role in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Dahomey" by Dov Ronen (1971), "Royal Monopoly and Private Enterprise in the Atlantic Trade: The Case of Dahomey" by Robin Law (1977), *Der atlantische Sklavenhandel von Dahomey: (1740-1797): Wirtschaftsanthropologie und Sozialgeschichte (Studien zur Kulturkunde)* by Werner Peukert (1978), *The Uncommon*

Dahomai, who is paid in goods to not interfere with the machinations of white European slave traders and even provide a number of slaves on occasion (Hagemann 46-48). Urs Bitterli describes a similar situation in his 1970 historical study *Die Entdeckung des schwarzen Afrikaners: Versuch einer Geistesgeschichte der europäisch-afrikanischen Beziehungen an der Guineaküste im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, noting that Black African middlemen served an important role (125). These middlemen pierced into the interior of the sub-Saharan African region to negotiate with the chiefs of certain ethnic groups in order to prepare the capture of Black Africans. These negotiations were often difficult, which was probably due to disagreements over pricing and quantities of captives (Bitterli 126).

Bitterli describes how representatives from the slave ships eased these instances by generously offering "Branntwein" (brandy, spirits) to the African chieftains in order to get them drunk and bend their will in favor of the European slavers (126). Bitterli lists a number of items that were used in exchange for enslaved Africans: "Gewehre und Munition, farbige Tuche und billiger Schmuck, Tabak und Branntwein sowie was Eisenbaren" (127). Bitterli's historical discussion aligns with Hagemann's portrayal of the king, who is known to enjoy, trade, or rather drunkenly and freely give away some of his captives for brandy: "Johnson. . . . Ich besitze noch einen Vorrath [sic] starken Branntwein; der König von Dahomai ist Liebhaber davon, und hat viele Gefangene; vielleicht vertrinkt er ein Paar Dutzend

Market: Essays in the Economic History of the Atlantic Slave Trade edited by Henry A. Gemery, and Jan S. Hogendorn (1979), *Slavery, Colonialism, and Economic Growth in Dahomey, 1640-1960* by Patrick Manning (1982), *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* by Paul E. Lovejoy (1983), "Dahomey and the Slave Trade: Reflections on the Historiography of the Rise of Dahomey" by Robin Law (1986), "The Dahomean Middleman System, 1727–c. 1818" by David Ross (1987), "Slave-Raiders and Middlemen, Monopolists and Free-Traders: The Supply of Slaves for the Atlantic Trade in Dahomey c. 1715–1850" by Robin Law (1989), and *The African Diaspora* edited by Joseph E. Harris, et al. (1996).

Schwarze" (Hagemann 47).[170] Kotzebue similarly mentions brandy and fabric cloth as having been used to procure slaves by exchange: "John. . . . Ich wette, man hat sich für ein paar Ellen Tuch und einige Kannen Branntwein gekauft" (56).[171]

Black African middlemen obtained slaves on their own, as well, when there was a shortage in the supply, Bitterli writes (126). This is when they also organized transportation of captured Black Africans to the coast to initiate the marketing of the captives. In all of this, white Europeans were spared and did not need to go into the interior of Africa. The African middlemen and Europeans started working together and a system of mutual dependency developed:

> Die Weißen hatten am eigentlichen Sklavenfang, dem "Kidnapping," nur sehr geringen Anteil; denn Vorstöße ins Hinterland konnten sie nicht wagen, und die Versklavung der Küstenbewohner empfahl sich nicht, da diese als Vermittler und für den Unterhalt von Schiffen und Besatzungen immer wieder gebraucht wurden. . . . So bildete sich im Laufe der Zeit zwischen den Eingeborenen der Küstenregionen und europäischen Seeleuten und Siedlern ein Verhältnis wechselseitiger Abhängigkeit. (Bitterli 125-26)

Once Africans were captured, they were forced to walk all the way to the coastal region, which often took several weeks (Bitterli 126). Bitterli refers to the Scottish traveler of West Africa Mungo Park (1711–1806), who describes having walked alongside captured Black Africans to the coastal regions. Park notes that the enslaved populations endured the scorching hot sun while suffering from exhaustion due to having to walk more than five hundred miles. Yet, according to Park, the captives still offered him water so that he would stay hydrated, and they also prepared his sleeping place at night (Bitterli 126). Bitterli

[170] Johnson. . . . I still own a supply of spirits; The king of Dahomai is a connoisseur of it and he has many prisoners. Perhaps, he will drink until he owes us a few dozen Blacks.

[171] John. . . . I bet a few pitchers full of spirits were bought for a few cubits of fabric.

demonstrates the necessity of these middlemen for Europeans to successfully participate in procuring African captives. In this way, the *theft* of the *body* particularly prospered in times of hardships, such as during famines or ethnic wars, which, in the context of *Seliko und Berißa oder die Liebe*, were caused by the forceful takeover of the king of Dahomai.

Hagemann introduces the European slavers Johnson and Ducheaux, who view the displacement and house burnings during the war in Dahomai as ideal and in their favor: "Johnson. Sehn [sic] sie, alle Wohnungen sind fast abgebrannt, die Noth [sic] wird die Neger zu uns bringen . . . . Sind die Väter todt [sic], wer will die Kinder füttern!" (47-48).[172] Many Guineans suffer and seek relief by trading off family members in order to provide for the rest of their families. Darina and her three sons, Guberi, Seliko, and Telueh, described as dark-skinned, suffer a similar fate, because Darina is sickly, and the family is short of food. Darina's sons fear her starvation and thus decide to join forces with white European slavers and sacrifice one of their own to sell into slavery: "Guberi. . . . Brüder, wir wollen einen von uns an die Weißen verkaufen. . . . [I]ch kann mein Leben zu nichts brauchen, als zur Rettung der Mutter. Willst du die sterben lassen? Willst du die verhungern lassen?" (Hagemann 17, 50).[173] Thus, Guberi and his brother Seliko approach Johnson and Ducheaux after it is decided that Seliko will be the one who is sold (Hagemann 18, 52). Determined to end his mother's suffering and motivated by his assumption that his beloved partner Berißa had been captured and murdered, Seliko begs to be taken to the New World: "Seliko. Kauf mich, lieber Herr, ich will gut thun. Ich will dich nicht belügen" (Hagemann 52).[174] Riesche assigns

[172] Johnson. Look, how all their dwellings are nearly burnt down, distress will bring the Negroes to us. . . . If the fathers are dead, who will feed the children!

[173] Guberi. . . . Brothers, we should sell one of us to the Whites. . . . I have no use for my life, other than to rescue mother. Do you want to let her die? Do you want to let her starve?

[174] Seiko. Buy me, good Sir, I want to do well. I do not wish to lie to you.

this self-sacrificing and devoted behavior to the dark-skinned Black African characters in this play: "So sind die als 'Schwarze' bezeichneten Figuren des Stücks allesamt äußerst tugendhafte, unbescholtene und friedfertige Menschen . . . Aufopferungsvoll und selbstlos kümmern sie sich voller Liebe umeinander" (230-231).

Having failed in his endeavors to be sold into slavery, Seliko insists on posing as an intruder who entered the king of Dahomai's harem to defile one of his mistresses, who he does not know is Berißa in this case, in order to receive a reward of "400 Unzen Gold" (400 ounces of gold) from the king of Dahomai (Hagemann 55). After having received the money, and with Seliko in captivity awaiting his death, Guberi regrets his decision and the money in his possession:

> Guberi (allein.) Verfluchtes Geld! (Er wirft den Beutel hin) da liegt für vier hundert Unzen Gold Bruderfleisch und alle Schätze des Erdbodens können die Asche nicht wieder lebendig machen. — Nein, Seliko, ich will dich nicht morden [sic]! — Fort zum König! — Und die Mutter! —Die arme kranke hungernde Mutter! — Wird sich der könig [sic] ihrer erbarmen? Er, der nur Sünden belohnt? Der nur schändlichen Brudermord mit vier hundert Unzen Gold bezahlt? Würde Seliko nicht dennoch sterben müssen, weil er die heilige Person des Königs belogen hat — (Er hebt den Beutel wieder auf) Her mit dir und hin zu Darinen [sic]! — Du bist nicht verflucht, jede Unze ist Gottes Segen und Mutterlohn! — Mutterlohn? — ein Beutelchen Geld für einen geliebten Sohn? — Eine Hand voll Staub für einen Seliko? — Für ihren Magen sorgten wir, und dachten nicht daran, daß wir ihr das Herz zerissen: — wenn sie nun den Kauf verflucht! — Und den brudermörderischen Verkäufer dazu! — Laßt das nicht wahr werden, barmherzige Götter! — — Dann könnt ich aus Verzweiflung ein entsetzlicher Mensch werden. Dann könnt ich zu den Weißen gehn, mich taufen lassen, und auch mit Menschenfleisch handeln. (Hagemann 74-75) [175]

[175] Guberi (alone.) Curse the money! (He throws the pouch) here are four hundred ounces of gold for the flesh of brothers and all the treasures of the earth cannot bring ashes back to life — No, Seliko, I do not wish to kill you! —To the king! — And mother! — Poor, sick, hungry mother! — Will the king have mercy on her? He, who only rewards sin? He, who rewards shameful fratricide with four hundred ounces of gold? Would Seliko not have to die for lying to the holy person, the king? — (He picks the pouch up again) Come and head to Darinen! — You are not cursed. Each ounce is God's blessing and the mother's reward! — Mother's reward? — a pouch of money for a beloved son? — One hand full of dust for one Seliko? — We took care of her stomach and did not think that we were tearing apart her heart: --if she now curses the purchase! — and the fratricidal sellers too! — Do not let it become true, merciful Gods! — —Then, I could become a terrible person out of desperation. Then, I could go to the Whites, be baptized, and also trade in human bodies.

Guberi is haunted by guilt and the painful loss of his brother. He begins to wonder and worry about the possible disapproval of his mother. In this moment of terror, Guberi promises to further punish himself by being baptized (which indicates a conversion to Christianity) and joining forces with white European slavers while being burdened with the death of his brother. This passage portrays the dark-skinned characters as selfless and virtuous in their efforts to provide for their sick and famished mother. The king and the slavers, on the other hand, are portrayed as selfish in their profiteering and immoral ways. Overall, Hagemann shows the *theft* of the *body* and the corresponding horrific conditions during the Middle Passage to be masterminded by white European slavers.

In sum, the five plays discussed in this section articulate the theme of the *theft* of the *body* in distinct ways. Both Nesselrode and Kotzebue, through the eyes of enslaved characters, provide graphic and detailed accounts of the Middle Passage that signify the point of no return and the end of human and social freedoms. In this context, Black African peoples are forcefully transformed into bodies and numbers through the beginnings of commodification set in motion by the violent transatlantic machinery of slavery, which ultimately leads to the formation of the African diaspora (Nesselrode 64; Kotzebue 75). Schmidt highlights the realities of children being stolen away, while Ziegler barely addresses Toni's *theft* of the *body*. Finally, Hagemann portrays Europeans and light-skinned Black Africans as working together regarding the *theft* of the *body*. As we can see, these works were very descriptive and presented their readers with explicit and detailed accounts of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. This included descriptions of enslaved Africans on slave ships, as well as accounts of how violence was enacted based on but oftentimes also regardless of the sex of the slaves. For example, female slaves were more often raped and forced to bear

children for their slave masters and male slaves were frequently beaten on the plantations as they worked. But sometimes, male slaves were also raped,[176] and some women were expected to labor as hard as the men (Spillers 207).

According to Spillers, both male and female Black African slaves were victims of unbearable brutality and thus experienced *externalized* torture, which is often associated with gendered male violence exerted by other males (207). For this reason, both female and male captives had to endure the horrors of this theft, which resulted in numerous deaths on the way to the New World. Nesselrode confirms this through his character Zamor, who states that "Leuten beiderley Geschlechts" (people of both sexes) had been captured, dragged, and starved during the Middle Passage (61-64). As mentioned before, two female captives were mercilessly devoured by other captives who were suffering from starvation. This represents the dehumanization of the enslaved, brought on by the inhumane and horrific domain of the conditions on slave ships (Nesselrode 64). It further demonstrates the loss of humanity alongside gender, which came to a climax after the Middle Passage and resulted in captured Black Africans no longer *being* for and to themselves. In accordance with this, readers are exposed to the details and dynamics of commodified bodies through depictions of what slavers looked for in the physical body and stature of slaves, which will be further illustrated in the following discussion.

[176] While both female and male slaves were sexually abused by male slave owners, there is less scholarship that corroborates the latter.

New Dynamics: Hortense Spillers's *Being* for and to the Captor

The treatment of Black African bodies in everyday plantation life exemplifies Spillers's understanding of the enslaved as being thingified: "It [the captive body] is reduced to a thing, to *being* for the captor" (206). Thus, the worth of the Black African body is downscaled to lucrative capital on the slave markets. Kotzebue gives examples of the dehumanization of slaves, as he shows the usage of slave children as a substitute for horses that pull the slave master's carriage for his stroll on the plantation (51). The slave master is unconcerned with the children's exposure to heat and his usage of slaves as animals. John, who took over the plantation from his father in *Die Negersklaven,* even refers to his slaves as barely better than dogs (Kotzebue 34). The equating of slave and animal allows for the slave master and overseer to treat the Black African slaves according to their own violent volition, which ties into Spillers's understanding of irreparable high crimes against the flesh that are registered by the enslaved through wounding (206).

Here, Spillers's distinction between "body" and "flesh" is essential for comprehending the difference between captive and liberated subject positions. Spillers identifies the violence inflicted once being captured:

> Before the "body" there is the "flesh," that zero degree of social conceptualization that does not escape concealment under the brush of discourse or the reflexes of iconography. Even though the European hegemonies stole bodies — some of them female — out of West African communities in concert with the African "middleman," we regard this human and social irreparability as high crimes against the *flesh,* as the person of African females and males registered the wounding. If we think of the "flesh" as a primary narrative, then we mean its seared, divided, ripped-apartness, riveted to the ship's hole, fallen, or "escaped" overboard. (Spillers 206; emphasis added)

Spillers's account of this loss of humanity, stripped all the way to the flesh, while it is still attached to the bones of the captive subject-position, explicitly details the magnitude of

torture endured by Black African peoples during and after the Middle Passage. This concept is extensively taken up in *Die Negersklaven*, which describes conditions such as severe lashings, the necessity of protecting oneself from snakes and dogs, and being brutally cut open for having failed to properly attend to the melting of the sugar:

> M. Kn. Ich habe dem alten Benno den Rücken aufhauen, und Salz und spanischen Pfeffer hineinstreuen lassen. . . . John. . . . warum befahlst [sic] du nicht ihn aufzuwinden [?] . . . M. Kn. War nicht nöthig. Die Feuerglut, bey [sic] welcher er ewig schwizt, hat ihn so ausgedörrt, daß [sic] bey jedem Hiebe die Haut sich von den Knochen löst, wie die Schaale [sic] von einer Kaffeebohne. (Kotzebue 25-26, 46-48, 51, 58-60) [177]

The historian Michael Gomez discusses the development of the African diaspora in *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora: New Approaches to African History* (2005). Here, he addresses the whip, which is also present in *Die Negersklaven*, as being employed everywhere. Kotzebue and Nesselrode each describe similar scenarios that speak to the inhumane treatment of Black African bodies on plantations after the Middle Passage. The general day-to-day treatment of Black African slaves in Nesselrode's account is illustrated through the neighboring plantation that houses 3,000 enslaved Black Africans and the richest slaveholders in Jamaica. In this description, slave food is compared to that of pigs, which Thompson, a visiting British merchant on Sir Germin's plantation, comments on with utter disgust and disgrace. He disapproves of this treatment, saying, "Pfui der Schande" (Ah, the shame) (Nesselrode 14). The slaves on Sir Germin's neighboring plantation are used to replace horses by being spanned in front of the plough to plant seeds and are frequently slaughtered like livestock (42). In comparison to Kotzebue's text, Nesselrode's accounts of

[177] Master farmhand. I lashed old Benno's back and had salt and Spanish pepper sprinkled on the wound. . . . John. . . . why did you not demand him to be hoisted up[?] . . . Master farmhand. It was not necessary. The hot fire in which he sweated dried him out so much that each strike removed the skin from the bone, like the peel of a coffee bean.

the violence inflicted on slaves are not as frequent and detailed because the plot mainly takes place on Sir Germin's plantation. The horrors are said to happen at the neighboring plantation that Thompson reportedly visited only once. The neighboring plantation belongs to Jarvis and Levson (Nesselrode 13).

Ziegler also describes similar incidents that happened on plantations, including when the female Black African freed slave Toni shares her experiences on a plantation in "Amerika" (Ziegler 44). She describes constant malnourishment and exhaustive physical labor to have been the order of the day. She further mentions the hot temperatures and the plantation labor to have overwhelmed her at times, which she was punished for "mit der Peitsche brachte ein Mensch den andern [sic] in's Leben zurück" (Ziegler 44). [178] Like in Nesselrode's descriptions, Toni compares her enslavement to the life of an animal. In fact, she envies the neighbor's dog: "Oft habe ich die Hunde unsers [sic] Nachbars [sic] um die Nahrung und die Liebe beneidet, die ihnen von ihrem Herrn wurde [sic]" (44). [179] While using words such as "Härte" (harshness) and "Grausamkeit" (cruelty), Ziegler does not give much insight into Toni's enslavement, which may be due to her liberation and because her enslavement is not the focal point of the story.

Similarly, Schmidt portrays Jernrs as happily liberated and traveling with his white German friend Bernhard from Magdeburg, whom Jernrs considers a close comrade. Jernrs alludes just once to physical labor and mistreatment (Schmidt 32). He explains his misery to have commenced after having been purchased by a Dutch merchant: "Arbeiten mußte ich,

[178] With the whip, one human brought another back to life.

[179] I often envied our neighbor's dog for the food and love it was provided by its master.

daß [sic] mir das Blut aus den Nägeln sprütze [sic]" (32).[180] There are no other accounts of being brutally mistreated, but Schmidt implies that Jernrs had potentially been starved or fed rotten food, as often illustrated in slave plays. Jernrs describes himself as "Mein Fleisch war von meinem Gesicht wie verschwunden, und die Augen lagen mir so tief im Kopfe, daß [sic] ein Vogel in der Höhle ganz bequem ein Nest hätte bauen können" (33).[181] This analogy is emblematic of Schmidt's literary writing style, which employs metaphors and other imagery to provide a powerful portrayal of slavery and Jernrs's experiences in Philadelphia. Schmidt does not show or address prolonged suffering and beatings. However, he does address the thingification that slaves experience through descriptions of Jernrs being sold and purchased like livestock. Jernrs is revealed to have been captured by Portuguese men who then sold him to the Dutch merchant for "54 Gulden" (54 guilders, currency) (32). As an object and property, Jernrs is talked and bargained about at the same time that he is being a passive and powerless "bystander" over his own body, as demonstrated in the following: "Er verlangte meinen Herrn zu sprechen und ich führte ihn zu ihm. Wie hoch wollen Sie mit dem Buben hinaus? redete er meinen Herrn an. 200 Gulden war seine Antwort. Ich gebe Ihnen eine Mandel Diamanten, wo eine mehr werth seyn soll denn die ganze Summe, erwiederte der Fremde. Ein Handschlag machte den Handel richtig" (Schmidt 34).[182]

Hagemann also shows Black African individuals as commodified *beings* of no particular worth on the coast of Guinea as a result of European machinations. Johnson and

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[180] I had to work until the blood sprayed from my nails.

[181] My flesh had almost disappeared from my face, and my eyes were set so deeply in my head that a bird could have comfortably built a nest in the hollow space.

[182] He demanded to speak to my master and I led him there. How much do you want for the boy? He asked my master. 200 guilders, he responded. I shall give you diamonds, of which one shall be worth more than the entire amount, the stranger responded. A handshake concluded the trade.

Ducheaux imply that the king of Dahomai will trade in a certain number of slaves for a bottle of brandy or a poodle (47):

> Johnson. . . . . Ich besitze noch einen Vorrath [sic] starken Branntwein; der König von Dahomai ist Liebhaber davon, und hat viele Gefangene; vielleicht vertrinkt er ein Paar Dutzend Schwarze.
> Ducheaux. Sie werden lachen, wenn sie meine Speculation [sic] hören.
> Johnson. Das Schachspiel?
> Ducheaux. Ach, da muß [sic] ich doch immer bares Geld gegen Menschen setzen! Sie kennen doch meinen Monsieur?
> Johnson. Ihren Pudel, der so schön apportirt [sic]?
> Ducheaux. die [sic] braune Majestät von Dahomai ist von seinen Künsten ganz entzückt, aber unter zehn Neger geb ich ihn nicht weg. (Hagemann 47)[183]

Comparing or equating Black African slaves to animals, in particular dogs, is prevalent in many of the slave plays and speaks to the low status of dogs in the eighteenth-century German literary tradition.

Further addressing the commodification and transformation into *beings* for the slave trader in Africa, Hagemann demonstrates the selection process for suitable slaves. He shows the biggest and strongest Black African males to be the most lucrative slave material (Hagemann 18). Hagemann describes the specifics, including age and stature, to be taken into account, which highlights the commodification of Black African peoples:

> Ducheaux. Johnson, haben sie in ihrem Leben einen Neger von solcher Größe, von solchem Wuchs gesehn [sic]?
> Johnson. Passirt [sic]! Wenn er fetter wäre, machte er eine respectable Figur.
> Ducheaux. Wie alt?
> Seliko. Achtzehn Jahr.
> Ducheaux. Der tausend!
> Johnson. Das glaub ich kaum.
> Ducheaux. Nun bei meiner Ehre. Der kann ein schwarzer Riese werden.

[183] Johnson. I still own a supply of spirits; The king of Dahomai is a connoisseur of it and he has many prisoners. Perhaps, he will drink until he owes us a few dozen Blacks. Ducheaux. You will laugh if you hear my speculation. Johnson: The chess game? Ducheaux. Oh, there, you always have to bet cash money against people! You know my monsieur? Johnson: your poodle that plays fetch so wonderfully?
Ducheaux: The brown majesty of Dahomai is quite enthralled by his skills, but I will not give him away for fewer than 10 Blacks.

> Johnson. (betastet ihn.) Der Knochenbau nicht schlecht! — Die Brust gut gewölbt! Der Athem [sic] nicht kurz! — das Fleisch fest! — Wollen sie ihn kaufen? (Hagermann 51)[184]

In this context, Hagemann illustrates slave suffering in the New World from the perspective of Seliko's and Guberi's imaginations; they have not experienced slavery via the Middle Passage into the New World. Rather, they comment on slavery based on their observations of slavers in Africa. In their understanding, slavery lasts at least forty years and the enslaved are used as a substitute for an animal—beaten, worked day in and day out, starved, and offered leftover dog feed during that time:

> Guberi. In eine Sclaverey [sic], die vierzig Jahr dauern kann. . . .
> Seliko. . . . aber deswegen kann ich ja doch noch an die 40 Jahre dienen. . . . Du sollst mich zu allem brauchen. Ich will dein Lastthier [sic] seyn [sic] und nicht besser, — ach, ich will nicht mahl [sic] so gut gehalten seyn [sic]. . . . Du sollst mich mit Füßen treten, und ich will dazu lächeln. Arbeiten will ich vom Aufgang der Sonne, biß [sic] sie wieder untergeht, und mir nicht so viel Zeit nehmen, mir den Schweis [sic] abzutrocknen, oder meine Thränen [sic]. . . . Sieh ich will gern nichts essen, als die Brocken, die deine Hunde liegen lassen! — Ich brauche nur einen Lappen zu meinem Kleide. (Hagemann 19, 52-54) [185]

While this description alludes to the horrors of slavery in the New World, it also presents somewhat of a romanticized picture of slavery.

