
DISSEYATION

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Abstract

The criminal legacy of National Socialism cast a shadow of perpetration and collaboration upon the post-war image of the German soldier. These negative associations impeded Helmut Kohl’s policy to normalize the state use of the military in the mid-eighties, which prompted a politically driven public relations campaign to revise the image of the German soldier. This influx of new narratives produced a dynamic interplay between political rhetoric and literature that informed and challenged the intuitive representations of the German soldier that anchor positions of German national identity in public culture. This study traces that interplay via the positioning of those representations in relation to prototypes of villains, victims, and heroes in varying rescue narrative accounts in three genre of written culture in Germany since 1985: that is, since the overt attempts to change the function of the Bundeswehr in the context of (West) German normalization began to succeed. These genre are (1) security publications (and their political and academic legitimizations), (2) popular fantasy literature, and (3) texts in the tradition of the Vergangenheitsbewältigung. I find that the accounts presented in the government’s White Papers and by Kohl, Nolte, and Hillgruber in the mid-1980s gathered momentum over the course of three decades and dislodged the dominant association of the German soldier with the villainy of National Socialism. The new
dominant account established in the genre of security policy publications and their political and academic legitimations positions the German soldier as a European Christian hero and displaces the villainy previously associated with his image onto foreign powers and their populace. An overview of the developments in the genre of popular Nibelung adaptations echoes the development of the antagonistic accounts in the White Papers of their periods, but then these adaptations conform to the generic expectations of the Nibelungen material, though the last novels I discuss break free from this. In the genre of literature in the tradition of the Vergangenheitsbewältigung, authors engage in the broader public debates concerning the German soldier and national identity and produce counter-narratives that are both antagonistic to the dominant narrative as well as other antagonistic accounts.
Dedication

This document is dedicated to Merete, Sofie, and Camilla.
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**Introduction**

The prevalence of the Teutonic warrior-hero in Nazi rhetoric and representations has haunted post-war images of the German soldier, which has cast a shadow of perpetration and collusion over the rhetoric of honor, valor and chivalry. In the first two decades following the war, historians and politicians challenged this association of the soldier with villainy by describing him not only with those aforementioned heroic characteristics in speeches, but also as a victim of larger forces.¹ Popular texts, like Heinz G. Konsalik’s wildly successful *Der Arzt von Stalingrad* (1956), used similarly structured associations to restore the honor of the exemplary German soldier. Both of these types of publication tacitly extended this defense to the characterization of the Wehrmacht more generally. Toward the end of that period, key high-culture texts such as Günther Grass’ *Die Blechtrommel* call that re-characterization as victim into question and emphasize the more sinister role that the soldier, and perhaps the average German, had played in the war. Though different kinds of publication – that is, belonging to distinct genre of writing – these texts share the trait that their construction of semantic elements such as

¹ These larger forces include indoctrination, coercion, bureaucratic and structural pressures, and criminal leadership.
figures, setting, and event scenario(s) creates a *narrative* structure that engages with a shared image of the German soldier.

In this study, I look at the dynamic interplay between publications in political rhetoric and literature that attempt such an engagement using the “recue narrative.” The recue narrative offers positions of hero, villain, and victim for individuals to adopt and assign to groups in a simple plot of 1) a villain committing a villainous action against victim, 2) the intervention of the hero, 3) the hero defeats the villain, and 4) the villain is punished and the hero is praised. In a written text, these narrative structures can be implied in words, metaphors, and phrases that rely upon an underlying narrative for their meaning (Lakoff, *The Political* ch. 17).

I interpret the use of the recue narrative in the larger framework of German national identity and in texts concerning this discourse. As detailed in chapter 1, discourse is understood as the language within particular groups and the social reality they construct with it, which for this study is primarily concerned with textual interventions in a discourse. I argue that intuitive representations of the German soldier are formed by the German media for the German public from his positioning as villain, victim, or hero in varying recue narrative accounts in texts in three subsets of genre of public culture. These genre are (1) security publications (and their political and academic legitimizations), (2) popular fantasy literature, and (3) texts in the tradition of the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. 

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A primary vehicle in the genre of security debate is the “White Paper,” a public relations document published by the government to justify its current security policies. The White Paper of 1985 inaugurated a fundamental shift in the discourse by asserting the necessity of a forward defense and the use of nuclear arms to inhibit an impending soviet invasion. I begin the study in the mid-eighties with the Kohl government’s push toward normalization and revived nationalism. This push includes: (1) the start of a campaign of the removal of ideological and constitutional limitations to operations of the Bundeswehr, (2) a clear break from the Ostpolitik of Willy Brandt and re-characterization of the East as ideological enemy, and (3) pressures from the US for Kohl to expand Germany’s military capabilities and involvement in global governance. In the following decades, only two White Papers are published in 1994 and 2006. These documents address the further shedding of ideological and constitutional limitations to the operations of the Bundeswehr that are central to the public and academic debate of the period. The publication of the White Papers and their surrounding controversy provides a temporal framework for the examination of the textual examples of rescue narratives found in related genre concerning the changing image of the German soldier. The White Papers and related publications make up the texts of the first genre I examine and include the transcripts of political speeches and newspaper articles, memoirs and books of political figures, open letters and summaries of academic work, and other security policy documents geared toward the German public. The modern mass news media often repeated the textual examples of rescue narratives from this category extensively throughout a news cycle.
In the second genre, popular fantasy novels, I concentrate on the popular adaptations of the *Nibelungenlied*, whose authors integrate current topics from related discourse in order to make the older material more relevant and compelling to a contemporary audience. The generic elements of these adaptations are closely associated with ideals of masculinity and expectations about the configurations of “hero,” “warrior,” and “enemy.” Adaptations make changes to plot and figural representation to accommodate the intended audience’s contemporary interests, stereotypes, and values. These works have a more limited reception than the political public texts I examine, but because of their heavy reliance on generic conventions and ideal models of heroes and villains, adaptations of heroic tales make an excellent measuring stick of contemporary constructions of identity. Because the *Nibelungenlied* itself is structured as a series of bridal quests, a specific pre-medieval form of the rescue narrative, and because of the long tradition of using it politically as a national epic, its adaptations are particularly apt sources for the examination of competing ideals of the German warrior/soldier, and by extension, national identity in this context (Bornholt 7).

The third genre I examine is literature in the tradition of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* that produces abstract and counter-intuitive positionings of soldiers to those offered by the rescue narratives found in the texts of other two genre. While the authors of security documents and their justifications write to assert a depiction of the German soldier as hero against the dominant view of him as villain, authors of the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* tradition write both against the dominant view and the
accounts put forth by the authors writing in the other genre. The counter-narratives I examine in this genre work against the dominant view of the soldier as villain, as well as the narrative interventions of Helmut Kohl, Andreas Hillgruber and Ernst Nolte that epitomize the three narratives that have depicted the soldier as victim and hero that have justified security policy since the mid-eighties.

The rescue narrative accounts championed by Helmut Kohl, Andreas Hillgruber and Ernst Nolte in the mid-eighties were initially met with opposition, most notably by Jürgen Habermas, but then through their reintroduction in modified forms in subsequent debates, they became integral to the establishment of an intuitive heroic identity for the German soldier in the new millennium. Kohl’s account dissociated the youth from the past, Hillgruber equated the Holocaust with the expulsion of Germans living in the East, and Nolte relativized the Holocaust as a feature of totalitarianism, and justified the Holocaust as a logical strategic defense (see Hillgruber; Fischer and Lorenz 226-30; Nolte, Vergangenheit 42-6; Habermas, Eine Art 64-8; Brumlik 77-83). In the mid-nineties, narratives of reunification and European integration combined with Samuel Huntington’s thesis of cultural conflict to create a European Christian soldier combating “madmen” and rescuing populations from famine. It was not until the emergence of the Bundeswehr as a combat force in the late 90s that the ideological momentum of the initial accounts of Kohl, Hillgruber, and Nolte unfastened the German soldier from his association with villainy through the analogy of the Holocaust and Hitler with foreign threats. The German soldier could now combat the shameful past by preventing future
genocides and by going to war against Hitler-like foreign dictators, while protecting Germans from economic suffering. In the new millennium, both the 2006 White Paper and the naturalization and immigration laws of 2004, 2007 and 2009 support a cultural conception of nation of Germany as the center of a Christian Europe threatened by Islamic extremism and the piracy, terrorists, and non-state actors of the developing world.²

The focus of this study is on the shift in operations of the Bundeswehr and the corresponding discursive and cognitive processes involved in changing the depiction of German soldier. A discourse, such as the one that constructs German national identity, is dispersed with regularity in signifiers across all modes of signification for a particular group (Laclau and Mouffe 105-6). This dispersal demonstrates a dependency upon shared signification between genre of discourse, so that we can imagine a change in the predominance of a narrative in one genre leading to the destabilization of those in related genre. This understanding helps explain the surprising discovery I made while researching the recent literary reception of the Nibelungenlied. The vast flexibility in the representations of the epic’s most iconic and stereotypical figures, Hagen and Siegfried,

² While the immigration law of 1999/2000 shifted the concept of Germany from that of an ethnic to an immigrant nation, it also renounced the 1963 provision for dual nationality and introducing higher expectations for naturalization. The laws of 2004, 2007, and 2009 have become increasingly restrictive in their integration requirements. In 2007, applicants had to demonstrate language proficiency and cultural knowledge at the Common European Frame of Reference level B1. In 2009, the government expanded their ability to expel applicants or those who had gained citizenship deceitfully with the retroactive loss of German citizenship that extended to their descendants, even if this would leave them stateless. The enforcement of these rules included the loss of citizenship through the acquisition of another nationality after gaining German citizenship (Hailbronner 6-15).
correlated with contemporary representations of the German soldier in political rhetoric. This correlation suggests that accounts emerging in Kohl’s speeches and Nolte’s essays were influencing the representations and positioning of these figures in these adaptations. In the case of *Nibelungenlied* adaptations, the positioning of Siegfried and Hagen closely followed the positioning of groups in the White Papers as hero, villain, and victim.

As within any discourse, there are competing narratives within the discourse of German national identity, each making claims of truth, but with only one (set) emerging at a given moment as the dominant account that fixates meaning through its ordering of relations (Phillips and Jørgensen 56). A discourse never becomes a total system because the fixation of meaning is impermanent, as other narratives threaten to replace the truth of the dominant narrative over time as material, ideological and historical conditions change (Laclau and Mouffe 111-3). A counter-narrative works to destabilize the fixation of a dominant narrative and while counter-narratives are effective, their impact is limited to the size of their audience. The counter-narratives of politicians and historians that justify security policy find a much broader audience in highly publicized debates, and therefore typically have a much greater impact on the stabilization or destabilization of the dominant narrative than those found in the other genre.

Theoretical models of discourse typically underemphasize questions of agency, even though the notion of “positioning” implies the selection of rhetorical and narrative strategies to construct a depiction of social relations in a text. The logic behind the adoption of a narrative to construct a position from which a speaker is a subject often
proves to be based upon irrational, collective stereotypes. Margaret Wetherell and Jonathan Potter identify and examine the logic of such statements in *Mapping the Language of Racism* (1992). Through an examination of interview transcripts with Pākehā New Zealander’s on their relationship to the Māori minority, Wetherell and Potter demonstrate that those who adopt stereotypes reflexively can be made aware of the irrational nature of their account and re-evaluate the claims of truth of the narrative they adopted (ch. 8). These claims of truth “can draw attention away from social reform towards utopian visions,” provide “a logic and method for justifying individual conduct,” and establish “a positive identity and a benevolent ‘vocabulary of motives’ vis-à-vis other, supposedly less enlightened, individuals” (201). Discursive practices supported the ideological basis for racism found in the transcripts and indicated that cognition in this context drew upon stereotypes and associated narratives reflexively to reproduce the irrational positioning that emphasized the inherent cultural dominance of the in-group. The study also indicated that it was possible to disrupt the fixation of these relations by focusing attention upon the inconsistencies of the narrative and through inquiry move the individual into a mode of reflective reappraisal. Wetherell and Potter’s study supports the separation of cognition into two levels, reflexive and reflective, that Daniel Kahneman theorized in his 2002 Nobel Prize lecture “Maps of Bounded Rationality.” A rescue narrative is one such building block of reflexive cognition.

These studies help explain the differences I found between structures of the rescue narratives in the three genre with which I am concerned. The white papers and attending
debates present a direct re-positioning of the German soldier in regard to a previously established account, attempting to change what understandings of the soldier were most intuitive (accepted reflexively). The popular adaptations of the Nibelungenlied embedded similar re-configurations in alterations of the epic that shifted the associations with its two most prominent characters – Siegfried and Hagen – and thus bolstered the reflexive aspect aimed at in the security publications. Counter-narratives in the tradition of the Vergangenheitsbewältigung, on the other hand, explore and question the intuitive nature of the sense of German identity structured around the new accounts of the soldier, leading to a reflective engagement with the discourse of national identity that challenges such reflexive positioning on the part of readers, without necessarily providing a model for a new dominant account themselves. Over the span of the past three decades in the aforementioned genre in written culture, the competing accounts encased in rescue narratives involving the German soldier correlate to the progression of the reflexive acceptance of or the reflective challenge to shifting positions of German national identity.

The rescue narrative is a rhetorical device typically used by politicians to construct favorable positions for themselves as hero and to position opponents as villains and voters as victims at a level of reflexive cognition (Lakoff, The Political 233-5). The rescue narrative is a narrative prototype that constructs collective identities (Hogan, Understanding 11-12). As a prototype, the various positions it offers evoke strong emotional responses to each position and to the expectations of the narrative outcome (Hogan, The Mind 239-242). There are three positions available in the rescue narrative:
the hero, the villain and the victim. Each position in an account is occupied by a distinct
group and produces a particular identity dependent upon the binary oppositional
relationships of the hero and villain, the villain and victim, and the hero and victim.

Politicians and academics produced several narratives in the mid-eighties that
were antagonistic to the dominant narrative position of the German soldier as villain. For
example, the 1985 Whiter Paper justified an escalation in the deployment of nuclear arms
with the argument of forward defense and force matching, i.e. that the NATO match
Soviet strength.³ The authors of the White Paper split West Germany along generational
lines, thereby strengthening Kohl’s narrative of the “Gnade der späten Geburt” that
featured characterized young Germans as victims of the older generation: a generation
equated with the National Socialists. Among other narratives, Nolte’s was the most
radical in that he suggested that the heroic German soldier under Nazi leadership had
defended the German people from a villainous Soviet army. During this same period,
leading CDU politicians positioned West German soldiers as heroes rescuing the Eastern
victimized population from a villainous SED party.

The next White Paper was published in 1994 amidst the controversial out-of-area
operations protested not only by average Germans but by Bundeswehr officers as well.⁴

³ The 1985 White Paper appeared just two years after the Kohl government had published one in 1983. The
White Paper attempted to answer the public opposition to the planned deployment of Intercontinental
Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) on German soil.

⁴ These operations included: the support of the NATO ACE mobile force during the Gulf War (1990), the
UNAMIC relief mission in Cambodia (1991), the ship embargo of Serbia-Montenegro in Operation Sharp
Guard (1992), the monitoring of air space over Bosnia-Herzegovina in Operation Deny Fly (1993), support
Even though the German military was constitutionally restricted to the defense of its borders, the *Bundeswehr* increasingly deployed support troops in global operations. In 1993, the German support troops for the U.N. mandated mission in Somalia (Unosom II) saw combat duty when Indian combat troops never arrived. The illegality of these missions prompted a reinterpretation of the German Basic Law and a *Bundestag* vote to approve them retroactively. As the narratives of the previous period began to take hold and find support in the new right intellectual movement, the narrative of West Germany rescuing the East had run its course. The villain had been defeated, which left the German military and NATO in an “identity crisis” without a clear enemy (Lübkemeier 30). It is during this period that conservative politicians like Wolfgang Schäuble turn towards a Christian rescue narrative in order to invest German identity into a European and international frame. This allows for an altruistic (non-national) justification of military intervention with the soldier serving as a compassionate, heroic helper-in-uniform with a U.N. mandate attesting to the morality of his objectives. Schäuble bases his federal European conglomeration of nation-states upon a narrative of a past common European heritage in the Holy Roman Empire with Germany at its center (Mayer 66-7).

The CDU published the next White Paper in 2006 when they regained control of the government led by Chancellor Angela Merkel and made clear their goals for the full normalization of military-state relations. Among these are controversial new objectives, of peace enforcement in UNOSOM II (1993), peace enforcement in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in UNPROFOR (1993), and assisting in the disarmament of Georgian rebels in UNOMIG (1994).
such as the protection of resources abroad for economic stability, the combat of foreign
dictators in order to return refugees to their home countries, and the use of the military in
domestic emergencies. As Germany normalized the use of its military, a German-led
European and Christian identity emerged. During this period, the German soldier relied
upon a narrative of compassion and defense not just for himself, but for foreign
populations, so that the German-European identity could adopt a hero position with the
terrorist as villain and a terrorized population as victims, thereby splitting the foreign
population into victim and villain. Several other historic changes affected the identity of
the soldier, such as the inclusion of women into the combat force, the eventual abeyance
of conscription, and the serialization of the enemy through the vague concept of terror,
terrorists and despotic rulers.

In chapters two, three, and four of this study, I use the attempt to inaugurate shifts
in the dominant account of the German soldier signaled by the White Papers to center
examinations of the political and literary discourse of their periods. I find that the popular
fantasy adaptations by Wolfgang Hohlbein, Jürgen Lodemann, and Thorsten Dewi trace a
trajectory of rescue narratives that follow the interventions of political accounts. In
chapter 2, I explicate the repositioning of Hagen from villain to victim in Hohlbein’s text.
In chapter 3, I look at the development of Lodemann’s narrative over the three periods
with special emphasis on his revisions from the 1990s that add an interesting perspective
to the figures of Siegfried and Hagen by positioning Hagen as a villainous European who
represents the Church as a political institution. Simultaneously, this moves Siegfried
(again the prototypical German) away from his depiction as national victim to that of a universal victim. Hohlbein and Dewi again revisit this material after the beginning of the new millennium, which is explored in chapter 4. Their new adaptations include the second half of the *Nibelungenlied* for the first time, a significant evolution because it involves action set in the exotic non-European Eastern lands, the introduction of warrior women, and the serialization of the material ending with epilogues that promise a brighter future for subsequent generations.

The literature in the tradition of the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* keeps pace by providing counter-narratives that are antagonistic to the intuitive nature of the dominant account of the German soldier and the antagonistic narratives of the other genre. The contradicting representations of the binary and ternary oppositional differences of hero, villain, and victim offered in these narratives force a re-evaluation of the intuitive groupings and the narratives that support these. These works expose the reflexive positioning of collective group identities and stereotypes and complicate the clear division between hero, villain, and victim.

In the works I have chosen to examine, there is a disruption of the fixed nature of identities, but also the unintentional consequence of opening these positions up to other collective identities resulting from this disruption. In chapter 2, Jürgen Becker’s *Bronsteins Kinder* (1986) is shown to use the recast German soldier to challenge the role of victimization in establishing German national, as well as German-Jewish, identity. Marcel Beyer’s *Flughunde* (1995), discussed at the conclusion of chapter 3, presents the
reader with two perspectives, one of a naïve child and another of an objective scientist, who do not remain naïve or objective for very long. This work centers on Hermann Karnau, a sound engineer working for the Nazis, who complicates the image of German soldiers in two ways: first, he records their sounds as they kill and die, thus showing them at victimizers and victims at an element level; second, he adopts the metaphor of combat to conceptualize his own field research, thus imagining himself as a German soldier in the domain of science, who seeks to eliminate “foreign” sounds, colonize audial territory, and participate in the planning and execution of atrocities against “non-Germans” that he later denies. This allows Beyer to address the militarization of other domains of life during the Nazi period in a way that not only solidifies the position of the soldier as villain, but also expands the mindset of the soldier to broader populations of German society. Stephanie Zweig’s Das Haus in der Rothschildallee (2006) presents an account of a Jewish family that is analyzed in chapter 4. The family becomes disillusioned with the loss of their son, who was a soldier for the Germans in the First World War, and the subsequent defamation of his name and the scapegoating they endured in German newspapers, radio, and film reels. Zweig’s text outlines the use of propaganda to drum up and maintain support for wars, which in the case of WWI involved the construction of an image of the German soldier that included both Germans and German-Jews in order to solidify support for the war. The novel shows that as the war dragged on, propaganda turned to blame the German-Jewish soldiers and their families for the German losses. Zweig describes the media’s role in first promoting an image of the German soldier that incorporates minorities with the promise of a multicultural national identity, and then its
subsequent role in disenfranchising these groups from their claims to national identity. Working with texts across these genre in this study is aided by some theoretical insights drawn from discursive psychology and cognitive narratology. These approaches share a notion of the mind rooted in language and have more recently been combined by Rom Harré and Grant Gillett, David Herman, and others to create a “second cognitive revolution methodology.” Concepts of discourse theory, such as nodal points and master signifiers, supply a theoretical framework for examining and comparing the positioning of identity-bearing signifiers across genre. I argue that one narrative common to the texts I examine that positions these signifiers is the rescue narrative as described by George Lakoff and Patrick Colm Hogan. In particular, I look at the rescue narrative as a prototypical structure that establishes an intuitive sense of national identity through discourse.

Using the theoretical armature developed from discursive psychology and cognitive narratology in chapter 1, I have found that within each period, changes in the subject positions offered in the rescue narratives of the White Papers for German soldiers are echoed by those offered in popular fantasy novels. The long history of political appropriation of this material to provide ideals and ethos for the German soldier makes the examination of its contemporary adaptations an effective means in which I can test the saliency of the elements of the hegemonic narrative accounts derived from the political discourse in this closely related popular literary genre. These texts offer figural and metaphoric complications to the representation of the Germanic warrior hero, his
enemy and those he rescues as found in the dominant account. After an initial contestation, the narrative concedes and ultimately assists in the fixation of the dominant account in part due to reader expectation and the well-established constraints of the genre. By examining these accounts at key periods of controversial developments in security policy, I demonstrate that the image of the German soldier as hero has replaced that of villain in a process stretching over the last three decades. This process has led to the reconfiguration of (West) German national identity driven by a conservative agenda for normalization influenced by economic interests, such as the securing of resources, and pressures from outside actors, such as obligations to alliances. On the other hand, literature in the tradition of the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* provides competing accounts that disrupt the stability of the dominant and other antagonistic accounts of the rescue narrative and the positioning of its figures, which make them useful in moving from the reflexive to the reflective level of discourse.
Chapter 1 - Theory and Methodology

In this chapter, I synthesize theoretical insights and approaches drawn from discourse theory, discursive psychology and cognitive narratology in order to examine the power of narrative to suggest an organization of social relations as intuitive. This methodology allows me to analyze the construction of the identity of the German soldier via the implicit and explicit elements of narratives and to track this development across related genre over a period of three decades. I begin by defining my terms in the context of discourse analysis and describing their relevance to the formation of social identity in the positioning of the self and others. I then combine these insights with George Lakoff’s analysis of rescue narratives as a framing mechanism and cognitive heuristic to produce an approach for the examination of a self constructing an identity through implicit and explicit variations of the groups associated with the positions of the rescue narrative.

1.1 A Discursive Approach

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe modify Antonio Gramsci’s criticism of the economic determinism of Marxist theory that did not fully consider the ability of the economic dominant class to manipulate cultural beliefs and impose them as the norm, thereby reinforcing the intuitive nature of their class distinctions, gain the consent of the lower classes, and perpetuate a socially unjust system (68-9). In Hegemony and Socialist
Strategy (1985), Laclau and Mouffe dismiss the rigid top-down structuring of Gramsci’s hegemonic influence of a dominant class, and argue that dominant cultural worldviews are in constant flux because the definition of entities (subject positions) relies upon a chain of binary oppositions.5 These entities can find themselves in different positions of privilege in different domains of public culture, and therefore there is no social identity that cannot be destabilized through re-contextualization.6 Laclau and Mouffe stress that a discourse must be dispersed with regularity and that the positions of signifiers are derived from their difference, their binary opposition to one another (105-106). Because Laclau and Mouffe speak of discourses in the plural, they differentiate between discourse as the organization of signs to construct a social reality and discourse as the organization of identities within a specific genre of that discourse. For them, these all can conflate into a discussion of a single discourse, or be broken apart to talk about multiple discourses. In my study, discourse refers only to the organization of signs to construct a social reality, and the term “genre” is used when speaking of the different written modes participating in that discourse multiplicity of discourses, which are viewed here as subsets that engage with each other in the discourse. I do this in order to examine the specificity of semantic elements offered in narratives within a genre and to track the interaction of these

5 A subject position refers to an identity constructed or assigned within a narrative to a group by a speaker or text (Harré and Gillett 180).

6 Narratives of trading places in the style of Mark Twain’s The Prince and the Pauper (1881) exemplify the power of symbols to position identities and their flexibility, just as severe re-contextualization as in narratives in the style of Robinson Crusoe (1719) can provide insight into the construction of social meaning. In everyday terms, the same person may adopt several different positions throughout the course of a day at work, at home, in clubs, etc.
elements with those of other related genre and analyze their impact on the construction of a social reality in the broader discourse. Genre implies a set of the rules governing texts corresponding to expectations of the audience about figural representation, setting, items, theme, etc., which bear upon the organization of identities within a discourse for a particular group. Thus, genre bring with them “particular ways of talking about and understanding the social world,” and the narratives within a genre are “engaged in constant struggle with one another to achieve hegemony, that is, to fix the meanings of language in their own way” within the discourse (Phillips and Jørgensen 6).

Certain semantic elements are shared across genre that are related within a specific discourse, such as particular representations of heroes, villains, and victims. Some of these shared elements serve a particularly important function in organizing discourse, and a change in their characterization in one genre elicits changes in the other genre. An element that organizes both the identities within a genre and those within a discourse is called a nodal point (Phillips and Jørgensen 50). In this study, the positions of hero, villain, and victim are shared by rescue narratives in three distinct, yet overlapping genre involved in the discourse of German national identity: 1) public security policy documents and their political and academic justification (which I will refer to with the shorthand “White Papers”), 2) fantasy adaptations in popular literature (my specific examples are adaptations of the Nibelungenlied), and 3) literature in the tradition of the Vergangenheitsbewältigung. The representation of the German warrior/soldier offered by these rescue narratives functions as a nodal point that organizes
the identities constructed within these genre and the discourse. The following table offers a visual conceptualization of the relationship of the genre to discourse organized by the nodal point of the German warrior/soldier.

![Diagram of genre and discourse relationship]

Figure 1: The German soldier as nodal point organizing genre and discourse.

Within each genre exist competing accounts of the rescue narrative that position different groups as hero, villain, or victim. These positions provide groups a variety of subject positions from which they may form their identity. Each of these accounts vies to become the dominant, or true, account and establish its organization as the intuitive groups associated with those positions first within the genre, then within other genre, and finally.
within the discourse. In essence, narratives compete to organize identities within a genre, and dominant narratives then influence the organization of identities in related genre and finally affect the organization of identities in the discourse that constructs social reality. The social relations of the dominant account mapped out through the discourse are produced and reproduced intuitively by the makers and consumers of culture. This repetition of the account generates a structural mechanism of language and thought that functions on a reflexive level of cognition. For Laclau and Mouffe, there is no ultimate stabilization of subject positions, and therefore no fixation of identities. Change is induced by antagonistic accounts produced by groups and individuals who seek to contest the social relations of the dominant narrative. By reassigning the groups associated with the positions of the rescue narrative, these competing accounts challenge the hegemonic narrative and the groups it offers as binary oppositions.

For example, a pro-military pundit at the outset of the Kohl era relates that the allies rescued young German soldiers from a villainous dictatorship at the end of WWII. The pundit holds that these soldiers have been victimized and provides them a position that is intended to evoke sympathy and understanding in the audience. A newspaper reports these statements, and they garner attention from other news media that either implicitly or explicitly set it against the dominant account that positions the soldier as villain. The exposure of the pundit’s competing account becomes the seed for journalists to write essays, scholars to write articles, TV producers to create programming, musicians to pen lyrics and screenwriters to draft screenplays. During this expansion,
other subject positionings may be presented that challenge those in the first pundit’s account, but always in relation to it so that his positions become familiar with the spread and repetition of the texts supporting it. If at some point, the identities provided by this antagonistic narrative become so familiar and invested with social relations of power that they can become an intuitively accepted truth, then a new dominant narrative has come into being.

Robert Caldini sets out two psychological concepts that can help explain this process. The concept of “authority pressure” refers to an individual’s compliance to requests given by those they deem to have authority as well as those bearing signs of authority, such as titles, clothes, and other symbols of power (177-191). In the above example, the account comes from a variety of channels, so that readers may not feel the need to know the specific source before sharing the narrative positions based upon the perception of authority provided by number of channels that have reported it. As the account is dispersed across more media, it engages in the principle of “social proof,” so that the account becomes ever more widely accepted as fact. The principle of social proof refers to the automatic response of most individuals to look to others within their group to determine what is correct (99). In the aforementioned example, the massive exposure of the account surrounds an audience with language that defines the German soldier that they can identify with and integrate into their identity. This new identity becomes social

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7 Ryan Holiday’s Trust Me, I’m Lying: Confessions of a Media Manipulator (2012) describes in detail the exploitation of resource-starved “blogs,” news aggregators, and the short news cycle by marketing and public relations firms to filter fake news up into the national news media and boost sales and exposure.
proof for others “to decide how they themselves should act” and the discourse readily provides them with further support for assuming the new identity (118). Those who can manipulate or direct the dispersion of an account control a powerful psychological tool through which they can maintain and generate social power among their audience.

The narratives generated by individuals and groups invested with social power use the media to maintain their position of dominance in a society. “Think tanks, front groups, lobbyists, and PR people” construct and disperse narratives that are echoed by politicians, officials and intellectuals to support those in power (Miller and Dinan 177). Competing narratives exist that offer an “alternative worldview,” but these are often not afforded the broad public exposure necessary to destabilize a dominant narrative (182).8 The positions offered in the dominant narrative are only fixated for as long as the narrative is maintained throughout the discourse, and therefore the identities derived from a narrative are relative and open to change. This relativity of identity allows for a concept of self that is unstable and that cannot be justified in an essentialist or empirical manner, because it is contingent upon its positioning within a narrative and the social relations mediated by discourse (Laclau and Mouffe 114-118). This instability comes from the arbitrary nature of signification and the reliance of a sign upon its difference to other signs for its definition. In the rescue narrative, there are three fixed positions that offer

8 Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman’s propaganda model describes the filters of news in the eighties as “major funding sources (notably, advertisers), and mutual interests and relationships between the media and those who make the news and have the power to define it and explain what it means” as well as “flak” created by the experts assigned to denounce alternative views and bias the news in favor of those in power (1-2). Social media has been able to sidestep the filters of national news to dramatic effect in the coordination of protests and on-ground reporting in the Arab Spring.
distinct identities to groups occupying these positions, so that the dominant account offers a positive heroic, negative villain and sympathetic victim to certain groups.

Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips identify key signifiers as nodal points and master signifiers as organizers of discourse and identity (Discourse 50). Nodal points organize genre within a discourse, and master signifiers organize identities within a genre. In this study, the German soldier is a nodal point that organizes and binds certain genre to the discourse on national identity, and as a master signifier the German soldier oscillates between different positions within the rescue narrative and the positions’ complimentary organization of identities within genre. The examination of the German soldier as a nodal point emphasizes its power as a central signifier within a genre and across genre within a discourse, stressing the manner in which its opposition to other signifiers organizes the identities presented in a genre relative to the discourse.

Varying accounts stabilize and destabilize the meaning of these signifiers, so that when a key signifier like the image of the German soldier is destabilized, new social formations can emerge, and the associations that are attached to a master signifier (an organizer of identities within a genre) can become unhinged from their position and undergo a radical transformation. The above example demonstrates that a nodal point, a signifier that organizes a discourse, can also function within each genre as a master

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9 Geoff Boucher suggests the existence of a marginalized and unmentioned other with which the master signifier receives its identity and with which it stands in a binary relation, so that it, this other, is in effect, the master signifier from which all other signifiers, including what was presumed to be the master signifier, receives its meaning (102-5).
signifier, as it organizes the other signifiers and their identities, which are in our case those offered by the rescue narrative: the hero, villain, and victim. The repetitions of such accounts within a genre can spread into the broader discourse, which in this case is German national identity, and become either a point of full or partial fixation for the discourse (a nodal point).

The subject positions found in varying accounts of the rescue narrative in different genre of public culture compete to become the dominant account in the discourse on German national identity. Because of the dispersal of the rescue narrative throughout these genre, the occupation of the German soldier at various subject positions in different accounts can reproduce or oppose a dominant account and the identities it offers. The relationship of these subject positions to one another is through a binary (ternary) opposition, as Phillips and Jørgensen state. These entities and the identities they offer are “established relationally, in relation to something they are not” (50). Therefore it is necessary to undertake an “analysis of the ‘Other’ which is always created with the ‘Us’ [that] can give some idea of what a given discourse about ourselves excludes and what social consequences this exclusion has” (50). The analysis of the Other provides insight into what groups a particular narrative is marginalizing and privileging and what fears, desires and other motives may be involved in the stereotyping of these groups.

Discourse analysis provides a means to identify the disruptions and shifts to the relationships of signifiers at the nodal point of the German soldier/warrior. While the key signifiers indicate abstract social identities and their role in organizing genre across a
discourse, there remain questions as to how these abstractions can be used by individuals. In *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (1995), Norman Fairclough suggests that the study of everyday language shows agency to play a much larger role in an individual choosing from among the subject positions offered via discourse than it does in a conception of discourse such as Laclau & Mouffe’s. Fairclough posits that individuals actively construct their identities when they speak; whether a person is relating the events of the day, expressing their opinion, or telling a joke, there are social relationships and implied narrative structures involved. For Fairclough, any text is an inter-textual amalgamation of elements drawn from a variety of discourses, so that the notion of competing accounts is incorporated in the individual, who may adopt a position offered by the dominant account, but may also shift to a position offered by an alternative account. Fairclough places more emphasis upon the textual derivation of subject positions by an individual, so that social identities are imparted, maintained, and inspired from textual examples that people form by vetting discourses and repositioning subjects in these through narrative interventions. An individual may attempt to create or move into alternate subject positions by intervening

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10 Laclau and Mouffe’s perspective on agency can be seen to be inherited in part from their turn towards Michel Foucault’s definition of discourse in *Archeology of Knowledge* (1969), and the dispersed notion of a discursive formation, but at the same time, their insistence upon the contestation of discourses, master signifiers, etc. also implies the conscious act of positioning and intervention, and thereby also agency.

11 This principle of adoption provides a discursive background to social performance, in that any one person may perform different roles in different contexts, but this is not the same as to say that they may suddenly shift roles within a discourse without risking incurring social penalties. For example, if one were to impersonate a police officer, there are very real social penalties that could be incurred, such as incarceration (removal from the general society), whereas the socialite that pretends to be something they are not risks being ostracized from the group they are performing for.
in a discourse, although the individual’s means for dispersing such an intervention may be severely limited.\textsuperscript{12}

By incorporating textual analysis into the theoretical approach to identity formation through discourse, Fairclough offers a methodological bridge between discourse theory and narrative studies. Texts support the formation of group identities, such as the ones I am interested in, and repetition and broad dispersion across genre can affect a normality or intuitive sense of appropriateness. Fairclough maintains that the repetition of rhetorical structures and narratives in discourse leads to this intuitive sense, and thereby implies a level of unreflective cognition structured through discourse.

In the work of Stuart Hall, Paul Gee, and Margaret Wetherell there is no separation between discourse and thought, which means that the mind exists in language and can therefore be examined in the analysis of written and spoken language. In this social constructivist model, researchers examine written or spoken texts in order to discover an underlying cognitive structure that is explicitly or implicitly observable. A text is comprised of linguistic and rhetorical structures, some of which more or less consciously construct the social world and the subject positions within it. The meaning of these elements can derive from an implied narrative. For example, the word “job creator” appearing in a contemporary political text implies a narrative in which the wealth of the nation becomes concentrated in a few individuals, who then provide benevolently from

\textsuperscript{12} This would also require that others accept this new positioning, a man in rags claiming to be a police officer would incur social penalties, or may simply be ignored like the child who insists that they are an adult.
above by creating jobs for the rest of the individuals in society. These implied narratives are often used by politicians to persuade their audience by positioning themselves and their policies favorably to those of their opponents. The textual examples of the White Papers that I examine often use implied narratives to position the German soldier favorably, while in the other genre, his position is often much more explicit.

Just like muscles that have learned to swing a bat to hit a ball, operations of the mind tend to adopt a particular pattern the more often it has been presented, allowing the same pattern to be activated quickly and reproducing a thought and response without requiring focused attention or higher level thought (Feldman 64). For this reason, those who control the mass media channels may build consensus for an account through its massive repetition.  

As the reliance upon cognitive shortcuts increases with the faster pace of life and society’s growing dependence upon technology, so does the need to simplify certain thought processes in order to free up our concentration for specialized tasks (Caldini 230-4). Cognitive shortcuts save time and provide a basis for decisions that need to be made quickly, while also making us more susceptible to the methods of Public Relations people who help the powerful establish hegemonic consent.

In the constructivist view, the exposure of an uncritical audience to the repetition of an account over a period of time can lead to the adaptation of a logic based on

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rhetorically absorbed heuristics that accepts the account as intuitively true. The powerful individuals and groups who control the access to and content of channels of the mass media can therefore use this advantage to influence, contest, and form public opinion. The discursive constructivist approach assumes that even reflexive cognitive processes are not hidden, but accessible and observable through language and its rhetorical structures, therefore making these processes available to analysis, even if sometimes in the form of metaphor and implication. In broad terms, popular literature (and art) relies upon the inherent heuristic logic of a genre to engage its audience quickly. Sometimes it presents antagonistic elements, but with few exceptions, popular literature stabilizes the dominant account and the basic intuitive logic of the genre.

Critical works present antagonistic accounts that intervene in the intuitive logic of manufactured “truths.” In a society that values informed democratic participation, it is important that these counter-narratives find their way to a broad reception through whatever channels available, if only to break the illusion of the truth of stabilized social relations and inhibit the formation of patterns of thought that support extreme positions and stereotypes. These works complicate an utterance’s most basic assumptions and associations, thereby forcing the reader, viewer, or listener into a reflective level of consciousness where the validity of the logic of the utterance can be reappraised. Critical literature does not necessarily offer new subject positions as it challenges old ones, but its

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14 Fairclough’s “appropriateness” or normality of certain subject positions corresponds to such an “intuitive” description.
intervention in primarily in the disruption of the generic elements and stereotypes in order to offer break the logic of the dominant account. This disruption presents the possibility that there are different functions in literary writing and that critical literature accesses and strengthens different modes of thinking than the intuitive norm. I now need to develop a model of narrative accounts that allows me to track shifts in the rescue narrative at a reflexive level of cognition as well as to interpret those interventions that force reflection. In the following section, I look at Wetherell’s account of this formation of the “intuitive” level of cognition and how it may be applied to the variance in accounts in this study.

As Wetherell explains, “language’s main function…is representational…. Language in its picturing and representational modes mediates between the world and people. But language itself is removed from the world” (Wetherell, Taylor and Yates 15). While language remains an abstraction, it still situates an audience in relation to others and within the common symbolic world they share. A variation of accounts leads to an instability and contestation of meaning that is “circulated, exchanged, stifled, marginalized” until one account dominates others as a “definitive truth” (16). This aspect of struggle can be seen at the level of utterances that engage “in response to or in dialogue with previous utterances” (17).

In this view, every text that constructs a representation of the Germanic warrior/soldier enters into a dialog with the previous texts that also do the same. At the outset of the Kohl era, the politicians, historians, and authors who want to position the
German soldier as a victim or hero engage with previous texts and his dominant position as villain. This repositioning could be performed through the repetition of an account that contests the dominant position of the German soldier until the competing account is established as the dominant account for the target audience, thereby manufacturing a “definitive truth.” The most successful texts have a readily recognizable structure and are invested with emotional appeals, both of which subvert rational appraisal (Westen 146-150).

A discourse analyst assumes that meaning is relational, indexical, and produced jointly by texts and their audience within a genre; therefore any utterance can affect a discourse and any fixation of meaning is only temporary (Wetherell, Taylor and Yates 18). Identity is primarily based upon the kinds of narratives people tell, and the discourse analyst is tasked with the examination of the way dominant and antagonistic narratives are formed, the genre they draw upon, and the ways these elements construct identities and events (23). The owners of media can effect change through the repetition of emotionally laden simple narratives, but given that a social position may be contested at any moment, subversive texts may be precisely those that leave open possibilities that superficially support hegemonic compliance, while introducing destabilizing semantic elements. Subject positions may be stabilized through the repetition of narratives, but they may also be destabilized through a similar process, one that popularizes new associations and groups with its generic elements, and finds commercial success (and dispersal) because of these. A strictly antagonistic account may not find the same media
support as do those that play within the boundaries of the genre and the expectations of the filters of propaganda, and therefore a repositioning within a genre is more likely to be effective if it provides some kind of identificatory figure to offer an alternate yet coherent identity to multiple audiences. These new positions have a chance for repetition, imitation, and emulation throughout the hegemonic culture, so that they may achieve a decisive fracture in the truth value of the dominant account. When this happens, a new dominant account may include these new positions for in-groups and out-groups and therewith also new social identities for members of these groups to assume (Harré and Gillett 140-1).

With discourse analysis, I have a theoretical basis to examine intersecting and competing discourses by identifying key signifiers, such as nodal points and master signifiers involved in the narrative positioning of the German soldier. Wetherell’s account of discursive psychology offers a transition from the theoretical argument made by Laclau and Mouffe and further refined by Fairclough to a methodology based upon an economy of meaning in which I can examine the jockeying of position via competing accounts. I turn now to Daniel Kahneman’s model of the reflexive level of consciousness and from there to the idea of narrative prototypes offered by cognitive linguists and narratologists. The seeming antagonism between discursive and cognitive accounts of cognition are reconciled by David Herman’s suggestion that theorists adopt a middle
ground that rejects a strict dualism in favor of a theory that posits that “the mind is both in here and out there; so is the world” (Narrative 160).15

1.2 A Cognitive Approach

The study of narrative has become increasingly important in the social and political sciences over the past three decades, especially following the work of Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman on framing and decision-making in the late seventies and early eighties.16 Their work has become the foundation for a variety of cognitive and psychological approaches to business, economics, law, management, medicine, political science, computer science, arts and humanities, education, and engineering and as such has served as a viable vehicle for interdisciplinary approaches (Thomson Reuters Web of Knowledge 1). Their work theorizes cognition based upon empirical evidence that narrative structures guide behavior and prime emotions to influence the way we experience and make choices about the world.

In the mid-eighties, Tversky and Kahneman found that in areas where there is imperfect data, decision-makers have to rely on other strategies to guide them in making their choices. Even before decision-makers come to this variety of choices, they must

15 The cognitive theorists I work with would reject the accusation that they are arguing for universals characterized as pre-determined inner functions on two counts. First, the universals that they discuss they view as the result of interaction with the material world. Second, these universals are statistical universals in the sense that there are still anomalies, and therefore should not be considered to be constructing a complemented or universally applicable system.

16 Their “Prospect Theory” has become one of the most cited articles in all of the social sciences and has had a broad and far reaching impact across a diverse range of knowledge amassing 778 academic citations in over 504 sources in 2009 alone (Goldstein par. 1).
first be able to define the problem in terms of a decision frame. Tversky and Kahneman define a decision frame as the “decision-maker’s conception of the acts, outcomes, and contingencies associated with a particular choice” which is “controlled partly by the formulation of the problem and partly by the norms, habits, and personal characteristics of the decision-maker” (Tversky and Kahneman, The Framing 453). In other words, Tversky and Kahneman test a statistical model of cognitive interpretive processes that take the narrative discursive norms, individual habits, and personal characteristics as aspects of decision-making into account. Their results indicated that simple narratives played a crucial role in the recognition and interpretation of context at a level that operated before conscious thought.

Tversky and Kahneman’s studies found that in empirical research, problems are approached in a logical fashion, but divergent results may be elicited from the same

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17 The application of a specific narrative to anticipate a certain outcome is called a decision frame. A decision frame is a contextualization of a situation, one that narrows the scope of reality to positive or negative emotive associations attached to narrative and metaphorical structures (Lakoff, The Political 22-8). Much of the information related by a frame is implied and therefore carried into a context through semantic associations and the related patterns of use of a certain word. This implied structure of meaning can be imagined as the physical process of activation in neuronal clusters, called binding. When one neuron is activated, those to which it is connected are primed (ready to be activated) and are then either activated or inhibited, thus creating ready associations with other neurons. It appears that firings are coordinated in different areas of the brain along connecting pathways, so that meaning need not be limited to a physical proximity of neurons (25).

18 Political Psychologists Terry Connolly and Lee Roy Beach have further examined the role of these scenarios as a form of pattern recognition (see Margolis) that match available schemas (see Bartlett) in order to organize large bodies of knowledge (see Pennington & Hastie). They construct a model of decision making as a cognitive process that includes Helmut Jungermann’s differentiation between exploratory (backward inferential) and anticipatory (forward inferential) systems, which depending on the combination of perception, context and knowledge/experience results in the selection of different scenarios. This means that a decision-maker often infers story elements that are missing when seeking to match a present context with available scenarios in an act of emplotment.
problem set because of the way in which the problem is formulated. The formulation of a problem affects the focus of the observer and his or her perception and the expectations of a narrative. For example, a text may direct attention to a choice’s negative associations, such as the fear of losing the right to bear arms, so that it influences the audience to choose an option that is not in their best interest. Public Relations people generate and attach these negative and positive associations to candidates, concepts, and ideas through the mass media. Tversky and Kahneman call this a framing effect: the manipulation of a decision by manipulating the perception of context via narrative and metaphorical associations that affect the preference of a scenario (Advances 64).  

The research on framing effects suggests that opinion can be directed by engaging a reader (viewer, voter, citizen, etc.) to adopt particular negative or positive associations with a concept and thereby manipulate their expectations of outcomes. The framing effect has led Kahneman to distinguish between two interrelated systems of thought: a reflective level that is accessible and self-aware, and a reflexive level upon which the reflective level is built and that contains the foundational linguistic and rhetorical structures of thought. This separation of thought into these two levels refers specifically to the level of consciousness of the thinker. At a reflexive level, there is very little if any awareness of the linguistic operations of the mind, while at the reflective level, there is awareness of

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19. Tversky and Kahneman’s research showed that negative framing was much more effective than positive framing in manipulating the decision for or against a certain course of associated action. When the possibility of gain was emphasized in the formulation of the problem, there was only a moderately observable increase in risk-taking, whereas if the framing of the problem emphasized possible loss, there was a dramatic increase in risk-aversion (Kahneman and Tversky, Prospect 17-9). This indicates that fear is a driving factor in the manipulation of risk-taking and decision making.
computation, points of argument, narratives, etc. (Kahneman, Maps sec. I). Kahneman theorizes that frames are part of a pre-conscious system that filters and directs thought and included in these linguistic frames are narrative prototypes.

Prototypes are “fuzzy” categories of representation that allow for quick differentiation and for recognition of natural entities and abstract concepts. Prototypes differ from schemas in that their “fuzziness” allows them more flexibility, so that “in the former case [schema], an entity happens to be fully compatible with an abstract representation and in the latter case, it is only partially compatible” (Taylor 66). This partial compatibility allows for greater variation between items at the fringes of prototypes across cultures. However, research has shown that there remains a statistical universal consistency in terms of the focal center of a prototype, for example, on what the best representation of the color red would be (Hogan, Cognitive 133-4).

By applying the concept of prototypes to discourse theory, we can think of master signifiers as prototypes because they have attained a fixation of meaning through their relationships to other signifiers as best examples. The conception of a master signifier as prototype

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20 The term “fuzzy” is borrowed by linguists from fuzzy logic, which indicates that instead of a binary relationship having a 0 or 1 value, there may be any value ranging from 0 to 1. Here it means that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the world and the images of the world in the mind, nor is there a schematic or listing of characteristics from which things may be identified; instead there is a basic form that is more or less like an image of the best example.

21 Statistical universality means that in the overwhelming majority of examples of a study, this point holds true, while still allowing for the few cases in which it deviates from this common pattern. It would be universal, except for one or two deviant cases, and therefore it is called statistically universal.

22 An application of discourse theory in the understanding of lexical prototypes emphasizes the reason why Laclau and Mouffe dismissed a strictly synchronic approach. The foci (of a prototype) in a synchronic evaluation may not be the result of any predisposition (or universality), but rather seem like a prototypical
would allow the identification of a dominant narrative or the gauging of the success of antagonistic accounts by surveying whether or not their signifiers fit the prototype images. This is not intended to be tautological exercise, but rather aid in the identification of the dominant identities and contesting groups. In turn, prototype narratives (best examples) combine event scenarios and semantic elements which help regulate those identity-bearing signifiers fixated through discourse.

By modifying the understanding of prototypes with discourse theory, we can see that some prototypical elements are not inherently universal, but dependent upon discourse. For example, the prototypical witch of the seventeenth century in Scandinavia, the Baltic, and Russia was male, while in Germany, France, and Switzerland during the same period it was female (Kivelson 606). The discourse of different cultures and periods can produce varying prototypical images that can vary by gender, symbols, values, and traditions. The one thing that both the male and female witches had in common was their membership in certain social categories and the public perception of this membership as a threat to the social order (623). While different individuals may be included or excluded from groups occupying the social position of the German soldier, as the recent inclusion of women into combat forces exemplifies, his or her societal function does not vary. The prototype of the German soldier is better defined according to his or her function that is the same across cultures and eras: the soldier is the protector of the in-group and has the

form because it enjoys a fixation within a discourse at that time, thereby emphasizing the importance of not only cross-cultural best examples (which have supported the account of predisposition) to provide evidence of universality, but also that researchers adopt a diachronic comparative approach within a single culture to substantiate claims of statistical universality.

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task to dominate and, if necessary, kill members of the out-group who have been given the same function in their societies. In the rescue narrative, the soldier functions most often as hero, which can lead to the dehumanization of groups assigned to the position of villain if the narrative achieves dominance within the discourse on national identity. The victim provides the impetus for the heroic soldier to dominate or eliminate the villain. If the soldier becomes the villain, as he did in the dominant narrative of the seventies in Germany, then the pacifist hero (binary opposite) is viewed as protecting out-groups from the soldier’s function to dominate and eliminate them. The image of the soldier differs between groups and is dependent upon discourse, but it is functionally universal in the structured relationship between his position and the positions of members of an out-group.

Patrick Colm Hogan argues that in addition to prototypical figures, there exist prototypical narratives that are combinations of plots and semantic elements that help regulate the identity-bearing signifiers fixated in a discourse. A prototypical narrative like the rescue narrative can be considered universal because it only describes the structure of the functional relationships of in-group to out-group conflict, while the groups themselves vary the definition of the positions within this structure through their competing accounts. The prototype is based upon the ideal outcome and the expectation of events that would lead to a successful heroic narrative and a “happy” end. In this case, the rescue narrative is a structured relationship of signifiers bound to “the way we think about happiness… [which] vary with context…but the contexts and resultant prototypes recur everywhere (Hogan, Cognitive 135).
case, the narrative organizes the relationships of various accounts of socially viable positions in the discourse. Such narrative structures are universal because they emerge from common human experiences derived from our emotional and physical makeup, and through the activation of these most basic event scenarios, an author, artist, or public relations person can trigger a strong emotional response in their audience.

George Lakoff bases his interpretation of the role of simple narratives on political speech on the work of Tversky, Kahneman and Hogan. Lakoff provides an outline for the elements that make up a rescue narrative and how politicians typically use them to position themselves and others. For example, the concept of “tax relief” carries with it an associated rescue narrative as the word “relief” implies the alleviation of suffering. Paying taxes is equated with suffering, and those who pay taxes are presented as suffering under the burden of those who collect the taxes. There is a victim, the tax-payer, and a villain, the tax-collector. The word also implies the alleviation of suffering, so that there is also a hero, who would cancel or reduce the suffering caused by the taxes. In order to understand the word relief in the context of tax relief, we need all the semantic elements and the plot of the rescue narrative.

24 Tversky, Kahneman, Lakoff, Johnson, et al. have provided a theoretical basis for Patrick Colm Hogan to develop a theory of narrative universals which combined with Kahneman’s division of thought processes into reflective and reflexive forms and Lakoff’s own work on conceptual metaphor and computational neural theory to develop his conception of simple narratives.
Rescue Narrative

*Semantic Roles*
Victim (helpless, innocent)
Villain (evil)
Villainous Act (harmful)
Hero (good)

*Event Scenario [Plot]*
(Start a) Villain harms Victim;
(Central a) Hero struggles against Villain;
(Finish a) Hero defeats Villain;
(Finished State a) Victim is Rescued, Hero Rewarded, and Villain Punished (Lakoff, The Political 234)

Using the semantic elements and scenario structure provided by Lakoff, I can explicate the following functional positions offered in the rescue narrative to the genre activated by the word “tax relief”:

Rescue Narrative (Taxation)

*Semantic Roles*
Victim ➔ tax-payer
Villain ➔ proponents of taxation
Villainous Act ➔ taxation
Hero ➔ opponents of taxation

*Event Scenario [Plot]*
(Start a) tax proponent tax tax-payers
(Central a) tax opponent struggles with tax proponent
(Finish a) tax opponent defeats tax proponent
(Finished state a) Tax-payer does not pay tax, tax opponent gets voter support, and tax proponent loses voter support.