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[184] Ducheaux. Johnson, have you ever seen a Negro of this size, of such stature?
Johnson. It happens. If he were fatter, he would make a respectable figure.
Ducheaux. How old?
Seliko. Eighteen years old.
Ducheaux. The thousand!
Johnson. Hardly.
Ducheaux. I swear on my honor. He can become a Black giant.
Johnson. (touching him) The bone structure is not bad! — The chest is well developed! The breath is not short! —The flesh is firm! — Do you want to buy him?

[185] Guberi. Slavery that may last 40 years.
Seliko. . . . And for this reason, I may serve close to 40 years. . . . You should use me for anything. I will be your pack animal — oh, I should not even be kept that well. . . . You should kick me with your feet and I shall smile about it. I shall work from when the sun rises until it sets, and not even take the time to wipe my sweat, or my tears. . . . See, and I shall not eat but what your dogs leave over! — I shall only need a rag as my clothes.

Seliko believes that he would be working for forty years, which implies that there would be some form of a contractual agreement that would allow him to "quit" or be released from his "duties" after serving his slave master for this amount of years. This monologue does not address the reality of many slaves dying during their work on plantations due to brutality at the hands of planters or overseers, as well as due to exhaustion and sickness. Seliko is not aware of the magnitude of slave labor, indicated by his reference to not wanting any food but the leftovers of plantation dogs. He is oblivious to the reality of needing proper nourishment and garments in order to perform work on the plantation in the heat. However, in the context of the portrayal of plantation slavery in these slave plays, there are commonalities in how some of these authors imagine slavery to have been conducted. In the following section, I will discuss how white supremacist ideologies and other discourses of slavery were used to separate enslaved Black Africans from notions of humanity.

Social Death: Orlando Patterson's Transformational Paradigms of Slavery

African captives are often portrayed as grateful and content with being slaves to their masters, especially illustrated by Nesselrode's *Zamor und Zoraide* and Schmidt's *Die Kette des Edelmuths*, but they are commodified through the general erasure of their humanity. This dehumanizing paradigm was mainly based on skin color, which was understood to be the single marker of servitude (Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* 58). Cultural sociologist Orlando Patterson examines the rituals and marks that manifest the transformation and complete assumption into slavery by four crucial features: (1) symbolic rejection; (2) changing the slave's name; (3), the imposition of a visible mark of servitude; and (4) a new status in the household in his seminal 1982 work *Slavery and Social Death* (52).

Patterson identifies slaves as a category of persons treated as property and occupying a subcategory of human proprietary objects (*Slavery and Social Death* 21). Particularly, Patterson deems claims and powers with respect to a person, thing, or action as more suitable because the master possesses all these in regard to his slaves (*Slavery and Social Death* 22). Patterson establishes the relationship between slave and slave master as one in which the slave lacks honor (*Slavery and Social Death* 26). This condition allows the slave master to treat his slave as he wishes. The master has absolute power over his property/slave (Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* 26). This total power over the bodies of enslaved Africans is evinced by the sexual abuse toward female slaves discussed above. In this context, slaves — male and female — entered into a relationship with the slave master that was a substitute for death, which would be the outcome of their lack of submission (Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* 26).

Yet the slave master needed the authorization of his community to assume sovereign power over another (Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* 35). This can also be said for plantation slavery in the New World that made absentee ownership possible. Plantation owners and slave masters had absolute power over their slaves, even when they were away. Their position of power was sanctioned by their communities and maintained through the full assumption of the slaves into the masters' households, which often operated as if they were present. This was mainly possible through the institutionalization of the slave master relationship, which represents what Patterson calls "Gewaltverhältnis" (relationship of violence) as part of the natural normative order (Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* 36). This order became part of the law under which the master was treated an authority with a lawful right to dominate his slave. This domination is practiced through the desocialization and depersonalization of the slave, who was socially dead (Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* 38).

Social negation was the first phase of enslavement. This social death was irrevocable and was followed by an introduction into the community of the slave master as a nonbeing (Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* 44). Similar to Spillers' theory of the slave as the captor's *being* (206), slaves were reduced to a thing of no actual worth to the slave master because they could easily be replaced. At the same time, in my understanding, Spillers alludes to the fact that one, the slave, is only *being* as in existing for the captor. Gomez asserts that the low costs of procuring slaves made it simply easier to exchange "enslaved workers with new recruits rather than promote stable families and strategies of reproduction in the islands" (88). The slave had no other function than to work for the slave master as part of his household and was therefore regarded as a commodity with no human attributes. Kotzebue demonstrates human commodification and the loss of all human attributes when William and John converse:

> Will. — Sage mir Bruder, hälst du deine Sklaven für Menschen?
> John. Ich behandle sie wie Menschen.
> Will. (spöttisch) Würklich [sic]?
> John. Ich gebe ihnen zu essen und zu trinken.
> Will. Das giebst [sic] du deinen Hunden auch.
> John. Sie sind auch nicht viel besser als Hunde. (Kotzebue 33-34) [186]

Being considered the slave master's object and property rather than a human being sets the process of social death in motion (Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* 51). Patterson elaborates more specifically on the rituals and marks that fully transform Africans into slaves, which falls under the category of social death. Patterson lists the following features: "[F]irst, the

[186] Will. – Tell me brother, do you consider your slaves human?
John. I treat them like humans.
Will. (mockingly) Really?
John. I provide them with food and drink.
Will. You do the same for your dogs.
John. They are not much better than dogs.

symbolic rejection by the slave of his past and his former kinsmen; second, a change of name; third, the imposition of some visible mark of servitude; and last, the assumption of a new status in the household or economic organization of the master" (*Slavery and Social Death* 52).

A slave's past is completely rejected and disassociated from his current life as a slave when he enters into a relation with a slave master. The enslaved African is no longer considered a human and is therefore treated according to the volition of the slave master. Based on this notion, it is logical that neither John nor the king of Dahomai are concerned with Ada's or Berißa's past lives that entail their marriages and thus true commitments to Zameo and Seliko. Ada and Berißa take the position of sexual objects whose purpose is to fully submit to their slave masters, irrespective of their statuses as already married women. This ignorance is also present among the other enslaved Black Africans who are aware of John's callousness and thus exemplified in the following quote: "Truro. Kann er dich retten? Bist du doch nicht eines Königs Weib, das zu berühren nach unsern [sic] Sitten den Tod verdient" (Kotzebue 15).[187] This ignorance is also visible when the overseer, Paul, clarifies the irrelevance of any familial ties that Africans may want to trace or pursue once they have entered into a relation with their slave master: "M. Kn. Bin ich denn nur da, um euch zu antworten? Wenn ich mich mit jedem Sklaven in ein Gespräch über seine Familie einlassen wollte, so würde die Pflanzung halb zu Grunde gehen" (Kotzebue 29).[188] Paul's attitude is

[187] Truro. Can he save you? You are not the wife of a king, touching whom would mean death according to our customs.

[188] M. Kn. Am I only here to answer to you? If I wanted to enter a discussion with every slave about his family, the plantation would soon be half destroyed.

indicative of the enslaved African being the slave master's property now, which requires that all ties to the past be simultaneously relinquished.

Nesselrode illustrates this very condition in his description of Zamor. Being auctioned off along with other enslaved African bodies demonstrates the commodification of West African peoples and the loss of humanity because Zamor is introduced into the community of the slave master as a nonbeing. In this, "Zamor" no longer exists. He is now turned into property that the slave master exerts power over (Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* 26). In that sense, Zamor was renamed and baptized (Nesselrode 62).

> Zamor. Wir wurden gleich darauf ganz getrennt ich wurde einem Kaufmann verkauft, der ein Italiäner [sic] von Geburt war, und meine Braut war schon vorhin an einen Spanier verkauft worden. der [sic] Italiäner zwange mich mit der grösten [sic] Marter und Pein mich taufen zu lassen; und ein Mann mit einem geschornen [sic] Kopf und langen schwarzen Rock gosse mir Wasser auf den Kopf, ohne daß [sic], ohne daß [sic] ich wuste [sic] warum, auser [sic], daß [sic] mir mein Herr sagte: ich sey nunmehro [sic] ein Kind der Seeligkeit, man nannte mich Johannes, da ich aber darnach [sic] an einen Engländer verkauft wurde, nannte man mich Jones; in den Geheimnissen der Religion hat man mich aber nie unterrichtet, ich habe dahero [sic] noch immer die Religion meiner Väter gehalten, ich glaube an Orissa [sic], der Belohner des Guten und Bestrafer des Bösen, und dies ist ja auch der Christen Gott; aber welche Belohung können sie hoffen, die, die ihren Nebenmenschen verfolgen? (Nesselrode 62)[189],[190]

[189] We were soon separated, and I was sold to a merchant, who was an Italian by birth, and my wife had already been sold to a Spaniard. To my greatest distress and pain, the Italian forced me to be baptized: and a man with a shaved head without me knowing why, except that my master told me: I was now a child of bliss, they named me Johannes, but I was never instructed in the secrets of the religion, which I why I have held on to the religion of my fathers, I believe in Orissa, the rewarder of good and punisher of evil and this is the same as the Christian God; but what reward can those expect who pursue others?

[190] Emmanuel Bolaji Idowu defines Òrìṣà to be the generic name for divinities among the Yoruba peoples (59). Harold Courlander identifies this term to refer to innumerable Gods and heroes in the Yoruba tradition (5). He mentions this term to include a variety of Gods "ranging from the original and supreme sky deity . . . to the local protective deities of regions, towns and villages" (5). Idowu states that the term Òrìṣà was first utilized in identifying the arch-divinity in the Yorubaland. Here, myth has it that the arch-divinity among others descended into the world in order to complete functions assigned by the Supreme being Olodumare (Idowu 59). Courlander mentions the creation of dry land by Obatala as having made the descendance of Òrìṣàs in the worldly plane possible (5). Because there exist an exorbitant number of Òrìṣàs, there exist different hierarchies and categorizations, too. There are Òrìṣàs who command the elements, those who appear in cases of accident and uncertainty, and those who are believed to have existed since the beginning of time, such as Obatala (in the Ife context referred to as Oduduwa) (Courlander 6-7). The "lesser" Òrìṣàs, however, have been bestowed with

Having been renamed, Zamor is introduced as Jones, the leader of the slave revolt. On Sir Germin's plantation, however, he is reunited with his wife and has his identity "reinstated." Sir Germin's positionality as a "good and generous" plantation owner allows for this peaceful reunion. In addition to this, Sir Germin is also reunited with his long-lost son, Karl, who was abducted and missing for many years. It turns out that Karl was a "slave" to Mahmud's father for eight years. Karl states that he was loved and treated like a son while he loved Mahmud's father like a father. To this extent, the ending can be interpreted as a larger family reunion in which white and Black people extend love and friendship to each other regardless of their skin color.

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limited gifts and are therefore of service to human beings in terms of issues with fertility, protection from enemies, and assuring good health, to mention a few (Courlander 6). Courlander notes that minor Òrìṣàs are barely distinguishable from a category of beings who are less than orishas but more than humans. And this category of beings, in turn, leads into the order of epic human heroes and other persons who have performed memorable deeds (Courlander 6).

While Òrìṣà is exclusively used to refer to divinities and isn't a suitable form for ordinary spirits, the term can, however, also be given to humans (Idowu 61). In this case, it would only befit a king to be called or referred to as an Òrìṣà, which indicates that this king has been ordained and thus has received the authority for his reign from the divinities and, ultimately, the supreme deity. This means that as king, one is considered to be a solidified "symbol of the theocratic government of the world" (Idowu 61). In those instances, when referring to human beings in the form of kings, then the term Ibikeji Òrìṣà is used, which means Deputy Òrìṣà (Idowu 61). While they are still primarily divinities, Idowu mentions that Òrìṣà usually "brings to mind the image of beings with personal, if not physical, certainly anthropomorphous, qualities which make them individual realities to their worshippers and qualify them for their functions in the world of men. The conception of their anthropomorphous qualities is well substantiated in some of the myths which represent a good many of them as culpably too much like human beings in waywardness!" (61).

Courlander adds to Idowu's discussion by stating that there is reason to believe that Òrìṣà Gods were not invented, but rather existed in the form of former rulers of ancient kingdoms or even people who had immensely contributed good deeds and acts of distinction such that they were ultimately seen and conceived of as deities after their demise (7). Here, Courlander refers to Moremi, who protected her city from raiders, as well as a local medium, who had financially contributed to his town and was considered a benefactor (7). Based on this discussion, it may very well be the case that Zamor is actually referring to a famous and distinguished ruler who is conceived of as deified. However, that would ultimately also mean that this very ruler has died, which sets the process in motion to be deified and considered as such. For this reason, it is more plausible that Zamor is actually refering to the supreme being, which is also considered an Òrìṣà God, according to Courlander. Zamor describes this divinity as overarching and ever-present rather than just commanding the elements or assuring and protecting one's harvest. Therefore, it is very likely that Zamor refers to a supreme being when we talk about "Orissa," which could be Obatala or Oduduwa, depending on his ethnic affiliation.

This supposedly loving reunion disguises the fact that there is still a clear difference between Black and white people. Whereas Karl is described as having lived with Mahmud's father as a "slave," he was not expected to partake in any hard or forced labor on a plantation. Karl does not even qualify as an enslaved white laborer and individual in the sense of the serfdom that was widely practiced in Europe, especially in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. There is no labor relationship mentioned or spoken of. The slaves on Sir Germin's plantation, however, are in one way or another being exploited. This exploitation happens despite his nice and friendly behavior toward his slaves. Moreover, it occurs regardless of whether the slaves work there as laborers who are paid low wages or compensated by being able to reside on the plantation. The fact of the exploitation remains.

Although Nesselrode portrays Sir Germin as a generous and charitable individual, the conditions the enslaved live under still constitute exploitation. This constellation highlights the inherent colonial paternalism of slavery because the reading and watching audiences are being misled into thinking that Sir Germin takes on the role of a father and cares for his slaves. However, this treatment is only considered sufficient in an ameliorationist understanding and in comparison, to the brutal treatment that other slaves have been experiencing within the play. Admittedly, while ameliorationist approaches exist along the wide spectrum of abolition, I argue that these approaches are also clearly still within the institution of slavery. They uphold white supremacist and paternalist structures and are nowhere near emancipation (Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism* 68). This paternalist relationship is ultimately what has kept Sir Germin, his family, and his plantation in business and in good standing, although the simple fact remains that his wealth and existence is built and founded on slave labor, regardless of any embellishments presented by Nesselrode.

Throughout the play, Nesselrode suggests a view of human relations that is not based on blood lines. This heartfelt bond of human relations is an additional measure to distract the reading and watching audiences from the exploitative conditions portrayed. Hence, slaves often refer to Sir Germin as father and a father figure (50, 56, 68). Sir Germin refers to Mahmud as his son on a few occasions and often calls his slaves children (35, 50, 77). This constellation presents and reinforces the problematic colonial trope of Black inferiority through white paternalism. Sir Germin's behavior is indicative of a sense of duty toward his slaves. This duty typifies the relationship between a father and his children—it is a father's responsibility to take care of his children and raise them according to noble and societal standards in order for them to become productive members of society. The only requirement here is that there exists a need for colonial education, guidance of adult Black Africans which in turn confirms African inferiority as an innate phenomenon. Thus, proper white Western male education is needed to correct African behavior to be accepted as productive part of society in the sense of fitting in and having a place in society. This place has been carved out by slavers and planters such as Sir Germin and is validated as well as reciprocated through slave responses.

Ultimately, this constellation allows for Sir Germin to be characterized as noble, selfless and most of all superior while it continuously and permanently keeps Black African slaves from self-actualization and rising in station as human beings independent of slavery and slaveholders. This indicates Spillers's concept of being and/or existing for the master/captor as the master eventually and only benefits from this arrangement. The slaves accept and solidify this constellation through considering Sir Germin a father figure that they are not only grateful for but also willing to give their life for. Sir Germin is convinced that his adult slaves cannot live on their own due to being inferior which is the reason he

highlights not to leave his slaves alone when he offers to manumit his slaves: "Germin. Gerne Freunde. Kinder macht euch alles mögliche Vergnügen, ich lasse euch nicht allein alle Freiheit" (Nesselrode 126).[191] His slaves affirm this colonial hierarchy once again by insisting on staying with him (126).

In the end, it is clear that both positions feed off each other, which allows for an interpretation of this relationship in the context of the West Indian philosopher Frantz Fanon's (1925-1961) use of the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's master-slave dialectic in Fanon's book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Here, Fanon discusses the concept of attaining self-consciousness through recognition by another as essential to "being" in the sense of actively existing as a human (216). One's "being" and thus reality depends on being recognized by another. Fanon writes, "Man is human only to the extent to which he tries to impose his existence on another man in order to be recognized by him. . . . It is that other being in whom that meaning of his life is condensed" (216-17). For this reason, both sides are required to act toward each other to be recognized and to avoid a bare and meaningless existence "sealed into thingness" (Fanon 217-18). A struggle for recognition ensues; reluctantly recognizing the other signifies opposition. Fanon identifies recognition without a struggle as pointing to not having attained true and independent self-consciousness (219).

In this context, one could see Sir Germin's slaves as having recognized, assumed, and accepted their position, which suggests a dependency or even a reciprocity. Sir Germin takes on the positionality of imperial Europe having imposed its being on that of the enslaved Black Africans, represented by his slaves. They recognize this arrangement without

[191] Germin. You're welcome, friends. Kids, make merry. I will not leave you alone in freedom.

a fight, which allows Sir German (again, acting like imperial Europe) to self-actualize and attain self-consciousness in the form of superiority: "One day the White Master, *without conflict*, recognized the Negro slave" (Fanon 217). Thus, Sir Germin ultimately has power over his slaves regardless of his kindness, because there will always be one side that has reached self-consciousness over the other. The offer of manumission can be read as a concession on Sir Germin's part but, again, still demonstrates the power dynamic in terms of the master-slave dialectic. This is therefore reflective of Fanon's analysis of how "the Negro steeped in the inessentiality of servitude was set free by his master. He did not fight for his freedom. . . . The white man is a master who has allowed his slaves to eat at his table" (219).

The collection of human relations without bloodlines further resonates with views expressed in publications by Enlightenment scholars such as Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840). As discussed in Chapter 1, in his treatise *Über die natürlichen Verschiedenheiten im Menschengeschlechte* (1775), Blumenbach argues for a common origin of humanity, which would serve as a valid scientific reason to oppose slavery. His contemporary and writer of the preface to his book, Johann Gottfried Gruber (1774–1851), introduces Blumenbach's work as trying to prove a common origin while also associating it with an awakening of slave traders: "Und es gab noch immer Mittel, die Sklavenhändler . . . aus ihrem Schlummer zu erwecken. . . . Unter den mancherley [sic] Gelehrten von verschiedenen Nationen, welche die Einheit des Menschengeschlechts zu vertheidigen [sic] suchten . . . trat unter uns auch Herr Hofrath Blumenbach auf" (Gruber in Blumenbach, *Über die natürlichen Verschiedenheiten im Menschengeschlechte* VIII-IX).[192]

[192] And there were always means, to wake the slave traders . . . from their slumber. . . . Among the multifariously educated from various nations, who sought to defend mankind . . . Mr. Hofrath Blumenbach also emerged.

Blumenbach was certain that once a common origin was proven and spread, people would be less likely to continue to engage in slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Humanity was bound as one by science, so these practices would essentially mean enslaving one another. Blumenbach considered his studies to be a substantial push toward ultimately abolishing slavery and the transatlantic slave trade because nobody would want to enslave their next of kin (Junker 98-100). In this, he ended his treatise by stating: "Und eben dieser unmerkliche [sic] Uibergang [sic], durch welchen auch andere Racen, wie wir gesehen haben, in einander fließen, führt uns endlich nach einer Vergleichung mit dem, was in den vorigen Abschnitten dieses Werks. . . : 'daß [sic] nämlich unstreitig alle bisher bekanntgewordene Abarten des Menschen nur zu Einer und derselben Gattung gehören['] " (Blumenbach, *Über die natürlichen Verschiedenheiten* 224).[193] Blumenbach's viewpoint is especially echoed by Zamor, who claims: "Du und ich wir sind alle Brüder! Orissa ist unser aller Vater! Wir sind alle von einer Herkunft und wenn wir todt sind, denn sind wir gewesen, unsre [sic] Knochen sind alle von einer Farbe, sie unterscheiden keinen Stand mehr" (Nesselrode 57).[194]

Directed toward the future, Nesselrode strategically allows for a reconciliation through Zamor's words. This character's journey is reflective of the inhumane treatment of Black bodies during slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. Zamor's positionality as wounded flesh, in Spillers's theory of violence inflicted on Black slaves, signifies a powerful viewpoint of equality between Europeans and slaves without the option of retaliation. Zamor perpetuates an idealistic narrative of egalitarianism that seems immediately attainable

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[193] And it is just this imperceptible transition through which other races we have seen flow into each other which leads us to a comparison that was described in a previous part of this volume. . . .: 'that all known varieties of man belong to one and the same species.[']

[194] You and I are brothers! Orissa is our father! We all have the same origin and when we are dead, our bones are all of the same color, they are no longer distinguished by status.

within the context of the abolitionist movements toward emancipation. This understanding identifies a new path of togetherness for Black and white people, regardless of race and nationality. His words carry weight because they openly erase the possibility of engaging with the repercussions and implications of slavery for former Black African slaves and their progeny. In this sense, Black African slaves—here represented by Zamor, among other slaves—do not require white people to acknowledge their crimes and thus take responsibility and express guilt for the establishment of slavery and the trade in slaves.

Through Zamor's words and the overall refusal to accept manumission, Nesselrode hopes to appease Black African slaves and present an outcome of love and friendship between Black and white people when slavery is finally abolished. This idealism not only illustrates a white utopia in terms of wishful imagining of a blameless future, but also romanticizes the institution of slavery and its inhumane principles. It denotes what Fanon envisions as: "Out of slavery the Negro burst into the lists where his masters stood. . . . The Negro has not become a master. When there are no longer slaves, there are no longer masters. . . . The Negro is a slave who has been allowed to assume the attitude of a master. The white man is a master who has allowed his slaves to eat at his table" (21). From here, I turn to an examination of the specific ways Black African female slaves are treated in these narratives when juxtaposed against white women characters from bourgeois backgrounds.