The noun “tax relief” assigns positions within the context of taxation and associates these positions with positive and negative connotations. Instead of taxation begin framed as providing for the freedoms guaranteed by the government, taxes are viewed in this narrative as afflictions. With this frame, the audience is asked to perceive themselves as if they are in the middle of the narrative in a pitiful state of oppression and to use the
expectations of the narrative to guide their decision making. The end of the rescue narrative can be achieved by the rescue of the victim from the villainous action, i.e. by a candidate passing legislation for the taxpayer to pay less in taxes; otherwise the perception of the taxpayer remains *in medias res* holding out hope for another hero and a future victory.

The rise of the peace movement in the seventies and the policies of Willy Brandt provided a position to the pacifist as hero, and soldier as villain (Dalgaard-Nielsen 33-4). The position of the activist as hero provided an identity for young Germans that was vested with socialist and pacifist views in opposition to the fascist and soldier identity of the past. Several competing accounts that looked at the Nazi period featured German victims that included the young soldier, women, and refugees, with the villain restricted to the Nazi leadership. By breaking down the rescue narrative into its semantic elements and plot, Lakoff provides us with those positions that function as master signifiers in the discourse on national identity. The semantic elements of hero, villain, and victim are the subject positions that in different accounts provide variations on the organization of identities at a reflexive level of cognition. These narrative positions of hero, victim, and villain are implied in the associations of a word, concept, or metaphor and observable in texts that are involved in the construction of the image of the German soldier.

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25 The possibility remains for a negative or positive valuation of the narrative’s outcome, and every narrative based upon a prototype of happiness goes through its opposite “correlated prototype for sorrow” which for the heroic narrative is the “complete loss of social power…or some approximation of this” (Hogan, Cognitive 135).
The use of the rescue narrative structure in the White Papers circumvents objective argumentation and instead is intended to arouse certain emotions and expectations inherent in the relationships of the story structure. Empathy for the victim, identification with the hero, and dominance of the villain are some of the emotional goals aimed for when implementing a rescue narrative (Lakoff, The Political 231-3). The emotion provided by implicit narrative structures is not to be underestimated and has been found to guide the organization of preference in making decisions (Damasio, Descartes' 34-50). The speaker using an implied rescue narrative is framing the political context and introducing emotionally compelling logical heuristics in order to manipulate and persuade public opinion. These narratives operate upon a reflexive level of cognition and frame the social world through their manipulation of the groups assigned to those basic oppositions of subject positions that become recognizable within a discourse. As Lakoff puts it:

Language gets its power because it is defined relative to frames, prototypes, metaphors, narratives, images, and emotions. Part of its power comes from its unconscious aspects: we are not consciously aware of all that it evokes in us, but it is there, hidden, always at work. If we hear the same language over and over, we will think more and more in terms of the frames and metaphors activated by the language. And it doesn’t matter if you are negating the words or questioning them; the same frames and metaphors will be activated and hence strengthened (Lakoff, The Political 15).

Lakoff describes language in the above passage as guiding unconscious cognitive processes that affect decision making. At this reflexive level, narrative and its elements
are introduced, maintained, and become predominant via their repetition. The framing process described by Lakoff supports claims of hegemony found in the narrative struggle of discourse theory. By adopting Lakoff’s narrative frames for a study of the struggle in discourse, we can view these structures as defining social relations, and investigate the repetition of a particular account as an attempt to impose it as dominant while destabilizing others.

By combining the theory of social identity construction through positioning with that of identifying internal narrative structures, we have a model for the construction of identity at a subconscious level and which is dispersed throughout discourse and across genre. The repetition of a framing narrative stabilizes or disrupts the positions established by the discourse. The difficulty of establishing a new identity suggests that not only are dominant frames continually maintained, but that they also act as receptive filters to the interpretation of stimuli and meaning (Damasio, Self 184-7). In discourse theory, this filter is viewed as external to the self and as part of the structuring role of discourse. In

26 Strategies to disrupt dominant conceptual metaphors can be deployed by means of opposition and repetition and/or exposure. For example, the abstract rise and fall of points on the stock market is conceived in terms of “ocean travel” as a recent study by Chung, Ahrens, and Sung has demonstrated, then those positive aspects of liquidity and movement can be disrupted by attaching the negative aspect of occupation into the mental space that the metaphor constructs. Combining this metaphor with that of good is up and its binary opposite of bad is down, there is a negative metaphorical association with the stock market of stasis and sinking that would require a bail-out, a nautical analogy of the process of bailing out water of a sinking ship with a bucket. According to Lakoff, this would not weaken the metaphor, but rather emphasize the negative aspect of stasis and sinking, given the abstract nature of the concept of the stock market itself, and the dependence upon social perception for the valuation of stock, the success of a movement such as the Occupy Wall Street may not entirely be quantifiable in terms of the occupation of physical space, but also need consider the occupation of mental space and strategies to increase the exposure and repetition of their conceptual intervention in the media.
cognitive theory, the receptive filter is a catalog of patterns that are recalled and matched to the context in the act of interpretation. By combining these, we can imagine a master signifier of a genre internalized and functioning as a prototype. This prototype remains the best example within a group as long as the discourse remains stable, but can change if a new account is established through discursive intervention. The synthesis of a discursive and cognitive model of the mind treats prototypes as emerging through the mind’s engagement with discourse. This treatment underscores the arbitrariness of social relations and the role discourse plays in forming these, while also providing a means with which social relations can be recognized and individuals can actively engage in transforming them. A dominant narrative can maintain irrational social relations through the internalization by individuals of narrative illusions, false beliefs, and partial metaphorical associations that have become predominant in the discourse to which they are exposed. In these cases, a narrative intervention offers a means of disrupting inequitable social relations by contesting the dominant account and emphasizing the arbitrary nature of their position.\textsuperscript{27} One means of effecting this change is through counter-narratives that reposition the groups of the narrative account organizing the discourse.

1.3 Summary

Discursive psychology provides a methodology that examines language for the construction of identity through subject positions offered in the narrative accounts used

\textsuperscript{27} Bertolt Brecht’s \textit{Verfremdungseffekt} implements this strategy to create a critical distance to the work being viewed by distancing the audience emotionally from the characters.
by individuals. Cognitive narratology offers narrative structures, such as the rescue narrative, that function subconsciously as logical heuristics. By combining these insights, I can analyze variations of subject positions of rescue narratives in texts as stabilizing or destabilizing the organization of collective identities in the discourse on German national identity. In the following chapters, I identify the subject positions constructed in the accounts of public political discourse concerning the identity of the German soldier and track these as they develop in each period with alternatives offered in popular adaptations of the *Nibelungenlied* and in works in the tradition of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. 
Chapter 2: The First Period (1985-1987)

This chapter tracks the construction of the image of the German soldier as victim and alternatively as hero at the height of the Cold War in Europe in the mid-eighties. The materials examined include the 1985 Federal Ministry of Defense White Paper, texts of political speeches honoring German soldiers by Kohl, Reagan, and others, key contributions to the Historikerstreit, fantasy adaptations of the Nibelungenlied with particular attention paid to Wolfgang Hohlbein’s Hagen von Tronje, and Jurek Becker’s Bronsteins Kinder. The chapter begins with a discussion of German victim narratives and a narrative of the German soldier as a heroic ideal. These narratives are Helmut Kohl’s dissociation of his generation from those who were adults during the war, Andreas Hillgruber’s equation of the Holocaust with the expulsion of Germans living in the East, and Ernst Nolte’s categorization of the Holocaust as a feature of totalitarianism justified by the logic of Nazi leadership (see Hillgruber; Fischer and Lorenz 226-30; Nolte, Vergangenheit 42-6; Habermas, Eine Art 64-8; Brumlik 77-83). These narrative accounts are antagonistic to the dominant rescue narrative of the previous decade that began in earnest with the student movement that positioned the German soldier as villain having
committed the villainous act of the Holocaust against the Jewish victim with either an implied Allied liberator, or the German anti-war pacifist as hero.\textsuperscript{28}

The 1985 White Paper features several narrative accounts that position the Wehrmacht soldier as victim and as hero. In reaction to the immediate post-war re-education narrative, German dramas such as Wolfgang Borchert’s \textit{Draußen vor der Tür} (1946) positioned the Wehrmacht soldier as a young victim or Carl Zuckmeyer’s \textit{Des Teufels General} (1946/47) as a veteran hero (Fischer and Lorenz 50-52). It was not until the late sixties that the dominant narrative positioned the German soldier as villain. This position was due to a variety of factors that included: 1) highly publicized trials of war criminals; 2) increased coverage of the Holocaust in schools, television, film, and exhibits; 3) critical works associated with Peter Weiss, Günther Grass, the beginnings of Väterliteratur, and the \textit{Neuer Deutscher Film}; and 4) the global social movement. The White Paper returns to the image of the young, naïve soldier and re-introduces several narratives that had previously been less well received, such as those of the suffering of German soldiers in war and captivity, the resistance in the military to National Socialism, and the selflessness soldiers rescuing the wounded (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung

\textsuperscript{28}While the 1968 student movement created a clear break between the war and post-war generations, this schism was helped along by institutional adjustments that followed the 1959 wave of anti-Semitic violence by predominantly young German men. Schools incorporated the holocaust into their primary education curriculum and a popular television documentary series increased public awareness of the holocaust and the brutality of the Nazi regime to the public.
These accounts provide the following positions for hero, villain, and victim in our rescue narrative structure.

1. **Captivity**
   Hero = liberators, implied Allied forces
   Villain = captors, implied Soviet Union
   Victim = captive German soldier
   Villainous act = captivity

2. **Resistance**
   Hero = liberators, implied Allied forces
   Villain = National Socialist regime
   Victim = soldiers in German resistance
   Villainous Act = criminal governance

3. **Rescue**
   Hero = German soldier
   Villain = national enemies, implied Allied forces and Soviet Union
   Villainous Act = injuring, killing German soldiers
   Victim = other German soldiers

Founder members of the *Bundeswehr*, such as Theodor Blank and Adolf Heusinger, include these narrative accounts in their early speeches that were collected and also published in 1985 (Blank 115; Heusinger, das Selbstverständnis 150-1).

Other narratives of the 1985 White Paper describe the contemporary strategic situation, such as 1) the threat of a Soviet invasion, and 2) the illegitimacy of the East German government. The first narrative positions the *Bundeswehr* soldier as hero protecting the West German population from an East German soldier who is ready to invade. Despite the prevalence of these narratives in political discourse, the German public remained strongly opposed to the use of arms, and in particular nuclear weapons.

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29 The July 20th assassination attempt was considered treasonous by many of the *Bundeswehr* officers for a considerable time after the war (Fischer and Lorenz 76)
The popular television series *Holocaust* (1979) and the French documentary *Shoah* (1986) and an influx of literature from abroad stabilized the position of the German soldier as villain during this period.

The 1985 White Paper indicated a policy shift towards normalization and offered a heroic image of the soldier. The political and academic justifications for normalization attempted to revise the negative associations attached to the German soldier, but these attempts were unsuccessful during this period in establishing a new identity for him. Under the Helmut Kohl government, security policy moved away from the détente of *Ostpolitik* and challenged again the legitimacy of the East German government. At the same time, it became a goal of the Kohl administration to establish a *Stunde Null* approach to the normalization of state to military relations (see Haftendorn; Pearce; Williams). Negative associations with the German soldier persisted and made it difficult to attract conscripts in numbers that would sustain the border defense, and the further militarization of Germany with nuclear arms proved unpopular with the majority of German citizens. Under pressure from the US led NATO, Kohl’s government pushed normalization as a means to gain further political influence via a shared responsibility for maintaining the organization of global Capitalism. The financial incentives from manufacturing weapons and the (imperial) use of the military for securing resources were politically taboo at the time, but would later provide opportunistic windfalls for Kohl, Schäuble, and other members of the CDU government throughout the nineties (Stünker, Fograscher and Ströbele sec. V).
A central challenge to normalizing security policy were the restrictions set in the German Basic Law, such as Article 87a’s restriction of military operations to border defense and the Article 24 §2’s allowance of deployment through organizations of mutual defense. Under the normal state military relations of corporate capitalism, the military is used to secure resources abroad, but this is strictly prohibited by articles cited above. These restrictions are reflected in the 1985 White Paper in §49 that addresses the threat of economic instability if the oil supply in the Persian Gulf were blocked by the Soviets.

The paragraph only vaguely indicates that precautionary measures are necessary and intimates an awareness of a security threat without further comment. This paragraph can be read as suggesting that precautionary measures must be taken to secure the steady flow of oil into West Germany to defend its infrastructure. The next paragraph states that actions outside of German NATO responsibility are to be executed by nations individually, thereby implying that Germany is exempted from these missions as Article 24 §2 of the Basic Law does not allow for the unrestricted involvement of the German military in missions that are out of (NATO) area. In addition, Article 25 of the Basic Law and paragraph 80 of the German penal code make the planning of wars of aggression a crime punishable with life-long imprisonment. The White Papers acknowledge the aforementioned legal restrictions, but then argue for a concept of forward defense in Eastern Europe that would allow for temporary invasive maneuvers in enemy territory (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung par. 58).\(^{30}\)

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\(^{30}\) The concept of forward defense placed as many forces as possible at the border and included invasive
The 1985 White Paper is a revised paper from 1983 that addressed public opposition to controversial new strategies that included the deployment of Pershing II missiles in the BRD. The 1985 White Paper was double the size of its predecessor with an appendix intended to support the argument of force matching and the role that nuclear weapons would play as a deterrent in a strategy called mutually assured destruction (MAD). The White Paper and its pro-military advocates employed rescue narrative accounts with a clear ideological enemy and the threat of an impending invasion to move toward policies of further militarization of the BRD.

The problems of normalizing the German military were not only the restrictions of the Basic Law, but also the cultural legacy of the National Socialists and their criminal use of the German military. This legacy created a reflexive positioning of the German soldier as perpetrator in the victim/perpetrator binary relationship. This was the dominant position of the German soldier in Germany and throughout the rest of Europe and the world at the beginning of the Kohl era. The narratives of Kohl and Nolte facilitated a politics of normalization that attempted to move the image of the German soldier away from its associations with National Socialism.31

Kohl’s narrative epitomizes the use of his phrase “Gnade der späten Geburt,” which is a modification of the Stunde Null argument used by Wolf Graf von Baudissin to actions as defensive maneuvers that would draw the conflict away from West German civilians.

31 The narrative of Andreas Hillgruber equated German victimization with the victims of the Holocaust, but since this account did not pick up popular momentum until the late nineties, I discuss its impact in more detail in the following chapters.
claim a clean break from the past. Baudissin was the ideological architect of the new
*Bundeswehr*. Unlike other prominent figures planning the rearmament of Germany, such
as Heusinger and Blank, who wanted to establish a link to tradition, Baudissin wanted to
fundamentally change the structure of the military to attract young officers like himself
and to inhibit conditions he thought would cause the corruption of military ideals
(Baudissin, Soldat 23-5). He assumed that the separation of the soldier from civilian life
led to the development of two separate societies in Germany, a “Staat im Staat” in which
the soldier began to despise the civilian and his way of life (Baudissin, Die geistigen 145-8).
For this reason, Baudissin argued for conscription, so that the time spent in the
military by most soldiers would be short before they returned to civilian life. In his
conception of the “Staatsbürger in Uniform,” he made provisions for the enlisted man to
retain civilian rights while serving (Baudissin, Bewußte 171-3). He provided guidelines
rather than regulations for the limitations of civilian rights for a soldier while serving, and
any infractions of these were required to be sent to military court, hindering commanding
officers from punishing disobedience. German Basic Law restricted the military to
defense of the border, and thereby hindered the alienation of soldiers from democratic
society through long tours of duty in foreign lands (Article 87a §1). Baudissin also
insisted that new soldiers not blindly obey orders, but rather by means of insight into their
role in protecting their country, they should conduct themselves professionally. This
concept of “innere Führung” was arguably one of the first management models to
emphasize the delegation of authority and responsibility (Baudissin, Innere 181-94).
Other structural restrictions were instituted by the constitution, such as the military
budget being administered by a civilian institution, so that Generals needed to have their requisition requests approved by an outside civilian institution (Article 87b §1). Baudissin intended that these and other innovations prevent a dangerous fascist subculture from resurfacing within the military.

Unlike the *Stunde Null* that Baudissin viewed as a responsibility to rethink institutional structures to restrict the use of the military outside of Germany, the blank slate that Kohl argues for is the willful forgetting of the criminal nationalist past in order to pursue *Realpolitik* and shed the restrictions developed by Baudissin.\(^{32}\) Because of this separation between the post-war generation and those who participated in the war, the younger generation enters into a binary opposition with the older. Kohl defines the younger generation in opposition to the older generation as innocent and therefore victims of the older generation.

Nolte’s narrative account found in his 1986 article “Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will” suggests that National Socialist history is comparable to other countries’ histories of colonization and totalitarian rule. Nolte introduced this narrative in 1980 at a historian’s conference and expanded upon this publicly in 1986 in a Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung editorial. At the beginning of the decade, Nolte argued that Hitler was becoming a legend and that historical studies should re-examine the period of history in order to understand how Nazism rose in order to demystify Hitler (Nolte, Zwischen

\(^{32}\) The war ended when Kohl was 15, an age that would have given him enough time to be influenced by Nazi ideology and even participate as an anti-aircraft auxiliary. He was drafted at the end of the war, but did not see combat.
By the mid-eighties, Nolte modified his argument for a broader audience with the view that 1) the Holocaust was a normal process of nation building, 2) the Holocaust was similar to genocides of other totalitarian regimes, and 3) Hitler was reacting to the perception of a real threat (Nolte, Vergangenheit 41-46). The last account created a lot of controversy as it repositioned the criminal leadership away from a position as villain into that of hero defending the German people from the “asiatische” threat (Nolte, Vergangenheit 45).

Narratives of German victimization in German politics have a long history, such as the *Dolchstosslegende*’s well-documented role in popularizing Nazi ideology (see Härd). This legend traces back to the English General Frederick Maurice’s comment published on December 17, 1918 in the *Neue Züricher Zeitung* that the German army had been stabbed in the back by the German people (Keil and Kellerhoff 36-7). German Generals Erich Ludendorff and Paul Hindenburg soon repeated this analogy in the context of the betrayal of Siegfried from the *Nibelungenlied* with their aim from the people to the politicians. German generals used the *Dolchstosslegende* to excuse their defeat by scapegoating a vast array of imagined political enemies that included communists, bankers, and even democracy as a political system. The Nazis imposed a Jewish identity with these scapegoats to support their paranoia of a Jewish world conspiracy and position the German soldiers as victims of political betrayal. The importance of producing a heroic image of the German soldier was not lost after the Second World War and was a central topic in the 1950 *Himmeroder Denkschrift*. A group
of 15 members wrote this memorandum, in which they outlined the rearmament of West Germany a full five years before Germany would be admitted into the NATO. They stressed the importance of eliminating “jeder Diffamierung des deutschen Soldaten (einschließlich der im Rahmen der Wehrmacht seinerzeit eingesetzten Waffen-SS) und Maßnahmen zur Umstellung der öffentlichen Meinung im In- und Ausland“ and promoted an „Ehrenerklärung für den deutschen Soldaten von Seiten der Bundesregierung und der Volksvertretung“ in order to rehabilitate the image of the German soldier at home and abroad (Baudissin, Heusinger, und Speidel 67). Victimization of the soldier was an integral part of this Umstellung in the early speeches from the early 50s of Theodor Blank, who was head of Amt Blank and responsible for planning the rearmament of West Germany (Blank, Der europäische Soldat deutscher Nationalität 111). Adolf Heusinger, the General Chief of Staff during war and the first inspector General of the Bundeswehr, also saw the soldier as victim of a corrupt leadership that he had ironically been part of (Heusinger, Legitimation 153).

2.1 Historical, Ideological and Material Background

In this section, I discuss the political climate at the beginning of the Kohl Era and several of the initiatives and controversies associated with his chancellorship during this period. These include the visit to the graves at Bitburg with U.S. President Ronald Reagan and the Historikerstreit featuring editorials by Ernst Nolte and Jürgen Habermas. The efforts of the Kohl government to rehabilitate the image of the German soldier met
popular and political resistance at home and abroad.\textsuperscript{33} During the \textit{Historikerstreit} (1985-87), the narratives of Kohl, Hillgruber, and Nolte that characterized German soldiers as victims and heroes created a public debate on the soldier’s role in \textit{Wehrmacht} and the \textit{Bundeswehr}’s current strategic context. Concurrently, security policy documents depicted an immediate threat of Soviet invasion to argue for an expansion of military responsibilities. To counter this threat, nuclear weapons were deployed in a strategy of mutually assured destruction and force matching. These measures and the heightened ideological rhetoric of politicians raised the anxiety of the public over the potential for nuclear war during the mid-eighties.\textsuperscript{34}

The Helmut Kohl government entered into office after a vote of no-confidence removed Helmut Schmidt in 1982, and immediately began to reverse the past decade’s \textit{Ostpolitik}. Within a year, the Kohl government had pushed the INF (Missile Armament) package through parliament, prompting the largest demonstrations and protests Germany had seen in the second half of the Twentieth century (Koopmans 639). Hans Dietrich Genscher, minister of foreign affairs, soon attempted to change the perception of the German soldier as villain. On his official visit to Warsaw, Poland, he contemplated laying a wreath at the grave of a German soldier, arguing that this was hero-worship, but rather a

\textsuperscript{33} The insistent plea in the 1985 White Paper §146, §150, § 296, §652, and §715 for the German soldier and populace to deem their way of life worth defending and be willing to do implies such opposition, as do the projected conscript shortfall due to conscientious objection, and high number of recorded demonstrations and demonstration participants during these periods.

\textsuperscript{34} Anxieties over an impending invasion were only heightened by the deployment of new nuclear weapon systems in Germany during this period and led to an increased prevalence of the both invasions and nuclear dangers in film, television, novels, and in news, such as the catastrophic meltdown at Chernobyl on April 26, 1986.
gesture to emphasize the cost of war (Genscher 82). His memoir reveals two things about the new policy towards the East and Kohl plans for the Bundeswehr. First, his visit showed an immense insensitivity towards the international perception concerning German historical revisionism. Second, his plan to visit the graves was justified by the Kohl narrative of the “Gnade der späten Geburt” that focused on the young age of soldier. By focusing solely on their age and anonymity, the visit emphasized the grave’s value as a symbol for the soldier as victim of a corrupt leader, soon to be repeated at the Kolmssöhe cemetery.

U.S. President Ronald Reagan’s 1985 visit of Kolmssöhe cemetery in Bitburg, Germany with Chancellor Helmut Kohl was intended to honor the U.S. soldiers and German soldiers buried there. With a symbolic gesture, Reagan and Kohl planned to emphasize the strength of the security partnership between the United States and West Germany in light of a new round of ICBMs deployed that year. Controversy arose when it was discovered that there were no American soldiers buried at the cemetery but instead the graves of 49 members of the Waffen-SS, who would implicitly receive the honor of the visit. The symbolic message sent at Bitburg could be interpreted as the honoring of a criminal organization, so Reagan gave the following statement:

These [SS troops] were the villains, as we know, that conducted the persecutions and all. But there are 2,000 graves there, and most of those, the average age is about 18. I think that there's nothing wrong with visiting that cemetery where those young men are victims of Nazism also, even though they were fighting in the German uniform, drafted into service to

35 There are no cemeteries in Germany that contain graves of US and German soldiers together (Jensen 54).
carry out the hateful wishes of the Nazis. They were victims, just as surely as the victims in the concentration camps. (Buchanan par. 17)

Reagan’s statement applies the same logic as the argument Genscher gave in his memoirs in rationalizing his wish to honor the German soldier’s graves in Warsaw in 1984. The soldier’s youth in Kohl’s narrative represents his innocence and naïveté, Nazi or otherwise, and Reagan couples this with the notion of the German soldier as victim. Reagan at first points to the SS as villains, but then qualifies his statement and differentiates between German villains and victims by focusing on age as an exculpatory qualification for the individual soldiers who fought the war. The focus on age allowed Reagan to redirect attention away from the atrocities of the Schutzstaffel and to blame their actions upon the commands of “one man’s totalitarian dictatorship” (Jensen 110).

The war against one man’s totalitarian dictatorship was not like other wars. The evil of Nazism turned values upside down. Nevertheless, we can mourn the German war dead today as human beings crushed by a vicious ideology. (134)

Several strategic categorical positionings assert the soldier as victim in this speech. First, the label of a single man’s dictatorship minimizes the participation and collaboration of millions of Germans to the designs of a single person. Second, the term Nazism emphasizes ideology as the villain as opposed to its actors, who became victims of Nazism. These positionings create an image of the Nazi soldier as a young, naïve, innocent victim.

Reagan continues to construct an image of the German soldier as young and congenial in his tale of US and German friendship during the Battle of Bulge.
I'm thinking of one special story -- that of a mother and her young son living alone in a modest cottage in the middle of the woods. And one night as the Battle of the Bulge exploded not far away, and around them, three young American soldiers arrived at their door -- they were standing there in the snow, lost behind enemy lines. All were frostbitten; one was badly wounded. Even though sheltering the enemy was punishable by death, she took them in and made them a supper with some of her last food. Then, they heard another knock at the door. And this time four German soldiers stood there. The woman was afraid, but she quickly said with a firm voice, “There will be no shooting here.” She made all the soldiers lay down their weapons, and they all joined in the makeshift meal. Heinz and Willi, it turned out, were only 16; the corporal was the oldest at 23. Their natural suspicion dissolved in the warmth and the comfort of the cottage. One of the Germans, a former medical student, tended the wounded American. (135-6)

Reagan’s anecdote conceals the fact that the Battle of the Bulge was a German offensive meant to encircle and destroy the US and Allied advance in Belgium and Luxemburg. Germans managed to kill 19,000 Americans and injure another 89,000 before retreating behind the Siegfried Line (Miles par. 18). The tale is an example of a German-American friendship that dates back to their bloodiest confrontation. Reagan made only a brief statement on his visit to Bergen-Belsen and on the horror of the Holocaust, but emphasized repeatedly that the young soldiers were victims of a totalitarian ideology. Reagan implied that it was a totalitarian ideology that the Soviet soldiers suffer under in the contemporary security context. Reagan finished his speech with a logic that reduced oppression to a formation of totalitarian regimes:

Well, today freedom-loving people around the world must say: I am a Berliner. I am a Jew in a world still threatened by anti-Semitism. I am an Afghan, and I am a prisoner of the Gulag. I am a refugee in a crowded boat foundering off the coast of Vietnam. I am a Laotian, a Cambodian, a Cuban, and a Miskito Indian in Nicaragua. I, too, am a potential victim of totalitarianism. (Reagan par. 19)
In his first sentence, Reagan quotes Kennedy’s famous speech to remind listeners of the history of German-American relations and the suffering caused by the split of Germany into two states. Reagan jumps from this suffering to a series of what he views as similar cases of suffering, such as Jewish suffering under Nazism and other populations suffering under Communism. In Reagan’s ideologically split worldview between capitalism and communism, or freedom and totalitarianism, conflate Nazism with Communism.³⁶

The Bitburg visit and the Nolte article that followed soon became topics of a public debate known as the Historikerstreit. Historians and sociologists interpreted and criticized the Bitburg visit in a variety of different ways. These interpretations included the visit as reconciling the image of the perpetrators of the Second World War (Brumlik 77), as tragic spectacle (Mommsen 163), as a claim that Germany had been on the right side in its fight against Bolshevism (Habermas, Vom öffentlichen Gebrauch 245), and as an indication that Germany was gearing its military towards normalcy (Winkler 263). The Bitburg visit was a political and symbolic failure because it only served to further emphasize the insensitivity of the US and German governments towards the victims of the war and did not produce a favorable climate for the installation of US nuclear arms.