Contrasting Colors: Black African Female Slaves Alongside White Bourgeois Females

Kotzebue's Ada and Nesselrode's Zoraide are portrayed as loyal and faithful wives to their husbands, with whom they lost contact when they were sold into slavery. This is consistent with the depiction of Black African enslaved female characters in a number of plays, where they are presented as virtuous and chaste. These character traits are also given

to white female characters and illustrate a long tradition visible in eighteenth-century German drama, such as with Emilia Galotti in *Emilia Galotti* (1772) and Amalia in *Die Räuber* (1781). In this way, Black African female characters are aligned with white female characters. Their shared gender highlights a shared humanity that speaks to basic humanist principles, expressed in both fiction and nonfiction writing.

Riesche highlights the topic of faithfulness, which by extension speaks to the virtuousness of a woman, as "Zoraide weist in ihrer unbedingten Liebe zu ihrem Mann Zamor, den sie in den Wirren der Versklavung aus den Augen verloren hatte, und in ihrem Widerstand gegen die Avancen eines weißen Mannes zahlreiche Parallelen zu Kotzebues Ada auf" (Riesche 196). Ada and Zoraide are confronted by white men propositioning them. Yet, they are depicted as exclusively longing for their husbands, which demonstrates loyalty, faithfulness, and everlasting love for their Black African male counterparts. For this reason, Zoraide and Ada are determined to face any consequences, including death, to stay true to themselves and by extension their husbands. This way of thinking is indicative of the enlightened ideals that were bestowed upon foreign and non-white characters all the same, according to Riesche:

> "Tugend" und "Natürlichkeit" etwa sind Qualitäten, die im Entstehungszeitraum der Stücke sowohl "der Frau" als auch den außereuropäischen Fremden, vor allem den vermeintlich unzivilisierten Völkern zugeschrieben werden. Aber auch die aufklärerischen Bildungsprojekte bezogen etwa ab der Jahrhundertmitte nicht nur mehr und mehr auch Frauen ein, sondern erklärten, um die gesamte Menschheit zur Humanität zu führen, auch Menschen anderer Kontinente zu Objekten pädagogischer Bemühungen. (128)

The projection of white European female character traits onto non-white characters reflects enlightened ideals that are comparable to those put forth by, for example, the German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803). In Herder's enlightened

understanding, mankind and humanity are conceptually related to one another (Adler 94). In this sense, mankind constitutes the entirety of human individuals—past, present, and future—in terms of physical tangibility. Humanity refers to an attainable and ideal state of mankind and classifies mankind's inherent potential for achieving this ideal of humanity (Adler 94). Drawing on Robert T. Clark, who wrote a detailed 1955 biography of Herder titled *Herder: His Life and Thought*, "'humanity' is both an ideal condition and a definable real quality" (Clark qtd. in Adler 94). Thus, when Herder uses humanity as a quantitative term, it comprises all human beings: "They are all equally endowed with it, as different as their respective development may have been so far" (Adler 104). Herder's view of humanity clearly reflects global equality, which is symbolic of Herder's critiques of slavery, colonization, racism, and ethnocentrism (specifically Eurocentrism). Noyes restates this perspective and notes that it can be viewed as some sort of natural law (8). Herder saw European expansion into the New World in unison with violent enslavement and exploitation as a violation. Accordingly, Herder identifies one single humanity and an array of diverse customs and traditions associated with it (Noyes 8).

Adler describes this as Herder's cultural relativism: Not all humans occupy the same standards, though they are all equal in value (Adler 104). Individual differences come into play because human beings are considered diverse in their very nature, which is representative of variety and cultural differences (Adler 104). Thus, humanity is not exactly the same around the world, yet the potential to attain humanity is equal among all human beings. Adler explains that every human is in possession of the quality of humanity, including all "persons, as well as ethnic groups, regional social organizations, [and] nations" (Adler 104). In this way, Noyes emphasizes Herder's premise that "all cultures need to

develop in the manner that is appropriate for their own particular environment, their history, their traditions and their understanding of the world" (Noyes 8).

A similar outlook on humanity is articulated by Henri Jean-Baptiste Grégoire (1750–1831), also referred to as Abbé Grégoire, who was a French Roman Catholic priest and abolitionist scholar. In his 1808 work *De la littérature des nègres, ou Recherches sur leurs facultés intellectuelles, leurs qualités morales et leur littérature; suivies de Notices sur la vie et les ouvrages des Nègres qui sont distingués dans les Sciences, les Lettres et les Arts*, Grégoire argues for equality among Black and white people by iilustrating cultural achievements by Black African people. In the introduction to the 1996 translation by Jean-François Brière and Thomas Cassirer titled "On the Cultural Achievements of Negroes," the translators describe Grégoire as having ascribed to "universalist and philanthropic principles of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment" in terms of his opinion of humanity and society (Brière and Cassirer in Grégoire xxxii). In this sense, Grégoire argued for an essential unity of humanity and its perfectibility, derived from an understanding of all individuals as children of God. Grégoire deems civilization to be a progress attainable through the inclusion of all forms. Therefore, civilization does not promote diversity because it is in and of itself a process of unification—it ultimately makes people the same and not different. Culturally, humanity becomes one.

Blumenbach's (1754–1830) discussion of African individuals shows striking similarities to Grégoire's. This suggests that Grégoire was heavily influenced by Blumenbach's work. Blumenbach emphatically argues for the unity of humanity regardless of positionality and categorization within his fivefold racial division of mankind, which he describes as arbitrary. It is noteworthy that Blumenbach questions the validity of monogenism versus polygenism, which could also have political implications regarding the legitimacy of slavery (Junker 99). Monogenism was believed to have served as a valid

scientific argument opposing the institution of slavery, which Blumenbach sought to prove (Junker 99). This demonstrates an egalitarian awareness of different cultures and defies a justification of slavery based on African inferiority. Blumenbach surely conceived of his views as being opposed to racism and slavery, which he establishes throughout his works as a common thread. Nonetheless, Blumenbach draws on, echoes, and even confirms scholarship and stereotypical assertions that can be read as racist in nature. Feeding into some of the dominant stereotypical depictions of Black Africans (such as being close in relation to apes) casts an ambiguous light on Blumenbach's viewpoint, which he seemingly intended to be an egalitarian description of humanity. To highlight his findings in favor of Black Africans, Blumenbach illustrates Africans' merits in his 1806 treatise *Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte*. In this, Blumenbach reiterates the scientific unfoundedness of differences, both physically and mentally, between Africans and people of other races based on his observations as well as accounts by scholars, travelers, traders, and explorers worldwide from various time periods.

Both Kotzebue and Nesselrode also seem to speak in favor of a humane treatment of Black African slaves throughout their storylines, which could point to a humanistic perception of equality between Black African slaves and white European individuals—a simplistic understanding of abolition. However, as previously discussed, abolitionist viewpoints did not necessarily propose equality between Black and white people. In fact, often the goal was a humanely run plantation environment to avoid slave revolts, which could have been encouraged and campaigned for among white Europeans by a modest, virtuous, and obedient portrayal of Black African slave characters (Carey 124). This depiction and the very fact that none of the enslaved Black Africans attain liberty and freedom to self-determine, govern, and take control of their lives without white Europeans

in them indicates prejudicial concepts of the rightful condition and placement of Black African peoples in these plays. This is not to say that the ambivalent nature present in abolitionist perspectives may not have carried over to the plots of these plays. They thus genuinely present these Black African characters in a humanistic and universalist manner that still exhibits white paternalist notions.

Hagemann's dark-skinned Black African female character Berißa seems portrayed according to humanistic and universalist standards. Berißa's storyline resembles those of Ada and Zoraide. In this, Berißa is captured, imprisoned, and propositioned by the king of Dahomai, who then gives her "Bedenkzeit" (time to consider/think) to decide whether to officially become his mistress and live in his harem (Hagemann 25, 32). She instantly and fearlessly opts to die, rather than behave immorally by becoming unfaithful to Seliko: "Berißa. Wenn du mich mordest [sic], will ich dich lieben"(Hagemann 27).[195] She chooses death a thousand times ("Den tausendfachen Tod will ich tausendmahl [sic] wählen; dich nie"),[196] while she promises the king of Dahomai that he will only get to hold her in his arms once she has turned into a corpse (29). Her loyalty and respect for Seliko and their relationship is tested when she is asked to drink a cup of what she presumes is poison, which she gladly does, inwardly addressing Seliko beforehand and hoping to meet him in an afterlife: " Berißa. Seliko, deine treue Berißa trinkt dirs [sic] auf unsere Vereinigung zu" (30).[197] Berißa is determined to die to avoid further advances by the king of Dahomai, because she assumes Seliko was captured and murdered. Her character is described as

[195] Berißa. If you murder me, I shall love you.

[196] I shall choose a thousand-fold death one thousand times; never you.

[197] Berißa. Seliko, your faithful Berißa drinks to our reunion.

virtuous and moral throughout the play through phrases such as her being "schuldlos" (without fault), "Oberpriester. . . . Heilkraut . . . unter giftigen Pflanzen,"[198]as well as "righteous" by the king's courtier, who plans to get Berißa executed for not submitting to his king's will (Hagemann 37, 34). Berißa welcomes the courtier's efforts because she wants to die: "Mit einem dankbaren Lächeln werde ich sterben, dieß [sic] Lächeln wird die Leiche behalten, und dich segnen" (40). [199]

Berißa awaits and hopes for her death when Seliko suddenly enters the scene. She then begs for his life to be spared but still wishes for herself to die for love and her moral values: "Für ihn Gnade, für mich nicht, für ihn, für ihn!" (80). [200] In light of the overall depiction of this character, Berißa should be considered among the portrayal of virtuous, faithful, and loyal women such as Ada and Zoraide. Similarly, loyal and faithfully holding on to her former life and marriage, Zoraide is introduced as melancholic and depressed due to the loss of her husband: "Aber für mich ist keine Freude mehr . . . Todt! — Todt, ganz todt! alles ist todt für mich . . . den zärtlichsten aller Männer, meinen geliebten Zamor . . . in jenen Gefilden der Ewigkeit, in der Stäte [sic] des heiligsten aller Heiligen, dort! — dort werden wir nicht mehr getrennet [sic]" (Nesselrode 19-20). [201] Zoraide's depressed state of mind causes suicidal tendencies that are associated with not seeing her husband again, who she previously thought had been murdered. This is proven by her almost taking her own life

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[198] A medicinal herb . . . among poisonous plants.

[199] I shall die with a grateful smile; my corpse will bear this smile and bless you with it.

[200] Mercy for him, not for me, for him, for him.

[201] But for me, there is no more joy. . . . Death! --- Dead, it is all dead! Everything is dead to me. . . . the most affectionate of all men, my beloved Zamor. . . . who is in the realms of eternity, in the most sacred place of all, there! – there, we will no longer be separated.

rather than being taken advantage of by another man. In this, Sir Germin explains that he bought Zoraide from a Spaniard, who wanted

> durch Gewalt dasjenige von ihr erhalten wollte, das sie nur ihrem geliebten Zamor zugedacht hatte. Ganz entkräftet traf ich sie an dem Ufer des Meeres mit einem Messer in der Hand an, mit dem sie sich gegen den erhitzen Spanier schüzte [sic]. . . . Sie sollte hier das Opfer seiner Ausgelassenheit werden; sie würde es auch endlich geworden seyn [sic]. . . . Ich stieß den Spanier zurück. . . . Ich bote [sic] ihm Geld für sie, und er überließ [sic] mir sie gegen sehr hohen Preiß [sic]. (Nesselrode 15-16) [202]

This demonstrates Zoraide's utmost respect and loyalty toward her wedded husband and the holy bond of matrimony.

Likewise, in Kotzebue's *Die Negersklaven*, Ada asks to be killed by her husband, Zameo (128). Like Zoraide and Berißa, Ada would rather die than be taken advantage of. She considers her death the best-case scenario to spare her husband's life and preserve her honor by staying faithful to her husband. She feels strongly about her convictions and thus convinces Zameo to kill her before taking his own life in the first ending of the play. This devotion and determination are highlighted throughout the last pages of the play (127-137), which portray Ada as weary of life as she cries out to Zameo:

> Ada. (sich an ihn schmiegend) Laß uns sterben! . . . Ich fordere die größte Wohlthat von dir! [g]ieb [sic] mir den Tod! [d]en Tod von deiner Hand! . . . Rette mich! [me]in Gatte! [m]ein Geliebter! erbarme dich meiner Angst! [e]s ist der lezte [sic] Augenblick, in welchem die Liebe handeln darf! er kehrt nie zurück! nimm dieses Messer und stoße es mir in die Brust! . . . O Zameo! fasse Muth [sic]! laß als dein treues Weib mich sterben! (127-29)[203]

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[202] to receive from her by force, what was only meant for her beloved Zamor. Exhausted, I met her at the shore with a knife in her hand, which she used to protect herself from the heated Spaniard. . . . She was to be the victim of his exuberance, and she would have been. . . . I pushed the Spaniard backward. . . . I offered him money for her, and he sold her to me at a very high price.

[203] Ada (nestling closely to him). Let us die! . . . I ask of you the greatest relief! Give me death! Death by your hand! . . . Save me! My husband! My beloved! Have mercy in light of my fear! This is the last moment in which we can act on love! It will never return! Take this knife and push it into my chest! . . . Oh Zameo! Be brave! Let me die a faithful woman!

Ada is prepared to die at the hands of her husband, Zameo, who does eventually kill her. Kotzebue shows that both characters make the ultimate sacrifice for love and moral values.

The ending of Kotzebue's *Die Negersklaven* resonates with Lessing's bourgeois tragedy *Emilia Galotti* (1772). In this play, Emilia, a member of the bourgeoisie, is relegated to her gender identity—as a woman, she is regarded as property. This viewpoint is enabled by the intersection of her social class and gender identity and acted upon by men throughout Lessing's play. Cultural critic Inge Stephan emphasizes this idea in her 2001 work "Die aufklärerische Praxis im Drama." Emilia's dilemma is downplayed by powerful men, including her father: "Als 'Ware' wird die Tochter zum Objekt des Austausches zwischen Männern und zum Gegenstand der Auseinandersetzung zwischen Adel und Bürgertum" (Stephan 166). As a virtous maiden, Emilia becomes profitable and therefore part of a "Besitzverhältnis," in which she is "[das] 'Eigentum,' 'Vermögen' und 'Ware' des Vaters, ihre Tugend ist nicht nur ein ideelles, sondern auch ein materielles Gut" (Stephan 166). Emilia's maidenhood, purity, and piety are central to her profitability and hence highly guarded by her father. This viability is measured by a suitable wedding match, which can only be secured if Emilia protects her virtue and upholds her innocent reputation that reflects on the entire Galotti family, especially Odoardo, her father.

The Galottis are respected and deemed to be in good standing if Emilia does not disappoint, which is shown when Count Appiani praises Odoardo for having raised Emilia formidably: "das Muster aller männlichen Tugend!" (Lessing 32).[204] Stephan asserts: "Es verweist auf die Ökonomisierung der Beziehungen, und es zeigt zugleich, wie sich die bürgerliche Gesellschaft in der Propagierung der väterlichen Gewalt als patriachische

[204] The model of all male virtue!

Ordnung neu zu begründen sucht" (166). Emilia is part of a plan to ensure the family's respect, so Count Appiani considers Emilia to be an asset due to her piety that is tied to her maidenhood. Emilia fulfills this characteristic by attending Mass even on the morning of her wedding day to beg for "Gnade von oben" (Lessing 21).[205] Count Appiani desires "eine fromme Frau . . . die nicht stolz auf ihre Frömmigkeit ist" (Lessing 32).[206] Odoardo and Appiani's viewpoints match perfectly because a future for Emilia has already been decided on, involving her father, who agreed to Appiani's proposal namely "diesen würdigen jungen Mann meinen Sohn zu nennen" (Lessing 25),[207] as well as Appiani, who has decided to live in the countryside with Emilia once wedded (25).

Yet, this agreement is cut short by the Prince of Guastalla, who is mesmerized by Emilia's beauty and henceforth decides to possess her, irrespective of her upcoming wedding ceremony (Lessing 12). The prince views Emilia first and foremost as a sexual object. The sexual nature of the prince's interest in Emilia is represented by his residence, the so-called "Lustschloss" (castle of lust). Emotions such as pleasure, desire, and satisfaction can be associated with the word "lust." Overcome by his desire to sexually possess Emilia, the prince allows for his chamberlain, Marinelli, to plot against Count Appiani and the Galottis. This behavior is indicative of an unjust, selfish, and absolutist royal who abuses his power as a means to an end.

Through this narrative, Lessing critiques despotic aristocrats who have not adopted bourgeois values. In that sense, it is the despotism, not the class, that is significant, and this

[205] grace from above.

[206] A pious woman . . . who is not proud of her piety.

[207] To call this worthy young man my son.

connects the Prince with the plantation owners, who are bourgeois. The despotic rule of the aristocracy is contrasted with the new and enlightened morality of the bourgeoisie. Depicting an unfair division of powers in society, the ruling aristocracy has the power to defile the bourgeoisie. This criticism of the tyranny of the ruling class is linked to Emilia's female body. It is worth noting that sexual advances like those of the Prince of Guastalla toward a virtuous bourgeois daughter of the middle class were common during times of political absolutism. Anyone who was not a part of the nobility was considered to be a subject of the ruling class and was therefore at their mercy at all times. Having no choice but to endure this subjugation, Emilia fell victim to the powerlessness tied to her social status and gender. In this sense, Emilia is depicted as voiceless and powerless and bends to the will of those who have power over her, men in general. For this reason, Emilia cannot act against her parents, specifically her father, or the prince when he sneaks up on her in church; she blindly obeys: "Ich habe keinen Willen gegen den Ihrigen" (32).[208] Emilia has no agency, which is perfectly portrayed in the ending of this bourgois tragedy : "Die Tochter ist Opfer im doppelten Sinne: Sie [darf] sich nicht einmal selbst töten, wie es Männer tun, sie [wird] umgebracht" (Stephan 166).

The above-discussed enforced relationship between men and women is also visible in other stage plays such as Friedrich Schiller's *Die Räuber*. The fate of Amalia in Schiller's play *Die Räuber* (1781) also betrays these structures, because Amalia requests to be and then is killed by her lover, Karl Moor, in the very end of the play. In this play, Franz Moor schemes against his brother Karl Moor in order to take on his life as the first-born son of Maximilian von Moor. In his jealousy, Franz forges parts of a letter sent by Karl to

[208] I have no will against yours.

Maximilian and convinces him to ultimately disown Karl by vilifying and slandering him. Franz takes it upon himself to reply to his brother Karl, stating that Maximilian and his lover, Amalia, have turned away from him. In the next step of this intrigue, Franz approaches and propositions Amalia, who reacts comparably to the enslaved Black African females discussed above: "Geh, sag ich. Du hast mir eine kostbare Stunde gestohlen, sie werde dir an deinem Leben abgezogen" (Schiller 42). [209]

After pronouncing his brother Karl dead, Franz feels offended and sets out to not only possess Amalia, but also humiliate her honor by forcing her to become his mistress as he says:

> Nicht meine Gemahlin — die Ehre sollst du nicht haben — meine Mätresse sollst du werden, dass die ehrlichen Bauernweiber mit Fingern auf dich deuten, wenn du es wagst und über die Gasse gehst. Knirsche nur mit den Zähnen — speie Feuer und Mond aus den Augen — mich ergötzt der Grimm eines Weibes, macht dich nur schöner, begehrenswerter. Komm — dieses Sträuben wird meinen Triumph zieren und mir die Wollust in erzwungenen Umarmungen würzen — Komm mit in meine Kammer — ich glühe vor Sehnsucht — itzt [sic] gleich sollst du mit mir gehn. *(Will sie fortreißen).* (Schiller 83)[210]

In this moment, Amalia's response is similarly suicidal to that of the Black African enslaved female character in the other plays. She embraces Franz only to steal his dagger, which she then uses to threaten him (Schiller 83, 84). Killing Franz would ultimately result in her being charged with murder and thus being sentenced to death. This signifies her suicidal tendencies. However, while Berißa, Zoraide, and Ada are ready and willing to sacrifice their

[209] Leave, I said! You have stolen a precious hour from me, I shall deduct it from your life!

[210] You shall not be my wife — the honor is not yours — but my mistress, so honest farmer's wives will point the finger at you, if you dare to cross the street. Grind your teeth — shoot fire and moon from your eyes — the fury of a woman excites me, and makes you only more beautiful, enticing. Come — the resistance shall decorate my triumph and spice the embraces forced in lust — Come with me to my chamber — I am burning with desire — you shall come with me right now. (*Tries to pull her away)*

lives for their honor and faithfulness to their lovers and husbands, Amalia ponders the idea of joining a nunnery: "In ein Kloster . . . dank dir für diese glückliche Entdeckung! . . . — das Kloster — das Kreuz des Erlösers ist die Freistatt der betrogenen Liebe. *(Sie will gehn)*" (Schiller 84).[211]

When Karl and Amalia finally meet again and it becomes clear that there is no future for the both of them together, because Karl has sworn his loyalty to a group of robbers he has been roaming about with, Amalia expresses stronger suicidal tendencies as she begs Karl to kill her (as does Ada with Zameo):

> Amalia (*seine Knie umfassend*). Oh um Gottes willen, um aller Erbarmungen willen! Ich will ja nicht Liebe mehr, weiß ja wohl, dass droben unsere Sterne feindlich voneinander fliehen, — Tod ist meine Bitte nur. — Verlassen, verlassen! Nimm es ganz in seiner entsetzlichen Fülle, verlassen! Ich kann's nicht überdulden. Du siehst ja, das kann kein Weib überdulden. Tod ist meine Bitte nur! Sieh, meine Hand zittert! Ich habe das Herz nicht zu stoßen. Mir bangt vor der blitzenden Schneide — dir ist's ja so leicht, so leicht, bist ja Meister im Morden, zeuch dein Schwert, und ich bin glücklich! (Schiller 146)[212]

Ultimately, Karl Moor kills Amalia in the same moment one of the robbers aims at Amalia (Schiller 147). In this sense, Ada's and Zameo's dilemma seems modeled after Schiller's scenario. This specific portrayal confirms the bestowal of character traits often associated with white, virtuous, and chaste German female characters onto Black African female slave characters.

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[211] Into a nunnery . . . thanks for this fortunate discovery! . . . — the nunnery — and cross of the savior is the sanctuary for betrayed love. *(She wishes to leave).*

[212] Amalia (*touching his knee*). For Christ's sake, for mercy's sake! I no longer wish for love, I know that our stars above flee from each other in discord, — I only ask for death. — Left behind, left behind! Take it in its terrible wholeness, left behind! I cannot take it. As you see, no woman can take it. I only ask for death! See, my hand is shivering! I do not have the heart to push it. I am afraid of the glistening blade — it's so easy, so easy for you, a master of the sword, pull your sword and I am happy!

The projection of these character traits onto Black women is indicative of a trend in the presentation of the interplay of male and female characters in eighteenth-century stage plays. It seems that this trend was then transferred to a variety of plays about slavery and the slave trade. In this context, the power relations translate perfectly as they align with factual historical information about lived slavery: female slaves as part of specific power relations that were often victims of sexual abuse. Yet, the representation of these relations and the depiction of women as de facto mouthpieces of authors, articulating new values and ideas, seemingly disappears toward the end of the eighteenth century.

Shades of Blackness

In stark contrast to *Die Negersklaven*, Nesselrode hardly portrays any violent sexual advances toward his female character Zoraide. Apart from having been violently approached in a sexual manner once, she grows up well-protected. Sir Germin and Sara have considered Zoraide their daughter ever since they took her in: "Ich liebe sie wie mein Kind" (Nesselrode 16).[213] This status of protection is reflected in her academic accomplishments. In this way, she is described as having command over the English, French, and Spanish languages and being well-read. She is characterized as more intelligent than was expected of women in general, and even more so of Black women within the context of slavery (Nesselrode 16, 26). As the daughter of a king, Zoraide's beauty is highlighted specifically when it is revealed that her mother is a white slave (16). Thompson exclaims: "So! Nun wunderts mich nicht, daß [sic] das Mädchen nicht schwarz ist, ihre schwarzen Haare ausgenommen gleicht sie gar keiner Mohrin, es ist eine ordentliche Brunette, und sie dürfte

[213] I love her like my own child

sich immer für eine Engländerin oder Italiänerin [sic] ausgeben" (Nesselrode 17).[214] Sir Germin adds that Zoraide's father originates from "Mohren die nicht schwarz sondern Kastanien braun sind" (Nesselrode 17).[215]

The concept of passing is quite interesting to explore here. Marcia Alesan Dawkins defines passing in terms of racial identity as being accepted or representing oneself effectively as a member of another or a different racial group. In an American historical context, that often refers to Black people of African descent representing themselves as white (Dawkins 1). Dawkins understands racial passing to be tied to rhetoric. She describes this by saying that rhetoric is used "to grapple with crises of meaning produced when images, identities, and categories diverge" (Dawkins 9). Herein, Dawkins explores the debate around rhetorical tradition between Plato and the Sophists in fifteenth-century Greece to highlight links between passing and rhetoric (9).

Dawkins centers the concepts of "rhetorical sincerity (aletheia) and its anthropological counterpart 'racial sincerity' (an alternative to authenticity) [to] explain that identity is linked to experience and to one's position in relation to a social hierarchy (i.e., philosopher, Sophist, slave)" (14). She emphasizes that one's social positionality and political interests define who one is within a social structure and that there may be a host of reasons as to why one chooses to conceal these factors in particular situations. Rhetorical and racial sincerity emphasize that identities are tied to experiences as well as "one's position in relation to social hierarchy (i.e., gender, race, class)" (Dawkins 14; Crenshaw 1242). Dawkins writes that passing engages "the classical debate between Plato and the Sophists and challenges the

[214] So! Now it does not surprise me that the girl is not Black, except for her hair, she does not resemble a Moor, as she is a proper brunette, and she could pass for a British or Italian woman

[215] Moors who are not Black, but chestnut brown

binary of episteme (objective Truth) versus doxa (common sense) through aletheia (rhetorical and racial sincerity)" (15). Rhetoric comprises identities continuously and contextually. At the same time, considering passing in a rhetorical framework allows an understanding of agency to be given to the actual individual who is passing at the same time that they are facing structural and societal constraints: "Passers emphasize the ability to persuade, attempt to balance personal integrity with community welfare, and demonstrate that a refusal to stay within proscribed boundaries can be simultaneously threatening and empowering" (Dawkins 15). She stresses that it needs to be grasped that passing as an inherent rhetorical act occurs when people of multiracial identities try to exist or even just attempt to express their being in monoracial terms. I believe this to be especially true with reference to historical settings. Additionally, as shown in Zoraide's case, there are political and social benefits attached to passing (Dawkins 20-21)

Passing also gives power to those who pass. In this sense, conventional boundaries based on one's racial identity cease to exist. Dawkins alludes to the story of Ellen and William Craft, two Black slaves who decide to flee in disguise. Ellen attempts to pass as white because she is light-skinned, but she adds another layer of passing by posing as a man, as well. She does this to take on the role of slave owner; William pretends to be her slave. Dawkins mentions the assumption of whiteness as providing the Crafts with the ability to "live as human beings with all the rights and privileges thereof and not to be 'held as chattels'" (32). Thus, Black people passing as white were afforded a real chance at "'life, liberty' and the pursuit of happiness" while asserting their human dignity, which seemed to be reserved for white people only (Dawkins 32). Passing as an act of power allows those who are passing to take control of their lives and bodies, which would otherwise belong to their slaveholders. This represents "slavery's totalizing domination" (Dawkins 32). Dawkins

defines power as the capability to direct actions within a relational system or network. It can be both liberating and repressive with regard to institutional structures of dominance such as slavery as well as cultural practices or opposition by way of passing or escaping, for instance (Dawkins 32). Thus, Dawkins states that "passing is connected to power and rhetoric as a way to impact audiences by maintaining and transgressing boundaries—a prerequisite for understanding the major historical facts of the Crafts' story. It is then possible to see how passing empowered the Crafts and their audiences within a network of dominant power relationships that were double-sided, prevailing yet contestable" (32).

In the 1957 book *The Colonizer and the Colonized,* Albert Memmi describes an analogous response by oppressed people in colonial settings that could be read within the theoretical framework of passing and the perks it provides those who successfully trespass and walk in a world of whiteness. Here Memmi identifies two options that the colonized people are left with when faced with the situation of being oppressed. The first option reflects the idea of passing within a colonial context:

> Two historically possible solutions are then tried in succession or simultaneously. He attempts either to become different or to reconquer all the dimensions which colonization tore away from him. The first attempt of the colonized is to change his condition by changing his skin. There is a tempting model very close at hand - the colonizer. The latter suffers from none of his deficiencies, has all rights, enjoys every possession and benefits from every prestige. . . . The first ambition of the colonized is to become equal to that splendid model and to resemble him to the point of disappearing into him. (Memmi 120)

Therefore, the assertion of power and agency is a critical byproduct of passing, as Dawkins also notes.

In the same vein, Cheryl I. Harris investigates the power dynamic inherent in the social construction of whiteness (Gaffney 2). She identifies passing as a "feature of race subordination in all societies structured on white supremacy" (1712). Initially, describing the

perks of passing based on her grandmother's experience,[216] Harris proposes that whiteness is a normative construction that operates like a

> treasured property in a society structured on racial caste. In ways so embedded that it is rarely apparent, the set of assumptions, privileges, and benefits that accompany the status of being white have become a valuable asset that whites sought to protect and that those who passed sought to attain - by fraud if necessary. Whites have come to expect and rely on these benefits, and over time these expectations have been affirmed, legitimated, and protected by the law. (Harris 1713)

She claims that whiteness functions like property, which is indicative of both tangible and intangible values (Gaffney 3). These advantages that are afforded to white people have been maintained over time and sanctioned by American laws. These laws present whiteness as a normative and thus invisible part of society (Gaffney 3). Whiteness is not seen as racialized, but rather, just accepted as the natural state of society, which Karen Gaffney highlights when she writes that "power resides in this unmarked status" (3). Blackness, on the other hand, is seen as disruptive. This shows parallels to Sutherland's understanding of the bourgeois context as normatively white and invisible, such that any intrusion (i.e., by Black characters within these plays) automatically disturbs the unspoken racial order of society (75).

In her theorization of whiteness as a property, Harris delineates four characteristics of property: 1. Whiteness as a Traditional Form of Property, 2. Modern Views of Property as Defining Social Relations, 3. Property and Expectations, 4. The Property Functions of Whiteness.

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[216] Passing "ensured higher economic returns in the short term, as well as greater economic, political, and social security. . . . [Passing] meant gaining access to a whole set of public and private privileges that materially and permanently guaranteed basic subsistence needs and . . . increased the possibility of controlling critical aspects of one' s life rather than being the object of others' domination" (Harris 1713).

1. **Whiteness as a Traditional Form of Property:** Harris mentions that legal statuses were determined according to whiteness. People were classified as either free or unfree. This entailed the formation of white identity, which was normatively incorporated into the law. Here, white property then referred to "all of a person's legal rights" (Harris 1725-26). The application of this traditional notion, which was by then constituted by law and thus made legal and binding, operated for the first time when white Americans encountered Native Americans. The interpretation of this legal system established a precedent in the form of a manifested custom that indicates the valorization of whiteness (Harris 1728).
2. **Modern Views of Property as Defining Social Relations:** Harris draws on the modern conceptualization of property, which highlights its purpose and usage as well as the social relations that surround it (1728). According to this concept, the contingent nature of property is emphasized, which has also been the foundation of the argument to expand property rights. Harris identifies property by way of Charles Reich and provides this list of property in a broad sense: "jobs, entitlements, occupational licenses, contracts, subsidies, and indeed a whole host of intangibles that are the product of labor, time, and creativity, such as intellectual property, business goodwill, and enhanced earning potential from graduate degrees" (1728).
3. **Property and Expectations:** Harris draws on Margaret Radin and explains how white privilege became an expected manifestation in which whiteness was identified as archetypal property for personhood, especially in a society based on racial subordination (1729). Legally, whiteness was constructed and instated as an objective fact, while Harris points to it being more of an ideological imposition by way of subordination. She addresses the understanding of reification here and emphasizes

that "relation between people takes on the character of a thing and thus acquires a 'phantom objectivity,' an autonomy that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people" (Lukács qtd. in Harris 1730). In this sense, whiteness as an object is under constant control. Harris emphasizes that the protection and upholding of these expectations are crucial. She refers to Radin, who states: "If an object you now control is bound up in your future plans or in your anticipation of your future self, and it is partly these plans for your own continuity that make you a person, then your personhood depends on the realization of these expectations" (Radin qtd. in Harris 1730)

4. **The Property Functions of Whiteness:** Harris alludes to holding property value, which can be both tangible and intangible (Gaffney 3). This refers to having specific rights, such as the right to use, the right of possession, or the right of disposition. The features of these rights include transferability, alienability, and the right to utilize and enjoy, as well as the right to exclude individuals (Harris 1731).

Harris's discussion thoroughly classifies the legal context of white privilege and white supremacy through the use of the concept of property. Some of these characteristics are mirrored in all of the slave plays, but they are especially visible within the characterization of Zoraide. She seems to be afforded some of these property benefits because she is lighter in complexion. Her ability to pass as white in some situations leads her to be treated better, which is clearly demonstrated throughout the play.

Zoraide's passing in Nesselrode's play due to her lighter skin tone is contrasted in Ziegler's play by Toni's experiences, whose darker skin means that her racial identity as Black is inescapable. Her Blackness is always immediately perceived. Consequently, Nesselrode introduces Blackness in association with whiteness as a marker of beauty, but Ziegler shows

this not to be true for Blackness alone. In the 2004 chapter "Black Skin, White Skin and the Aesthetics of the Female Body in: Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Ziegler's *Die Mohrinn*," Wendy Sutherland discusses skin color as having served as a main marker of aesthetics and racial difference (71). In this context, she characterizes Toni as "the ultimate eighteenth-century oxymoron, also because she possesses a beautiful soul in black — and therefore ugly — body" (Sutherland 72). Throughout the play, Toni is often described according to her character and merits. Hence, Georg falls in love with Toni's inner beauty rather than her outward appearance, which is clearly contrasted to the white socially acceptable beauty standards (Sutherland 73). Toni's impeccable virtue seems trapped in—according to eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century Western beauty ideals—an ugly body.

Toni's negatively connotated skin color in Ziegler's play is reflective of concepts of beauty and aesthetics in eighteenth-century Europe, as presented and discussed by Sander L. Gilman in *On Blackness without Blacks: Essays on the Image of the Black in Germany* (1982). For example, Gilman shows that the British surgeon William Cheselden (1688–1752) and philosopher Edmund Burke (1729–1797) associated Blackness with darkness (19-21). Darkness, in turn, conjures up fear while deriving its power "from being mixed and surrounded with coloured bodies" (Burke qtd. in Gilman 21). The perception of Blackness is seen as evoking negativity that can only be mitigated through acclimatization (Gilman 21). Feelings such as melancholy led both Cheselden and Burke to believe that "darkness as the fearsome figure of the Black, Blackness and therefore the Black, produce[s] terror and is therefore a source of the sublime" (Gilman 22). In this context, Burke utilizes the word Negrophobia, which describes emerging fears among Europeans when seeing Blackness (Gilman 22). Sutherland writes that Ziegler portrayed a duality between beauty and ugliness

that sets boundaries of female acceptability in society, because Toni is initially not accepted as a suitable match for Georg, according to his family (75).

"Dual relationships between European/African and white/black" are further embodied in ideas of beauty and ugliness, which are observed and identified via the physical beauty of the body (Sutherland 75). For this reason, Toni is excluded as an outsider and foreigner on the basis of her skin color alone. At no point during the play does Ziegler describe Toni's physical appearance through details of elements such as facial features and figure. These seem to be corrupted and spoiled by default due to her skin color. Toni is clearly reduced to her skin color alone, which is redeemed neither by the rest of her appearance nor her virtuous character and assimilation to the European, specifically British, culture. Toni seems to have a pure and virtuous soul and to be a beautiful woman. This is articulated by her brother Zangi, who describes her as beautiful and identities her, in fact, as one of the most beautiful women in Africa (Ziegler 5). But Zangi adds that Toni is "schwarz schön" (Black beautiful, beautiful in a black way),[217] which is considered ugly in Britain (Ziegler 5).

Ziegler reveals that there exists no one universal understanding of beauty because there are African standards of beauty in addition to the mainstream European ideals. Nonetheless, "the Black is used by aesthetics theorists and anthropologists to define all that is not European or German, all that is 'Other', — signifying the ultimate outsider excluded from European society because of . . . her skin color" (Sutherland 81-82). Ziegler centers whiteness in this play because it takes on a normative ideological function in which the

[217] This resonates with contemporary contexts of Black women's beauty being measured on a different scale not associated with white beauty ideals or standards. This system is inherently considered inferior or lower in grade, which is reflective of Black women transnationally being considered "beautiful for a Black woman." This implies that Blackness in and of itself is not associated with beauty and cannot be beautiful.

principle regularity is in no way, shape, or form bendable or able to be broadened to be more inclusive of diversity, particularly Blackness. This shows similarities to what Gaffney identified as whiteness functioning like property, conveying social and economic advantages that are upheld throughout history and sustained by laws (3). For this reason, Toni is ostracized and marginalized and is constantly in a state of comparison simply being in a European setting, because she is the only Black African female in the play's setting. With Toni having escaped the purely physical brutality and confines of the institution of slavery, Ziegler depicts a second layer of slavery that even free and emancipated Black people like Toni have to still endure: ideological slavery and its real and material implications. These dominant European perceptions of Blackness— also present in German contexts—that are ideologically demeaning and patronizing are perpetuated throughout Ziegler's play. They ultimately get to Toni and result in a distorted perception of self, indicating an ideological, psychological, and mental enslavement to white Western dominant narratives and paternalist notions, despite having been physically liberated and emancipated.

This state is reflective of Fanon's discussion in the introductory chapter to *Black Skin, White Masks*.[218] In this chapter, Fanon detects a historical and ideological correlation between Black and white people (9). Here, Fanon claims that white people are locked and sealed into whiteness, while the same condition applies to Black people and Blackness (9). He identifies a Black desire to be white based on the Western concept of white superiority (Fanon 9-10). Fanon states that the juxtaposition of the white and Black races has created a

[218] In this book, Fanon hardly ever addresses the specific situations of Black women, which has been critiqued by several scholars. In this, Fanon tends to speak in absolutes by primarily using Black men and their experiences as examples that claim to present the full spectrum of experiences. While some of these discussions center men and this is certainly limiting, I believe that Fanon's writing is still applicable to the experiences of black women in some instances. Thus, I will carve out a space for the representation of Black women within Fanon's groundbreaking work by altering the context of his discussions slightly.

massive psycho-existential complex (12). In this sense, he sets out to demonstrate that "what is often called the black soul is a white man's artifact" (Fanon 14). I believe this to be applicable to Toni's state of mind because there exists a constant comparison between Toni and Aurelie and therefore Black and white people in terms of beauty and social acceptability. Furthermore, the audience is not privy to meeting Toni within a context in which her Blackness is not highlighted or viewed through a particular white gaze that objectifies Black people. Fanon mentions this white gaze as having severe implications for Black people because it presents a constant burden that allows for no individuality (109-10). In fact, living in a white world results in being reduced to dominant and widespread stereotypes of Black people, which Fanon describes as being "battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, [and] slave ships" (112).

The notion of innate Black African inferiority, also reflected through dominant beliefs about physiognomy and appearance, is reinforced in this play by way of Ziegler contrasting Toni and Aurelie. Aurelie's whiteness is an attribute that Toni cannot compete with. For this very reason, Aurelie's virtue and overall appearance as a woman is understood as fitting the status quo. Thus, "the figure of Aurelie represents the ideal European female in physical form and in moral values" (Sutherland 75). Aurelie exemplifies an idealism that is visible throughout the play, in which she is frequently described as beautiful (Ziegler 18, 40). The repeated mention of Aurelie's beauty typifies time and again her value in society and, thus, her suitability to marry Georg (Sutherland 75). Toni is repeatedly referred to as an angel throughout the play, which is often attributed to her personality being angelic, courteous, and respectful. Her deed of having saved Georg from drowning is praised through the play, as well. Nonetheless, even when her angelic personality is addressed, Ziegler uses it in a diminishing way by adding the word Black to his descriptions. This is used as an a priori

demeaning attribute, whereas other times she is referred to as an ugly angel (Ziegler 10, 39, 50, 59, 80).

Moreover, Fanon identifies that Black people, regardless of being physically liberated, are ideologically unfree and objectified through being fixed in the eyes of white people (116). In a description that is relevant to Toni's experience, Fanon claims that Black people are not necessarily enslaved to a specific white view of them, but are rather slaves to their own appearance (116). Toni's Blackness is centered on, which excludes and marginalizes her despite her respectable and virtuous mannerisms (Fanon 116). Therefore, Fanon does not believe that any achievements of Black people are ever fully acknowledged, writing: "I was walled in: No exception was made for my refined manners, or my knowledge of literature, or my understanding of the quantum theory" (117). Fanon exemplifies the irrationality Black people are faced with within the confines of the white gaze.

Furthermore, Toni's Blackness is seen as a disruption at the Fleetwell household, especially with regard to what the institution of marriage stands for (Sutherland 75). Ziegler portrays Blackness as unassociated with whiteness, which typifies the normative context of beauty, nobility, and acceptability within this play. Echoing Gaffney once more, whiteness is accepted as the natural state of society rather than a racialized condition like Blackness, which grants it hidden power (3). There seems to exist a natural "Scheidewand" (dividing wall) that prevents Blackness and whiteness from intermingling and bars them from being joined in the institution of Holy Matrimony. Sutherland rightfully pinpoints the main disruption and commotion caused by Toni's presence when she is attempted to be assigned to the traditional role "occupied within European society by the white female: that of the wife of a European male" (75). This is conceived of as an impossibility that Toni herself has

internalized, which is indicative of her own mental entrapment within white European structures.

Along these lines, Toni illustrates instances of self-hate and low self-esteem due to residing in a predominantly white society. Thus, she aligns with the dominant discourse that considers the color black and Blackness to be unpleasing to the eye and considers herself ugly, which she mentions frequently (Ziegler 12, 46). Toni thinks her outward appearance makes her unworthy and thus pushes Georg to marry Aurelie, whom Toni addresses by saying: "Sie sind wahrlich sehr schön, Miß [sic]!" (Ziegler 40).[219] Toni fears Georg being mocked for his choice to marry her instead of Aurelie. Ziegler describes Toni as being impossible to sincerely love, which is implied through phrases such as: "Lieben kann er sie nicht; sie is zu häßlich [sic],"[220] as well as being called an abominable creature (69). Toni agrees by stating: "Georg, betrachte diese Gestalt — diese Farbe! diese groben Züge mit kaltem Auge, und du mußt[sic] ja auf den ersten Blick finden, daß [sic] die häßlichste [sic]Europäerinn [sic] gegen deine Toni ein Engel ist" (Ziegler 10).[221] The writer Arthur Murphy states that this Negrophobia occurs because of "the novelty of blackness in a white society" (Murphy qtd. in Gilman 22).

Murphy's notion of socialization is emphasized by Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), who was a British painter: "We indeed say, that the form and colour of the European is preferable to that of the Ethiopian; but I know of no other reason we have for it, but that we are more accustomed to it" (Reynolds qtd. in Gilman 23). Thus, the people in Georg's life

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[219] You are truly very beautiful, Miss!

[220] It is not possible for him to love her; she is too ugly.

[221] Georg, regard this being — this color! These coarse features with an objective eye, and you will find at first glance that the ugliest European woman is an angel compared to your Toni.

struggle to comprehend his love for Toni because they consider it to be reflecting an abnormal taste and thus associate it with habit, claiming he is already accustomed to Blackness: "Aurelie. . . . aber Gewohnheit und Liebe verschönert alles und sein Auge ist an ihre schwarze Farbe längst gewohnt" (Ziegler 69).[222] Toni agrees and blames Georg's extensive travels as having spoiled his perceptions by exposing him to "häßlichen [sic] Gestalten" (ugly beings) (Ziegler 62), and she deems a cleansing of his taste through Aurelie to be necessary. In this context, Georg agrees that he has changed, which by extension echoes Reynolds, because Georg states that he is no longer European like those who "an Formen und Farben hängt, und der die Triebe der rohen Sinnlichkeit für Liebe hält" (Ziegler 62).[223] In fact, Georg suggests moving to Africa "wo alle Tonis Farbe tragen und wo es keinen Mohren befremden wird, daß die Mohrinn Toni einen Weißen liebt" (Ziegler 74).[224]

But Toni's fears over the fallout from her relationship with Georg also extend to any possible offspring that might be of a darker complexion, as well: "Was er für mich fühlt, wird dem Spotte weichen Man wird ihn mit dem Nahmen [sic] eines Thoren brandmarken und über die Farbe seiner Nachkommen spotten" (Ziegler 67).[225] She is worried about racially contaminating Georg by virtue of having his child, which she believes will bring shame not only upon Georg, but also upon his entire family, harming his lineage for generations to come. Miscegenation becomes a clear controversial topic of conflict in Ziegler's play, in which Toni as a Black female threatens the white patriarchy of the Fleetwell

[222] But familiarity and love beautify everything, and his eyes have been used to her color for a while.

[223] hold on to shapes and colors, and mistakes the raw sensuality of desire for love.

[224] Where everyone has Toni's color and does not strike Moors as odd that the Moor Toni loves a white man.

[225] What he feels for me will be replaced by ridicule. They will call him a fool and ridicule the color of his offspring.

home, according to Sutherland (74). Toni's Blackness is shown to be even more harmful to Georg and his family because the Fleetwell family is of noble blood, which would forever be tainted through the union of Georg and Toni. This thinking aligns with Lessing's classification of the visually disgusting, which he associated with Black African features such as a flattened nose and larger nostrils (Gilman 26). Sutherland writes that the "mixing of blood and the resulting darkening of future generations threatens not only the individual and his family but also the state. This threat can also be interpreted as the (genetic) seed of vice, which corrupts the pure and virtuous European and ultimately German line" (74). This corruption of the pure and white race is conceived of as wrong and tied to an understanding of dark skin and African features being markers of ugliness that evoke feelings of disgust, as frequently exclaimed by members of Georg's family within Ziegler's play.