³⁶ Reagan’s rescue narrative is Capitalism’s rescue of the world from Communism. His comment on Vietnam refers to refugees as victims of Communism, without recognizing the colonial role the US played in producing this refugee. This narrative positions the US soldier as a representative of Capitalism as the rescuer of victims of Communism in Laos, Cambodia, Cuba and Nicaragua. Reagan lists conflicts in which broad swathes of people have suffered from US intervention and because of their continued resistance; these states still suffer under trade embargos imposed by the US (Chomsky, Year 255-81). For Reagan, these are victims of Communism, and the Indian, he is quick to point out is the Indian of Nicaragua, lest he confuses his listeners by drawing attention to the fate of Native Americans in the United States.
While the visit had failed to reposition the German soldier as victim, it had created a scandal that had reverberated throughout national and international media and provided more exposure to this competing narrative.

Following the formula of the Bitburg visit to recast the German soldier out of his villainous associations, Nolte compared the Holocaust with genocide of other peoples and National Socialism with other totalitarian systems. Nolte’s most controversial suggestion was the interpretation of the Archipelago Gulags as the cause for the Nazis drafting of the final solution (Zwischen 31). Stürmer argued that this revisionism was a moral and political necessity for Germany to continue to develop into a normal nation-state that was able to fulfill its military obligations (38). Christian Meier offered the first opposing voice, warning that as the reaction at Bitburg had shown, the push towards normalcy would only make things worse (54). Jürgen Habermas soon joined the discussion and became a key figure in the ensuing debate. His primary argument was that revisionism was being utilized by the architects of ideology (CDU) to encourage nationalism and expand the German contribution to the NATO, while at the same time transferring the criminal image of National Socialism in the public consciousness onto the enemies of the NATO (Habermas, Eine Art 71). Habermas drew Andreas Hillgruber’s Zweierlei Untergang into the discussion as another example of a historian encouraging nationalism. Habermas criticizes Hillgruber’s book for its depictions of soldiers as “tapfer,” the civilian population as “verzweifelt,” and the Nazi leadership as “bewählt” and for
suggesting with his title and formatting that Germans and Jews suffered similarly via the Holocaust and the expulsion of Germans from East Prussia (64).

The politically conservative path towards normalcy identified by Christian Meier, Micha Brumlik, Michael Stürmer, Hans Mommsen, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, Heinrich A. Winkler and Jürgen Habermas in both the Bitburg visit and the Historikerstreit focuses on the revitalization of nationalism through a public relations campaign to improve the public perception of the German soldier. The nationalism that the politically conservative scholars seek to re-establish opposes many of the ideological and legal restrictions instituted in the drafting of the Basic Law and the founding of the Bundeswehr. The preventative measures introduced by Baudissin in the mid to late-fifties were aimed precisely at protecting the soldiers and officers from assuming a social position that created a hero/victim binary opposition. By limiting the years of service, implementing conscription, delegating responsibility and maintaining civilian rights for soldiers in the Bundeswehr, Baudissin was trying to reduce the chance of the German soldier viewing the civilian as someone unlike himself and creating hero, villain, and victim subject positions with groups in West German society.

2.2 Wolfgang Hohlbein’s Hagen von Tronje (1986)

In this section, I examine the Nibelungenlied adaptations of the eighties in general before focusing on Wolfgang Hohlbein’s Hagen von Tronje published in 1986. The historical, political, and literary reception of the Nibelungenlied makes this adaptation an excellent source for analyzing the effects the political changes may have upon the ideals
for soldiers in other texts engaged in the discourse. The narratives produced by Kohl, Hillgruber and Nolte are echoed by Hohlbein’s adaptation and in particular, the repositioning of Hagen from villain to victim. The adaptation eventually conforms to reader expectations of the *Nibelungenlied* and resolves the tensions created by Hagen’s new positioning by creating two levels with which the reader understands his public infamy as villain, but private suffering as victim that ultimately stabilizes the dominant narrative. At novel’s end, the figures have returned to their traditional positions, but not without Hohlbein’s narrative complicating the dominant account of Hagen as villain, and with the *Nibelungen*’s relationship to German national political history, these complications reflect the same dynamic between the dominant account of the German soldier as villain and those antagonistic accounts that position him as victim.

The narrative structure of the *Nibelungen* material is a form of rescue narrative called the bridal quest that dates back to the *Chronica Fredegarii* (584-642) and *Liber historiae Francorum* (727) (Bornholt 15-6). The similarity in narrative structure between the *Nibelung* material and the rescue narrative structure of the security discourse allows for an analogy of hero positions between the political and literary representations of the soldier/warrior. The *Nibelungenlied* adaptations draw upon antagonistic accounts in the contemporary political security discourse to rejuvenate the material and subsequently reject narrative alternatives, so that they ultimately stabilize the dominant account and its generic elements. The Hohlbein novel presents positions antagonistic to the traditional position of Hagen as villain by transforming him into a tragic hero and eventual victim.
Hohlbein presents Hagen as a soldier of the older generation and revises his position from villain to victim in a manner that echoes the narrative of Kohl, Nolte and Hillgruber for the German soldier.

_Hagen von Tronje_ (1986) was marketed as a _historischer Roman_, even though elements of magic, witches, dwarves, other mystical beings, magic swords and other items come from fantasy.\(^37\) The novel’s historical claim derives from its recognizable settings of Xanten, Iceland, and Worms and the relation of its figures to semi-historical and legendary personages, as well as the privileged political role the material has had as a national epic since the late 18\(^{th}\) century. Its protagonist is connected to a pagan past characterized as a simpler world in which honor and duty defined the warrior’s and man’s role in society.

Hohlbein’s _Hagen_ stands in stark contrast to previous adaptations in the west. These adaptations have retold the story (_Die Nibelungen_ 1951), vaguely associated _Nibelung_ figures with protagonists in contemporary settings (_Der Tod der Nibelungen_ 1970, _Die Erinnerung des Helden Sigfrid: Ein Roman_ 1985), or satirized the material (_Total Krasse Helden_ 1986). In East Germany, adaptations engaged critically with the material, most notably in Heiner Müller’s _Germania: Tod in Berlin_ (1977) and Volker Braun’s _Siegfried: Frauenprotokolle Deutsche Furor_ (1987). Other notable works used aspects of the material as metaphor, such as in Christoph Hein’s _Drachenblut_ (1984), or

\(^37\) Fantasy literature became a popular pulp genre in Germany in the early eighties with Michael Ende and popular translations of Tolkien’s Ring cycle (Sørensen 423).
formed critical editions for primary and secondary studies, such as Franz Fühmann’s *Die Nibelungen* (1971) and the Manfred Bierwisch and Uwe Johnson translation of 1956.

The *Nibelung* material has become inseparably tied to German nationalism. Since its introduction, the publication of *Nibelung* related materials has correlated with the rise and fall of popular nationalism. For example, *Nibelungen* material published after 1848 spiked in 1871 with the formation of the German Empire to 52 works and then again to 70 works at the start of the twentieth century during the German suppression of the Boxer rebellion (Penzler 212).

The popularity of the narrative rose again at the end of World War I in 1918, the year in which the *Dolchstosslegende* first appeared in the *Neue Züricher Zeitung* as a quote from the British general Sir Frederick Maurice (Martin, *Nibelungen-Metamorphose* 148-149). The *Dolchstosslegende* appropriates the victim Siegfried as representative of the German soldier in the *Nibelungenlied* and assigns blame to a variety of groups as deceptively betraying him. The publication of new adaptations of the *Nibelungenlied* descended rapidly after 1918, primarily due to paper shortages (149). The popularity of the narrative in the form of Wagner’s operas, Lang’s films, and Hebbel’s plays remained strong leading up to and throughout the Nazi era, as can be seen in news, speeches, and personal memoirs during this period. After World War II, there was a slow and steady increase in the number of works published that adapted or retold the *Nibelungenlied* up until the early seventies, when the number leveled off at around 40 until 1989 (149). The association of the *Nibelungen* material with Nazi ideology and German nationalism
certainly played a role in the limited production of *Nibelung* material after the war. As Germany regained a prominent economic yet not national status, the production of *Nibelungen* material peaked, only to increase once nationalism became a reality (149). Since Reunification, the pulp market has boasted a plethora of new adaptations of the *Nibelungen* and its popularity has led to the establishment of a Nibelungen myth museum in Worms in 2003, a popular TV-event film in 2003, and Hohlbein and Dewi’s new *Nibelungen* series in 2004.

Bernhard R. Martin examined the literary and political reception of the *Nibelungenlied* from the mid-18th century to 2002. He concluded that authors “veränderten Handlung und Charaktere, passten sie den jeweiligen Zeitumständen an und machten dadurch erst das ‚Nibelungenlied‘ zum Träger von Werten, die in das Original nur mühsam hineingelesen werden können“ (Martin, Die Nibelungen 13). Martin examines stereotypes and their “Modellfunktionen” that provides values for the German male. He concludes that it is too early to speak of “einer erneuten Anpassung an einen geänderten Grundmythos,” but rather that both Hohlbein’s and Lodemann’s narratives offer mythic alternatives (Martin, Nibelungen-Metamorphose 211). Martin stresses the political appropriation of the material up until 1945, but then discusses literature thereafter, including Hohlbein’s and Lodemann’s texts, as decontextualized from the contemporary period in terms of myth and value systems. This separation leads him to interpret many of the elements in Hohlbein’s text as imported from abroad and in Lodemann’s narrative as reassertions of old ideology, without considering the role that
contemporary German political history may play in their formation. My analysis focuses on how Hohlbein’s narrative negotiates the antagonistic narrative accounts of the political genre that echo in the text to produce more nuanced figural positions and identities within the constraints and expectations of the *Nibelungen* material.

The plot follows Hagen returning to Burgund from a skirmish to meet a witch named Urd (Earth) who predicts the end of the Pagan world and its Gods. Hagen arrives at court and recovers from his wounds. During this time, a young warrior named Siegfried arrives and wishes to capture the throne. Siegfried’s plans are thwarted and he then looks to claim the crown through other means: marriage to the princess Kriemhild.

Alberich, a magical dwarf and unwilling vassal to Siegfried, suggests that Hagen kill Siegfried. Apart from gaining his own freedom, Alberich believes that Siegfried will bring about the end of the pagan world and Alberich’s magic. Siegfried does not follow any belief system, but uses both to his advantage. Hagen recoils from what he sees as a demonic presence in Siegfried’s combat abilities, so that when he discovers that Siegfried has been secretly meeting the unwed Kriemhild, Hagen realizes that he himself is in love with her and believes that Siegfried will bring her dishonor.

After the defeat of the Saxon and Danish armies, Siegfried wishes to ask for the hand of Kriemhild in marriage, but this is pre-empted by King Gunther’s announcement to win Brunhild. Gunther wins Brunhild with Siegfried’s deception and strength. After Brunhild arrives in Burgund, the mood of the people changed to despair as she dominates her weaker husband. After a double wedding and subsequent spat between the queens,
Brunhild begins an affair with Siegfried. As the Kingdom begins to deteriorate, Hagen is torn between killing the man Kriemhild loves and thus invoking her wrath, and letting the same man wrest control away from his king. Hagen’s solution is to escape his obligations at court by fleeing into the forest, but after receiving encouragement from Urd and Alberich, he decides to return to Burgund. Meanwhile, Gunther has become a puppet of the two foreign lovers Brunhild and Siegfried who now rule Burgund. Hagen is remorseful for leaving Burgund and feels responsible for the turn of events and confronts Siegfried who he finds in bed with Brunhild.

Hagen vowed to kill Siegfried if Siegfried ever betrayed Kriemhild, but rather than kill him now, Hagen challenges him to a duel and leaves with Siegfried’s sword. Hagen believes that his own death in combat will allow him a heroic release from his suffering and leave Siegfried and Kriemhild together. The two meet the next day in the forest and fight. Hagen realizes that the sword’s wielder becomes possessed by the weapon’s power. Balmung, the enchanted sword, urges Hagen to kill Siegfried, thus giving him the insight into Siegfried’s condition and challenges his own will to resist. Hagen suppresses his urge and resigns himself to a heroic defeat. Before Siegfried strikes the death blow, Gunther emerges from behind a bush and spears Siegfried in the back. Gunther pleads with Hagen to take the blame and Hagen reluctantly does so. Kriemhild discovers the wound in Siegfried’s back and despises Hagen as a cowardly murderer. The book ends with Pagan burial rites being given to Siegfried and Brunhild, who joined Siegfried in his pyre.
Several passages support a reading of Hagen as an allegorical figure for the German soldier as victim. For example, as Hagen meets the wise woman of the forest, Urda (Earth), they concur that old beliefs are on their way out, and that both Urda and Hagen are part of that old world. The old woman tells him to go “zurück nach Tronje, Hagen. Geht zurück in die Welt, aus der Ihr einstmals gekommen seid. Ihr gehört nicht hierher, so wenig wie ich” (Hohlbein, Hagen 35). She recognizes that they are both part of a forgotten past and that they are but marginal figures in today’s world. They are victims of a society that at one time needed them, but no longer does. She imparts a warning to Hagen that if he remains in this world, the political world of Worms, she sees only “Schmerzen auf deinem Weg, Hagen, Schmerzen und Blut und Tränen und Verrat. Man wird dich einen Mörder heißen und einen Verräter, und viele, die dich lieben, werden dich hassen lernen” (36). The irony of the situation is that Hagen, who traditionally is the villain, receives the warning. This warning establishes early in the narrative that the repositioning of Hagen as victim will follow.

In shifting the position of Hagen, the novel draws upon those antagonistic accounts in the political discourse that shift the position of the German soldier from villain to victim. The problem with choosing Hagen as a protagonist lies in the villainous role he typically plays in the Nibelungenlied. The Dolchstosslegende emphasized this villainous role early in the Nazi period, but then Nazi propaganda emphasized his determined obedience as a heroic ideal at the end of the War (Martin, Die Nibelungen 11). In the Nibelungenlied, Hagen is a murderer not just of one man, but also of the entire
house of Burgund, and therefore Hohlbein’s text performs a similar task of revisionism that Ernst Nolte embarked upon in his rescue narrative account that repositioned the German soldier as hero. The allegory that Hagen represents is that through his blind obedience and identity as warrior, he destroyed the kingdom he served to protect, just as the Wehrmacht soldier had obediently served the German Reich only to see much of Germany and Europe reduced to rubble and their population decimated.

Hohlbein could have written Hagen as a dark hero, but instead he rehabilitated Hagen and adapted key plot points, such as Hagen’s motivation to kill Siegfried. That changed the underlying narrative prototype from heroic to romantic. The insertion of Hagen’s unrequited love for Kriemhild provides a motivation of jealousy misunderstood as maleficence, which provides some of the momentum to shift the figure of Hagen into a position other than villain. As Hagen begins to move from his position as villain, Siegfried moves from his position as victim. Siegfried is guilty of treason for plotting to overthrow the rightful king, sleeping with the queen, and abusing Kriemhild. Hagen, however, would still be considered a villain if he deceptively murdered Siegfried. But he doesn’t. Instead, he openly challenges him to a duel, and plans to sacrifice himself and let Siegfried kill him for Kriemhild’s sake. There is no deception and his suffering has driven him to suicidal action that further moves him into a position as victim for Siegfried to become his murderer.

The repositioning of Hagen from villain to victim eliminates the negative associations of him as the murderer of Siegfried and emphasizes the positive associations
of his figure as ideal warrior. This revision does not revise the political reception of the *Nibelungenlied* or the legend of the stab-in-the-back, but it does provide evidence for the movement of Nolte’s antagonistic narrative into a related genre of public culture. The effect that this shift has upon the adaptation is that it opens up a radical alteration to the plot in the juxtaposition of romantic love with his strict adherence to a warrior ethos. Hagen’s sensitivity to Kriemhild allows the reader to think of him as a more sympathetic character contrary to initial expectations. This departure from reader expectations of the figure as a villain should intrigue the reader, while at the same time, the prototypical structure of the tragic romantic narrative prototype allows for the unrequited nature of his love to be an intuitively logical development of the character.

Instead of presenting Hagen as a Machiavellian advisor, he is depicted as an older man that suffers immense inner turmoil from his code of honor and from his secret love of the much younger Kriemhild. This positions Hagen as a victim of his obligation to Gunther and to his unrequited love with Kriemhild. Hagen is willing to sacrifice himself, but in this instance not for his nation, but for whom he imagines his lover to be. Hagen remains loyal to his lady and to his lord by subordinating his own desires to theirs. The romantic narrative becomes an antagonistic account to the traditional plot of the epic in that Hagen’s loyalty shifts from the state to a single person by the promise he makes to Kriemhild to protect Siegfried. Hagen’s motivation for his actions is not political deception, but a wish to fulfill Kriemhild’s wishes and protect her. The generational
The difference between Hagen as an old warrior and Kriemhild and Siegfried as young lovers is a point of emphasis in defining the positive and negative values of them all.

The figure of Hagen is identified as a soldier of the old generation mired in tradition and an ethos that fights but does not torture, kills but only other soldiers. The positioning of Hagen as victim and as representative of chivalric values echoes those accounts of the post-war period that sought to establish a link between the *Wehrmacht* tradition and chivalric values by emphasizing the suffering in captivity, the courage of resistance, and the bravery of rescue. Hohlbein’s narrative reiterates the basic logic of the Kohl account by separating the older from younger generation and making Siegfried the victim, but in a more complex way. Hagen represents the link to the past and the older generation soldier, who in Hohlbein’s narrative is also a victim of the political backstab by the politician Gunther. Hagen assumes the guilt that is rightfully Gunther’s in the murder of Siegfried because of his loyalty to Burgund. Hagen becomes a victim of his leader by accepting the blame that will publicly label him a villain.

By embedding Hagen’s motivation to kill Siegfried within a tragic romance narrative, he becomes a conflicted character who must risk his image as the honorable soldier for the love of Kriemhild. Gunther orders Hagen to kill Siegfried, so that his decision to spare Siegfried is an act against the order of the politician for what he deems to be his own moral and ethical choice. This notion is complicated by having Hagen not act from an inner conviction that stems from his own beliefs, but rather he is moved, much like Rüdiger in the *Nibelung* material, to sacrifice himself in order to maintain his
oath to both his lord and his lady. For this reason, the tragic romance narrative does not subvert the idea of a cult of personality entirely, but rather, it elucidates the dilemma of a soldier who is expected to obey even those orders they do not wish to fulfill.

Those devices used in the epic to depict Hagen as a villain are defused in Hohlbein’s text and are replaced with tragic heroic elements. Hohlbein’s Hagen is not responsible for the cowardly murder of Siegfried, an act that in the epic led to the fall of the house of Burgund. His motivation is not power, nor revenge, but rather a jealousy that is eventually overcome by a self-sacrificial love. In short, Hagen is the ideal male warrior of the court that he never was in the epic. A further invention that can be attributed to the Cold War context is the possession of magical weapons by these foreign figures, such as the sword *Balmung*, which when it lands in Hagen’s hands, tests him and only he and not Siegfried is able to resist the temptation of using such a powerful weapon.

The repositioning of Hagen from villain to victim begins in the first chapter as the text prepares the reader for this revisionary work in the first descriptions of the character. Hagen is described as old, wise and above all else, a human figure. This point is not only stressed in order for Hagen to become a relatable protagonist, but also to prepare the reader for the work of loosening Hagen from his expected position in the legend, myth, and the epic material.

Er war ein Mensch, keine Sagengestalt, auch wenn er fast schon zu einer solchen geworden war, und er war dreivierzig Jahre alt und somit weit über das Alter hinaus, in dem ein Mann normalerweise im Vollbesitz seiner Kräfte war. (Hohlbein, Hagen 19)
The text begins a process of humanizing and demystifying the figure and moving him away from a position as villain, just as Nolte had suggested for the *Wehrmacht*, in that “Die Dämonisierung des Dritten Reiches kann nicht akzeptiert werden. Sie liegt schon dann vor, wenn dem Dritten Reich die Menschlichkeit abgesprochen wird, die einfach darin besteht, dass alles Menschliche endlich ist und damit weder ganz gut noch ganz schlecht, weder ganz hell noch ganz dunkel sein kann“ (Nolte, Zwischen 34). Hagen is described as a somewhat aged man that has begun to tire of his work. The old and experienced Hagen stands in bold relief against the youth and *unmenschlich* vigor of Siegfried. The text stresses Hagen’s age in order to emphasize that he is part of an older generation and a representative of the waning values of a warrior’s code.

...äußerlich unterschied sich Hagen von Tronje nicht von seinen Begleitern. Inmitten der hochgewachsenen, muskulösen Gestalten wirkte er im Gegenteil eher klein, nahezu unscheinbar, zum mindesten unauffällig. Und trotzdem hätte jeder in diesem Mann den Führer der kleinen Truppe erkannt. Es war etwas in seiner Stimme, in seiner Art, sich zu bewegen, und – vor allem – im Blick seiner grauen, düsteren Augen, das ihn zum Führer machte. (Hohlbein, Hagen 12)

This introduction of Hagen to the reader depicts a man who is rather short and not much different from his companions, almost unnoticeable. Nevertheless, the text describes an inner quality that made the man recognizable as the *Führer*, the leader, of the troop. Those qualities that make him *Führer* and the aura of leadership that surrounds the figure of Hagen describe a cult of personality that along with the strong associations that already exist between the epic material and Nazi party propaganda and self-image produce associations between this figure and Hitler. In this way, the text addresses the most
controversial aspects of his protagonist early in the novel, in part to acknowledge them, but also to prepare the reader for a revision of the traditional figure. The associations that the above passage evoke for the figure of Hagen draws parallels with Nolte’s revisionist plea, in that Hagen as villain is repositioned not as a hero, but as a victim who by an obligation to his state and sense of honor is misunderstood as a villain and as the seeress predicted, “man wird dich einen Mörder heißen und einen Verräter, und viele, die dich lieben, werden dich hassen lernen” (36).

In Hagen von Tronje, Hagen’s role as the ideal soldier is supported by the lack of description of the character outside of his role as warrior and his role as a Germanic political actor possessing clichéd masculine attitudes and values evinced through his actions and dialog with others. There are only occasional glimpses of emotional breakages to Hagen’s masculine façade. Hagen is convinced that his inner turmoil will be resolved through the fantasy of his own sacrifice. A curious combination of the fascist longing for a heroic death combined with a willful, pacifist rejection of the powerful weapon that would have easily brought him victory. The sword possesses a voice of its own, one that represents the temptation of power and a refusal to use it.

[Hagen] wollte es nicht. Er wollte nicht, daß das dämonische Schwert Macht über ihn gewann. Und doch schrie es ihm zu: „Töte ihn! Töte ihn!“ (480)

Hagen’s experience with the sword makes him sympathize with Siegfried, who as a much more inexperienced and naïve warrior quickly succumbed to the power of the sword. Siegfried sees that Hagen struggles with the sword’s power, just as he had.

Hagen refuses to wield the power that the sword provides him and instead allows himself to be killed by Siegfried, expressing a form of conscientious objection to the use of powerful weapons and a literary protest that rejects the new accounts offered by Kohl in favor of the traditional dominant account in which the soldier remained victim. The novel reinforces the conservative position when it concerns the revision of the soldier’s past image, while also undermining those positions in terms of heightened political tensions between East and West Germany.

Hohlbein reconnects his adaptation to the Nibelung material through Siegfried’s death and the perception that he was a victim, and characterizes this as a misperception given that the novel has thoroughly established him as villain. In an earlier passage, Siegfried is depicted as enjoying torturing captives, something that Hagen disdains. The quick death that Hagen offers his captives is depicted as a more compassionate and honorable way of treating the injured enemy when compared to Siegfried’s torture. Hagen defends the enemy in that „dieser Mann ist unser Feind, aber er ist ein Krieger und hat ein Anrecht darauf, wie ein solcher behandelt zu werden,“ which presents an argument for a specific code of ethics during wartime that extends to prisoners like those expressed in the fourth Geneva convention held in 1949 that dealt with the rights of

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38 The installation of Pershing II missiles proved so unpopular that polls suggested that if it came between choosing missiles or being in the NATO, three-fourths of those polled would rather pull out of the NATO (Corry par. 3).
prisoners (191). By means of a comparison in the way each treats their prisoners, Siegfried moves into the position of villain as Hagen moves away from it.

As the novel ends, the reader knows that Hagen did not commit the murder, but will bear the burden of guilt for the act. As Kriemhild confronts Hagen, she presents the reader with an interpretation of Hagen that is well known, but which the reader now can recognize as a false interpretation because of the revisions made to the narrative in this adaptation. The adaptation proposes that Hagen had become a maligned figure because he was misunderstood and made into a scapegoat for the actions of the political leadership. Kriemhild explains that she does not want his death, but rather she will “dafür sorgen, dass dich die hassen, die du liebst, dass die Häuser, die dir offenstanden, verschlossen sind. Hass und Furcht werden alles sein, was dir entgegenschlägt. Du sollst leiden… Hagen blickte ihr nach. Noch lange, nachdem sie gegangen war“ (510-1). To further position Hagen as victim, his obligation to his lord and his sense of duty calls upon him to lie to Kriemhild, thereby ending the romantic narrative between Kriemhild tragically with her despising Hagen for what she falsely believes him to be. In Kriemhild’s positioning of Hagen, he is the villain, which is the traditional position for him. His position as a warrior, who has wrongly been associated with villainy, reads allegorical to the Wehrmacht soldier, whose reputation is associated with villainy and has been positioned as victim in narrative accounts of the post-war decades. The reader is challenged to re-evaluate their conception of Hagen as the villainous warrior and the narrative of the national epic in the same way that other narrative accounts have repositioned the German soldier as victim.
This repositioning from villain to hero and the expansion to Hagen’s character motivation through the inclusion of a romantic narrative and the associative relationship of his depiction to the German soldier make alterations to his character concurrent with Nolte’s push to do the same in his historical revision of National Socialist history. While the reader is introduced to the account of the villain transformed into victim, as Nolte does with his argument of the real “asiatische” threat defended by Wehrmacht, the accounts of the previous decades that position the soldier as a misunderstood victim are strengthened through Hohlbein’s narrative. In the next section, I look at Jurek Becker’s *Bronsteins Kinder* as an example of critical yet popular literature that acknowledges the binary opposition of perpetrator and victim in the dominant narrative used to define the German-Jewish relationship and provides a counter-narrative to the other antagonistic accounts and flips the positions of the dominant narrative.