For this reason, Georg's aunt is shocked at Toni and Georg's relationship because together they symbolize the epitome of "the social and sexual inappropriateness of miscegenation" to her (Sutherland 80). She makes her disgust known when she asks in disbelief: "Diese schwarze Figur da heirathen [sic]? . . . Kinder mit ihr in die Welt . . . setzen? . . . Kann es nicht dulden, das [der] Adel schwarz wird" (Ziegler 90-91).[226] Georg's aunt, Lucie, expresses her fears that "the black female's covert maternity presents a potential threat to the white patriarchy" for generations to come (Sutherland 81). She insists that Toni has put a spell on Georg and calls her a Black witch (Ziegler 96). While Toni and Georg are ultimately given permission to marry, Toni is still considered to be defiling the family's legacy and causing "ein Brandmark für die ganze Familie" (Ziegler 92),[227] according to the

[226] To marry this black being? … To have children with her? … We cannot tolerate nobility becoming black.

[227] a stigma for the whole family

dominant discourse. In this context, even Aurelie ultimately admits "'der Geist, der sie belebt, ist himmlisch und bezaubernd und weh dem Manne, der nur auf die Farbe und die Hülle eines Weibes sieht! Sie ist vergänglich, wie das Morgenroth"' (Ziegler 70).[228] For this reason, Toni will remain a "hässliche[s] schöne[s] Wesen" (beautiful ugly being) (Ziegler 70) due to her Blackness, which does not lend her any of the preferential treatment that a lighter skin tone would receive.

Accustomed to European beauty ideals, one could argue that Nesselrode's Thompson is physically attracted to Zoraide due to her "racial" proximity to whiteness from having a white mother (16). For this reason, Thompson is not surprised when Zoraide's racial background is first revealed. It seems that her beauty "makes sense" now and is justified by virtue of having white blood and a chestnut-colored father. People of African descent who are lighter in skin color are portrayed as being beautiful and intriguing. Zoraide's beauty is mentioned as overwhelmingly surprising because none of her facial features are considered contaminated by any of the traits that were associated with Blackness in the eighteenth century. In that time period, prominent nostrils and flattened noses were equated with a metaphorical ugliness of the Black body (Gilman 26). This is also mentioned in Montesquieu's *Esprit des lois* (1748).

Zoraide's in-between position of being lighter in skin tone not only compels Thompson to proposition her, but also brings up her ability to pass for white. According to Riesche's categorization of slave plays, biracial Black characters often occupy an in-between position that provides them with advantages in treatment and social status. This is especially visible by way of attracting the interest of a white man who is sincerely pursuing her and is

[228] Her spirit is heavenly and enchanting and beware the man who only looks upon the color and exterior of a woman! It is as fleeting as dawn.

willing to marry her and even gift her a plantation: "Ich will sie glücklich machen, ich heirathe [sic] sie bey [sic] meiner Seele; und wenn sie nicht mit nach England will, so kauf ich ihr eine gute Plantage" (Nesselrode 17).[229] At the same time, is not subjected to violence on the plantation because she is under the protection of Sir Germin and Sara. In this, Zoraide's failure to reciprocate Thompson's love does not result in rape or suicide. Instead, Thompson respectfully accepts Zoraide's decision and still considers her to be a good friend: "Thompson. Und ich bin durch den Korb gefallen, es macht aber nichts. Geben Sie mir die Hand Zoraide, Sie hat hat meine ganze Hochachtung, ich will Ihr von keiner Liebe mehr sprechen, aber Ihr Freund werde ich seyn [sic] bei Leben und Todt, das will Sie doch wohl, nicht wahr?" (Nesselrode 29).[230] Thus, there are not any consequences such as the ones Ada faces, which are rooted in an eighteenth-century aesthetic understanding of beauty that favors lighter shades of skin color. Ada is not given this preferential treatment due to her Blackness, which seems disposable despite her virtuous, faithful, and moral behavior. Skin color is regarded as more important than personality traits, and the benefits it confers or takes away extend from social access to physical safety and security.

Accordingly, Zoraide's in-between positionality that is visible through her light skin affords her some privileges while living with Sir Germin and Sara. In spite of this, Zoraide still favors her darker-skinned African husband. Zoraide identifies as a West African woman, which Nesselrode addresses by most slaves in the play being from Benin (30, 33, 34, 36). This identification is demonstrated when Thompson offers to gift Zoraide a plantation. She

[229] I want to make her happy; by my soul, I will marry her; and if she does not want to come to England with me, I will buy her a decent plantation.

[230] Thompson. And I was rejected, but that is alright. Give me your hand, Zoraide, you have my utmost respect, I will no longer speak of love, but I will be your friend in life and death, you would like that, wouldn't you?

openly shows her distain for slavery, exclaiming: "Zwey [sic] hundert Slaven mein Herr! um die Gebietherin [sic] zwey [sic] hundert unglücklicher Menschen zu werden, die die Natur zur Freyheit [sic] hat lassen geboren werden, um ein solches Geschenke soll ich meinen rechtmäßigen Gemahl untreu werden? O nein, mein Herr!" (Nesselrode 24-25).[231] Zoraide's awareness of liberty as essential and naturally given corresponds to Locke's notion [*Two Treaties of Government*, as discussed in a chapter titled "Chapter IV. Of Slavery"] of self-governance in unison with an inherent natural liberty that extends to all of humanity (205). Thus, the nature of law is that there is no superior power on earth or under legislation: "The natural liberty of man is to be free from any superior power on earth, and not to be under the will or legislative authority of man, but to have only the law of Nature for his rule" (Locke 205).

This humanistic rationale identifies the entirety of humanity as being part of society, something Zoraide sees as encompassing herself along with all the people on the plantation, regardless of race, skin color, and national origin. For this reason, everyone is considered to commonly abide by the "laws of men" under the government: "Freedom of men under government is to have a standing rule to live by, common to every one of that society, and made by the legislative power erected in it" (Locke 206). In that sense, slavery encroaches on the rights of men to self-govern. In accordance with the nature of law, there is no room for slavery in contractual societies.

Reflecting these principles of Lockean thought, Zoraide asserts: "Liebste Gebieterin, auch ich bin ja Ihre Sklavin, und in diesem Betracht nicht um ein Haar besser als die übrigen

[231] Two hundred slaves, my good Sir! To become the ruler of unfortunate people, who are meant to be free by nature, this gift is supposed to make me become faithful to my husband? Oh no, Sir!

Unglücklichen die in der Knechtschaft leben müssen; zwar über mein Schicksal kann ich mich nicht beklagen, denn ich bin Ihre Sklavin, — und das bin ich gerne, ja recht gerne; Sie sind so gut gegen mich beste aller Frauen!" (Nesselrode 20).[232] With these words, Zoraide once again demonstrates her in-betweeness. This positionality is further illustrated by her having taken up Christianity while still feeling connected to the West African deities, including "der große Orissa . . . den der Mohr als Beherrscher des des Himmels, der Erde, der Wälder, der Meere, der Thiere [sic] anbeten . . . Orissa wird bey den Mohren das höchste Wesen genannt" (Nesselrode 25-26).[233] Having received some Christian instruction and ultimately converted to the faith, Zoraide is now able to make larger connections between Christianity and her former native religion. She acknowledges that Orissa and the Christian God are both considered to be "Supreme Beings" who are conceptually understood to embody the same idea. Thus, they are referred to by different names depending on whether they are being worshipped by Africans or white Europeans, but they are one entity: "Da man mich zur Christin gemacht hat . . . das ist derselbige Gott mein Herr, den auch die Christen Verehren [sic]. Orissa ist bei den Mohren der Belohner des Guten, und Bestrafer des Bösen; bei Christen wird er anders genennet [sic]; der Name thut [sic] aber nichts zur Sache, es ist eben derselbe Gott" (Nesselrode 25-26).[234]

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[232] Dearest mistress, I too am your slave, and in this regard, I am no better than the other unfortunate ones, who are subjected to be your slaves — and I like to be, I rather like to be. You are so good to me, greatest of all women!

[233] the mighty Orissa … whom the Moors worship as the ruler over heaven, earth, forests, the seas, and the animals . . . Orissa is the name of the Supreme Being among the Moors.

[234] Because I was made a Christian . . . this is the same God, my Lord, Christians worship as well. For the Moors, Orissa is the provider of rewards for good deeds, punisher of evil; Christians refer to him by a different name; the name does not matter, it is the same God.

Zoraide's identity is shaped by her experiences in her home country of Benin, as well as her experiences, good and bad, since her capture. The pain, loss, and unbearably inhumane conditions she experienced during the Middle Passage are juxtaposed with the welcoming, loving, and respectful atmosphere she lives in with Sir Germin and Sara. This positive environment is evinced throughout the play by sentiments such as "Sara. Ich habe Dich nie als meine Sklavin . . . gehalten" (Nesselrode 21),[235] which explain countless freedoms that other African female slaves such as Ada, are not granted (Gilman 21). All these factors, especially Zoraide's light skin color, shape her portrayal by Nesselrode. Black African female slave identity was often also significantly shaped by the white master-enslaver through the imposition of various forms of violence, which I will delve into here.

Gender and Sexuality: Sexual Assault and Motherhood within Slavery

Spillers stresses that sexual abuse against Black bodies was mainly conducted by men against women and relegated the female to the loss of her own body.[236] It entailed women's continued dehumanization through sexual exploitation, which was often invisible because it was kept a secret by enslaved women as well as by the slave masters who took advantage of these women as they pleased. Sexual violence was inflicted on the female body at the same time that more-visible physical violence was also imposed: "The African female subject, under these historic conditions, is not only the target of rape . . . but also the topic of specifically *externalized* acts of torture and prostration that we imagine as the peculiar province of *male* brutality and torture inflicted by other males" (Spillers 207). Gomez

[235] Sara. I never considered you my slave.

[236] Both female and male slaves were sexually abused by male slave owners, but there is less scholarship that corroborates the latter.

confirms this dynamic and alludes to a vulnerability to sexual exploitation in terms of Black African slave girls and women (88-89).

Kotzebue comments specifically on the gender-related aspects of slavery by establishing this gender difference in the treatment of male and female slaves at the very beginning of the play. The female characters Ada and Lilli live separately from the male slaves. This spatial separation is similarly supported by historian Trevor Burnard's analysis of Thomas Thistlewood's (1721–1786) journals from 1748 to 1786. Burnard relays an observation from Thistlewood's planter neighbor William Beckford: "The occupations of the women are only two, the house, with its several departments and supposed indulgences, or the fields with their exaggerated labors. The first situation is the most honourable, the last the most independent" (Beckford qtd. in Burnard 171). The house of the slave master illustrated the imminent and constant threat of sexual exploitation that enslaved women faced. As Burnard emphasizes in his discussion of Thistlewood, "Contemporaries were well aware that slave women's experiences were very different from those of slave men" (171). Kotzebue exemplifies this in his depiction of the sexual advances toward enslaved women.

While living in the master's house, Ada is repeatedly propositioned by John and described as follows: "Lilli. . . . daß [sic] unser Herr . . . Ada's Gegenliebe zu erpressen strebt, wie man den Saft aus einem Zuckerrohr gewaltsam preßt [sic]?" (Kotzebue 15).[237] This statement is indicative of the commodification of natural resources, which are then compared to the enslaved female body that has been violently taken by the white slaveholder. Both sugarcane and the female slaves are commodities that are used for his

[237] Lilli. . . . That our master . . . seeks to extract the reciprocity of Ada's love, in the same way that juice is extracted from sugarcane with force?

satisfaction. John's previous relations to female slaves are symptomatic of the inescapable violence perpetuated against female slaves. Accordingly, Kotzebue has John state: "Ich ließ [sic] ihr den ganzen Leib mit Stecknadeln sanft zerprickeln [sic]. Dann wurde ihr in Oel [sic] getauchte Baumwolle um die Finger gewickelt, und angezündet. Drey [sic] Tage nachher liebte sich mich auf das zärtlichste" (Kotzebue 20).[238] Violence is inflicted as a form of pressure to force the enslaved female to favorably engage in sexual acts. Whereas John often hints at the sexual manner of his advances toward Ada, there is hardly any explicit mention of rape within the play: "Ich breche eine Rose, die Dornen stechen ein wenig, aber ich breche sie doch, und sie duftet drum [sic] nicht minder schön" (Kotzebue 23).[239] However, the effects of such abuse reveal what has occurred, and it is not surprising that we are later presented with Ada's miscarriage. Toward the end of the play, she explains what happened: "Ada. Der Schmerz um dich — dein Verlust — Mißhandlungen — und eine Ohnmacht, die auf den Stufen der Schiffstreppe mich heftig niederwarf" (Kotzebue 127).[240]

Likewise, Ziegler implies in *Die Mohrinn* that Toni's experiences of being raped on a plantation by a "Europäer" were due to that person's greed: "Toni. Seine Habsucht zog ihm das schöne Gewand der Menschheit aus, und hüllte ihn in eine Tygerdecke [sic]" (44).[241] She mentions having endured horrific labor conditions and malnourishment for four years, but "nach einer Mißhandlung, die ich nie vergessen werde, ging meine Langmuth [sic] in stilles Murren, und endlich zur Verzweiflung über; den ich verlor den Glauben . . . faßte [sic] den . .

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[238] I let her entire body be gently pricked with pins. Then, cotton dipped into oil was wrapped around her fingers and set on fire. Three days after, she loved me most affectionately.

[239] "I pick a rose, its thorns prick me a bit, but I pick it nonetheless, and its scent is not lessened by it.

[240] Ada. I hurt for you — your loss — mistreatment — and a loss of consciousness that violently cast me down on the steps of the ship.

[241] His greed pulled off the garb of humanity and wrapped him into a tiger blanket.

. Entschluß [sic], mein Leben zu enden" (Ziegler 44).[242] Toni does not share specifics about the incident that led her to consider suicide. It must have been more severe than any other physical abuse she experienced in the previous years. This evocative description of Toni's feelings stemming from her mistreatment not only stuns due to its authentic voice, but also clarifies the gendered differences in the treatment of slaves. Likewise, in *Die Negersklaven,* Kotzebue aims to portray the cruelties of slavery and the conditions faced by Black female slaves, which aligns with Spillers's discussion of the African female subject. This circumstance also lends itself to examination through its description of the realities of eighteenth-century plantation slavery in Jamaica, which was considered common knowledge among people of the time (Burnard 171).

Thistlewood's journals continue this emphasis on accurately illustrating the plight of the female slave, though his commitment to the truth is likely not for the same purpose as Kotzebue. His intent was more likely to chronicle his rapes and sexual encounters as trophies. Thistlewood's journal entries present instances that contemporaries were cognizant of in the eighteenth century (Burnard 171). Thistlewood's journals serve as an example of factual information that accentuates the significance of historical knowledge regarding the depiction and treatment of Black female slaves. The journals detail the continuous sexual molestation and exploitation of Black enslaved women from the perspective of a white British slaveowner in eighteenth-century Jamaica. Patterson describes Thistlewood as inconceivable in his treatment of female (and male) slaves, while suggesting that this is the "real" face of slavery that existed everywhere:

> In the long annals of slavery no slave-owner wrote more prolifically and candidly about the brutally gendered nature of slavery and its consequences

[242] after a mistreatment I will never forget, my patience became silent murmurs, and finally desperation; because I lost faith . . . and made the . . . decision to end my life.

> for female, and male, slaves than the mid-eighteenth century Jamaican Thomas Thistlewood, who kept a diary of his sexual and other corporeal using up of his slaves over a period of 37 years during which he engaged in 3,852 sexual acts with 138 slave women. Although he had an average of 14 different partners per year, some of whom he raped. ("Trafficking, Gender and Slavery" 326-27)

These journal entries describing true events show parallels to Kotzebue's play and highlight details that are grounded in historical experience. Analyzing Thistlewood's journal entries, Burnard mentions an enslaved woman called Sally, who had been raped up to 37 times by Thistlewood in 1768. Thistlewood also controlled her sexual partners starting from the young age of 15 or 16 (Burnard 176). Tales of violent sexual encounters resulting in venereal disease and "her private parts . . . [tearing] in a terrible manner . . . [and] having bled a great deal" are emblematic of the violent nature of being burdened with sexual abuse and slavery (Thistlewood qtd. in Burnard 176). In this sense, Gomez states that evading violation was oftentimes not an option that was available to enslaved African women because they would be punished for refusing sexual advances (89). Gomez stresses that some form of coercion was always present "even in romanticized unions of 'consent'" (89).

These accounts also harken back to Spillers's discussion of external and internal violence (207). In both Kotzebue's and Thistlewood's writings, the desire of the white slave master is indicated to be superior to all other desires, which affirms the existence of a significant racial and gender hierarchy. Thistlewood immortalizes the circumstances of the female slave within the larger context of slavery through his diary entries, which he likely saw as souvenirs of the physical, sexual, and psychological violence he enacted on his slaves. The violence against Black African female slaves continued throughout the nineteenth century. Harriet Jacobs, for example, illustrates the struggles of the female slave in her slave narrative *Incident in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861). Here, Jacobs describes how "the slave girl is

reared in an atmosphere of . . . fear. The lash and the foul talk of her master and his sons are her teachers. When she is fourteen or fifteen, her owner, or his sons, or the overseer, or perhaps all of them, begin to bribe her with presents. If these fail to accomplish their purpose, she is whipped or starved into submission to their will" (29). Whereas Jacobs and Thistlewood represent inherently different and opposing positions, both narratives confirm the conditions endured by female slaves in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and both accounts were used to advocate for abolition.

Jacobs's narrative and Thistlewood's journal entries have similarities that are captured in Kotzebue's play and demonstrate dimensions based on historical experience. Jacobs was aware that the gender hierarchy she described also applied to white families, which is why she specifically appealed to the morality of white women in the Northern United States. This is expressed in the preface to *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, in which she directly addresses the reader to appeal to those in the North and to highlight the truthfulness of her retelling:

> READER, be assured this narrative is no fiction. I am aware that some of my adventures may seem incredible; but they are, nevertheless, strictly true. I have not exaggerated the wrongs inflicted by Slavery; on the contrary, my descriptions fall far short of the facts. . . . But I do earnestly desire to arouse the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South, still in bondage, suffering what I suffered, and most of them far worse. I want to add my testimony to that of abler pens to convince the people of the Free States what Slavery really is. (Jacobs 3)

Jacobs's appeal and overall account strategically demonstrate sexual exploitation and motherhood during enslavement to draw attention to the condition of the African female subject by addressing women in the North of the United States. In this sense, Jacobs tried to find a solution for this particular historical moment of slavery through writing. Thus, the slave narrative provides a truthful account in the hope of expediating the abolition of slavery

by emphasizing the urgency of the matter, which Kotzebue accordingly highlights through John's forceful behavior toward Ada.

Whereas Jacobs and Thistlewood offer a glimpse into the treatment of the Black African female slave during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, historians Randy M. Browne and John Wood Sweet state in their 2016 article titled "Florence Hall's 'Memoirs': Finding African Women in the Transatlantic Slave Trade" that any documentation of the lives of enslaved Black African women in the slave trade presents a challenge to historians (206). Generally, there is a lack of narratives written by enslaved women, which presents little to no documentary evidence. Hartman takes up this lack of historical documentation in her 2008 article "Venus in Two Acts" and presents a narrative about the female slave, which she states is "variously named . . . [and] found everywhere in the Atlantic world," which includes the master's bedroom(1). Hartman refers to this female slave as Venus, which is also based on her semi-autobiographical work *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (2007). Hartman defines Venus and foregrounds her loss of voice and the agency to tell her own story while also echoing Thistlewood's and Jacobs's accounts:

> There are hundreds of thousands of other girls who share her circumstances and these circumstances have generated few stories. And the stories that exist are not about them, but rather about the violence, excess, mendacity, and reason that seized hold of their lives, transformed them into commodities and corpses, and identified them with names tossed-off as insults and crass jokes. The archive is, in this case, a death sentence, a tomb, a display of the violated body, an inventory of property, a medical treatise on gonorrhea, a few lines about a whore's life, an asterisk in the grand narrative of history. (Hartman 2)

In order to imagine what cannot be confirmed due to a lack of historical sources, Hartman taps into a space located in between "two zones of death — social and corporeal death" and seeks "to reckon with the precarious lives which are visible only in the moment of their disappearance" (12). To retrieve stories about these women's lives without romanticizing

their situation—especially as presented in the plays by Nesselrode, Kotzebue, Ziegler, and Hagemann, which chronicle instances of reunions of love alongside escaping rape and death—Hartman explores stories about enslaved Black African women that marginally illustrate their existence within the "archive of slavery." Hartman draws on narratives such as travelogues, diary entries, and slave narratives. Among these works are Thistlewood's diary entries and travelogues by the French explorer and merchant Jean Barbot (1655–1712) and the British surgeon Alexander Falconbridge (1760–1791), who explicitly and brutally but also offhandedly address their escapades with Black African female slaves (Hartman 5-7).[243] This analysis further explains the severe treatment female slaves had to endure during slavery: "Upon entering the archive of slavery, the unimaginable assumes the guise of everyday practice, which we can never fail to forget as we gape at the grim faces and stripped torsos . . . or recoil from the mutilated body" (Hartman 6). Gomez similarly establishes the magnitude of horrors slave women had to endure: "Women, many of them pregnant, were whipped on their bare behinds, after which salt and pepper were often poured into the wounds along with melted wax – a reflection of slavery's sadistic nature" (88). Hartman's use of the archive presents an approach to a "history of an unrecoverable past" in which the archive is used as a tool to write against the archive itself (12).

Further exploring the archival silence in terms of the experiences of African slave women, historian Sasha Turner looks at manifestations of grief among enslaved females about the death of infants and children. Turner engages with the fragmented archive in order to illuminate "mothers' fear, grief, and apprehension" in her 2017 article "The Nameless and

[243] The latter two have also been discussed by German-language writers, such as Blumenbach in his 1806 treatise *Beyträge zur Naturgeschichte,* which references Barbot in the context of the intellectual capabilities of Black Africans. Additionally, Sell references Falconbridge as one of his sources in his 1791 academic work *Versuch einer Geschichte des Negersclavenhandels*.

the Forgotten: Maternal Grief, Sacred Protection, and the Archive of Slavery" (243). Turner establishes, as does Hartman, the difficulty of exploring and identifying women's feelings through the archive (232). She draws on Hartman's work *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth Century America* (1997) and echoes that the significance lies not in "what we see but in what we don't see" (Hartman qtd. in Turner 245).

These emotions expressed by female slaves encompassed concerns about their own lives as well as those of their children. Beyond the initial trauma of experiencing sexual assault at the hands of their slaveowners, enslaved women often found themselves pregnant as a result of the rapes perpetrated against them. This forced the slave women to adjust to a change in their status from individuals to mothers. In Kotzebue's play, the reproductive labor of motherhood becomes just another burden placed on female slaves in addition to hard work and sexual assault. Having just given birth three days ago, a Black African female slave was whipped harshly for not being able to work hard enough. Her injuries stopped the milk production that her infant depended on. Thus, the baby sucked on her bleeding breast for three days until getting (accidentally) hit by the overseer when it was in its mother's arms (Kotzebue 58). Fearing for her infant and the life of torture that lay ahead of it, she absentmindedly "Neg. . . . drückte . . . ihm einen Nagel in das Herz — es schrie nicht — es zuckte nur Einmal — und sieh, es ist todt" (Kotzebue 58, 60).[244] While deeply grieving the loss of her child, the mother describes the murder of the child as a sign of motherly devotion and love: "Neg. Mutterliebe! Mein armes Kind soll viele Jahre lang gequält werden, nun hat seine Qual nur drey [sic] Tage gedauert. . . . Meine Pflicht" (Kotzebue 59-60).[245]

[244] Neg. . . . Pushed . . . a nail into its heart — it did not scream — it only flinched once — and see, it is dead.

[245] Neg. A mother's love! My poor child is to be tortured for many years, now his pain only lasted three days. . . . My duty.

The birth of a child to an enslaved African woman results in the partus sequitur ventrem law[246] taking effect, which specified that children born to enslaved women would receive their mother's status (Turner 232). Infants were considered commodities by birth, which highlights Patterson's idea of a specific mark of servitude as a matrilineal hereditary condition (*Slavery and Social Death* 52). Kotzebue discusses this law through his female slave character, which indicates the years of torture her child was meant to suffer and would have endured under the system of plantation slavery (58-59). In the 2011 book *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*, the historian Jennifer L. Morgan explores reproductive labor and the thereby resulting positionality of enslaved African women in the British colonies during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. She argues that motherhood caused feelings of loss among female slaves in the New World (108). Giving birth to children in the Americas set the process of creolization in motion and meant that other than their parents, these offspring were geographically speaking at home. Morgan states that "in the context of New World slavery, of course, creolization was in fact rooted in loss; in the despair of infant death and the altered meanings of women's fertility under the weight of bourgeoning plantation regimes" (108).

The brutally enforced reproduction through a slave woman's fertility in relation to enslaved or apprenticed women who remained childless in the British Caribbean is examined by the historian Diana Paton in her 2017 article "Maternal Struggles and the Politics of Childlessness under Pronatalist Caribbean Slavery." Paton explores Jamaica during the apprenticeship period (1834–1848). Here, Paton illustrates the value of slave children from the late eighteenth century through 1834: "Children were to be treated as valuable

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[246] This law was adopted as a doctrine in the British colonies in 1662.

commodities: potential adult labourers to be nurtured" (252). She highlights the function of reproductive laborers in light of Ned Sublette and Constance Sublette's theory of enslaved women having had capitalized wombs (Paton 252). Especially after the trade in slaves via the Middle Passage became illegal in 1807, British Caribbean colonies dealt with substantial reductions to the long-distance sale of slaves, which made reproductive labor even more significant. Morgan posits that the value placed on giving birth caused enslaved African women to consider themselves commodities with the assigned task of birthing children into lives of harsh labor and violence (108).

This perception aligns with Sharpe's concept of Black maternity as a vessel in the Middle Passage. The Middle Passage as a birth canal takes on the mass production of enslaved Black offspring that are born into a status of non/beings (Sharpe 74). I argue that this notion's outcome is similar in implication to the partus sequitur ventrem law. Kotzebue's play speaks to the importance of reproductive labor through the character of the Black African female slave who was encouraged to contribute to the growth of the slave population, which harks back to Sublette and Sublette's idea of capitalizing on enslaved women's wombs. The female slave recounts: "Man mir einen Mann gab, um noch mehr Sklaven in die Welt zu setzen" (Kotzebue 59).[247] Turner, too, refers to the setting of Kotzebue's play in the context of planters' dependency on reproduction "to replenish Jamaica's slave population" (236). Paton rightfully states that the value of enslaved women "extended beyond their own lifespan into their childbearing potential and the lives of the children they might bear" (252). Paton further establishes that children were seen as an

[247] I was given a man to produce more slaves for the world.

investment, as were their mothers, which allowed enslaved mothers to enjoy better conditions after 1807 (252).

Kotzebue paints a different picture, which may be due to the play's earlier date, toward the end of the eighteenth century. The overseer brutally beats and whips the enslaved mother, who is weakened due to having given birth three days prior. He accidentally strikes the child in its mother's arms: "Vor drey [sic] Tagen habe ich es gebohren [sic]. Ich war sehr schwach und krank, da kam der Weißer [sic] knecht [sic] und verlangte, ich solle den Zucker zwischen den schweren metallenen Walzen pressen. Das konnte ich nicht. Da hat er mich geschlagen. . . . Als mich der Meisterknecht schlug . . . aber Ein Streich fiel doch auf mein Kind" (Kotzebue 58-60).[248] Furthermore, Kotzebue's character refers to having suffered three previous miscarriages due to her plantation labor. She notes that pregnant dogs were treated better than slaves: "Dreymal [sic] hoffte und fürchtete ich Mutter zu werden, dreymal [sic] entwand sich mir, unter zu harter Sklavenarbeit, eine unreife Frucht. Den Jagdhund laßt [sic] ihr zu Hause, wenn er werfen will, und nicht mehr gehen kann; aber die Negerin muß [sic] arbeiten, bis die Geburtsschmerzen sie in den Sand krämmen" (Kotzebue 59).[249] Kotzebue wrote this play in 1796, which reveals the conditions on slave plantations in Jamaica long before the interception of illegal slave ships in 1807. It is likely that the enormous value placed on reproductive labor and thus Black African female slaves had not peaked yet due to a seemingly unlimited long-distance trade in slaves.

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[248] I gave birth three days ago. I was very weak and sick, then a white farmhand came and demanded that I crush the sugar between the heavy metal plates. I could not. So he beat me. . . . When the master farmhand hit me . . . one strike hit my child.

[249] Three times I hoped and feared becoming a mother. Three times I lost, due to hard slave labor, my unripe fruit. You leave your hunting dogs at home before they give birth, if they cannot walk anymore; but the Negro woman has to work until labor pains make her sink into the sand.

In light of the specific case of a slave woman called Bessie in seventeenth-century Barbados, Morgan foregrounds that reproduction is strictly seen as a woman's province that is indicative of the invisibility of fatherhood. "Whether [the father] was enslaved on another plantation, had died, or was the slaveowner himself" was of no relevance because the children were considered to be the master's property through their mother (Morgan 109). Much like this, Kotzebue does not pay any mind to the father of the infant in his play. Instead, he dedicates almost three pages to the monologue of the slave woman, who details her experience. The reader is left to guess whether the baby's father is another slave or the actual slaveowner. Nevertheless, the slavers and planters controlled the reproductive organs of the Black female slaves for the dual purposes of replenishing the plantation slave population and seeking sexual pleasure. Morgan states: "Uninterrupted by even a tacit nod toward paternity, the mother-child dyad came into being at the behest of slaveowners intent on calculating their own patriarchal powers through the ownership of human property" (109).

Turner classifies a complex diversity in narratives depicting motherhood and African women slaves (245). Some women exhibited patterns of indifference toward their children or even abandoned their offspring. A number of women actively resisted what they saw as their destiny and the destiny of their children by turning "the violence endemic to slavery inward . . . slitting the throats of their sons and daughters or using vaginal suppositories and emmenagogues to prevent conception and expel fetuses" (Turner 233). Kotzebue's character reflects the complexity typified by Turner. Kotzebue illustrates infanticide as a necessary measure to spare the infant from a life of enslavement. Turner and historian Barbara Bush examine infanticide in the historical context of the so-called nine-day rule: Infant death was often recorded as before the ninth day, and an infant's survival was considered more likely

after the ninth day (Turner 236). Bush links this rule to the beliefs of the Akan peoples in West Africa in her 1990 work *Slave Women in Caribbean Society 1650-1838*. Here, infants are only regarded as parts of the human world eight or nine days after their birth. Only at that point are these children no longer considered to be ghosts wandering in between two worlds (Bush 146). Bush establishes this rule as having functioned as permission for infanticide as a protective measure (147). The infanticide in Kotzebue's play occurs three days after the baby's birth and thereby lies within the range of time identified by Bush (58).

I argue that infanticide as a protective measure could be understood as an ultimate act of love or devotion for a child to spare it from a life spent suffering the horrors of slavery. Kotzebue confirms this viewpoint through his character's lamentations of having wanted her own mother to spare her from this fate: "Meine Mutter wäre auch so barmherzig gewesen, und hätte mir den Hirnschädel zerschmettert, als ich gebohren [sic] wurde!" (Kotzebue 60).[250] This character does not waver from her confidence in having acted in a motherly and sacrificial manner, which is said to be her duty as a loving mother:

> Dieses Kind war das Erste, dessen Leben mir einen frohen Augenblick schenkte. Ich habe es lallen hören — es hat an meiner Brust gelegen — ich habe mich gefreut — ich habe erfahren, wie einem fröhlichen Menschen zu Muthe [sic] ist! — Süsser Rausch der Mutterliebe! (Kotzebue 59)[251]

Morgan emphasizes the memorialization of "selfless women working endless hours to support their children—mamas with expansive hearts and bosoms and a ferocious protectiveness, warriors who shouldered weapons while nursing babies" in terms of

[250] My mother would have been so kind, if she had crushed my skull when I was born!

[251] "This child was the first one whose life gave me a happy moment. I could hear it babbling — it was on my breast — and I was happy — I learned what it feels like to be a happy person! — The sweet rush of a mother's love!"

motherhood in African American historical narratives (113). However, Turner interprets this overarching narrative as obscuring readings of the emotional suffering and pain that enslaved women endured. This reading expresses the importance of exploring what Hartman terms "what we don't see" in the fragmented archive (Hartman qtd. in Turner 245).

In this sense, one could infer that Kotzebue's character practiced a deliberate act of resistance and thus behaved in line with the dominant narrative of African slave mothers. But Kotzebue presents a loving and happy mother who, in this particular scenario, realizes the contradictory impossibility of her motherhood in slavery. Aligning with Turner's conceptualization, Kotzebue demonstrates the dynamicity of violence with a layered depiction of purely physical violence in relation to emotional pain as well as violence imposed through the narration of motherhood in the context of plantation slavery in eighteenth-century Jamaica. This dynamicity of violence also extends to different forms of epistemic violence through the construction of invalid and baseless discourses on the so-called Other. These dialogues, especially regarding the transatlantic slave trade, have severe material implications for the lives of Black Africans. On the other hand, some slaveholders sought to cultivate an image of being "good" and just by offering their slaves better treatment or even considering them to be friends or family members rather than property. I will discuss the characteristics and contradictions of so-called "good" and "bad" slaveholders in the following section.

A Dichotomy of Violence: Good Slaveholders vs. Bad Slaveholders

In *Zamor und Zoraide*, Nesselrode seeks to portray a stark division between "good" and "evil." Here, "good" slaveholders and planters are shown to be kind and friendly toward

their slaves. They deem slaves to be friends and hold them as servants rather than slaves, thereby rejecting violent measures. These attitudes echo understandings of ameliorationist strategies within the spectrum of abolition. "Evil" slaveowners are characterized as callous and brutal in their interactions with slaves; they provide harsh living conditions and regularly inflict violence. Their slaves are regarded as commodified property within a capitalist framework. Zoraide's experiences are shaped through having encountered both "good" and "evil" slaveowners, which is indicative of a corresponding theme of dichotomy in slavery.

Nesselrode introduces Zoraide as currently living on the plantation of a "good" and generous planter called Sir Germin. He calls his slaves his friends and children, as he repeatedly refers to them throughout the play (Nesselrode 32). In this sense, Sir Germin describes his slaves as loyal and just, which is the reason he feels no harm will come to him and his family during the upcoming slave revolt. This confidence is exemplified when Sir Germin arms his slaves for the approaching revolt:

> Gut, Ihr versprecht mir Hülfe [sic], Ihr schwört mir bei Himmel und Erde daß [sic] Ihr mir treu bleiben wollt, ein anderer würde Euch nicht trauen, und Euch so wie die andern [sic] gethan [sic] haben, an Ketten schließen lassen, ich will es aber nicht thun [sic], nein, Kinder, ich will mich Euch ganz anvertrauen, ich lasse Euch alle bewaffnen, Freunde! bin ich Euch ein harter grausamer Herr gewesen, so gebt mir mit den Gewehr, das ich Euch in die Hände gebe, den Todt, wenn ich ihn verdient habe; bin ich Euch aber ein guter Vater gewesen, so schützet mich und die Meinigen [sic]. (Nesselrode 33)[252]

In his relationship with his slaves, Sir Germin is depicted as trustworthy, loyal, and friendly because he sympathizes with ongoing searches for long-lost family members and is

[252] Well, you promised me your help, swore by heaven and earth that you would remain faithful to me, a different man would not trust you, and put you in chains, as others have done, but I do not wish to do this, my children. I will give myself over to you fully. I will let you arm yourselves, friends! If I was a cruel master to you, then use the rifle I have given to you to put me to death, if I deserve it. If I was a good father to you, then protect me and mine.

knowledgeable about their pasts and concerns. For this reason, Sir Germin is aware that Mahmud, one of his slaves, has been looking for his father for quite a while now. He supports this quest and encourages him in it: "Germin. Ich wünsche Dir mein Sohn, daß [sic] Du Deinen Vater wieder finden mögest" (Nesselrode 33).[253] Sir Germin shows interest in his slaves and their former lives and thus listens carefully and follows up on previous conversations, which is established in a scene in which he talks to Mahmud. Here, Sir Germin reassures himself by asking about Mahmud's origin: "Aus welcher Gegend bist Du? ich habe es vergessen" (Nesselrode 33).[254]

Sir Germin's friendly relationship with his plantation slaves is reciprocated and appreciated by them, which Nesselrode primarily illustrates with stage directions that demonstrate loyalty, gratitude, and friendship in a submissive nature through the slaves bowing down: "Die Schwarzen fallen auf die Erde, und weisen mit den Händen auf den Himmel und auf die Erde, und legen als dann ihr Hände kreuzweiß [sic] auf die Brust" (Nesselrode 32)[255] and "(alle Sklaven fallen nieder, und umfassen die Knie des Sir Germins)" (Nesselrode 50).[256] Mahmud shows his gratitude by praising Sir Germin's just and fair treatment of slaves: "Mahmud. Herr! Keiner von uns wird seyn [sic], der nicht willig sein Leben für Dich aufopfere, Du hast uns unsre Knechtschaft nie fühlen lassen, deine Ketten sind uns leicht geworden, ich wenigstens für meinen Theil [sic], ich würde mir nie meine

[253] I wish for you, my son, that you will find your father again.

[254] Which region are you from? I forgot.

[255] The Blacks fall onto earth, point their hands at the sky and the earth, and then place their hands across their chest.

[256] (all slaves fall down and hold their arms around Sir Germin's knees)

Freiheit gewüscht haben, und ewig, Herr! wollte ich dein Sklave bleiben" (Nesselrode 33).[257] Nesselrode's portrayal of Sir Germin's slaves reinforces his approachability and generosity, especially through their day-to-day interactions, which demonstrate seemingly genuine friendship bonds and the slaves' contentment with their situation. Sir Germin has the slaves' best interests at heart and thereby makes sure to not burden them through harsh conditions on his plantation.

This view of slavery as a benevolent institution is upheld by claims in many, varied locations that Black African slaves lived in better psychological, moral, and economic circumstances that poor white people (Eichstedt and Small 149). One contemporary setting for such assertions is the public and private plantation museums operated by African Americans. The sociologists Jennifer L. Eichstedt and Stephen Small investigate these museums across the U.S. Southern states of Georgia, Louisiana, and Virginia in their study *Representations of Slavery: Race and Ideology in Southern Plantation Museums* (2002). In this, Eichstedt and Small explore the qualities of the constructed historical narratives and discourses perpetuated by these museums. Eichstedt and Small illustrate rhetorical devices that serve to trivialize and deflect the impact of slavery and "position African Americans as comfortable with or civilized by slavery" in many of the visited sites (147-48). Eichstedt and Small's conclusions are supported by Nesselrode's conceptual understanding of slavery, which speaks to the many ways these racialized strategies resonate with "other realms of representation and public life" (Eichstedt and Small 149). If not contextualized and engaged

[257] "Sir! There is not one among us, who would not gladly lie down his life for you. You never made us feel our servitude, your chains have become light on us. I for one would have never wanted freedom, Sir! I would want to remain your slave."

with, these methods may result in invalidating notions regarding the harsh realities of slavery (Eichstedt and Small 148).

Though there may have been enslaved Africans who believed themselves to be in need of the protection the institution of slavery offered, Eichstedt and Small criticize the lack of critical context in these museum tours (150). They specifically highlight a tour taken at George Washington's birthplace that perpetuated the narrative of Washington deeming "slavery to be an economic drain on master-enslavers, as they 'often has more slaves who they took care of than who were productively working on the plantation'" (Eichstedt and Small 150). In this sense, slaves are shown as being taken care of and treated well and ultimately costing their slavers more than the value of the actual labor they provide (Eichstedt and Small 150). This narrative implies that enslaved Black Africans were indeed incapable of self-governing and taking care of their own day-to-day affairs. Thus, they benefitted from the structural institution of slavery and were treated well. Consequently, planters and slavers did enslaved Africans the favor of keeping them well. The regarding of slavery as a benevolent institution, visible in Nesselrode's play, is indicative of a handing-down of white dominant narrative discourses, which are manifested in various forms of cultural productions and public life, such as the tours given in U.S. slavery museums. Nesselrode bolsters this thinking through his character Sir Germin, who proudly states: "Ich habe zwar auch Sklaven, wenn du willst, aber nie habe ich Sie als solche betrachtet, wohl aber als meine Knechte, die ich für ihre Arbeit bezahle" (41).[258]

In their analysis, Eichstedt and Small further address the benevolence of slavery through the reinforcing narrative trope of the grateful and happy slave, which is

[258] Although I have slaves, if you will, I never saw them as such, but as farmhands, who are paid for their work.

demonstrated by "details of individual enslaved persons . . . to show that they received favors and rewards from the master-enslaver and that they expressed contentment in slavery" (147). This construction implies a childlike, plain, simple African nature and an incapability that is in need of dominant and structural white leadership, which Black African slaves welcomed (Eichstedt and Small 151).[259] Thus, Black slaves' natures are often signalled via loyalty and affection toward their white slaveowners (Eichstedt and Small 151). In this sense, variations of these rhetorical tactics suggest that enslaved Africans showed their faithfulness by betraying potential slave revolts and remaining on their plantations even after emancipation was granted (Eichstedt and Small 151). Eichstedt and Small critique the absence of historical background: "There is no discussion of punishment of enslaved people nor of the economic and political restraints faced by those legally freed at the end of the Civil War. Instead, acts undertaken by some enslaved people are referenced without the larger context of horror, brutality, and dehumanization that was an intimate part of the institution of slavery" (151). This broad view is also often missing within the slave plays that portray the overall happy and grateful character of African slaves who decide to remain either with the plantation or their owner in some capacity. Nesselrode, Kotzebue, and

[259] This constructed narrative is often considered to be an extension of the stereotypical comic image of Sambo. Historian and scholar of African American studies Joseph Boskin's study *Sambo: The Rise and Demise of an American Jester* (1988) provides a wide-ranging historical overview and insight into the stereotypical image of Sambo by tracing this image in various American cultural productions. Here, Sambo is introduced as having arisen from initial slave-trading contact between England and West Africa during early colonization efforts in the seventeenth century (Boskin 7). The conceptual notion of Sambo existed long before the inception of this specific entertaining identity that took root in the Americas through the system of plantation slavery (Boskin 7-8). Boskin describes Sambo as having descended from "a long line of Fools who played an important role in medieval Europe" (9). Sambo was stereotypically portrayed as happy and grinning, which shows a resemblance to the images of his predecessor while also occupying an entertaining function (Boskin 11). Specifically, exchanges of humor were used to assert psychological and political power. "Whites were in the dominant position of setting the parameters of these exchanges, but Blacks were able to develop a repertoire of retaliatory humor to partially offset their situation," Boskin writes (58). Humor was used to reduce the chance of violence.

Ziegler all depict these scenarios in light of the seemingly and thus stereotypically loyal and loving demeanor of Africans, both male and female.

Nesselrode alludes to the uncertain status of slaves after manumission or emancipation through his depiction of Sir Germin, who notes most of his slaves had been manumitted and had chosen to live on his plantation (Nesselrode 42). Sir Germin adds that he pays many of his slaves for their labor, which is why he considers them menial workers rather than slaves (Nesselrode 41). Even those Sir Germin still regards as slaves are considered to have been manumitted as well because their labor has bought them liberty (Nesselrode 42). The varying nature of "master-slave" relationships presented by Nesselrode is especially fascinating because despite differing arrangements, liberty seems to have been attained by all of the enslaved Africans on Sir Germin's plantation. Nesselrode attributes these slaves' decisions to remain on the plantation to Sir Germin's friendliness and benevolence, which aligns with Eichstedt and Small's notion of the rhetorical devices of slavery as benevolent institution and the happy and grateful slave. These tropes are emphasized again toward the end of the play. Sir Germin implies the uncertainties of being manumitted as he states: "Ichh lasse euch nicht allein alle Freiheit, sondern ich entledige euch aller eurer Leibeigenschaft" (Nesselrode 126).[260] He assures the slaves that they can stay around while they enjoy liberty and unburdens his menial laborers from their plantation work, which he describes using the term that refers to serfdom rather than slavery. He further offers two scenarios: allowing his slaves to leave (he uses the term travel, which possibly refers to some slaves wanting to return to their homeland or to travel in search of their loved ones) or them remaining on his plantation. Toward the end of the play, it is

[260] I will not leave you alone in freedom, but take away your serfdom.

implied that all slaves gladly remain "in care of" Sir Germin rather than leaving (Nesselrode 126). The very concept of allowing the plantation to serve as alternative "housing" for his slaves could be read in light of the uncertainty some slaves experienced after manumission or emancipation, a phenomenon that is also applicable to the West Indies, where Nesselrode's play is staged.

Kotzebue, likewise, depicts his slave characters as voluntarily choosing to remain alongside white males in some form of a "master-slave" relationship. Kotzebue details the horrors of slavery in many instances throughout the play. For example, William is repeatedly approached by his father's former slaves during his visit (from England) to the Jamaican plantation that his brother John has recently inherited (Kotzebue 53-57). These slaves tell William about their daily trials and tribulations, hoping that he, too, shows benevolence like his father once did (Kotzebue 58-60, 62-65). Kotzebue depicts William as sentimental and influenced by William Wilberforce and the British abolition agenda to terminate slavery and the trade in slaves (65-66). While visiting the plantation, William is confronted with infanticide, the chopping off of body parts, extensive whippings, and attempted sexual assault, all atrocities that enslaved Black Africans had to endure at the hands of his brother John and the overseer, Paul (Kotzebue 15-16, 20-23, 25, 58-60). Terrified by the nature of slavery presented to him, William convinces his brother to sell four of his slaves to him: "Will. Bruder, ich beschwöre dich bey dem Grabe unsers Vaters! handle menschlich! gieb [sic] . . . die Freyheit [sic]!" (Kotzebue 87).[261] Kotzebue depicts the uncertainties faced by slaves after manumission. William decides that it would be best for Zameo to remain alongside his elderly father, Ayos, now that both have been freed. He implies that Ayos

[261] Brother, I beg of you by our father's grave! Act humanely! Give . . . freedom!

would not be able to sustain himself and thus needs his son in order to survive: "Will. Aber mit all deiner Freyheit [sic] könntest du leicht verhungern, wenn ich dir nicht ein Geschenk machte, welches dich in Zukunft vor Mangel schützen soll. — Da! ich schenke dir deinen Sohn, er mag für dich arbeiten" (Kotzebue 88).[262] William is aware that though he has been manumitted, a former slave still needs to find a way to sustain himself. He deems Ayos to be the most vulnerable to "economic and political restraints" (Eichstedt and Small 151). To boost his chances of survival, William assigns Zameo to his father (Kotzebue 88). However, Zameo submissively, happily, and voluntarily chooses to serve William, who freed him, for eternity (Kotzebue 89).