2.3 Jurek Becker’s *Bronsteins Kinder* (1986)

Published in 1986, Jurek Becker’s *Bronsteins Kinder* deals with post-war roles of Jewish and German relationships and their respective collective identities as victim and perpetrator. The book is told from the perspective of a young Jewish man, Hans, living in the GDR with his father, Arno, in the mid-seventies. Hans discovers that his father, along with a couple of close fellow concentration camp survivors, have recognized a local man, Arnold Heppner, as a guard from their internment at Neuengamme. Arno and the others kidnap and torture Heppner in order to extract a confession from him that he was the guard at the camp they remember. The question of morality and justice weigh heavily
upon Hans, who after much deliberation, decides to free the captive only to find his father fallen dead in the same room. Despite his distraught emotional state, he nevertheless frees Heppner. By providing the reader the perspective of Hans, Becker addresses questions of identity for the post-war generation of Jews living in Germany, and through Hans, asks them “zu wem du gehörst?” (J. Becker, Bronsteins 139). Previous Becker novels, such as *Jakob der Lügner* (1969) and *der Boxer* (1976), have dealt with the theme of German-Jewish binary opposition and the problems involved in forming a viable post-Holocaust identity, but as Birgit Dahlke points out, *Bronsteins Kinder* is the first of Becker’s works that adopts the perspective of the following generation (Wir par. 7).39

Irene Heidelberger-Leonard’s 1992 article “Schreiben im Schatten der Shoah” argues that *Bronsteins Kinder* is the first example of Väterliteratur written from a Jewish perspective and moves closest to connecting the book with the books’ contemporary arguments that support German victimhood. The article draws upon the infamous speech made by Franz Joseph Strauss in 1987 and emphasizes two sides of historical revisionism, one that frees up Jewish identity from victimhood and another that loosens German identity from a position as villain. Heidelberger-Leonard argues that Jews should not be “ewig dazu verdammt…die Opfer Hitlers zu bleiben” (28). Strauss demands that „es ist höchste Zeit, dass wir aus dem Schatten des Dritten Reichs und dem Dunstkreis Hitlers heraustreten und wieder eine normale Nation werden“ (Garbe 127).

39 Originally a screenplay, Jakob der Lügner, was rejected, and only after successfully adapting it in book form would it then become a film penned by Becker. *Der Boxer* and *Bronsteins Kinder* also became films.
Becker’s narrative writes against the positioning of the Jewish sons and fathers as victims and exemplifies a “Schatten der Shoah” (Heidelberger-Leonard, Schreiben 19). What these texts have in common is their focus on the injustice of memory and that a shadow of guilt and shame has over younger generations. Strauss and Heidelberger-Leonhardt both assert that the younger generation should be free from the deeply embedded cultural stereotypes that arose after the war. Becker attempts to write a novel that can revise the binary of perpetrator and victim and destabilize those groups fixated at each position. In this manner, the novel engages its contemporary discourse on German and Jewish identity and challenges the fixedness of those categories in relation to each other. Becker’s text presents the reader with a Jewish protagonist who tries to break from the role of victim that his father and sister, his teachers and classmates, and the entertainment industry, continually place him in. The text offers a narrative of comparative suffering in a way that emphasizes the common humanity in all victims past and present without occluding the responsibility of each individual to make the difficult choices that can bring about reconciliation.

Published during the period of the Historikerstreit, the narrative re-alignment of Jewish identity from victim to perpetrator in Bronsteins Kinder unavoidably engages the discourse of Germans as victims divided by generations. First, Becker places Arno, the protagonist’s father, into the role of survivor turned perpetrator, thereby providing the reader an example of the persecution of Germans who via their guilt can imagine themselves to be collectively paying for past crimes. Second, Becker chooses to tell the
story from the perspective of Hans, who was born after the war, and thereby questions the identity of the post-war Jewish generation: Do they remain victims or reposition themselves outside of the binary opposition of victim and perpetrator? As readers, we are mostly certain that Arnold Heppner was a guard at the camp and actively participated in the crimes that Arno and his fellow survivors endured, so that his torture is performed with grim irony to get Arnold to admit his role as perpetrator. The phonetic proximity of the names Arnold and Arno as two sides of the binary opposition supports the interchangeability of the roles of Arnold and Arno as reflections of each other’s past positions in this binary. The two men become symbolic for Hans’ two choices: 1) a self-destructive path of revenge founded in the binary of perpetrator and victim, or 2) an act of forgiveness that ends the cycle of revenge associated with such a binary and finds common ground in suffering. Hans vacillates between these two positions throughout the novel and it is with great reluctance and hesitation that he decides for the latter.

Hans begins the story as a young man, who is uncertain of himself and who lives under the crushing weight of a critical father, who is either silent or disappointed with his son. Hans tries to break free from his father’s perspective of him as a failure, as well as the position his German classmates set him in as victim, and even the inadequacy in expressing his emotions to the girl he is seeing. Upon finding his father’s captive in the cabin he visits with Martha, Hans remains undecided about what to do about him. As the novel progresses, Hans experiences his relationship with his father as if he were another
captive of his father. This experience is compounded by Hans’ observation of how these categories of perpetrator and victim are continually reproduced in a variety of contexts.

The play within the play, or rather the film within the novel, has Hans’ love interest, Martha, being given a small part in a WWII resistance film because of her authentic Jewish heritage. This brings Hans to ask whether the casting director used the same qualification for those playing SS men (J. Becker, Bronsteins 197). This superficial insistence on authenticity can be considered a criticism of a problem not addressed in the GDR, criticized by Nolte as a nation founded on the myth of the “Sieg über den Faschismus” that blinds it from the continuation of racial stereotyping (Nolte, Zwischen 17-18). While Hans waits for Martha to finish filming, he observes the following:

Mir fiel das Bild ein, das ich bei meiner Ankunft gesehen hatte: die kartenspielenden SS-Männer. Jetzt erst käme es mir sonderbar vor, dass sie unter sich geblieben waren, so wie die Leute mit dem gelben Stern unter sich blieben. Der Umstand, dass sie alle miteinander Komparsen

40 Becker’s choice of setting the action in the GDR of the seventies undermines the founding myth of the East that claimed to have expelled or sentenced all former Nazis. The novel was published in the West in the eighties and for a Western audience with a picture of the East that has still to address the binary opposition of Jews and Germans that have failed to become unified through common class struggle. The text suggests that the East has not inspired its citizens to think beyond their collective identities as can be seen in Hans’ critique of the film Martha is in.

Many literary scholars have read Bronsteins Kinder as an effort to wrest Jewish identity from its stereotyped victimhood and focus specifically upon the father and son’s relationship as an example of intergenerational trauma without considering the impact that the realignment of the Jewish victim stereotype has upon the binary partnered German identity (Figge and Ward; von Maltzan; Heidelberger-Leonard; Jung). Due to the dominant role that the German victim narrative played in the Nazi’s rejection of the conditions of the Treaty of Versailles and because these narratives had become a dominant topic of discussion in the contemporary discourse during the production and publication of the novel, it is surprising that Bronsteins Kinder was not met with more criticism for the way in which it supports narratives of German victimization. Setting the novel in the East could have dampened such criticism by introducing it as an East specific problem that destabilized the account of East Germany’s “Sieg über den Faschismus” as a “Staatstragender Geschichtsmythos” (Nolte, Zwischen 18). As published in the West, it reads as a glimpse into life in the East and the problems found there.
Hans’ observation suggests that identity formation is based upon superficial stereotyped roles, rather than upon a reflection on the social commonalities that could bring these two groups together. Hans’ suggestion of aligning identity along social roles and class follows the ideal of socialism, but its apparent contrast with reality is a critical jab at its failure to unify racially stereotyped groups in this way. Becker provides the reader a perspective of Hans developing a different socialist way of thinking about German-Jewish relations outside the binary logic of perpetrator and victim. As the passage continues, Hans identifies the well-known stereotypes of the Jewish victim narrative onto the drama playing out before him and reads an intentional threatening subtext into the acting that keeps the two groups from reconciling.

Hans imagines Martha as a sheep before wolves that Martha does not recognize. Martha represents a person who is blessed by the late birth and represents the uncomplicated relationship she has to Germany’s past. Her enthusiasm for the minor role is interpreted by Hans as perpetuating the stereotypes of Jewish victims.

As the novel presents Hans’ father and sister, Arno and Elle, as perpetrators with German victims, this depiction also begin to define the relationship they have with him. Werner Jung defines this relationship as one of silence; a silence of the past that robs
Hans of his Jewish identity, but in their conversations, one can see that Hans feels that this silence is an oppressive force. Through carefully chosen words and phrases, Becker relates Hans’ impression of his relationships with his family as oppressive. For example, he feels „wie jemand, dem die Hände gefesselt werden, bevor der eigentliche Kampf beginnt“ (72). At another point, his father takes his arm and leads him „wie einen Verhafteten, in den hinteren Raum” (78). The simple conversations he has with his sister often “zur Tortur werden“ (128). The relationship that Hans has with his own family of survivors, positions him as their victim, moving him into a position in which he can identify more with the captive German than with the torment of either his father or sister. The original title of the book, “Wie ich ein Deutscher wurde,” implies that Hans adopts a German identity through the experience of silence, guilt, shame and the inability of Jews and Germans to communicate the devastation of the experience of the Holocaust through other means than the binary of perpetrator and victim (Jung 185).

By leaving many of the questions regarding Jewish victimhood open, the text challenges the notion of a blank slate for those born after 1945 by demonstrating the transmission of shame and guilt and the loss of identity that accompanies these from one generation to the next. Hans is still weighed down by the death of his mother, the institutionalization of his sister, and the silence of his father that was louder in life than after his death. By making Arno and other Jewish victims into perpetrators, the novel supports those narratives of German victimhood that displace Hans’ position as victim by identifying with German suffering from the memory of the Holocaust. Hans is no longer
a Jewish victim, but has subsumed his victimization with the position of the German victim offered in Kohl’s account. Becker’s narrative provides an counter-narrative to other antagonistic accounts and to the dominant narrative by disrupting the position of the Jewish victim into that of perpetrator and stabilizing those accounts in which the German has become a victim of the memory of the Holocaust. Hans’ freeing gesture at the end of the novel, while providing an alternative to the binary opposition of perpetrator and victim, cannot have the same impact upon the discourse as the numerous examples that position Germans as victims in the novel have.

In the final scene, Hans arrives at the cottage and has made up his mind to release the prisoner. Despite seeing his father’s lifeless body as a result of an apparent scuffle between Arnold and Arno, Hans still releases him. Hans recognizes that his father’s decline and death were directly related to the torture of Heppner and becomes part of the logic of his reluctant freeing of Heppner, accompanied by his own identification with Arnold’s suffering, and sense that he should not act outside the law. The final act of the book is an act of Hans’ redemption of the memory of his now dead father. Hans accomplishes what his father needed to, but could not do. Bronsteins Kinder ends with Hans’ reluctant gesture that underscores the wariness with which following generations can move forward by letting go of the past categories.

Als ich mir nach hundert Hinundherbewegungen das Resultat besah, sagte Heppner: „Er hat den Schlüssel bei sich.“

Da auch dieser Versuch keinen Erfolg gebracht hatte, fing ich an, den Eisenpfosten zu bearbeiten. Ich zähle nicht mehr mit und feilte so lange, bis ich die Finger nicht mehr spürte. Dann ging ich zu Vater und griff ihn in die Tasche, zuerst in die falschen, dann in die richtige. (J. Becker, Bronsteins 302)

Hans ‘reluctance to free Heppner while knowing his father lies dead demonstrates the difficulty with which his choice is being made by numbing himself to his situation yet still doing what he thinks is right. Hans fights back his urge to lash out at the captive Heppner, but by freeing him, he was able to finish what his father could not and even what Heppner as a concentration camp guard could not: and that is free his prisoner. Hans’ action redeems his father in part by keeping his father from becoming a murderer, and at the same time signals an act of Hans stepping out of his father’s shadow to choose reconciliation with his German captive.

Hans’ resolution to free Heppner does not come easily or quickly, so that at time it is a matter of principle, a matter of confronting his father, and a matter not worth mentioning. As Hans’ attention leaves and returns to the matter of the captive, the text lets readers ponder the question on how to break the cycle of revenge as Hans witnesses other relations of perpetrator and victims and the toll the captive is taking on his father. If Arno kills his captive, he becomes like those he hates most, and therefore he remains a victim, somewhat by coincidence, though not entirely, if the decline of his health, his drinking, as an intentional self-destructive spiral. Where the father fails, however, the son may succeed in creating a new relationship and a new narrative. Hans chooses to set
Heppner free; a choice made to “free” himself of his father’s past, albeit reluctantly. His choice offers a third way of reconciliation involving a cautious forgiveness that can break the victim-perpetrator constellation that had entrapped his father. This final act negates the perpetrator/victim binary through the complexity of the situation and the psychological difficulty through which Hans sees his actions through.

While the scholarship focuses primarily on the question of Jewish identity, the novel intentionally complicates the notion of a singular identity. For example, Von Maltzan asks the novel “Was ist ein Jude?” but the reader finds Hans at novel’s end in a moment of identification with the German captive (Maltzan 87). The novel’s complexity extends quite a different question; a question of who can be considered a victim, and whether these victims can be united by their suffering into a new German identity that moves beyond the binary opposition. Hans’ final act suggests another way for a collective German and Jewish identity to be constructed for the post-war generation that brings both German and Jew together through mutual suffering. This is not the forgetfulness that Kohl is promoting, nor the revision of historical perspective promoted by the Historians, but rather it is the recognition of the self in the other; and identification with the humanity of those who have been trapped in the perpetrator-victim binary.

Thomas Rothschild’s brief review of the novel addresses the problem of German victimization in the novel and its impact on a collective post-war German identity. Rothschild concisely relates the re-positioning in Becker’s novel as Arno moves from victim to perpetrator and back to victim as both he and his son are “Opfer des Faschismus
und will es nicht wahrhaben” (J. Becker, Bronsteins 224). This repositioning creates a secondary problem, however, for while Becker continually shows the reader different ways in which Hans and his Jewish family and friends are cast as victims, their perpetration of crimes strengthens a narrative in which the German reader can understand him or herself to be victimized and manipulated by the memory of the Holocaust and its survivors.

To unfix Jewish identity from its victim position simultaneously loosens the position of German identity as perpetrator, once detached; both can be moved to other positions between narratives. As Heidelberger-Leonard points out, the children in the novel are either “gefangen” in their victim position, as Elle, Hans’ sister, is institutionalized, yet free to violently attack Germans, and Hans, who is free, yet trapped in an “innere Gefängnis” caused by a lack of direction (Schreiben 28). For example, Hans’ assault on another boy, who pedantically directed him to disrobe before showering, is excused because of Hans’ special status as a member of group that is typically positioned as victim. Instead of being punished, the tolerance of Hans’ actions keeps him positioned as victim. The punch should position Hans as an aggressor provoked through bullying to take action in order to defend himself, from which he could establish himself as a respectable equal, but this is not the case. After the incident, Hans is reprimanded by the German instructor and convinced to apologize to Norbert, who responds to the apology that “Wenn er gewusst hätte, was los ist,” he would have left him alone (J. Becker, Bronsteins 47). At this point, Hans is already being repositioned back into the
role of victim and his aggression is interpreted as a symptom of his acute sensitivity to his status of victimhood. This is further supported by Sowade, the gym instructor, who calms Norbert and the other boys down with the following statement:


Hans is singled out as a special case by the instructor who tells the boys that Hans is Jewish and will therefore react in ways that “unsereins” will not be able to understand. Sowade treats Hans like a child who cannot be held responsible for his actions and allows Hans to ignore the rules that are meant to apply to everyone and strike a peer without consequence. That such special treatment could cause animosity among his peers is not mentioned. Instead, this juxtaposition allows the tolerant German to feel gracious for overlooking the matter and transform Norbert’s anger to pity change by interpreting his outburst as a symptom of his victimization.

In the positioning of Arnold and Arno, physical abuse and torture identify them as victim and perpetrator. The relationship between these two men becomes a tale of reckoning and revenge between the generation that experienced the war as adults. Arnold represents those Germans who were never held accountable for their actions during the war, and Arno represents the eyewitness survivors who can identify them. While the suffering of Arnold at the hands of Arno can be understood as revenge, there is also a German nurse who suffers at the hands of Han’s sister and Arno’s daughter, Elle. Elle,
who had been in hiding during the war, makes false accusations that end the nurse’s career and thus uses non-lethal means of revenge upon those figures that did not participate directly in the physical abuse and killing nor wronged her directly.

The manner in which Becker uncovers Elle’s scheming is telling. It begins when Elle convinces her father that the medicine a certain nurse has been giving her is poisonous to her system and knowing her father, encourages him to take some of her pills to an outside laboratory to get things checked out.

Elle's Verdacht bestand zu Recht, die Tabletten waren Gift für sie; es handelte sich um ein besonders starkes Beruhigungsmittel, das sie nicht brauchte und das ihr kein Arzt je verordnet hatte. Über die Station brach Unwetter herein, Schwester Hermine wurde entlassen. (233)

The reader believes Elle to be a victim, a Holocaust survivor, who is forced to relive her victimization at the hands of her nurse, the German that has been invested with authority over her. This position changes for the reader when months later she lets Hans in on her secret.

An jenem Nachmittag fing Elle plötzlich zu strahlen an und führte mich zu einer riesigen Platane. Als sie sich davon überzeugt hatte, dass uns niemand gefolgt war, griff sie in ein Astloch, holte eine Medikamentenschachtel hervor und verlangte fünf Punkt. Es waren jene Tabletten, mit deren Hilfe sie die unschuldige Schwester Hermine vertrieben hatte. (233-4)

This new information repositions Elle as the perpetrator of a crime in which the German nurse Hermine is the „unschuldige“ victim. Elle aims her anger at those who could be seen as collaborators who profited directly or indirectly from her family’s losses. In this
case, Elle generalizes that all Germans were responsible for causing her loss and her revenge is therefore generalized to all Germans.

Becker consistently obscures the decisive line between perpetrator and victim, but to what end? Do his readers excuse Elle’s behavior as understandable given the nature of trauma she endured during the war or do German readers find further evidence to support a feeling of persistent unjust persecution. Are readers primarily forming stereotypes of a German-Jewish identity, or are they relating Hans’ perspective to preconceived stereotypes and narratives of German persecution and Jewish sensitivity? The book found broad use in German schools after its publication and thereby has arguably became influential in weakening Jewish victim stereotypes, while strengthening German victim narratives than find cause for feelings of persecution in the memory of the Holocaust. Is Bronsteins Kinder a novel of revenge? Anne Sa’adah (2006) political science article on regime change includes a lengthy footnote that reads the book as a novel of revenge. She argues that the book illustrates the inadequacy of a new regime’s legal system to address a survivor’s assumed want for revenge. This analysis ignores the broader problem of the role that identity plays in such a revenge narrative. At novel’s end, Arno’s revenge forces a confession out of the captive that does not satisfy him, but rather makes him become his own victim. Furthermore, the reparations cannot have the same meaning to Hans as they do to the captive, who wishes that he “auf diese Weise einen Schlussstrich unter die verdammte Vergangenheit ziehen könnte” (105). There is an overwhelming sense of disappointment with every alternative that would allow Hans, Elle, or Arno to break out
of their role as victim in the novel, leaving only the superficiality of Martha’s goal to be a movie star as an example of someone who has moved on through an ignorance of the past. On the other hand, Hans’ solution that focuses on moving forward by acknowledging common suffering provides a challenging and difficult solution to breaking the German-Jewish binary opposition as perpetrator and victim, which despite the critique of East Germany in the novel, is the ideological foundation upon which it was built. Defining identity in terms of social struggle rather than as ethnic and national struggle supports those efforts to build an identity of non-totalitarian global socialism. Ernst Renan noted that “suffering in common unifies more than joy” in his essay on building nations (6). If this were true, then the utter devastation of the war should have unified Germans and Jews long ago, but this has not happened for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the continued prevalence of the German and Jewish binary opposition.

2.4 Summary

The 1985 White Paper re-introduced the rescue narrative account of the 1983 White Paper in which the German soldier was positioned as hero in light of an impending invasion by the Soviet and NVA forces. The republication of the 1983 White Paper in 1985 doubled in size by extending and providing support for the argument that defense was necessary and that the German citizen must possess the will to defend West German values and freedom. This republication was a strong indication that the German pacifist stance towards and other opposition to the installation of Pershing-II missiles in Germany
was growing. Further support of this opposition can be seen in the high number of demonstrations and the high number of conscripts, who were claiming conscientious objection to avoid military service. This account was supported by the positioning of the soldier in the dominant account as villain, unlike those competing accounts produced in government and defense publications that either sought to establish him as victim or hero. The positioning of the German soldier as victim in antagonistic accounts such as Helmut Kohl’s focused on the young age and presumed naiveté of the soldier, while other antagonistic accounts like those found in the White Paper and in Nolte’s revisionism focused on the soldier’s function in defending the populace from an impending dangerous invasive threat.

As these antagonistic accounts began to gain momentum in the popular domain of news and journalism, they concurrently appeared in Wolfgang Hohlbein’s adaptation of the Nibelungen material Hagen von Tronje. Hohlbein’s most effective innovation was the inclusion of a romantic narrative that provided the motivation for a repositioning of Hagen from villain to victim, which destabilized Siegfried from his traditional position as victim and placed Gunther as a villainous political leader. The novel concludes with the realignment of these figures back into their expected positions, save for Hagen, who shoulders the blame for the crimes of his political leader. At novel’s end, the positions of the figures have returned to their traditional positions, but not without Hohlbein’s narrative complicating the dominant account of Hagen as villain, and with the Nibelungen’s relationship to German national political history, these complications
reflect the same dynamic between the dominant account of the German soldier as villain and those antagonistic accounts that position him as victim.

While the popular adaptation of the *Nibelungen* presents complications to the dominant account, Jurek Becker’s *Bronsteins Kinder* provides a counter-narrative to these antagonistic accounts in which he switches the positions of the German perpetrator and the Jewish victim found in the dominant account of the period. By setting the novel in the East in the seventies, the narrative destabilizes the claim of the East’s “Sieg über den Faschismus” while also suggesting an alternative means of producing a national identity based upon the recognition of other’s suffering. In this way, Becker critiques the division of East and West, as well as that of Germans and Jews, but also suggests that a remedy exist by recognizing the self in the other.

While there is contestation of the dominant account fixating the soldier as villain during this period, there is not enough momentum for any of these antagonistic accounts to fully replace it. In the next chapter, I look at antagonistic narratives that attempt to position the German soldier’s identity into a European context that coincides with the broadening of the scope of villains to the entire German population in the dominant narrative. These developments subsume the population into the same position of collaboration that the German soldier had been associated with as villain. As the account of a collective German guilt gains momentum, the antagonistic accounts of German victimization find a more receptive audience.

The 1994 White Paper announced the end of the Cold War and the victory of West Germany and its allies over the East German government and the Soviet Union. The text asserts with finality the end of the enemy and therewith the end of the rescue narrative account in which the villain is eliminated, while looking to new groups to fill this position and justify future security policy. The inclusion of more groups into a previously narrow or fixated position is a process I term dilution and is a key concept to most of the strategic narratives that gain traction during this transitional period. This inclusion expands the associations attached to master signifiers and can re-organize the discourse by offering a previously limited identity to more groups.

In this period of transition, I look to Patrick Colm Hogan’s identification of a compassionate epilogue as a means to characterize and integrate previous out-groups back into an in-group. As part of the compassionate epilogue and as a consequence of retaining the German Basic Law, leading German politicians look to joining supranational organizations allowed in article 24 §2 to expand their military role globally. This has a consequence of shifting national identity towards a broader international one, which Wolfgang Schäuble suggested to be based on a shared European background in Christianity. This allows for the compassionate epilogue to be implemented in the
positioning of Eastern European states as well as to expand the military mission as missions of compassion outside-of-area that had been established in Basic Law article 87a §2. These missions faced public opposition, which eventually led to the reinterpretation of the Basic Law to allow for these missions.

The *Siegfried* novels Jürgen Lodemann published in 1986, 1994 and 2002 demonstrate how the above process influenced the representation of the figures and the structure and framing of the identities of Siegfried and Hagen. The first and last versions present two very different associations with Siegfried’s character who moves from ideal German male to a universal sacrificial figure. In the 1994 version, the loss of Siegfried is not the loss of the German ideal male, but rather the loss of an alternative worldview that offers an analogy to the end of Communism. Siegfried is represented as the ideal worker and champion of the proletariat, while Hagen stands for the politician that protects the interests of the owners of capital. This antagonistic account touches upon the loss of Eastern Germany as an alternative social and political system as well as the fear of losing democratic influence through the formation of supranational political structures in a federal model of Europe. This version ends with Siegfried positioned as victim and the subordination of the local and national political sphere to the Catholic Church as a supranational institution.

Marcel Beyer’s *Flughunde* provides a counter-narrative that fluctuates between positioning academics and the German family as victims and villains. While this work is not centered on the German soldier, its protagonist Hermann Karnau adopts the metaphor
of combat to conceptualize his field research and he imagines himself functioning as a soldier scientist who eliminates foreign sounds, colonizes audial territory, and participates in the planning and execution of atrocities that he later denies. This allows Beyer to address the militarization of other domains of life during the Nazi period in a way that not only solidifies the position of the soldier as villain, but also expands the mindset of the soldier to broader populations of German society. Beyer shows that the insipid nature of National Socialist ideology corrupts the family, so that Helga can be viewed as both a victim of Karnau and her parents, but also is learning to adopt a villainous role towards her siblings. Karnau can likewise be viewed as victim of the coercion that perverted his work, just as the narrative of the young soldier, but Karnau is also shown to be the villain whose work likely included the murder of children. Beyer also addresses the division of generations into villains and victims through the perspectives of his two victims that is later expressed in the Goldhagen debates. The text demonstrates through this juxtaposition of the narrative voices of Helga and Karnau that Nazi ideology corrupted both the subjective naïve world of the child and the supposed objective world of scientific knowledge of the adults, leaving both narratives that claim innocence through the age of the narrator as well as those that rely upon historical authenticity as highly suspect. In this way, Beyer denounces the victim narratives promoted by the intellectual new right and particularly the narratives of Kohl, Nolte, and Hillgruber that had gained some traction in conservative political and academic discourse after unification.
While the impetus for the 1994 out-of-area controversy has its origin with the onset of the Kohl era, German reunification offered the CDU government the opportunity for a rapid implementation of their plans for normalization. The White Paper of 1994 begins with the statement that “heute steht Europa am Beginn einer neuen Epoche” indicating a new direction not just for Germany, but for all of Europe (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung vi). In the pages that follow, the end of the Cold War is presented in an account that confirms the positions of the rescue narrative put forth in the earlier White Paper (1985) with the Bundeswehr heroically poised to rescue the citizens of East Germany (vii). A new narrative positions the East German people as heroic self-liberators who “stürzten die Unterdruckungsmaschinerei der SED zusammen” (sec. 101-7). The 1994 White Paper declares victory over the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact nations and ends the central narrative account of the Cold War, so that new, vaguely formulated enemy images emerge and are used to argue 1) against an insular security policy and 2) for Germany’s obligation to assist in policing the globe (sec. 204-11). The publication of this White Paper followed the controversial decision by the Bundestag to retroactively approve out-of-area missions that had begun immediately following reunification and it addressed the end of the Cold War and argued for a global role for the Bundeswehr.41 The timing of the White Paper and the argumentation therein

41 In 1993, it became a requirement that the Bundeswehr could not be engaged in out-of-area operations without the approval of parliament. The following year, the operations that precipitated the necessity for the law were retroactively approved. These provisions that were now being reinterpreted in the German Basic Law had been drafted specifically to deter Germany from adopting a central military role in Europe and thus limit its ability to militarily project power (Kanarowski 82). The reinterpretation of the provisions allows Germany to extend itself beyond its borders in taking operations upon itself that may be considered
indicates that it was produced to justify and defuse public opposition to further normalization. These narratives within the White Paper were then repeated in other media channels and further established the momentum for a new military identity.

In the White Paper narrative of 1985, the West German soldier had been positioned as a hero rescuing the East German population from the oppression of the SED party and the Communism of the Soviet Union. The loss of that ideological enemy with the collapse of the Soviet Union weakened the justification for maintaining the NATO alliance based upon the threat of a Soviet invasion. The lack of a villain threatened to eliminate the social position held by the German soldier since there was no longer an enemy to define his role. This instability was further complicated by the need to incorporate East German soldiers into the Bundeswehr yet distance them from their cultural roots. Amidst these conditions, the Bundeswehr, under the direction of the CDU-led government, rapidly transitioned forces to support missions abroad on a path towards normalization. The Bundeswehr had served sporadically in relief missions throughout the Cold War, but the first out-of-area combat support began even before the 2+4 treaty on September 12, 1990 had granted Germany self-rule. On August 16, 1990, the German government deployed 500 servicemen to the Persian Gulf to operate seven German mine

power projection, the protection of financial and national interests abroad, and moving towards a central military role in Europe and the World. Article 24 allowed Germany to enter into collective systems of security to protect itself, and this was reworded to include Europe and Global peace (GG Art. 24 §2), therewith it was interpreted that deployment of troops in these collective security instances were not restricted by article 87a §2, such as the defense only case exclusively applied to national defense, not supranational or European defense, and arguably against the intention of the law (Rose par. 14-18). By veiling German interests as European interests and combat operations as peacekeeping operations, the door to Germany’s participation in global combat operations has been opened. This would eventually lead to Germany’s first combat mission late in the decade.
removal vessels to prepare safe passage for NATO boats, including U.S. carriers fitted with fighters and bombers, destroyers set with radar and mine removal equipment, and submarines armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles.

The shift from support of relief missions to support of combat missions further challenged a German national identity that had been founded in a pacifist rejection of force and had been integrated into the German constitution in the prohibition of the use of military force to secure resources for industrial profit. These measures had been instituted to placate wary neighbors, who feared a re-emergence of German nationalism that could threaten the security of Europe, and to deter the projection of German power abroad in modern and post-modern forms of colonization. Amidst these tensions in the ideological and material direction of unified Germany, variant accounts with alternate binary identities entered into the discourse of national identity from interested political and industrial actors.

The two narrative accounts examined for this period do not reposition the German soldier further away from its association with National Socialism, but rather many other subject positions are infused into the position of perpetrator. This addition of identities at

42 The institution of a 15 year plan replacing the 5 year plan in 1983 for the Bundeswehr and the hiring of a Public Relations firm to promote the Bundeswehr among German youth in 1985 indicate the efforts being made by the Kohl led CDU government to pursue a radical transformation of the image of the soldier in the public eye. The first goals of a 15 year plan would target changes made by 1998. Without details of this 15 year plan open to public or academic scrutiny, one can only speculate on its contents. Given the efforts of the Kohl government in other arenas towards the normalization of the military, however, one can view this “normalization” as a goal that would have been pursued. Upon inspecting the trajectory of the Bundeswehr from 1983 to 1998, a strong case can be made for the realization of “normalization” of the military with the decision to participate in bombing (Allied Force) in 1998 and peace enforcement throughout the Kosovo war which has become a reality of 1999 and thereafter.
this position leads to a watering-down of the binary association of the soldier as perpetrator, and because of this, I term this a process of dilution. By the middle of the decade, there was a new openness and readiness to address the common German’s role in the Holocaust. Beginning with the previous decade’s engagement with the positioning of the German perpetrator and Jewish victim, it was apparent that the accounts offered by the Kohl government and found in the Historikerstreit had gained enough exposure in the media that “a certain sea change had been achieved” that they had become less controversial and were gaining a broader acceptance within the public (Grossman 108).

In 1995, the public of a reunified Germany commemorated the 50th anniversary of the War’s end with a specific focus on the Holocaust, while concurrently and paradoxically celebrating the 100th Birthday of the soldier author Ernst Jünger, who is best known for his highly subjective writing style in relating his experiences in the First World War. Jünger’s work was praised and criticized in over a hundred articles and books on his life, work, and reception during that year alone. Some international box office success broadened the responsibility for war crimes to include other populations and domains, some of which had been brought into “militarized” roles, such as the industrialist working with the armed forces in Schindlers List (1993) or the lower class woman who had become a KZ-warden in Bernhard Schlink’s Der Vorleser (1995). The inclusion of more identities into the position of villain and heroic rescuer made for a strong mix of condemnation and celebration of the German soldier and those who fulfilled similar roles.
The first narrative account that I examine is the shift in identity from a national German identity to an international European identity, a strategy proposed by Samuel Huntington in his *Clash of Cultures* (1993) essay that predicted a new enemy image to be formulated around cultural, and implied religious, differences that drew a line between the West and the rest of the world (25-9). Wolfgang Schäuble cited Huntington in an early debate on the formalization of the EU, in which he argued that the European Union should be based upon a shared Christian heritage.

Huntington’s thesis of a war between cultures might be, in its consequences, exaggerated, but there is no doubt that these global cultural conflicts and challenges exist, and that we Europeans have to give an answer to them. For me it is unquestionable that the answer can only be a common European answer. The same is true for all other dangers and risks which Europe is facing today. We will only be able to master them as a close community. However, we can only become a real community if we manage to discover our common roots. One of the most decisive foundations is doubtlessly our common historical and cultural heritage…the peoples and nations of Europe are united in a common identity, in a community of common values with roots reaching back to the medieval Christian and to the archaic ages. (Mayer 66-67)

Schäuble mentions risks and dangers to Europe, already speaking in terms of a new face of war and the identificatory figure of the medieval Christian. He gestures to the crusades that had at that time unified Europe against the populations of the Middle East, as well as the Germanic tribes that often contended with the Roman Empire. Without being specific about enemies, such allusions to medieval Christian and Germanic migration periods invoke a romantic notion of a unified Europe. The Germanic tribes included not only the Germans, but other tribes that settled Europe, such as the Angles, Saxons, Franks, Vandals, Goths, Visigoths, Ostrogoths, and who had one common enemy in the Huns.
Schäuble stresses the dangers without any specifics as grounds for a European unity and it is from this sense of danger of the unknown that provides the impulse for him to search for common roots, as the soldier is defined in part by the imagined threat. This is why Schäuble proposes that Christianity be this common background; this reversion to the crusading mentality of the eleventh through fourteenth centuries is one reason why Schäuble continues to recommend the exclusion of Turkey from the EU, despite requests from the US that views Turkey as a strategic geographic ally. He explains that “a part of Turkey is Europe…but a much bigger part of Turkey…is definitely not in Europe” echoing the cultural fault line drawn in Huntington’s paper (Dempsey par. 14-5).

This movement away from a German national identity was further augmented through treaties and mutual security and economic agreements that they committed to, such as the Eurocorps in 1993 and the Maastricht treaty in 1992, which have laid down a basis, however weak, for a federalization of Europe. These were but a few of the

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43 Gunther Hellmann believes that the evocation of the Carolingian Empire enables a reunified Germany to construct an identity that is nationally centered, but allows for its extension a cooperative approach with other European nations (Tuschhoff 19). The Carolingian Empire is primarily associated with Charlemagne and the Christianization of Europe in the popular imagination, an imagined identity accompanied by a rescue narrative account based upon an imagined shared religious-cultural background. The villainous threat and opposition to the Christian European identity in this account is the general category of heathen/pagan, those different religious-cultural political models, such as Islam, Hindu, Buddhist, etc. Political rhetoric of this period, such as in Kohl’s 1992 debate on European Unity in Bundestag, establishes the European Union in terms of a collective fate that harkens back to nostalgic models of Christian unity, while the invocation of Samuel Huntington’s vision of conflict emerging in a post-ideological world as a clash of cultures by Schäuble further emphasizes the “Christianity of Europe” in that the shared “Christian heritage even contains a concrete instruction on how to organize the future of Europe” (Mayer 67).

44 Historian Martin Dedman identifies the German vision for the EU as the creation of a union upon a federalist model, with Germany as the first among equals, by instituting common economic and security policies (Maastricht Treaty 1992-93) and then using economic force to interfere in member’s national politics (as can currently be seen in the current crisis in Greece). His estimation, however, of the “transfer of German sovereign control and decision making to a supranational body in Brussels does not make
symptoms indicating that German politicians, at this time the conservative CDU, were pursuing an expansion of German political power by increasing the range of their political and military options and capabilities by investing in a “never again alone” strategy that masked national power projection via the restricted nature of their operations in international organizations (Dalgaard-Nielsen 24-5).

A measure of the success of adopting this international identity can be seen in the 2007 study in which more than three-quarters of those young Germans surveyed described themselves as European citizens with only a third of the youth of other nations doing the same (European Commission Community Research 19).\(^{45}\) By adopting a German European identity, the German military can enter into a pre-normalization stage by emphasizing the constitutional Article 24 §2 rule on mutual collective security above the Article 87a restriction to national defense. This stage includes taking on support missions and participating in UN Peace Enforcement actions, and carries with it complications, such as the formation of new binary oppositions as new enemy images. By labeling military actions European and international, politicians were also able to market the Bundeswehr soldier in their security discourse much better than if they invoked the labels of German and national and their past associations.

Germans feel less German” stating that “the FRG and GDR did not create separate national identities” is simply wrong, undermining his own statement by stating that it is the avoidance of nationalism that brings Germany to subsume itself in an international forum (Dedman 162-63).

\(^{45}\) While this identity seems prevalent in most young Germans today, there still exists Eurosceptism and the opposition to the hypothetical federalization of Europe as undermining democratic processes of member states (Pelinka 22).
Moving away from national and toward international institutions helped to broaden the definition of German identity into an international one and is likewise a strategy of dilution, as the specific instance nationalism is replaced by an aggregation, a larger grouping; a key ingredient in diffusing the negative racial and national ideological associations accumulated since the rise of National Socialism. While still a German nation, the use of the military as a political tool of Capitalism, securing of resources and enforcing trade by threat or use of force are tied to multinational institutions that likewise divide the responsibility of actions across a larger number of agents and allow German troops to avoid labels that are associated with the negative images of the past. The side-effect of such a strategy as the one proposed by Schäuble is that while it can be successful in forming a strong group cohesion, it also alienates and excludes those individuals and groups that while European, are not Christian.

The second narrative account, which was correctly identified by Volker Ulrich as a continuation of the Historikerstreit of the previous decade, was instigated by Daniel Goldhagen’s book Hitler’s Willing Executioners in 1996.\textsuperscript{46} In this book, Goldhagen refutes previous explanations of the Holocaust with an analysis of case studies. Unlike previous explanations, his account argues that the ideological roots of racial hatred made the Holocaust possible. Goldhagen argues that eliminationist anti-Semitism was wide-

\textsuperscript{46} Among the many critics who pick up on this affinity, Wolfgang Wippermann's Wessen Schuld? (1997) demonstrates the revival of four arguments that dominated the Historikerstreit which were re-invoked in the rebuttal of Goldhagen’s thesis. These are arguments that 1) conflate Nazism as just another form of totalitarianism (relativizing), 2) believe war was inevitable with Germany as a European geographic „Mittellage”, 3) which representative groups were responsible (Kriegsschulddiskussion), and 4) emphasize the „modern“ and „good“ sides of the Third Reich.
spread and moved average Germans to commit, even volunteer to commit, atrocities against Jewish men, women, elderly and children. Goldhagen’s account disperses the role of the perpetrator across a broader spectrum of German society than other theories had before, which set off a series of dismissive rebuttals from prominent historians, such as Hans Mommsen and Norbert Frei, and journalists, such as Rudolf Augstein.47

Through Goldhagen’s interaction with the public in open debates at universities, the generational cleft became more apparent with “twenty-year-olds who applauded his lectures and booed his critics” (Bartov 50).48 Many of his detractors, such as Hans Mommsen, argued that a complex bureaucratic model coerced normal Germans into compliance and was a stance that tended to relativize and excuse the lack of German resistance as impossible in this system. The binary oppositions between younger and older generations of Germans and their associations with victim and perpetrator, and perhaps the dynamic of the debates themselves, led Goldhagen to repeatedly state that Germany had since the end of the war become a model for tolerance that further marked a division between the generations.

47 Other historians had approached the impact of ideological influences that implied a collective responsibility of the average male, such as William L. Shirer in his Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (1960), but cited the patriarchal and militaristic tradition as the ideological impetus, rather than prejudice (Grossman 98).

48 Goldhagen’s argument rested upon the influence of Anti-Semitic ideology for the average German and its diffusion throughout all of society, but then lauds post-war Germany as a model society (which won over his younger audience), providing a theoretical problem of how this new model Germany could have emerged so well from the same population. A Stunde Null is a theoretical problem for the argument of ideology.
In the aftermath of the debate, Hannes Heer and Gerd Hankel prepared *die Wehrmacht ausstellung: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944* for the *Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung* and faced much greater public opposition than Goldhagen, because incriminating the German conscripted army cast a much broader net of culpability upon the average (male) German than even Goldhagen’s case studies had. As Atina Grossman describes it, “the *Wehrmacht* exhibit hits hard at a core postwar narrative, the legend of the clean army, and forces a confrontation that Germans cannot divert by saying, “but my family were not Nazis” (Grossman 98). Opposition to the exhibit took on a much more extreme and varied form which included legal action and an eventual Bundestag debate, bomb threats and bombings, and the largest neo-Nazi demonstration since the end of the war.

By opening up the perpetrator villain position to so many more agents including that of the average soldier, rather than incriminate German society, the narrative of responsibility for the Holocaust became a more amorphous ideological argument. First, the expansion of the responsibility for the Holocaust to include more groups dilutes the responsibility of the single individual. Second, this dilution of the perpetrator image

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49 The *Wehrmacht ausstellung* was put together by the *Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung* led by Jan Reemtsma and opened on the heels of the Goldhagen award in 1996. It was an exhibition of photos of corpses and/or soldiers and corpses provided by the families of the soldiers who had taken them during the Eastern campaign. In 1999, Bogdan Musial cited a lack of clear documentation for many of the pictures, and what he believed to be the inclusion of several pictures that were depictions of Soviet secret police (NKWD) executions that the German soldiers had come upon, which forced the exhibition to close and given to an independent commission. The exhibit reopened in 2001 in Berlin under a new name. The *Bundestag* held a special meeting in 1997 in which Volker Rühe, German Defense Minister at the time, attested to the accuracy of the exhibit and that the *Bundeswehr* does not continue in the tradition of the *Wehrmacht* (Fischer and Lorenz 289).
became a further dividing point for the younger generation that viewed their victimization by more members of the older generation. This dilution is implicated in Goldhagen’s thesis of the soldier being one of the many responsible parties, whereas in the Wehrmacht ausstellung, the focalization of perpetrator focuses on the image of the soldier alone. Not unlike the effects of the diffusion of responsibility, when too many agents begin to occupy one of the positions in our binary of perpetrator and victim, or our simple rescue narrative positions of villain and victim, then the image associated with that position becomes diluted. This simply means that the concept becomes fuzzy, less defined, and more apt to lead to an imprecise generalizing logic on a reflexive level. As the aggregation of the previous generation begins to stabilize at the position of the perpetrator, the younger generation is able to define themselves in their opposition to them by adopting the position of victim alongside the victims of the dominant account.

Throughout this period, other groups dilute the image of the perpetrator image and absorb some of the negative associations that had narrowly focused on the soldier. This supports the incremental challenge and breaking of those limitations that had previously given Germany a strong pacifist, secular identity. This process began with the first forays of the Bundeswehr in support missions abroad that led to the re-interpretation of the Basic Law and the 1998 bombing of Serbia, which was followed by the largest deployment of peace enforcement troops as part of the KFOR mission in Kosovo.

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50 The diffusion of responsibility has been proven to affect individual actions in countless sociological experiments, most prominently by those conducted by John Darley and Bibb Latané in the late ‘60s.
3.1 Historical, Ideological & Material Background

In this section, I discuss the end of the Cold War and reunification and the elimination and incorporation of East German culture and out of area *Bundeswehr* missions that followed. With the end of the Cold War narrative, CDU politicians look towards a European federation to establish a common identity based on Christian principles, while a sociologist from Harvard sparked the second round of the *Historikerstreit* before the book was even published in Germany.

The end of the last decade marked the fall of the Berlin Wall and the eventual breaking up of the Soviet Union that led to a paradigm shift in the West German security situation. The Cold War narrative binary opposition of Communism and Capitalism could no longer be functional determiners of hero and villain as these became realigned after the fall of the wall. Germany’s Cold War enemy had become its close ally and the focus of the presentation of the enemy slowly shifted away from the rhetoric of an ominous ever-present threat to a compassionate plea to aid a weak and miserable population as the impetus for intervention.

51 The joy of reaching the goal of the heroic narrative prototype was clearly evident in the days and celebrations following the fall of the Berlin wall, but in its wake it left the *Bundeswehr* and the NATO suffering from what Eckhard Lübke in 1990 termed an “identity crisis” (Lübke 30). There was no longer a clear ideological enemy to justify the continued existence of the German army as it was currently structured for a forward defense and border guard. In terms of European security, the NATO seemed unnecessary to the point that its leadership re-aligned its forces under the command of international organizations such as the U.N (Yost par. 1-2). A result of the two-plus-four negotiations was that the *Bundeswehr* would remain in the NATO and this membership was a primary reason why there was no new constitution drawn up during reunification and the East was annexed by the West in order for it to retain its previously established alliances and treaties.
After Germany gained sovereignty in 1990 the *Bundeswehr* quietly began its out-of-area operations with support troops delivering humanitarian aid to conflict zones.\(^{52}\) Germany no longer required a standing army to fend off an invasion, and so shifted towards strategic incremental steps towards normalization. These initial forays developed from support of relief missions into support of combat missions, which soon turned to air support before implementing an eventual combat role. With pressure from their alliances and economic factors influencing the direction of the *Bundeswehr* towards a combat role, the incremental transition taken by its administration reflects a strategy of gradual transition in order to slowly gain public acceptance of a normal military despite public opposition.

Economic influences, such as those revealed in the CDU and Karlheinz Schreiber scandal that was brought to public attention in 1999, concerned lobbying, donations and payouts to Kohl, Schäuble, Strauss and many other CDU politicians by the arms dealer Schreiber for what is assumed to be favorable policies towards the research and

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\(^{52}\) In the years following the fall of the wall, Germany has not yet picked up the new narrative thread, but rather reeled in the epilogue of their previous narrative. The next enemy was not one that endeared the narrative of compassion, but rather prompted the defensive threat as the US engaged in its first major war since Vietnam against the same man who they had helped to power in Iraq to contain Iran back in 1980. Germany, however, was not as quick to hop from one ideological enemy to the next, especially now that they had gained their autonomy and could exercise their right to refuse to go along with whatever the US demanded. Nevertheless, they participated in support roles rather than combat to appease their allies while also steering clear of combat missions that would have been highly unpopular among its neighbors and own population. Germany continued to expand its mission beyond its borders, even though by doing so, they were breaking constitutional law, which led the German government to be especially deceptive in the use of its language concerning the expansion of the *Bundeswehr* mission (Becher 401).
development and the sale and purchase of the weapons he was peddling. The CDU affair with Schreiber provided a material impulse for the party leaders who had received donations to move security policy towards a normalcy that would support the weapons industry. While pleas for Germany to gain a seat on the UN Security Council were rebuffed, German allies demanded that Germany take on more responsibility in exposing troops to the risks of combat. These factors and a neocolonial model of procurement of resources kept the normalization of the military on track despite continued public opposition.

The end of the Cold War eliminated the image of the communist villain, and so I turn to Patrick Colm Hogan’s identification of a common epilogue to the heroic narrative prototype. In this epilogue, the hero is remorseful and identifies with the conquered enemy’s plight, and this can serve as a transitional narrative segment that incorporates out-groups into the dominant in-group identity (Hogan, The Mind 76-80). While there was no physical combat, the end of the Cold War did leave some groups defeated and

53 In 1999, after the SPD regained control of parliament, they began their own investigation of illegal party donations to the CDU and it came to light that since the early eighties and more prominently after unification in 1991 and throughout the CDU control up until 1998, Helmut Kohl and several other leading CDU politicians, including Wolfgang Schäuble, had maintained a network of secret bank accounts through which they had been accepting personal illegal private “donations” on behalf of interested parties, i.e. lobbyists. One of the key controversial donors to emerge was the arms dealer Karlheinz Schreiber, also known for his part for a similar scandal in Canada, who stood to profit from the sales of arms to the Bundeswehr as well as with the approved export of arms abroad. With this knowledge, one can assess that the re-emergence of the German military after reunification has moved forward under the CDU and a policy that pushes for normalization. A normalization accompanied by the economic growth and political and monetary benefit of CDU politicians from the manufacture of weapons. To directly benefit from the manufacture of weapons is ethically offensive to a great deal of the German population, and there was a decided gap in the narrative that made the justification of such policies difficult to sell to the German people. The NATO was the primary affiliation of the Bundeswehr, but had little to do after the collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellites (see Cameron and Cashore).
others as victors. The compassionate epilogue for a reunified Germany comes in the form of the rescue of the East, but as unification subordinates the Eastern identity into a unified whole, the East German is removed from the position of victim in the rescue narrative accounts coming from the CDU. The victim position is filled in neocolonial terms with suffering populations abroad argued to be in need of the civilizing soldier, whose identity is founded in a common European Christian background. The image of a Christian European soldier provides a justification for objectives of an early out-of-area involvement in relief missions that refocused attention from the threat of an enemy to the care of his victim.  

Before a Christian European identity could be stabilized, the antagonistic GDR identity would need to be subordinated into a unified German national identity based in the alliances and treaties of West Germany (Flanagan 280). This process included the elimination, demonization, and diminution of East German culture, exemplified in the

54 This form of deployment also provided the practice of a model for crisis response that would come into fashion under Donald Rumsfeld touted as a replacement for the standing army. During this period, the Bundeswehr along with air and naval forces were being restructured in order to participate more effectively in its new role in out-of-area missions by creating a crisis-reaction force of 50,000 forces in addition to its main defense force of 280,000 soldiers.

55 West Germany led negotiations as an economic powerhouse to which the Soviet Union and the GDR were heavily indebted. The GDR had been granted 22 billion for specified purposes and another 35 billion promised for 1991, which including its previous billion dollar loans from West Germany indicated how quickly the East had become dependent upon the West after Gorbachev’s implementation of perestroika (Haftendorn, Coming 289). In addition to these promises, West Germany’s willingness to give several billion DM worth of credit to the Soviet Union created favorable negotiations for them as did their contribution of 15 billion DM to the relocation and retraining of Soviet forces (Wettig 963). With the amount of financial commitment West Germany was willing and able to provide, there is little wonder why the SED plans for reunification were ignored (Haftendorn, Coming 285).
"Literaturstreit" attack upon the legitimacy of East German literature.\textsuperscript{56} Integration in terms of the rescue narrative of the West saw the dismissal of the majority of NVA soldiers as ideologically corrupt and the destruction of equipment as outdated and symbolically reminiscent of the old regime (Federal Ministry of Defense § 123). Economic integration meant the removal and destruction of state currency, and the privatization and elimination of production in the East that left 2.5 of 4 million East Germans out of work.\textsuperscript{57} While these measures stabilized the West’s rescue narrative of villainous leadership and victimized population in the East as a dominant account, the end of the Cold War implied that this victimization had ceased and the heroic narrative had turned into the compassionate epilogue theorized by Hogan.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{56}The "Literaturstreit" began with the intellectual attack upon Christa Wolf by editorials in the FAZ and other conservative papers which positioned GDR authors such as Wolf as collaborators with the oppressive SED regime through an aesthetics of propaganda and collaboration with the ministry of the interior (Universität Wien par. 2).

\textsuperscript{57} The removal of monuments and other material traces of an oppositional East German identity were eliminated, such as the 4,500 tons of East German coins that were melted down and over 3,000 tons of paper currency that was collected, stored, and after theft and subsequent appearance of these notes on the collector’s market, were also destroyed (Zatlin 215-18). The economic integration did not stop at currency, as the privatization of all state-owned works, factories, and businesses was led by the Treuerhand agency and a resulting closure of these that pushed 2.5 (employed by state) of the 4 million East Germans into unemployment (Kirschbaum par. 5).