Ziegler describes a similar scenario between the African female Toni and the white Englishman Georg. Toni decides to commit suicide after having endured the harshness and brutality of slavery for four years (Ziegler 44). She is approached by Georg while she is holding a knife, and he wins her trust (Ziegler 45). She tells him about her ordeal and he decides to buy her freedom. Georg purchases Toni, gives her some money, and provides her with her manumission papers: "Er gab mir meinen Freybrief [sic], er gab mir Geld, ich warf beydes [sic] weg und lief zwanzig Meilen seinem Wagen nach, schrie und weinte, er mußte [sic] mich behalten. Des Nachts schlief ich vor seiner Thüre [sic] auf der harten Schwelle. Er befahl mir zu gehen; leise schlich ich auf den Zehen wieder zurück" (Ziegler 46).[263] Ziegler provides no explanation as to why Toni would like to serve Georg in this instance. In later conversations, Toni explains that she felt an obligation to stay by Georg's side due to her so-

[262] But with all of your freedom, you could easily starve, if I don't give you a present to protect you from lack in the future. — There! I shall give you your son, so he may work for you.

[263] "He gave me my letter of freedom, he gave me money and I threw both away and followed his wagon for twenty miles, screaming and crying to keep me. At night, I slept in front of his door, on the hard threshold. He told me to leave and I quietly crept back on my tippy toes."

called "Sklavenpflicht" (slave duty) (Ziegler 11). Ziegler depicts Toni as having an innate feeling of responsibility that seems tied to her slave nature and, more broadly, even her Blackness. It is in this sense that Toni also considers it her duty to not eat and to almost starve, instead providing Georg with food on their travels when they are lacking provisions (Ziegler 11). This offers a seemingly natural and sensible reason as to why Toni did not leave the moment she received her deed of manumission. This situation would, in a German historical context, mean that Toni was actually legally free and no longer enslaved. This is according to the legal situation in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, because she had been provided with tangible proof of her manumission, despite there having been no legal basis for slavery in the first place. However, in this very rare situation of actually having all the information needed in order to lead a free life without being enslaved again, Toni decides to stay with Georg and ultimately marry him, which implies that they will be together forever.

While Georg is in no way or form Toni's slaveholder or owner, he does have authority regarding the power dynamics at play in their relationship. As a formerly enslaved Black woman, Toni is one step away from being at the bottom of the barrel regarding eighteenth-century hierarchies. It is for that reason that Georg's presence provides Toni with protection and a rather comfortable life away from uncertainty. Despite having been legally manumitted, Toni would have still very likely been taken advantage of and would have had severe difficulties finding a proper occupation. Toni's gender needs to be taken into account here, too, as Spillers, Hartman, Sharpe, and Jacobs have illustrated the precarity of being a Black female slave. In this sense, Toni is likely more protected by way of being someone's property, because as a legally "free" woman she is far more vulnerable and likely to be assaulted. Toni is looking to be kept safe by Georg. Therefore, it only makes sense for her to

remain alongside her protective white male counterpart, a situation that is presented in the previously discussed slave plays, as well.

Schmidt describes the friendship between Jernrs and Bernhard as the reason why Jernrs decides to follow his newly made friend to Magdeburg. Schmidt depicts Jernrs as happily liberated and newly wealthy, having inherited the fortune of his former owner, who was very generous and nice to him. Schmidt does not portray any uncertainty that may befall Jernrs as a Black African man in a U.S. context. Jernrs is not threatened by any white Europeans or even slave patrols. Schmidt characterizes Jernrs's only worry to be loneliness because he does not have any friends and is not acquainted with anyone throughout the play. Jernrs talks about having gone for a walk thinking about what to do next and where to travel to when Bernhard walks by (Schmidt 36). Here, Schmidt introduces Bernhard as friendly and respectful toward Jernrs, and greeting him in an open-minded manner: "Als Bernhard begegnete und hübsch frundlich grüßte" (36). Jerns goes on to say that he immediately felt Bernhard's good soul, which is why he decides to pursue a friendship with him and ultimately follow him to Magdeburg. Jernrs has no other place to go and feels completely safe at Bernhard's side. Schmidt suggests that Jernrs is somewhat indebted to Bernhard by sharing everything with him, including his fortune, through the storylines show Bernhard to actually be indebted to Jernrs.

Correspondingly, these plays seem to propose amelioration rather than the immediate or gradual termination of slavery. The practice of slavery is not presented as horrifically once these characters have ended up with these generous white men who embody the view that slavery is more of a contractual obligation that these enslaved Africans also benefit from. Accordingly, all the Black African characters have either found a true friend and confidante in their white male saviors, or even a spouse. This seemingly would

not have been possible if it had not been for the institution of slavery and, by extension, their capture from the African continent. For this reason, these characters decide to devote their entire lives to these white male slavers either by way of serving them eternally (Kotzebue and Nessselrode), sharing their wealth with them and thus financing their entire lifestyle (Schmidt), or giving themselves entirely to them for them to possess and own them and their bodies in earnest by way of a consensual sexual relationship. This portrayal depicts these Africans characters as suffering from a dependency complex that is tied to social, economic, and political circumstances. It is also conveyed by way of a mindset that here seems to demonstrate and reinforce the colonial trope of Black inferiority through white paternalism.

These depictions in the plays seem to refer to what Eichstedt and Small describe as the "economic and political restraints faced by those legally freed" (151), which is applicable to many slave systems in the Americas. Nonetheless, the historical context remains unspoken of, which leaves the reader to guess in some instances as to why many of these enslaved Africans share the urge to stay in close proximity to their white slaveowners and friends. Following this, Eichstedt and Small echo rhetorical strategies used in four of the five analyzed slave plays. It needs to be noted, though, that these rhetorical devices reinforce stereotypical views of Black Africans overall, such as being unable to care for themselves and thus happily accepting any guidance provided by their slaveholders. These rhetorical strategies create an illusion of interdependency and symbiosis that the master-enslaver and the Black African slave both benefit from.

Correspondingly, Zamor addresses Sir Germin as "Mann des Friedens" (Nesselrode 49), while one of Sir Germin's manumitted slaves, Franziß, follows suit and reassures Sara that he and the other slaves will gladly give their lives for them in gratitude:

> Sorge für nichts liebe Gebieterin, wir werden Dich schützen, Du hast uns Sklaven nicht als Sklaven, sondern als Deine Kinder gehalten; wir sind dankbar, und werden unser Blut und Leben für Dich und die Deinigen [sic] geben; sehe, da kommt Mahmud mit den übrigen voll Begierde für Dich zu streiten; sey [sic] ruhig, ich gehe, und mache das Gewehr in Ordnung. (Nesselrode 31-32)[264]

The slaves, among whom are Mahmud und Franziß, show an unwavering love and loyalty for Sir Germin. In this sense, Sir Germin's slaves disassociate from the other slaves and the slave revolt in Jamaica. They choose to fight alongside Sir Germin, even though the revolting slaves are also said to be from Benin. In fact, Sir Germin suggests that Mahmud's father may even be among the revolting slaves (Nesselrode 33). Mahmud is certain that, if this were the case, his father would immediately stop the revolt "wenn er wüßte, wie gut es sein Sohn bei Dir hat" (Nesselrode 34).[265] Thus, the slave revolt involves the possibility of not just physical peril but also emotional danger, because Sir Germin's slaves could encounter long-lost family members or friends who side with the opposition.

Mahmud's response is emblematic of an ardent, submissive, and relentless readiness to support Sir Germin. Mahmud adds: "Germin hat uns gut gehalten, wir sind seine Freunde; und Jones ist unser [sic] Feind, wenn er nicht Germins Freund seyn [sic] will. Aber er wirds [sic] seyn [sic], er wirds seyn [sic]!" (Nesselrode 38-39).[266] Mahmud advises Sir Germin tactically because Jones, the leader of the slave revolt, is a native of Benin and worships the Orissa deities, too. In an earlier instance of the play, Zoraide defines the

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[264] Do not worry, mistress, we will protect you. You kept your slaves, not as slaves, but as children; we are grateful and will give our blood for you and yours; see, there is Mahmud full of desire to argue on your behalf; be calm, I will go and make it alright.

[265] if he knew how well you are treating his son.

[266] Sir Germin has kept us well, we are his friends and Jones is our enemy, because he does not want to be Sir Germin's friend. But he will be, he will be!

significance of Orissa and implies that those who worship him and other associated deities act in accordance with fairness and civility (Nesselrode 26). Thus, Mahmud assumes that Jones is gracious, just, and wanting to only punish plantation owners for their inhumane treatment of slaves. Hence, Mahmud predicts Jones's friendship and an armistice. He sends a slave to approach Jones (Nesselrode 34).

Meanwhile, Mahmud and the others dig a ditch. They discuss Sir Germin's generosity once again by deeming him a deserving "Wohlthäter" (benefactor) (Nesselrode 40) whom they are ready to fight for and die with. Mahmud then alludes to unjust plantation owners as "Unmenschen, für die Henker unsere Brüder, die uns wie das Vieh halten, und Wucher mit uns treiben; Fluch, und Verderben für sie!"[267] and hails Sir Germin: "Es lebe Germin, und alle Weiße [sic], die so wie er denken" (Nesselrode 40).[268] This presents a dichotomy between good and bad slavers and slavery, which here is dependent on a valorization through the slaves, who further praise Sir Germin as a white slaveholder. Meanwhile, Jarvis and Levson are required to make this narrative comparison and thus serve the specific purpose of portraying cruel slaveholders. The condemnation of the inhumane institution of slavery as well as emotional and heartfelt responses about the daily brutalization and suffering of slaves at the hand of white, cruel, and merciless slaveowners constitutes an understanding of a different type of plantation system that is humanely run by Sir Germin, which leads to Eichstedt and Small's trope of the grateful and happy slave. In this, Nesselrode does not critique slavers or slavery per se. He is critical of the manner in

[267] Brutes, for the executioners of our brothers, who keep us like chattel, and practice usury; curse and doom them.

[268] Praise Sir Germin, and all whites who think like him.

which slavery is conducted on some plantations by the so-called bad slavers and plantation owners, who are typified by Jarvis and Levson (Nesselrode 13).

Nesselrode illustrates a dichotomy that surfaces by way of contrasting Sir Germin and his neighbors. This dichotomy is introduced in the very beginning of the play, when Thompson mentions the inhumane treatment at the neighboring plantation with regard to strenuous physical labor and lack of nourishment (Nesselrode 14). In that sense, Thompson describes Jarvis and Levson as evil and wild in their ways: "Ihre Gesichter gefielen mir nicht, es war so etwas wildes, etwas hartes in ihren Augen, und so was säuisches in ihren Reden" (Nesselrode 13).[269] Here, Jarvis and Levson take on the position of the harsh and brutal master-enslavers who consider their slaves to be disposable and in negation of all human decency, which is why Jarvis and Levson consider their brutal ways to be justified.

The exploitative and inhumane nature of plantation owners is not condoned by Sir Germin and Thompson. It is in this very climate that a Manichean interdependency comes to life. While the Black African was emblematic of inferiority and immoral contamination, his existence was essential to a European "privileged social and material status but also for his sense of moral superiority and, therefore, ultimately for his very identity" (JanMohamed 4). This then results in the so-called white man's burden, which exists in contradiction to the very essence of the white, superior slaveholder and colonizer. However, if the slaveholder or colonizer genuinely wants to fulfill his duty of manifest destiny and his mission to civilize the Black Africans, "he undermines his own position of social privilege; if the democracy from his home country is extended to the dominated country, then the colonizer can no longer retain his superior status" (JanMohamed 5). JanMohamed addresses the colonial society

[269] I did not like their faces, there was something wild, and hardened in their eyes, and something pig-like in the way they spoke.

when establishing this intrinsically contradictory Manichean dilemma, but I argue that this notion also extends to the dehumanizing paradigm of slavery through the transatlantic slave trade.

In this context, Fanon delineates the condition of the Black African, who is locked inside the body of the past. He alludes to an unbearable everlasting burden of holding on to the past that keeps Black Africans and those in the diaspora hostage by way of seeking meaning from the past for one's destiny (Fanon 229). Fanon believes that both Black and white people have become prisoners of the past by keeping past notions and ideas alive in the present. "Both must turn their backs on the inhuman voices which were those of their respective ancestors to make authentic communication possible," he writes (Fanon 231). For this reason, Fanon is not interested in reparations or discussions about collective guilt when he exclaims, "I am not the slave of the Slavery that dehumanized my ancestors. . . . I have neither the right nor the duty to claim reparation for the domestication of my ancestors" (228-29).

Sir Germin seemingly counters Fanon's historical discourse regarding his ancestors and takes on a position in favor and support of Black African slaves. Sir Germin claims to understand that the cruel treatment of Black Africans is the reason for the slave revolts and sympathizes with revolting slaves in this regard: "Germin. . . . Aber wenn ich bedenke, wie hart man hier im Lande die Sklaven hält; so kann ich es den Schwarzen schier nicht verdenken, daß [sic] sie es überdrüßig geworden sind" (Nesselrode 12).[270] However, he states that "Germin. . . . Meine Sklaven sind mir treu, daß [sic] weiß ich, denn ich habe sie nicht gleich meinen Nachbarn übel gehalten, und der Mohr ist dankbar, wenn man ihm guts [sic]

[270] But considering, how brutally slaves are kept here, I simply cannot blame Black people for becoming fed up.

thut [sic]" (Nesselrode 12).[271] Sir Germin's positive and rather progressive characterization is particularly dependent on the existence of submissive slaves, which ensures that he maintains his positionality within the context of the play.

Along these lines, Sir Germin expresses his understanding of equality. Accordingly, integrity and honesty can be found among all of humanity. This does not seem to be tied to racial theories about skin color, heritage, or ethnicity (Nesselrode 39). Thus, he does not approve of the harsh treatment of slaves and alludes to his duty as a human and to his "Menschlichkeit" (humanity) to act in generous ways. In this sense, Sir Germin states that he inherited most of his slaves, while others were free slaves who joined his plantation voluntarily:

> Das Geld giebt [sic] uns kein Recht, auch den geringsten Menschen zu verkaufen, ich habe zwar auch Sklaven, wenn du willst, aber nie habe ich Sie als solche betrachtet, wohl aber als meine Knechte, die ich für ihre Arbeit bezahle; noch habe ich keinen verkauft, die ich habe, habe ich mit dem Gute von meinem Oheim geerbt, die mehresten [sic] sind ganz frei, den der Preiß [sic] einiger geringen Arbeit ist die Freyheit [sic], der gröste Theil [sic] sind Freygelassene [sic] die schon selbst eigene Plantagen haben, obschon [sic] Sie sich mir zu Lieb immer meine Sklaven nennen. (Nesselrode 41-42)[272]

The last sentence of this quote, however, reveals some form of lust for superiority and Black admiration, because it implies that Sir Germin likes for his so-called "friends" to refer to themselves as his personal slaves in order to please him. His words reveal that he wants his slaves to submit to him and be dependent on him. It gives insight into a possible fetish for being white and being of a high status in comparison with the enslaved Black Africans.

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[271] My slaves are loyal to me, because I did not keep them how my neighbors did, and the Moors are grateful, if they are treated well.

[272] Money does not give us the right to sell humans. I too have slaves, if you will, but I have never regarded them as such, but rather as my servants, who receive payment for their work; so far, I have not sold one of them, whom I have inherited from my uncle. Most are completely free, because the price of work is freedom, the biggest portion are freedmen, who do not have their own plantations, although they call themselves my slaves to my benefit.

Kotzebue similarly highlights such a dichotomy of good and generous versus bad and cruel slaveholders. He portrays the plantation owner who preceded John as having had a heartfelt and devout relationship to his slaves. This owner chose his burial ground to be among the plantation slaves who still, after his passing, tend to his grave site and worship his presence (Kotzebue 55). Kotzebue demonstrates that Black African slave loyalty, gratitude, and submission remain beyond death. For this reason, the grave site has become somewhat of a sanctuary for the enslaved characters in Kotzebue's play. They actively seek guidance and protection there from their new and violent slaveowner, John. Under these circumstances, the slaves engage in a conversation that exposes their submissive and desperate nature, which further elevates the perceived historical superiority of the white slavemaster:

> Truro. Was wollt ihr Brüder?
> Neger. Hülfe [sic] von unserm [sic] alten Herrn!
> Truro. Tod ist tod!
> Neger. Sage das nicht. Wenn er ganz tod wäre, wofür war er so gut? Und wenn Alles mit uns stirbt, wofür leiden wir so viel?
> Ein Ander [sic]. Er wird uns hören. Kniet nieder um das Grab. (Sie knien.). (Kotzebue 63)[273]

The slaves proceed to pray to their former slaveowner as one would to a higher being. In this sense, they mention numerous good deeds he undertook during his lifetime that include generously serving wine, being lenient and forgiving of disobedience, tending to kids with

[273] Truro. "What do you brothers want?"
Negroes. "We need the help of our old master!"
Truro. "Dead is dead!"
Negro. "Do not say that. If he were fully dead, what would he be so good for? And if everything dies with us, would we suffer this much?"
Another. "He will hear us. Kneel around the grave again." (They kneel.)

smallpox, and freeing a slave's father (Kotzebue 64). They call him their father and chant their gratitude at his graveside.

The previous owner's son, William, follows in his father's footsteps by taking on the positionality of a "good and generous" slaveholder. Showing signs of aversion to the brutal treatment of Black African slaves, William articulates his convictions: "Welcher Feind meiner Ruhe hauchte mir den unseligen Gedanken ein, in dieß [sic] Land der Qualen zurückzukehren! — Doch nein! —ich habe das Grab meines Vaters besucht; durch Wohlthaten [sic] will ich seiner Asche ein Todtenopfer bringen" (Kotzebue 55).[274] This devout expression of love is overshadowed and contrasted by the conditions the slaves face, including daily brutalization and severe lashings at the hands of William's brother, John, and his overseer, Paul. John's unwillingness to change his cruel ways is "solved or dealt with" by William's interference at the end of the play.

Schmidt portrays a similar dichotomy through Jernrs's enslavement history. In America, Jernrs belonged to a Dutchman for five years, during which time he endured unimaginable misery (Schmidt 32). In comparison to Nesselrode, Schmidt is less descriptive in relation to the nature of Jernrs's mistreatment. He introduces a second owner, Lentin, who is far more compassionate and generous (Schmidt 34). Jernrs recalls being "refashioned" into a new role as "aus dem Sklaven ward [sic] ein Kammerdiener" (Schmidt 34).[275] Due to Lentin's good and generous ways, Jernrs is not forced to work on a plantation, but rather, simply has "ihn aus- und anzukleiden und mit ihm spatziren [sic] zu gehn"

[274] Which enemy to my quiet mind whispered to me the unfortunate thought to return to the land of terror! — But no! — I have visited my father's grave; I shall bring a sacrifice to his ashes by doing good deeds.

[275] the slave became a chamberlain

(Schmidt 34).[276] Schmidt intensifies this dichotomy of good and bad in the treatment of Jernrs through Lentin's emotional outbursts when confronted with Jernrs's previous abuse. Scars and marks across Jernrs's body that resulted from him being chained make his past evident: "Wenn ich ihn dann die Merkmale von dem Ketten an meinen Händen zeigte, so drehete er sich um und hielt das Schnupftuch fürs Gesicht" (Schmidt 34-35).[277] Schmidt depicts Jernrs as expressing his appreciation through his submissive slave nature, as discussed by Eichstedt and Small, which prompts him to want to wash Lentin's feet: "Wenn ich mich zu Zeiten zu seinen Füßen legte und die Fußsohlen scheuerte, so wurde er ärgerlich" (Schmidt 34).[278] Lentin did not want Jernrs to serve him in this manner. Jernrs still acknowledges Lentin's generous ways by saying, "Ach das war ein guter Herr! wenn der noch lebte!" (Schmidt 35).[279] Jernrs's positionality as a liberated Black African slave and the negative characterization of his previous Dutch merchant slaveowner allows for a positive and kind portrayal of Lentin by way of comparison. Jernrs's previous owner should be understood to be the antithesis to Lentin, which is essential to the elevation of Lentin as white, wealthy, and generous.

On a broader level, Schmidt depicts the German context as an unbecoming environment that exposes Jernrs to mockery and prying eyes. In this, he is repeatedly laughed at and not acknowledged, which leads to him sharing his experiences with Bremer's servant in a long monologue: "Jernrs. . . . Aber hör mal, es giebt [sic] doch garstige

[276] to dress him and go on walks with him

[277] When I showed him the marks from the chains on my hands, he turned away and held a handkerchief to his face.

[278] When I lay at his feet and scrubbed his soles, he became angry.

[279] He was a good master! If only he were still alive!

Menschen hier. Als ich mit meinem Bande die Gasse so herauf tändelte [sic], da blieben alle Menschen stehen und lachten mich aus" (Schmidt 26).[280] In a similar line, he shares, "Auf der Staße lachten sie mich aus, im Garten nickte man mir kaum zu wie ich guten Tag sagte, und hier läßt [sic] man mich allein stehen" (Schmidt 40).[281] Despite being made fun of and ignored, Jernrs decides to travel to Germany because he is loved by Bernhard, who exhibits friendship and amiable behavior toward Jernrs (Schmidt 32).

Jernrs's negative experiences of Othering in Germany are contrasted by him being welcomed into Bernhard's family, which starts with a warm welcome by Bernhard's father: "Brem. Sey [sic] mir herzlich willkommen, guter Jernrs! mein Sohn hat mir viel Gutes von dir erzehlt [sic], und ich freue mich, meine wenigen Tage zwischen euch beyden [sic] inskünftige [sic] zuzubringen" (Schmidt 41).[282] Jernrs is accepted here as part of the family unit, because Bremer knows of Jernrs's plans to remain in Germany with his son, Bernhard. Similarly, Schmidt depicts the servant Friedrich bonding with Jernrs instantly and thus expressing sincere compassion about Jernrs's enslavement: "Armer Jernrs! Ich bedaure dich herzlich" (33).[283] Bernhard's future bride, Rieke, seems to convey the same compassion, which is alluded to by Jernrs: "Ich habe ihr müssen meine Geschichte erzehlen [sic], und das that [sic] ihr recht weh daß [sic] ich so unglücklich gewesen bin" (45).[284] Schmidt includes these encounters to emphasize that Bernhard's family is able to see Jernrs's essence and

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[280] "But listen, there are nasty people here. When I walked up the street with my skipping rope, people stopped and laughed at me."