\textsuperscript{58} Mary Fulbrook examines the development in the mythology of the GDR in terms of heroes, victims and villains, and how these figures of the rescue narrative have transformed after the annexation and dissolution of East German culture. The GDR people’s self-image and involvement in the fall of the wall was initially heroic and revolutionary, but was soon changed by the West German government. According to Fulbrook, the West took on the central role in shaping the future of the East, and thereby repositioned the people who protested as victims and the Western Government as hero. Her analysis further shows a transformation of the perception of former East Germans of the GDR as rejecting the strict ideological classification of the East in the Western account, leading Fulbrook to suggest that historians should consider adopting an “octopus theory” of social hierarchy in the GDR in which the people saw themselves co-opted by a caring paternalistic yet paranoid party, which deflates some of the stark ideological enemy images of the Cold War (Fulbrook 190-1).
As the East was being assimilated, integrated and traces of its institutional memory eliminated, the practical security situation in Europe had also changed. It was clear that the CDU government planned to expand the role of the German military after reunification, as the Bundeswehr and its counterparts were soon deployed in support roles in out-of-area missions to Turkey during the first Gulf War and Cambodia in the UNAMC mission in 1991. After a third out-of-area mission, the ship embargo of Serbia-Montenegro, the constitutional court ruled that the Bundestag had to be included in the decision to undertake any out-of-area missions, eventually having to retroactively vote to approve what had until that time been illegal operations up until 1994, including UNOSOM II in which German support troops were stranded in a combat zone. There was something very different about these missions in that were motivated and justified by a compassionate plea to rescue a population deemed weak and miserable. The threat transferred from the ideological outward enemy to the internal enemy of Capitalism, so that the German soldier fought with the human agents who were weak and poor, while simultaneously fighting to keep the victims of poverty and misery from reaching its borders.\(^5^9\)

\(^5^9\) Looking into the future, the transition from standing army to Peacekeeper is supported by the self-image of the soldier understanding themselves as the compassionate superior force engaging in aiding a weak and miserable enemy, as opposed to bolstering defense in response to a great threat. In 2003, Bundeswehr sociologist Jörg Keller conducted a study in which members of the SFOR deployment answered a questionnaire designed to identify how they saw themselves as soldiers, 64% fit the profile for the category of “helper in uniform”, while only 3% fit that of the “male warrior” (Keller 6). The shift in the depiction of the enemy from that of the ideological enemy of the Soviet Union to that of the miserable and weak has changed the self-understanding of the Soldier’s role through his mission to that which resembles Hogan’s alternative heroic narrative prototype that emphasizes compassion and within a rescue narrative positions
Dalgaard Nielsen identifies two competing accounts for German security policy during this period as a pacifist “never again” account replaced by a cooperative defense of “never alone again” (Dalgaard-Nielsen 25). While the first major structural pushes to move from a national to an international identity stems from the political alignments struck during the mid-nineties, the narrative breakthrough arrived first at the end of the decade with the emergence of villainous acts that could be set in opposition to the identity of the European German soldier with the mass graves in Srebrenica. As a rescue narrative, the first account positions the pacifist as hero defending the German people from victimization by the German soldier as villain, while the second account positions the German soldier in a supranational military as hero defending other populations from victimization by foreign governments and their soldiers. The first account demonstrates a popular identification with the pacifist as hero, while the second account demonstrates a transition to soldier at this position. During the period of study in this chapter, the second account is an antagonistic one, which in the following chapter has become the dominant account during the first decade of the new millennium. The focus on this chapter remains tracking the transfer of German identity into European institutions, which broadens the responsibility for military actions and subsumes the villainous associations of the German national identity into a broader European one, thereby diluting the strength of the associations of a single national identity. In this formation of identity that subordinates the soldier as hero against the “madmen” rulers with a mission than claims nothing less than to rescue the world from poverty.
the German soldier to a European military, those associations with villainy that would cause apprehension to the German soldier entering into combat are diluted through the supranational character of NATO and UN missions.

As the aforementioned account dilutes the associations of the German soldier with the villain of National Socialism by entering into a supranational identity, the other account I look at in this chapter broadens the scope of responsibility for the war crimes to include everyday Germans. In his book *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* (1996), Daniel Goldhagen refutes arguments of German victimization via theories of systemic bureaucracy and criminal leadership that forced everyday Germans to unwillingly participate in the Holocaust. Goldhagen’s argument that eliminationist Anti-Semitism

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60 The initial reaction to Goldhagen’s theory of eliminationist Anti-Semitism in Germany moved one journalist to declare round two of the *Historikerstreit*, as the book faced harsh criticism from well-established German historians, such as Hans Mommsen and Norbert Frei, and journalists, such as Rudolf Augstein and Frank Schirrmacher before it had even been released in Germany.

On April 12, 1996 Volker Ulrich began the public debate of this book with a front page article in *Die Zeit* referring to its reception as round two of the *Historikerstreit*. Goldhagen demonstrates the existence of an eliminationist anti-Semitism that had pervaded German society to the extent that there was little to no attempt to hinder orders to kill Jews and thereby he re-evaluates several case studies already worked on by historian Christopher Browning, but unlike Browning, Goldhagen adopts a sociological and psychological approach to his analysis.

They criticized his sources as being selective and not new, and his theses as simplistic and hastily researched and because of his sociological approach was different from their own, they deemed it unscientific and sensational, which had misled him to false conclusions. The German critic Volker Ulrich and Michael Wolfsohn, however, show an acute awareness to the contemporary political implications of this repositioning of the collective memory of the German public by comparing it to the previous decade’s *Historikerstreit* and the public debate that followed (Shandley 10-11). 60 Peter Glotz, politician and social scientist, was the first German reviewer to defend Goldhagen’s work and to redirect the “künstliche Debatte” towards one that took the premise of the book seriously (Glotz 4). Several historians and journalists, such as Hans Mommsen and Ulrich Raulff offered an aesthetic critique of Goldhagen’s book that the Holocaust was too sensitive a topic to be depicted in gory detail, but this had not hindered Mommsen and others from praising the historical value of Ernst Jünger’s work on the subjective experience of the soldier in WWI the year before (Kautz 4).
pervaded all of German society and made the Holocaust possible disrupts the rescue narrative account in which the German population is positioned as victim and was either seduced or coerced by the villainous Nazi party that had characterized some of these historian’s life work, such as Mommsen’s.

3.2 Jürgen Lodemann’s *Nibelungen Novels* (1986, 1994, 2002)

Bernhard Martin has proposed that the central conflict in the Lodemann’s fantasy adaptations of the *Nibelungenlied* is that of an ethical dilemma which pits paganism as an alternative belief system against that of Christianity. By restricting his analysis to the narratives as myth, Martin does not address the contemporary political and ideological influences of the text, even though this is an integral part of his analysis for *Nibelungen*.
literature before 1945. In my analysis, I find figural, structural and plot variations in Lodemann’s three versions of his *Siegfried* novel that reflect those antagonisms to the self-concept of the German male as warrior as the role of the *Bundeswehr* soldier moves from a national to an international conception of identity.⁶²

In its first iteration, the narrator insists that all other versions of the true story of Siegfried have been falsified to discredit him as the ideal German male.⁶³ This conspiracy becomes the central aspect for the narrator to justify writing down the true events of *Nibelung* that are circulating orally. The revision of the *Nibelung* material as the historical origin of the German people can draw inspiration from the Stürmer and Nolte’s contemporary argument in the *Historikerstreit* that demands a “Suche nach der verlorenen Geschichte“ as „moralisch legitim und politisch notwendig“ in order to establish an „innere Kontinuität der deutschen Republik und ihre außenpolitische

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⁶² The publication of each version coincides with public debates concerning the memory of the German soldier as victim. In 1986, Lodemann’s 383 page novel *Siegfried: Die deutsche Geschichte im eintausendfünfhundertsten Jahr der Ermordung ihres Helden erzählt* (1986) is released during the *Historikerstreit* discussed in the previous chapter. Following the Bundestag decision to allow out-of-area operations, Lodemann revises his novel into the 555 page *Der Mord: das wahre Volksbuch der Deutschen* in 1995. These first two versions end with the death of Siegfried to produce a tragic position of Siegfried as victim. Lodemann’s third version *Siegfried und Kriemhild: Roman: die älteste Geschichte aus der Mitte Europas im 5. Jahrhundert notiert, teils lateinisch, teils in der Volksprache, ins irische Keltisch übertragen von Kilian Hilarus von Kilmacduagh, im 19. Jahrhundert von John Schazman ins Englische: ins Deutsche übersetzt, mit den wahrscheinlichsten Quellen verglichen und mit Erläuterungen versehen von Jürgen Lodemann* reaches 887 pages and appears shortly after the *Bundeswehr* engages in its first invasive war in 2002. This third variation includes the events of the second half of the *Nibelungen* material in which the murderous Hagen travels eastward to the court of Attila.

⁶³ Lodemann’s narrator often contradicts the *Nibelungenlied* version and considers its portrayal of Siegfried as too negative. Siegfried is described as the ideal heroic figure which allows for a greater tragedy with his victimization. Siegfried is clearly positioned as hero that provides an adaptation to the motivation of his murder, which is typically attributed to his reckless behavior and pride that leads to the deception and rape of his queen. The narrator asserts that the epic material is propaganda used to tarnish Siegfried’s image and that what has been written Brünhild “Ende niedergeschrieben sein mag…erscheint wie der zweite Mord” so that the truth can only be found in “andere Quellen” (Lodemann, Siegfried 361).
Berechenbarkeit“ (Stürmer 38). Lodemann describes his literary endeavor within these
term in his preface entitled Vorweg, für Zweifler as “die älteste deutsche Historie” and
uses phrases such as “in Wahrheit…im historischen…im oberrheinischen Burgund…er
geschah im Jahr 486” to provide a sense of historical time and place and truth
(Lodemann, Siegfried 7-13). Throughout the novel, the text presents reminders of the
authenticity of the text that run concurrent with validations of Siegfried as the ideal
German male. These claims insist that Kampf is a uniquely German metaphor for life,
which Lodemann prepares the reader for in his preface by citing Helmut Kohl and a letter
from his enthusiastically pro-Nazi father’s diary, his social democrat uncle, and a pastor
in pre-WWII statements.64 Lodemann argues that the metaphor of life as struggle is
integral to German history and therefore the narrative of Siegfried is its best
representation calling it “unsere Geschichte” that provides the “erste Variation dessen,
was ‘deutsch’ wurde” (8-9). This preface suggests that the intention with writing the
novel is to re-establish a metaphor for life as struggle and a German male ideal as

64 To support this claim of historical authenticity, the text contains images of artifacts with descriptions,
poems, spells, and integrates an assortment of material from different traditions and languages into his
version of the epic. By viewing his text as an important contribution to the revision of German history,
Lodemann draws upon contemporary political revisionist impulses of the mid-eighties and quotes Helmut
Kohl as defending the importance of Germans to continue to struggle and that “Noch jetzt erklärte ein
Kanzler: ‘Das wäre doch abartig, wenn wir nicht mehr kämpfen würden’“ (Lodemann, Siegfried 7).

In a diary excerpt from his father before the war, Lodemann quotes his father, who first relates to his son
every German owes everything they have to Hitler and that someday Lodemann too will become a “ganzer
Mann” (Lodemann, Siegfried 7). By mentioning Hitler, the text acknowledges the central role that struggle
had played in Nazi ideology, but he also wants to demonstrate that it was and continues to be a German
philosophy, conflating quotes from pre-war to mingle with those conservative political voices of the mid-
eighties. The text demonstrates that before the war, this was a view held both by National Socialists as well
as his social democratic uncle Walther that wished him to become a “ganzer Mann. Einer wie Siegfried”
(Lodemann, Siegfried 7). The text also demonstrates how widespread this ideal spread, where even at his
baptism the Pastor declared that he should become “ein ganzer Mann…Und daß Dir als solcher der Kampf
im Leben immer gelingen möge” (Lodemann, Siegfried 7).
warrior. Paradoxically, the status of the Nibelung as a historical text is both held up as authentic history and likewise dismissed as false, thereby justifying an adaptation that adjusts Siegfried’s oafish behavior at court into the ideal male warrior and thereby emphasizes the tragedy of his victimization by the political intrigue of foreign powers in Worms.

These foreign powers are represented by Hagen and the Catholic Church, who are cast as the villains who assassinate Siegfried because he has become popular among the Pagan people. Siegfried’s death is the symbolic death of Kampf as a German metaphor for life. Among other ideologically suspect passages of the novel that hearken back to concepts popular under Nationalism Socialism is Siegfried’s equation with Jesus as a sacrificial figure that was the victim of political conspiracy (274). The text’s insistence that the German male ideal is one of a warrior is a rejection of the pacifist male identity popular at the time of production and publication. By arguing that there is an authentic German male and an authentic German history that the text informs the reader of, implies that there is a distinct ethnic German nation and with it a distinctly national philosophy. This first iteration published in 1986 focuses on building a national identity for Siegfried as victim. Lodemann makes it clear in his prologue and epilogue that he views Siegfried as the ideal German warrior and that his murder is analogous to the loss of this male ideal and concurrent with narratives that position soldiers as victims in the political genre. In the 1994 version, Lodemann’s text opens up the figure of Siegfried to a broader European
and socialist identity while associating Hagen and the Catholic Church with a threat of federalism.

Lodemann’s *Der Mord* is a revision of his *Siegfried* novel of 1986 with approximately 150 more pages of text added with illustrations and in a gold-letter edition to indicate annotative information that provides the text some of its authenticity as a historical novel. In *Siegfried*, the title figure was presented as a masculine ideal and a historical reality with a very explicit argument by the author concerning the authenticity of the text and an appeal to read it as the true history of Germany. In this second iteration, the text presents itself as a historical document with extended framing devices to replace the preface and provide a faux imitation of an academic reception of the work as a manuscript that relates the eyewitness account of Giselher, who proclaims with his final lines that “DIE WAHRE GESCHICHTE, SIE IST GERETTET” (Lodemann, *Der Mord* 524). These frames add a veneer of authenticity, but also serve to move the national epic into an international historical document that was smuggled out of Burgundia, written in Latin, copied in Celtic, and translated into English and then into German – all

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65 Lodemann writes himself into the narrative by becoming the translator of the text, so that within the first pages he can explain that he had found the text in a shop of disinterested owners who had gifted him a large notebook in English. They parted with it because they deemed it to concern his ancestors and not theirs. Lodemann allows himself to be the translator/scholar of an English translation of a Celtic copy of an eyewitness account that was originally in Latin. By creating several layers of imagined documentation, Lodemann sets the work in different periods of reception, so that he can draw upon alterations and comment upon the text from a variety of sources and from a variety of periods that provides some value to his novel as a historical document that combines the disparate reception into one account. Lodemann’s layers lend some plausibility to the authenticity of his story; from an eyewitness, copied from a much older source than those which are extent, which thereby enables him to make a claim by proximity of the date of his original text closer to the historical events from which the story is assumed to have sprung. This also provides some flexibility concerning the accuracy of the translation and interpretation of extent material, a device which in the text is often used to comment on certain passages in gold type.
to faithfully recount the death of a man from the Netherlands. The text uses these frames to draw upon myths and traditions from different cultures that are similar to *Nibelung* material and allow him to explore material not normally associated with the *Nibelung* legend.

The text attaches several new associations to Siegfried in *Mord* that opens the figure up to a broader international identity, such as the word *Cherusker* and as *Xantener* and *Niederländer*. The final chapter contains several new innovations beginning with the title “Die Saga war Weltgeschichte” which positions Siegfried not just as an ideal of Germany, but as a universal figure that “die Erschlagung des Gastes aus dem ‘Niederland’ ist nichts Nationales, seine Ermordung erscheint als das Geschick des Kontinents” (529). Siegfried’s death is argued to be more than a national incident, but rather a Pan-European event that effected cultures and places in Northern Europe, such as “Sachsen…Friesen, Dänen und Iren…Kelten…England, Bornholm…Island” (529). This expansion denotes a group identity among a broader majority of European folk of the archaic ages, but at the same time positions an oppositional identity of a supranational political organization of the Catholic Church stemming from a southern Judaic-Christian culture. At the time of its production and publication, Germany was entering into Maastricht Treaty that formed the economic basis for the European Union and the main objection to a federalist model of Europe was the loss of local regulation and

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66 The *Cherusker* identification allows the text to conflate the figure of Hermann/Arminius with the figure of Siegfried, while also associating him with a specific Germanic tribe, precisely the sort of identification of which Wolfgang Schäuble is speaking of when referring to an archaic age
participatory governance, which the federalist model is antagonistic to. This antagonism reflects that opposition that had been growing in Germany, France, Denmark and other nations to a Federal Europe in 1993, which protestors summarized as that the "Union is only for politicians, not for the people. All our rights are being taken away from us" (Riding par. 38). These fears provide an explanation for the shift in Lodemann’s characterization of Siegfried as a European victim of a political and ideological colonization of local religion and freedoms by a supranational organization.

In this version, the text defines Germans as the people an oppressed population. This population is not depicted in terms of a singular ethnic nationality, but rather as a collection of independent tribes, so that Siegfried can be positioned as a revolutionary figure fighting for this group. Siegfried becomes the victim of the elite who threaten to eliminate tribal distinctions and self-rule with the establishment of a Christian empire. In Lodemann’s commentary at the end of the novel, the text provides answers to the rhetorical question whether “Der Mord an dem Niederländer ist eine erste “deutsche” Geschichte? ‘Deutsch’, so klärt es diese Kilianschronik, meinte keinen Stamm, kein Volk oder gar Blut und Rasse und derlei Schwachsinn, sondern war eine Perspektive. Diejenige von unten” (Lodemann, Der Mord 528).

The shift from a Pagan identity as an oppressed religious group to one that emphasizes the oppression of the proletariat associates the tragic death of Siegfried with

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67 The Kilians Chronicle is one of Lodemann’s framing devices that supports the interpretation of the Nibelungenlied as if it were an international epic that documented the oppression of the Church over the free people of Northern Europe.
the end of Communism as an alternative worldview. The text brings Siegfried closer to a universal and international identity through his depiction as a worker that despite his strength and physical prowess, he was one who „all seiner Güter nicht stahl, nicht erschwindelte, sondern in ungewöhnlichen Mühen verdiente, und dies nur, um sie wieder herzuschenken. Er ist von Grund auf ein Arbeiter. Er ist wie Herkules (45).

The depiction of Siegfried as *Arbeiter* signals his role as a representative of the commoner and in opposition to the monolithic political empire of the Church. His death by Hagen, a representative of the Church symbolic of a foreign empire, translates in the contemporary context to the loss of democratic self-rule amidst the unification of Germany into the larger and more distant political entity of the European Union. In this way, Siegfried is a complex figure who on the one hand can be used to suggest a more international identity, while on the other hand he opposes the institutionalization of that identity through supranational structures of governance. The emphasis upon the notion of *Kampf* found in the 1986 version has receded into the background and has been replaced by the figure of Siegfried as an everyman that functions both as nationalist and populist, and whose identity as common laborer is intended to spread his appeal out across borders.

As Siegfried is described in heroic manner, so is Hagen described with negative associations to mark him as a villain opposite Siegfried. Hagen is crass and lewd, a murderer and man-at-arms, and despite his affiliation with the church, his commitment is only of a politically expedient nature.

124
It’s clear that Hagen despises Siegfried who he sarcastically calls Hercules, as he himself lays drunk and derides Gernot, who interprets the behavior as hatred for Siegfried. To further differentiate Hagen from Siegfried, Hagen speaks Latin. By using Latin as a marker of Hagen’s identity, he is set in opposition to the common person through his knowledge of the foreign language of the political elite, whereas Siegfried as worker and pagan is further associated with the local people, their traditions and language. Hagen as villain is not only Siegfried’s murderer, but he also draws associations with the political elite and the political opportunism that had been expressed in the contemporary popular opposition to the European Union. Further associations with Hagen are his moniker Tronje, which the text explains that the zu in zu Tronje is not a preposition denoting place, but rather that Tronje means destroyer, so that zu Tronje describes the process of Hagen becoming the destroyer; that Hagen “wurde zum Tronje” (464).

In the third and final version, there are several reworked and extended passages of romantic scenes depicted in harlequin fashion which help integrate Kriemhild’s character into the narrative so that she can become a protagonist in the final chapter. The narrative follows the basic format of the Nibelungenlied with Kriemhild’s more predominant role

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68 Latin was the language of the church and of intellectuals up until the later stages of the Enlightenment and the rise of nations in the 19th century. During this period, the vulgate was the language to be studied and folktales and epics began to be valued as symbols that promoted a common heritage and nationalism.
as political leader and the inclusion of the second half of the epic material also introduces the exotic eastern kingdom and the Asiatic horde alluded to in Nolte’s account. The conflict between the Huns and the house of Burgund ends with both populations devastated. The addition of this exotic location and the destruction of Hun and Burgundian echo the fears underlining the public opposition to the Bundeswehr mission in Afghanistan.

The final chapter is presented by another narrative frame, this time an Irish monk Kilian Hilarus, who provides commentary on the hypocritical nature of political leaders and false religions, providing an antagonistic account of the German soldier in the East as a peace enforcer. The progression from a German narrator in Gernot to an Irish monk indicates a subtle shift in the identity of the narrator from a purely national understanding to one that includes other nationalities. A similar shift from national to international identity can be seen in the variant subtitles of the three versions. For instance, Siegfried (1986) carries the extended title Die deutsche Geschichte im eintausendfünfhundersten Jahr der Ermordung ihres Helden nach den ältesten Dokumenten erzählt. Note that text refers to it as the German history so many years after the murder of its hero. The book clearly identifies itself as an alternative historical record that revises the popular perception of the hero and his death. This alternative history echoes those impulses in the Historikerstreit that focused on the revision of the public perception of the soldier.

Keltische übertragen durch Kilian Hilarus von Kilmacdaugh, ins Englische durch John Schazman, aus dem Englischen von Jürgen Lodemann, in Absicherung durch älteste Urkunden, mit Glossen und einem Orts- und Personenverzeichnis. The book is now identified as the true folk book of the Germans, indicating that it is as a proto-national product no longer in the same category as a true historical record of the nation, instead it is characterized as a product of the people and those cultures involved in the title imply a broadened scope of its importance outside of just a German context. The extended title of the third version replaces the folk book reference with an even broader scope as the “älteste Geschichte aus der Mitte Europas” as Lodemann eliminates labels that imply it as the true German history of the true folk book of Germans.

Lodemann revised his adaptation three times between 1986 and 2002. These revisions offer a unique opportunity to look at the development of rescue narrative within a work that draws narrative inspiration from the political domain. Despite the genre constraints, the text offers a continually developing representation of German national identity and therewith variations on the representation of the ideal warrior that correspond to the broadening context of the Bundeswehr and its missions. These missions expand the role of the German soldier from a national defense to engaging in international conflicts. The first two versions of the novel end with the death of Siegfried, who is a symbol for German nationalism with the Nibelungen considered “der Beginn deutscher Geschichte” that is “nicht mehr erhalten” (Lodemann, Siegfried 371). It is conspicuous that these two texts end halfway through the original narrative with the murder of Siegfried in order to
depict the murder as a tragic end to the ideal male warrior during a period when the Bundeswehr was limited in the scope of its mission. The entrance into the second half of the Nibelungenlied material began after the invasion of Afghanistan and presents a scope of action that reaches beyond the familiarity of Worms, Denmark, and Saxony. Each text addresses the ideal of a national identity through the variant associations of Siegfried and the groups identified as victims.

The 1986 text offers the reader an idealized figure of Siegfried not found in the Nibelungenlied and defends this modification by citing related sources to provide the veneer of authenticity to what it claims to be the history of the Germans. The negative depictions of Siegfried found in the Nibelungenlied are dismissed as lies and propaganda in order establish Siegfried as the ideal German warrior. The text structure follows that of the tragic heroic narrative prototype, and the lamenting of his death is symbolically laden with overtones that position him as a contemporary symbol of Germany without a masculine ideal shaped by military culture.

Over the three novels, the texts present a development from an insular perspective that concentrates upon reviving nationalism in terms of establishing a link to the past that then broadens to the role of the ideal warrior in European and Global contexts. Siegfried represents a range of groups that broadens with each revision, so that his death is intended to be a tragic depiction of the demise of each of these group’s

69 There is a general avoidance of the apocalyptic material of the second half in most adaptations during this period. Hohlbein’s Hagen von Tronje also ended without relating the second half of the Nibelungenlied and the second half is avoided or briefly summarized by most German adaptations of this period.
independence through an overarching government represented by Hagen. Paradoxically, Siegfried becomes a symbol that unifies nationalities as a symbol of continued independence and unites them, while the unification offered by Hagen is depicted negatively, while it includes the relinquishment of self-rule. Siegfried’s death can represent different tragedies in each of the periods that the novel was published. For example, in 1986, his death could depict the lack of sovereignty, in 1994, his death can be interpreted as the end of self-rule for member states of the EU, and in 2002, his death could represent the loss of a national context for the German soldier with missions that protect the investments of corporate Capitalism.

In summation, Lodemann’s narratives develop antagonistic accounts to those that support a subordination of national politics to supranational organization, while concurrently and paradoxically incorporating associations into the hero and victim positions from these broader categories of national and then international identity. The concentration on the authenticity of the text as historically accurate in the mid-eighties produces a victim that laments the loss of national sovereignty. The broadened scope of the novel provided in the additional chapter of the final version offers both a depiction of Kriemhild as a powerful political woman vacant in the previous two versions and a warning to the expansion of conflict to the East. Siegfried is also depicted as a sacrificial figure that incorporates the identity with a European Christian background. The text that lies between these two and was published in the mid-nineties is a hybrid of national and international identification. The text claims to be historically and nationally important,
but also expands the range of those who could imagine themselves to be allied with or positioned as Siegfried. Siegfried is depicted as a victim of the supranational Hagen, but is also attached to associations of socialism that can be interpreted as a lament for the loss of the possibilities of East German Socialism as an alternative to Western Capitalism.

3.3 Marcel Beyer’s *Flughunde* (1995)

Beyer’s *Flughunde* presents the reader with two perspectives, one of a naïve child and another of an objective scientist, who do not remain naïve or objective for very long. This work centers on Hermann Karnau, a sound engineer working for the Nazis, who complicates the image of German soldiers in two ways: first, he records their sounds as they kill and die, thus showing them at victimizers and victims at an element level; second, he adopts the metaphor of combat to conceptualize his own field research, thus imagining himself as a German soldier in the domain of science, who seeks to eliminate “foreign” sounds, colonize audial territory, and participate in the planning and execution of atrocities against “non-Germans” that he later denies. This allows Beyer to address the militarization of other domains of life during the Nazi period in a way that not only solidifies the position of the soldier as villain, but also expands the mindset of the soldier to broader populations of German society.