[281] "In the street, they laughed at me; in the garden, they barely nodded when I greeted them, and here, I am left to stand alone."

[282] "Welcome, good Jernrs! My son has told me great things about you. And I am happy to spend the few days I have left with you both."

[283] Poor Jernrs! I feel very sorry for you.

[284] I had to tell her my story and it hurt her that I was unhappy.

humanity, rather than his Blackness, which comes with a set of preconceived notions that would result in him being shunned or not taken seriously.

Jernrs expresses his gratitude to them by sharing his newly acquired wealth (through his inheritance from Lentin) with Bernhard: "Jernrs. . . . Da er so ein braver Mann ist, und Jernrs so gern leiden mag, so gehört ihn auch alles was Jernrs hat" (Schmidt 36).[285] For this reason, Bernhard is free to spend Jernrs's fortune as he pleases, which still places Jernrs in servitude to Bernhard through their mutual dependency on each other:

> Bernh. Gieb [sic] mir mal eine Schnur Perlen.
> Jernrs. Du Narr, was brauch ich die denn dir noch zu geben; sie gehören ja mit dein [sic].
> Bernh. Guter Jernrs. Nun hol sie nur.
> Jernrs. Wart [sic], so will ich die Schachtel holen. (Schmidt 55)[286]

In this context, Jernrs is used as a vital piece of Schmidt's puzzle: "In Schmidts *Die Kette des Edelmuths* schafft das große Vermögen, das der ehemalige Sklave Jernrs von seinem früheren Besitzer geerbt hat, die Voraussetzung für das glückliche Stückende: Bernhard wird mit dem Geld die Schulden seines desertierten Bruders tilgen und setzt mit dieser großmütigen Tat die 'Kette des Edelmuths' in Gang, die der Stücktitel ankündigt" (Riesche 151). Thus, one could argue that Jernrs's fortune presents a different type of commodification and profiteering off Black African bodies, which were still being traded at that time. In this sense, a family reconciliation and celebration would have never been possible without Jernrs's fortune. For this reason, it seems that he is being used once again, which indicates a different form of abuse and violence—similar to Spivak's understanding of epistemic violence (76)—

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[285] Because he is such a brave man, and likes Jernrs so much, everything he owns also belongs to Jernrs.

[286] Bernh. "Why don't you give me a string of pearls?"
Jernrs. "You fool! Why do I need to give them to you? They belong to you as well."
Bernh. "My good Jernrs. Now go and get them."
Jernrs. "I will get the box."

because he is not present in the last scenes of the play, even though none of the story's issues could have been resolved without his initial presence and generosity. The idea of commodification, even when presented through a lens of friendship, hardens an understanding of Black African bodies being further exploited and used despite now being free, liberated, and wealthy.

Bernhard's imbalanced relationship with Jernrs bears similarities to Kotzebue's and Nesselrode's portrayals of slaves' rightful place being with their masters, which is confirmed by Bernhard's occupation. Bernhard is a merchant who benefits from plantation slavery through having enslaved Black Africans harvest sugar and coffee, which is ultimately the source of his financial gain. Thus, it is not surprising that he continues to grow his business and affords his lifestyle on the backs of Black African slaves. It is along these lines that Riesche states:

> In Schmidts *Die Kette des Edelmuths* schafft das große Vermögen, das der ehemalige Sklave Jernrs von seinem früheren Besitzer geerbt hat, die Voraussetzung für das glückliche Stückende: Bernhard wird mit dem Geld die Schulden seines desertierten Bruders tilgen und setzt mit dieser großmütigen Tat die "Kette des Edelmuths" in Gang, die der Stücktitel ankündigt. Obwohl die Schwarzen auf diese Weise also maßgeblich an der rührstücktypischen Entwicklung der Handlung beteiligt sind, bleiben sie, anders als die schwarzen Geliebten, stark im Hintergrund und treten über viele Szenen hinweg oft gar nicht in Erscheinung. Diese Ambivalenz zwischen Aktivität und Passivität bestimmt auch das persönliche Verhältnis zu den weißen Protagonisten. (151)

The final happy ending scene of the play would not have come to pass if not for Jernrs's docile nature and his deeply committed friendship and love for Bernhard. Jernrs's disappearance at the end of the play further indicates his actual insignificance to this white German bourgeois household and reveals another layer of exploitation. Consequently, Jernrs and Bernhard are placed in opposition. Jernrs's absence and thus resulting silence resonates

within a white Western overriding discourse that attributes to white males an unlimited scope of political and social action.

In this context, Spivak points to a dominating and sole perspective in Western discourses in scholarship and critiques an assumed transparency that is demonstrated by representations of the Other in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988). Thus, Spivak's deconstruction of the word "representation" reveals significant differences in interpretation and understanding that are worth investigating. Representation, in the first sense, illustrated by Spivak's use of the German word *vertreten,* describes a particular type of political representation, that of a proxy (71). This usage is shown by the example of a small peasant proprietor class that "finds its 'bearer' in a 'representative' who appears to work in another's interest" (Spivak 71). Representation in the second sense defines a transformation of the initial meaning, which is therefore a functional transformation that is exemplified by the German word *darstellen.*

The distinction between the different forms of representation is crucial for understanding the dilemma of the oppressed, whose existence can only be recognized and validated by the oppressor. The oppressed, too, can only be represented by the oppressor, which illustrates a value-labor relationship that Spivak describes as follows:

> The small peasant proprietors . . . cannot represent themselves; they must be represented. Their representative must appear simultaneously as their master, as an authority over them, as unrestricted governmental power that protects them from the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. (71)

The class interests and concerns of the oppressed are therefore left to the executive force of the oppressor, who embodies the subordinating, superior society (Spivak 71). Manifested in hegemonic power structures, this model of social indirection implies "a critique of the subject as *individual* agent [and] . . . a critique . . . of the subjectivity of a *collective* agency"

(Spivak 72). At the same time, it constitutes the subject on two levels: "the Subject of desire and power as an irreducible methodological presupposition; and the self-proximate, if not self-identical, subject of the oppressed" (Spivak 74).

Western writers and intellectuals who are neither of these subjects claim to report on the non-represented subject but lack an actual analysis of "the workings of (the unnamed Subject irreducibly presupposed by) power and desire" (Spivak 74). The resulting transparency shows the impossibility of Western comprehension and knowledge of hegemonic power structures, which the unnamed subject of the Other of Europe exists under (Spivak 75). Even the debate over the production of the Other "supporting or critiquing the constitution of the Subject as Europe" underlies an inherent Western ideology that cannot be effaced (Spivak 75). This ideology is visible in the constitution of the Other of Europe: Any possible textual ingredients useful for occupying one's own itinerary were eliminated by ideological and scientific productions as well as the institution of the law. This constitutes the Western intellectual as Other in its own shadow (Spivak 75).

In line with Spivak's critique, these plays were written by white males who claim to portray scenarios of slavery, but none of them has ever experienced slavery in this manner. Furthermore, many of these plays romanticize the condition of being enslaved by way of depicting love stories and family reunions, which is not realistic. Furthermore, these writers also speak for the enslaved Africans by writing their dialogue, which in many instances portrays white slaveholders and the institution of slavery in a favorable light. There is a high likelihood that people of African descent would have told these stories differently, as would people who actually experienced slavery. Instead, we are left with positive-leaning narratives that gloss over, glamorize, or exoticize the horrors of slavery or privilege the perspectives of white bourgeois slaveholders over the actual slaves they owned.

The slave plays' authors, including Nesselrode, use Black enslaved and liberated bodies to reinforce a dubious narrative dichotomy of "good" and "bad" slave masters. This dichotomy is based on a conversational interplay of slaves and their slave masters. In fact, the slaves speak openly about their fair and loving treatment at the hands of Sir Germin. In this sense, they consider Sir Germin to be a father figure. Numerous declarations of friendship and benevolence by slaves introduce Sir Germin as righteous, benevolent, and honorable. His views on slavery suggest abolitionist sentiments. Thus, I argue that Black enslaved bodies add value to the portrayal of the so-called "good and generous" slave master.

Overall, Black bodies are exploited three times over: They are (1) exploited and tortured by way of historical violence (which Spillers characterizes as the original sin); (2) used and refashioned for the purpose of a narrative that illustrates white paternalism as paramount; and (3) forced to please a visibly white and male obsession with being worshipped and respected by Black bodies that essentially serve as props in the slave masters' self-centered quests for acknowledgment. Thus, Kotzebue openly advocates for the abolition of slavery while indirectly endorsing it because his visual rhetoric of slave suffering is contrasted by an understanding of the rightful submission of Black bodies to white men (Zantop 153). At the end of the play, Kotzebue portrays Zameo's submissive nature as happily and voluntarily serving William, who freed him, for eternity: "Zameo. (umfaßt Williams Kniee) Wer durch Wohlthaten [sic] fesselt, der bedarf keiner Ketten. Du hast mich frey [sic] gelassen, und ich bin dein Sklave auf ewig; mit gebundenen Armen hätte ich entlaufen können, aber du fesseltest mein Herz — ich weiche nimmer von dir!" (Kotzebue

89).[287] It is not surprising that slavery on the plantation remains at the violent hand of William's brother John and the overseer Paul, while Lilli, Ada, Ayos, and Zameo continue to be slaves to William. Kotzebue does not argue for the freedom of these characters. On the contrary, they are happily absorbed into the household of their new white and male master, William, who is also Wilberforce's namesake. This twofold ending is indicative of the ambivalent nature of abolitionism.

Similarly, Nesselrode illustrates Sir Germin's supposed white selflessness and benevolence by offering freedom, which his slaves reject, with Franziß saying, "Wir küssen Dir die Füße Gebieter, wir bleiben alle bei Dir" (Nesselrode 126).[288] Schmidt shows Jernrs to be a devoted friend to Bernhard, who is described as having a "gute Seele" (good soul) that resulted in a "gemeinschaftliche Sache miteinander, schwuren uns einander nie zu trennen" (37).[289] Schmidt thus portrays the impossibility of former slaves living freely and independently. In this, he seemingly demonstrates only two options: Either be assumed into the household of a cruel slaveholder, here portrayed by the Dutch merchant, or be assumed into the household of a "good, generous and kind" slaveholder (disguised as a friend). Along these lines, Schmidt has Jernrs say: "Hier in Deutschland bin ich doch noch bey [sic] meinen Freund und in Philadelphia mußte [sic] ich mich ganz allein herumtreiben, hatte keinen der mich so sehr liebte wie Bernhard thut [sic]" (32).[290] Jernrs also recalls his first encounter with

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[287] (embraces William's knees) "Who binds with doing good, does not require chains. You have freed me, and I shall always be your slave; with chained arms, I could have fled from you, but you bound my heart — I shall never leave you!"

[288] We shall kiss your feet, master, we will stay with you.

[289] shared cause, we swore to never separate.

[290] "Here in Germany, I am with my friend, while in Philadelphia, I was all alone, and had no one who loves me as much as Bernhard does."

Bernhard, noting, "Als mir Bernhard begegnete und hübsch freundlich grüßte, ich dankte ihm, seine liebliche Miene und die gute Seele die aus seinen Augen schimmerte, nöthigte [sic] mich bey [sic] ihm stehen zu bleiben" (Schmidt 36).[291] In these plays, enslaved Africans are shown to be commodified and forced into submission due to a capitalist agenda alongside a supposed innate African inferiority that requires supervision by the white slaveholders.

Drawing from this, Nesselrode and Kotzebue demonstrate a contemporary German understanding of abolitionism. Violence against slaves was not condoned for several reasons, including religious beliefs and friendly relationships with slaves, as well as basic humanist principles. Both Nesselrode and Kotzebue respond to this common and contemporary portrayal and thus take a stance, shown by the "happy" endings of their plays. Carey identifies this notion as having been especially prevalent in the 1760s and 1770s among anglophone authors who supported the amelioration of slavery and claimed that "happy slaves were more productive than unhappy slaves, and so a humane plantation would therefore be an efficient plantation" (Carey 124). This understanding exposes a white paternalist gaze grounded and possibly inherent in Kotzebue's and Nesselrode's understandings of abolitionist sympathy toward slaves, which fits within the varied notions of eighteenth-century abolition.

Schmidt and Ziegler portray slaves who, whether liberated or not, stay in close vicinity to white paternalist male figures who guide their way. In this sense, Jernrs remains in Magdeburg and serves Bernhard through his fortune, while Toni stays in Britain with her newly wedded husband, Georg. However, in both cases, the white male figure takes on a supervisory position and an educational function. In this, Bernhard has command over

[291] When I first met Bernhard, who greeted me with so much friendliness, I thanked him, his beautiful expression and good soul shimmering from his eyes, which beckoned me to stay.

Jernrs's fortune while Jernrs passively waits in the background until he is needed, according to Bernhard's volition. Similarly, Toni is complimented for her non-African disposition: "Lord. Du drückst dich sanfst und edel aus — du mußt [sic] viel Umgang mit Europäern gehabt haben. Toni. Sechs Jahre begleitete ich einen Europäer als Sclavinn [sic] auf seinen Reisen um die Welt . . . Er lernte mir [sic] Sprachen, Wissenschaften — vorzüglich die Laute — ihm danke ich meine ganze Bildung" (Ziegler 27-28).[292] While Toni has picked up all the noble European traditions, she still needs white guidance, because Ziegler often alludes to her African nature throughout the play: "Lord. Mäßige dich! Du hast bey [sic] all deiner Bildung noch ganz das Heftige deines Volks. Sey [sic] doch wieder sanft und gelassen" (78).[293]

This supervisory position is indicative of an anglophone abolitionist understanding of white males in charge of Black bodies that then still serve without being brutalized on a plantation. Riesche claims: "Die Sklavenstücke offenbaren mit ihren Schlussvisionen, wie weit sie trotz aller menschenrechtlichen Rhetorik davon entfernt sind, eine *wirkliche* Befreiung und Selbstbestimmung der Sklaven überhaupt anzudenken. Sie zeigen auch, wie weit das argumentative Spektrum des Abolitionismus ist, aus dem sie schöpfen" (256). I agree and argue that these plays are actually emblematic of an eighteenth-century abolitionism that did not necessarily dispute or reject an understanding of presumed African barbarism or inferiority. These viewpoints were also often present among abolitionists and not considered contradictory to the agenda of terminating slavery, because it was important

[292] Lord. "Your expressions are gentle and sophisticated — you must have had many interactions with Europeans."
Toni. "For six years, I accompanied a European as a slave on his travel around the world . . . He taught me languages, sciences — especially playing the lute — I owe all of my education to him.

[293] Despite all of your education, you still have the harshness of your people. Be gentle and calm again.

to completely avoid or at least decrease the physical violence perpetuated against Black African slaves. Nonetheless, my analysis demonstrates that the various forms of violence inflicted on Black African bodies during the transatlantic slave trade were thematized in German-language plays of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and overall contributed to a sensitization of the contemporary audience.

Conclusion

This discussion demonstrates the transcultural and transnational applicability of these slave plays to various contexts of slavery and abolition. In this sense, it also shows that slavery and abolition were commonly addressed by a number of recurring themes that are portrayed in these fictional plays, but also reflected in historical discussions. For this reason, these plays easily existed in various language contexts as the bourgeois settings portrayed applied to the Euro-American space broadly. The historical accuracy in the portrayal of slavery represents in-depth conversations with the German-language authors regarding the conditions of slavery. Additionally, these plays also echo the duality in protest present in German-language contexts during that time. Accordingly, several plays allude to serfdom and describe the enslaved Black Africans as part of structures of enslavement that are indicative of serfdom. Engaging both serfdom and slavery shows how these writers successfully negotiated both conditions in the form of cultural productions with an emphasis on historical accuracy. The engagements with theoretical frameworks investigating the specificity of power dynamics and oppressive structures reveal a spectrum of abolition that can be understood to benefit white Western structures rather than enslaved Africans during that time. Thus, it becomes clear that strong paternalist structures are indeed inherent in abolitionist discourse. Furthermore, this discussion shows that these German-language plays

are worth being considered as part of the larger transnational and transcultural debate on slavery and abolition because they adopt literary strategies, characters, and arguments that underscore transcultural understandings of abolition and slavery.

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CHAPTER 5

EPILOGUE

The eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century German dramatic genre *Sklavenstücke* (slave plays) is indicative of the transcultural and transnational nature of abolitionist discourse, which was transatlantically proliferated alongside the trade in slaves. It is in this sense that this dramatic genre was inspired by the French genre *literature négrophile*, which presented a radical change in the portrayal of Black African people in an attempt to have the European public consider the horrors of slavery that Black Africans had to endure. *Sklavenstücke* belong to a large corpus of German-language cultural productions that critically engage the institutions of slavery, the transatlantic slavery trade, and the abolitionist movement. My investigation of these archives has revealed the variety and vastness of works addressing these issues within the German-language context. Furthermore, my research demonstrates the correlations between German understandings of abolitionism and the discourses that surfaced within the Euro-American space. Writers from institutionalized abolitionist contexts often admiringly referred to German-language contributions or even collaborated with their authors through transnational correspondences, which were conceived of as part of the transcultural opposition to slavery.

Accordingly, the German-language reading public was provided with news updates on slave revolts as well as eyewitness reports in favor of and against slavery that catered to a multiplicity of opinions. The recurring theme of transculturality confirms the understanding of circulating matters, which includes both people and cultural productions, across and beyond borders, irrespective of nation-state or principality affiliations. However, these affiliations at times resulted in innovative research centers that produced particular scholarship. The universities of Göttingen and Halle specialized in American history, for

example, because Halle belonged to the Kingdom of Hanover, which was in personal union with Great Britain. Thus, scholarship in Halle represented American interests and viewpoints, which by extension included discussions about slavery and abolition. These universities housed many writers and professors who pioneered critical engagements with and contributions about issues of slavery and abolition in a German-language context. Many other writers on these topics had actually been exposed to slavery or slavery-like conditions during their travels and took it upon themselves to reflect on their experiences. The university in Halle was well-known as a hub of innovation and enlightened understanding. For this reason, individual works about abolitionism by German-language writers and scholars belonged to various genres that included theatrical plays, theoretical treatises, newspaper articles, academic writings, travelogues, diary entries, and journal articles, some of which stemmed from anglophone or francophone settings and were then translated to make them more accessible to the German-language reading public. The political situation in France, in particular, led to French texts that were critical of colonial endeavors and structures being published in the German lands. The variety of cultural productions from different language backgrounds confirms that German transcultural abolitionist awareness existed in Europe during the Age of Enlightenment.

This awareness was grounded in and shaped by transcultural networks of communication, including cultural productions about slavery as well as personal German experiences with slavery and abolition within the borders of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. Here, German individuals represented German entanglements with slavery and abolition through German envoys, merchants, ship owners, and travelers who were directly exposed to slavery and who oftentimes trafficked enslaved Black Africans into the Empire, either after being commissioned by nobility or simply to have the enslaved serve

them before being resold. Enslaved Africans were also trafficked into other neighboring European jurisdictions such as Britain, France, and the Netherlands, and the status of these slaves quickly served as inspiration to some enslaved Black Africans in the German principalities. These other European countries in some instances granted freedom and liberty to slaves based on petitions, which had a transcultural impact on enslaved Africans residing in the German-language Empire who sought freedom in the same manner. However, as the only empire not involved in the transatlantic trade in slaves, German court reviewers demonstrating a transcultural understanding generally did not grant any verdicts of freedom. These officials offered their opinions in the context of the other states and countries that were faced with these issues, as well.

In fact, none of the petitions ever led to slaves being legally granted freedom, despite an understanding of the practice of slavery being legally non-existent. This outcome was due to the agricultural practice of serfdom, which was increasingly equated with slavery. Many feared that serfdom would have been toppled had liberty been granted to enslaved Africans in the German lands. Issues of abolition were taken up in a socio-critical manner to protest slavery-like conditions while also using Black African transatlantic slavery to disguise criticism. Furthermore, opposition to slavery by way of cultural productions such as the slave plays was present in other Euro-American contexts, too. The figure of the slave and the institution of slavery served as symbols drawing attention to and calling into question oppressive and stifling structures within society. Moreover, German-language writers and intellectuals were aware of the political and economic factors that kept serfdom alive in various parts of Europe. Thus, there existed a duality in literary protests against serfdom and slavery that highlighted the transcultural nature of abolitionist discourse. This defies the

notion of abolitionist activism having only emerged and operated within certain nation-states that excluded the German lands.

My research and analysis echo this transcultural dynamic by utilizing an innovative and interdisciplinary shift that centers approaches rooted in Black thought and critical race theories as the foundation of my study. Black studies theories allow for the human and Black humanity, in particular, to be centered. They declare this humanity in the face of dehumanization and commodification, which are crucial elements of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade. These frameworks address race and Blackness as layers of oppression as well as forms of identification within social structures in white-majority societies. I deem this novel approach to be essential for discussing German-language works on slavery, the commodification of Black bodies, and the overall portrayal of Black African individuals within the transcultural context of slavery that is embedded in abolitionist literary productions. These theoretical approaches allow for German-language contributions to be situated within first-hand transatlantic and transcultural abolitionist accounts, such as slave narratives, and reveal the discursive global structures emerging in slave plays. Taking into account the often-appeasing nature of abolitionism, these critical approaches allow for an incorporation of under-utilized frameworks in German studies that also expose white valorization by way of paternalist perspectives and gazes.

The highly questionable depiction of Black Africans and the consequent failure to achieve abolition warrants further study of the historical spectrum of abolition, especially in regard to the status of Black Africans in a contemporary context. The ambivalent historical nature of abolitionism—through its spectrum of strategies and approaches that in actuality centered the maintenance of white paternalism and superiority—is reflected in portrayals within cultural productions. The actual end of widespread slavery in the Euro-American

space during the second half of the nineteenth century brings forth questions about the violent formation of the African diaspora. These analyses further illuminate transnational Blackness as a marker of persistent understandings of non-personhood in the light of human rights discussions and ideologically and materially exclusionary measures directed at people of African descent. These formal and informal policies disallow the promise of equal rights despite these individuals being documented citizens. The effects of not being historically valued as a person are still prevalent among people of African descent, particularly in the United States. This is demonstrated by the recent brutal and extrajudicial murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless others by (frequently white) police officers, which strikingly takes us back to the inception and origin of police and policing in the U.S. context with the institution of slave patrols. The transnationality of Blackness as a marker of non-personhood has transcultural implications, such as in Germany, though the history of policing there did not emerge from slavery and the trade in slaves. Nonetheless, there have been numerous cases of deaths in Germany similar to those in the U.S., including the still-unsolved 2005 case of the Sierra Leonean asylum seeker Oury Jalloh, whose death in German police custody by fire while tied to a mattress was ruled a suicide. In this sense, additional scholarship on slavery and the transatlantic trade in slaves would benefit from continuing to center Black humanity within the context of anti-Blackness. Future research examining serfdom as one entry point into studies of anti-Blackness both within Europe and Germany more specifically is warranted. Another angle for further scholarship to explore is the connections between *Sklavenstücke* and the French genre *literature négrophile*, which has been said to have inspired the German-language slave plays.

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