In the novel, the reader follows the downward spiral of Karnau, who studies sounds and whose career and research becomes ever more entwined with Nazi ideology and goals. On the other hand, the naïve Helga Goebbels grows increasingly aware of the deception of her mother and father and their obsessive commitment to the war. Helga’s
development into a young woman brings a more critical appraisal of her father and mother shortly before her murder. The plot follows Karnau and Helga through the final months of the War in 1945 with some scenes occurring before and some long after. Karnau studies audiology, records interrogations, performs autopsies on horse cadavers, attends conferences, and eventually changes his research and its goals to substantiate Nazi ideology. Helga imitates soldiers in her play with younger siblings, spends time with her father, and moves from house to house as enemy armies begin to surround Berlin. The paths of Karnau and Helga cross while at the bunker in Berlin and this is where Karnau assists in the murder of the Goebbels’ children, whose death throes he records. Many years later, Karnau is called in as an expert in audiology to listen to the recording of the children’s death. After many attempts, he recognizes the last voice on the recording as his own.

Karnau’s experience of sound is central to the aesthetics of the novel and allows Beyer to hint at some of the psychological drives involved Karnau’s obsessive interest in collecting audio samples. The aesthetics are in part influenced by the poet Friederike Mayröcker, who emphasized idiosyncratic means of representing the National Socialist past (The European Graduate School par. 3). Mayröcker’s emphasis on writing texts that engaged in “a dialogue with music and the visual arts” combined with Beyer’s experience writing and editing for Spex, a popular German music magazine, can be seen as formative
for *Flughunde* (International Literature Festival Berlin par. 3).\(^7\) Karnau’s work as a sound technician and researcher becomes the metaphor through which readers experience the subtle adoption of a technocratic colonial worldview central to Nazi ideology.

Die Nadel zieht dort eine Spur über das schwarz glänzende Schellack, tastet die Schallplatte ab unter schmerzlicher Berührung und fraßt die Rillen mit jeder Umdrehung unmerklich weiter aus, als gelte es, in tiefer Regionen vorzudringen, um näher an den Ursprung der Geräusche zu gelangen. *(Beyer 24)\(^7\)*

The text demonstrates Karnau’s technical fetish in order to critique the highly subjective and pseudo-scientific notion that proliferated under Nazism. In Karnau’s world, he avoids human contact, but the language that describes the playing of a record provides sexually charged imagery of conquest. Semantic elements such as “tasten” and “schmerzlicher Berührung” focus the reader on the tactile description of the technology to play the record, while “fressen” and “in tiefere Regionen vorzudringen” indicate sensual, invasive and suggestive overtones that bring Karnau “näher” to his goal. Karnau wishes to find the origin of sound understood through the metaphor of conquest. The emission of sound as a

\(^7\) Beyer is also placing himself within a burgeoning genre of young German authors. The mid-nineties saw a popularity of the audiophile in young authors, some of these were collectively known as part of the “pop literature” movement characterized by its “brand name”-dropping and an affinity for music, which in extreme cases, such as Rainald Götz’ *Rave* (1998), led to pages of depictions of drug-induced musical epiphany, while in other cases music served as a kind of waypoint for young identities adrift in drugs and consumer culture, such as in Benjamin von Stuckrad-Barre’s *Soloalbum* (1998). As a young author and occasional writer for the music magazine *Spex*, it seems only natural that Beyer would be influenced by his peers and infuse some of these elements into *Flughunde*. For example, the text’s description of low frequency vibrations moving through the body moved Bernd Künzig to call it an imitation of the DJ culture popular at the time *(Künzig 139)*.

\(^{71}\) There is a general fetish in the description of the act of producing and recording sounds that is reminiscent of those moments in Süßkind’s *Parfum* in which technical jargon describing the production of a smell is combined with sexually suggestive language.
painful and sensual experience is found again in Karnau’s observation on the voices of the Goebbels’ children.

Irgendwann wird den Kindern aufgehen, dass sie nicht mehr frei über ihre Stimmen verfügen. Helmut wird dies spätestens an dem Punkt schmerzlich erfahren, wenn der Stimmbrech einsetzt: Plötzlich gehorcht der Kehlkopf nicht mehr, ein schmerzender Punkt, als nicht verheilende Wunde am Hals, die gezerrten, gestauchten Stimmbänder. (75)

This painful wound on Helmut’s throat, that tears as he reaches puberty, relates the painful and awkward moments of the teenage years in its audible form. For Karnau, there is a history in each sound a voice produces and this is a history of the violence done to the voice box. The painful changes of these voices during puberty foreshadow the painful awakening of the naïve Helga to the reality of the war and the deception and destruction all around her.

Examining the perpetrator and victim binary positioning in Flughunde, there is an expansion of the perpetrator position into the family life of Helga and indications of a strong ideological racism that was chosen rather than bureaucratic system coercion, just as in Bernhard Schlink’s international bestseller der Vorleser (1995) (Fischer and Lorenz 346). Schlink extends the perpetrator category to the average woman of a certain age, and suggests that education can bring understanding, empathy, and a kind of atonement for past crimes. Schlink complicates the relationship between generations. For example, in

\[72\ \text{The subjective style of pop authors and their emphasis on the moment was symptomatic of an era of uncertain identity, and represented a strategy of a generation that by focusing on the moment could pretend it had no past. This youthful crisis of identity was eloquently depicted by Christian Kracht in his debut novel Faserland (1995), in which his young male protagonist takes a self-destructive road trip with gestures towards Mann’s Tod in Venedig (1912) and a fateful possible suicide in the middle of Lake Zürich.}\]
der Vorleser, Hanne seduces the young protagonist Michael Berg and combines sex with a ritual bath and reading that recreates the imbalanced relationship of power that she once had with young girls who read to her when she was a concentration camp guard. Michael is seduced and the matter of his age positions him as victim, much like those girls she had watched over as a guard. When he is older, his silence at her trial and his refusal to continue with her after she is let out of prison make him in part responsible in her sentencing for a crime he knows she could not have committed and her eventual suicide. Hanne suffers because of Michael Berg, who is a generation younger than Hanne, setting up a relationship in which Hanne is a victim of the rejection of the younger generation. The argument in Schlink’s Vorleser unfortunately becomes one that centers on an unviable connection between illiteracy and Nazi ideology with her reformation through literature, which makes it seem that only the uneducated were attracted to Nazi ideology. The question the text asks its readers is the same which Hanne directs towards the judge, “was hätten denn Sie gemacht?” (Schlink 107). The question implies that there was no alternative for her in this situation other than to go along with what was offered her: a perspective that implies the illiterate German had no choice in the matter.

The reception of the der Vorleser demonstrates that German readers are interested in questions of responsibility for the crimes of National Socialism that reach beyond the leadership and the SS. Beyer’s Flughunde presents an ideological accounting for the corrupting of academic and family lives that moves beyond the concentration camp guard as a figure of culpability and expands the groups inhabiting other domains that were
militarized by National Socialism. Marcel Beyer’s novel was published in the same year as *Vorleser* and enjoyed a broad readership and modest financial success. The literary reception lauded Beyer for writing ”erzählerische Wahrheit” and that he did not interject his novel with a moralizing narrator (Künzig 124-125). This lack allows the text to demonstrate the ideological distortion of objective and subjective perspectives in other domains, such as family life and science. This approach to the crimes of the Nazis is no longer in terms of mourning, but rather from an interest in the sociological and ideological questions of power dynamics, and is a particular trait in younger authors who are two generations removed from the actual events (Paver 90; Schmitz, Soundscapes 121).

While the child figure of Helga offers the text a naïve figure and the view of a normal family, it does not offer objectivity or historicity. Helga is, like any child of the time, heavily indoctrinated and not a historical model for an objective voice (Paver 93). The family is not an average family as Helga is the daughter of Joseph Goebbels, which allows the text to present the reader with depictions of the construction of propaganda, the façade of the parents’ lies to one another, to themselves, and to the children. At the

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73 The moralizing overtones are not completely avoided into the depiction of certain passages. For example, as Karnau is commenting on new sound technology coming out, the text identifies the young soldier as one of the German victims of the war. Beyer writes that “Die neue Generation…die jungen Soldaten…die verzerrten Jungengesichter unterm Stahlhelm, die hier im Stellungskrieg, bei Vorstoß, Rückzug oder auch ganz einfach im Trommelfeuer der eigenen Seite ihr kurzes Leben lassen” (100). The text brings the technology called “the new generation” in comparison with the young soldier as victims of the war in which their death is not attributed to enemy fire, but to following orders and friendly fire. This positions the soldier as victim of their leadership and removes the enemy from the equation.
same time, because it is Helga’s perspective, there is mixture of naiveté with willful appropriation and imitation of adult attitudes and behaviors. Amidst the depictions of petty fighting and sibling rivalry, there are games in which the reader can recognize the effect of ideology on the pastimes of the children, such as the march of the deaf and the imitation of executions. Helga’s domineering of her siblings and the punishments she assigns the youngest of them, such as forcing them to clean the floor with their toothbrushes as she yells herself into a frenzy, recreates those images that readers are familiar with of Goebbels or of any stereotypical image of Nazi demagogues and military leaders. The text presents other instances in which Helga shows that she knows some but not all of the moral implications of the adult’s situations, such as in her observations of her father dictating his diary to his secretary or in his illicit affairs. These moments in the text provide the reader an opportunity to view the dynamics of power and social forces that are derived from ideology and the fanaticism that had seeped and poisoned everyday life.

Along with the children’s imitation of the abuse of power, so is the insistence by the adults that such transgressions never be found out and that they are kept secret, which is also imitated by the children.

Wenn jemand uns gehört hat beim Spielen, macht das wirklich keinen guten Eindruck. Nein, niemand darf erfahren, was wir mit den Kleinen angestellt haben, es gibt gewisse Dinge, die man zwar sehen, aber nicht hören darf, nicht aussprechen, sich nicht darüber unterhalten (Beyer 145).

National Socialism was not as concerned with the morality of an action and the abuse of power as it was with its superficial estimation. The silence instilled in the younger
generation is fueled by a shame felt from the abuse of the weak. In this instance, the silence of the youngest children, but allegorically, the shame of silence applies to the post-war generation concerning the secrecy of the older generation’s experiences during the war.

Not only does the text describe the degradation and abuse of power reflected in the children’s games, but the reader sees how they are disciplined by their father to accommodate his desire to impress and appear proper to one of his many female conquests.

Und auch die anderen werden aus dem Spiel gerissen, eins nach dem anderen gibt die rechte Hand. Aber das genügt der Sängerin noch nicht, sie nimmt, während der Vater zusieht, die kleine Hedda in den Arm, sie drückt sie an sich, Hedda zieht den Kopf zurück und schaut zur Seite weg, man sieht ganz deutlich, dass sie sich unwohl fühlt, aber der Vater greift nicht ein, er steht nur da und lächelt. (149)

This passage demonstrates how Goebbels is ready to sacrifice his children to satisfy his own desires. He either ignores them or doesn’t care about the manner in which they are treated, as it only matters that they maintain the perception that they are orderly.

Towards the end of the novel, Helga indicates that she has outgrown some of the naïveté in terms of believing her father. This allegorical relationship between Helga and her father within the family represents the larger political relationship that many Germans had with Hitler as a father figure in National Socialism. The text does at one point present a moralizing narration to the events as Helga begins to break free from her naïve childlike views.

The text presents those questions of a generation trying to understand the motives and decisions of their parents. The text provides an allegorical implication that contrary to what the adults, or leadership, thinks, the children, or German people, know better and can see and judge for themselves. The passage provides a critique of the silence of the older generation and an accusatory tone towards their collaboration with the National Socialists, but suggests that the generations are not as morally distinct as post-war narratives assert. Bernd Künzig calls Helga a hypothetical model through which “dem Mythos der kollektiven Unwissenheit der Deutschen eine Absage [erteilt wurde]“ (Künzig 139). This suggests that since the supposed naive narrative voice knew of the criminal activities of National Socialism and had the potential to develop a moral knowledge of right and wrong. As Helga becomes more aware of the lies of her father to her and her mother, and to the German people, she is upset with her father. Künzig interprets her knowledge as a sign of collective guilt, but it is her social position as a child that identifies her primarily with the younger generation, which positions her in opposition to the world of adults which she hesitates to enter. This does not necessarily lead to a “Bild einer Nation von Mitläufern,“ but rather to an image of German victimization and an allegorical relationship between father and daughter defined as different generations (139).
Other text passages that depict Helga with a doting father raise questions as to whether the ideology is being presented as an excuse for the decisions that her otherwise loving father would not have made. Accompanying these passages are those in which they are forgotten and left with housemaids as their parents have more important things to attend to. At times, Helga’s perceives her parents to be unfairly demanding of her, while readers know the reasons why they have been preoccupied, and why they are asked to pack lightly.

Wir sind, wo wir nicht hingewollt haben, Mama und Papa haben uns einfach so weggegeben, ohne weiter zu überlegen. Die kümmert es nicht, ob wir uns auch wohlfühlen, oder sie wissen das gar nicht, weil sie uns gar nicht richtig kennen. Und nur ein Spielzeug jeder. (47)

This passage depicts both of the privilege that Helga’s family enjoyed. They could afford to have staff to help them run the household, but there is also the emotional hardship and feelings of abandonment that mix feelings of pettiness with pity. In its allegorical implication, the abandonment of the children reflects the relationship of the Nazi leadership to the German people in that that they provided neither security nor cared for those that were entrusted to them.

Goebbels as a father is far from demonized in the text as he separates siblings from fighting, protects the smallest and tries to teach them to respect one another despite their age difference. For example, Helga punches her little brother after he breaks her watch and Goebbels scolds Helge, “du weißt genau, dass du Helmut nicht schlagen darfst, er ist noch klein, er hat sich nichts Böses dabei gedacht“ (77). After being disciplined, Helga is angered and upset at what she considers to be her father’s unfair
treatment, only to be surprised and overjoyed when he takes her to town to have her choose a new replacement. This complicates the image of Goebbels as villain. By inserting these short episodes of Goebbels as a family man into the text, the reader is familiarized with the concept that the Nazis were not morally vacuous. Goebbels' statement that “er ist noch klein” requires that Goebbels felt it was a morally wrong action for Helga to abuse her little brother because the young weaker sibling needed to be protected. The doting father Goebbels of previous pages is spared from poisoning his children as the text implies that it was Karnau who administered the doses.

The text presents a glimpse of an obsessive side of Goebbels figure which blinds him to danger he puts his children in as he tries to remove a spider from a cobweb on his car’s mirror.

Der Spinnenkörper klebt an der Fahrertür, das Tier strengt sich furchtbar an, um den Halt nicht zu verlieren. Papa denkt an nichts anderes mehr als an diese Spinne…Langsam tut mir die Spinne leid, sie strengt sich so verzweifelt an, um den Halt nicht zu verlieren, sie fällt ein Stück und haspelt dabei automatisch ein Seil ab, dann kommt sie unter Mühen wieder hochgekrabbelnd und will hinter den Rückspiegel in Sicherheit. Ich mag nicht mehr hinschauen. Es wird schon dunkel, und wir fahren immer noch. Sind wir schon auf dem Rückweg, oder nähern wir uns tatsächlich Magdeburg? Da stupst mich Heide an und zeigt nach vorne: Die Spinne ist verschwunden. (108-9)

The text presents this obsessive drive to rid the car of the spider as a battle of wills between a spider, an insignificant and harmless creature, and Goebbels, who does not stop until it is removed. As Helga watches her father’s obsessive determination to rid the car of the spider, his face appears ridiculous to her. This recognition of the absurdity with
which her father is determined to eliminate the spider, turns for Helga into empathetic compassion for the spider, who struggles against unbelievable odds. The thought of obsessing over the destruction of such a helpless creature repels Helga, who looks away, only that after a short while her attention is directed back to the spider and she knows that it has perished. While the reader is never introduced to a concentration camp victim, the example of the spider relates the irrational vigor with which the victims were pursued and murdered by the Nazis. The different reactions of Helga and her father to the plight of the spider further define them as representative of two separate generations and as perpetrator and victim.

The binary opposition of “good versus evil, child against adult” in the narrative positions Helga Goebbels in the role of the victim, so that in our rescue narrative, the German marginalized voices of female/child are positioned as victim, while the ahistorical male ideologue Karnau, who practices a pseudo-science is conflated with the national socialist soldiers and leaders as villain with which he collaborates (Schramm 198). Karnau’s repression of his crimes suggest that collaborator’s selective memory and repression keeps them from acknowledging their involvement, while at the same time implying, since Karnau continued his research in the East, that the East Germany’s oppressive regime housed Nazi collaborators. This draws associations of Nazism to the scientific research of the former East Germany, especially in the generation born before 1945 (Schmitz, Soundscapes 139; Künzig 135).
The narrative about Karnau is concerned primarily with his obsessive descent into the militarization of his research and the casual savagery of Nazi ideology. Karnau’s development into bestial experimenter is enabled by an extreme form of dualism that views the body as the mechanical upholstery of the skeleton and reduces people to their bare “physical and mental functions” (Schmitz, Soundscapes 126-131). The name of Karnau’s colleague, Dr. Moreau, is a reference to the figure in H.G. Wells’ “The Island of Dr. Moreau” from 1896, whose experiments created half-man and half-beast creatures that he hunted, whereas here it is the brutality of Nazi ideology that has transformed Karnau like the others into a bestial man. A significant aspect of this process is the distancing of the scientist to its subject of study, and in Karnau’s case, it is his early experiments on animal cadavers that helps him begin to distance himself to the horror of his experiments so that “mit der Zeit hat sich dieser Ekel allerdings verflüchtigt und der Umgang mit Tierschädeln ist für mich mittlerweile nichts Ungewöhnliches mehr” (Beyer 50). This leads to his dissociation from the suffering of other people. For Karnau these people become objects that produce sounds for him to study, as “die Männer, die da draußen liegenbleiben werden, sind hier in meinen Ohren. Ihre Leiber hegen dort rettungslos in der tödlichen Gefahrenzone, doch ihre Seufzer sind hier in Sicherheit auf meinem Tonband“ (114). This kind of dualism, or dissociation, between the body and the sound it produces allows Karnau to participate in brutal police actions and interrogations and record the screams of living and dying victims because he considers them objects of study (50). The novel provides a description of the process of detachment and extreme dissociation also found in Ernst Jünger’s works which had undergone a
Jünger had experienced a renaissance of popularity beginning in 1983 with the republishing of all of his works and in 1995 the celebration of his 100th birthday brought a flurry of media attention to him and his work with several biographies published that year.

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74 Jünger had experienced a renaissance of popularity beginning in 1983 with the republishing of all of his works and in 1995 the celebration of his 100th birthday brought a flurry of media attention to him and his work with several biographies published that year.
The language of the soldier (“hardening the body,” “battle”) is used to describe the elimination of the foreign elements of the German language. Karnau becomes an active collaborator whose career is furthered through his dissemination of research that supports Nazi policies. He has turned from a hesitant Mitläufer into a bestial human experimenter as he internalizes the ideology of the Nazis and he becomes delusional about his own importance as well as that of his work to the war effort in eliminating foreign sounds (Schmitz, Soundscapes 122).

The voice of the older generation can be heard in Karnau’s attempt to empathize with the young Helga as she eavesdrops on one of his recordings.

Jetz muss sie mich für ein Ungeheuer halten. Ich darf meine Aufnahmen nicht mehr abspielen, solange die Kinder bei mir sind. Das ist viel zu gefährlich. Und ich dachte, sie schliefen alle langst. Was hat die arme Helga wohl gedacht, als diese Leidenslaute aus meinem Zimmer ertönten? Hoffentlich geht es ihr bald wieder besser und sie vergisst recht schnell, was sie hat hören müssen. (Beyer 65)

Helga is shocked at hearing the experiments and Karnau realizes that he has frightened Helga. Karnau’s reaction reveals some empathy for Helga’s reaction, even though his empathy is tempered with a fear of being found out and the perception others may have of himself and what he does. Karnau’s juxtaposition to Helga mimics that

Klaus Theweleit’s Männerphantasien depicts this stiffening as a damming up of emotions and argues that this was a central psychological concept in Fascist ideology found in the literature of the Freikorps. The novel transfers this view into the audial realm as Karnau describes the stiffening of the body to include the tongue and thereby provide him an ideological justification for the spreading of Nazi ideology into all realms of knowledge.

The Hitler salute itself is the sublimated erection, which like in chimp society, where subordination of male chimps is displayed by their adoption of a submissive sexual position. This display for a sublimate sexual readiness can be seen in the salute of the Nazi (and other militia for that matter).
which she has with her father as an allegory of generational relations. Karnau’s fear explains the silencing of the past as a fear that they may appear as monsters, or villains, to their children.

Karnau believes himself to be unlocking some truth by opening up cadavers, and it is through this work that the reader is presented the process in which he desensitizes himself to working with corpses and how he disciplines himself to hold his emotions at bay as he imagines himself to be like a soldier entering combat (Magenau 115). While Karnau presents a process in which he moves from inquisitive scientific interest to a detached objective emotionless perspective, Helga undergoes a process from a naïve imitation of her parents to a reflective objection of their behavior. Helga, as the young positive figure, is made the victim, while Karnau is positioned as villain. Karnau’s vague memory of the event in which he apparently killed Helga positions her at that moment for the reader as victim.

The binary opposition in the novel between victim and perpetrator draws upon a myriad of associations in order to divide and establish associations with German perpetration and German victimhood. The most prominent of these are the child victim and the adult perpetrator and the female victim and male perpetrator. There is also the feigning of victimization by the perpetrators demonstrated in the advice given to Karnau by his colleague that he should learn to imitate the language of a victim (Beyer 215). This leads Schmitz to remark that “the novel’s most disturbing realization [is] that the authenticity of the victims’ utterings of pain remains either forever silenced or filtered
through its appropriation by their tormentor’s perception“ (Schmitz, Soundscapes 140). The novel represents the implementation of this advice in that the victims are barely present, so that only the young German girl Helga can function as a figure with which the reader can identify. What makes Helga a victim is that she is a child during the war and despite her misgivings, she trusted her parents.

3.4 Summary

The 1994 White Paper, conservative politicians like Wolfgang Schäuble, and the new intellectual right provided narratives that shifted national identity towards a broader, international one that allowed for the compassionate epilogue to be implemented in the positioning of Eastern European states as well as to expand the military mission as missions of compassion outside-of-area. The Siegfried novels Jürgen Lodemann demonstrate how this process influenced the representation of the figure Siegfried who moved from being an ideal German warrior to a universal sacrificial figure. Marcel Beyer’s Flughunde constructs a counter-narrative to these through the juxtaposition of the narrative voices of Helga and Karnau. In doing so he suggests that Nazi ideology corrupted both the subjective naïve world of the child and the supposedly objective world of scientific knowledge of the adults, which renders narratives that claim innocence through the age or through a reliance on historical authenticity highly suspect. In this way, Beyer questions the victim narratives promoted by the intellectual new right and particularly the narratives of Kohl, Nolte, and Hillgruber that had gained some traction in conservative political and academic discourse after unification.
Chapter 4: The Third Period (2003-2007)

The 2006 Federal Ministry of Defense White Paper announces that “Die Transformation der Bundeswehr ist auf dem Weg und muss konsequent fortgesetzt werden“ (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 4). The paper presents a fully modernized military combating „Armut, Unterentwicklung, Bildungsdefizite, Ressourcenknappheit, Naturkatastrophen, Umweltzerstörung, Krankheiten, Ungleichheiten und Menschenrechtsverletzungen“ which are the „Nährboden für illegale Migration und säkularen wie religiösen Extremismus“ (19). The transformation begins with the first combat missions of the late nineties being contextualized as combatting illegal migration and secular and religious extremism. These missions encompass the combat deployments against “Terroristen,” and „Nichtstaatliche Akteure” and that like the Taliban-regime in Afghanistan are responsible for „Kriminalität, Korruption, Menschenhandel und die Drogenökonomie“ (20). Accompanying these combat missions are those that secure the transportation of resources into Germany that maintain its economy, such as the combatting of „zunehmende Piraterie“ in the Gulf region (22). This new enemy presents a new mission for the deployment of troops that had only been hinted at in previous White Papers and provides a colonial context for the military mission abroad by securing access to resources. While these resources are being brought into Germany from abroad, the military is likewise securing the German economy from the effects of illegal and legal
migration by enabling „die Rückkehrung von über 400.000 Flüchtlingen aus Deutschland“ (21). The dominant rescue narrative account in this paper positions the German soldier as hero, his enemy as the vague, yet implicitly culturally distinct religious extremist, and the victim as those populations abroad threatened by violence and disasters, and at home threatened by these victims’ migration.

The contexts in which the German soldier is positioned as hero in the 2006 White Paper indicate that the Kohl plan for normalizing the German military is coming to fruition. In this chapter, I examine the role that positioning in the rescue narrative accounts of the White Paper has had on the normalization of the German military in four accounts, which are 1) the popular interest in the German as victim, 2) the equation of Hitler and the Holocaust with foreign leaders and their crimes, 3) the inclusion of women into the image of the German soldier, and 4) the concept of Leitkultur in forming images of the enemy. First, I look at the positions offered in the rescue narratives in their historical, ideological and material context (1998-2011) before analyzing their representation in the Nibelung trilogy of Thorsten Dewi and Wolfgang Hohlbein (2004,

76 The decision to participate in the first combat NATO bombing mission during the Kosovo War coincided with the final year of the initial 15-year plan for the Bundeswehr that had originated with the Kohl government back in 1983. Previous plans had been limited to 5-year budget planning, but Kohl initiated long-term strategic planning and extended this to 15 years at the outset of his tenure as chancellor. To meet the public disapproval, Manfred Wörner, the defense secretary, hired a PR firm to run an advertising campaign in order to make the Bundeswehr appear more attractive and exciting to young German men, in part due to high numbers of conscientious objectors. Considering Kohl’s objectives, all indications point to the effective use of a 15-year plan to gradually achieve a transition to normalization (see Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, Weissbuch 1985).

77 Leitkultur refers to a concept promoted by conservative politicians in the mid-2000s that proscribed an integration policy of subordinating minority cultures to the dominant German and Christian one.
2007, 2010), and followed by an examination of a counter-narrative offered in Stephanie Zweig’s *Das Haus in der Rothschildallee* (2007).

The accounts that emerged in the eighties from Nolte, Hillgruber and Kohl have become established in the security discourse to such an extent that they can serve as intuitive logic upon which the new rescue narrative positioning of the German soldier as hero can be manufactured.78 Through the repeated equation of despots like Milosevic and Hussein and genocide with Hitler and the Holocaust in broadly distributed news media demonstrates the adoption of Nolte’s strategy of relativizing the history of the Nazi period by equating the Holocaust and the Nazi leadership with other genocides and forms of totalitarian government. The new enemies that are labeled as new Hitlers committing new Holocausts can be positioned as villains and villainous acts which the German military can combat, thereby repositioning them from their own past and its associations with villainy into one of a heroic rescue.

Just as the accounts formulated by the founders of the Bundeswehr positioned the German soldier as victim of the Nazi leadership were a reaction to the accusations of the soldier’s collaboration with villainy and villainous action of the Nazi period, the intellectuals of the Neue Recht produced a plethora of German victim narratives

78 Stephen Brockmann confirms the realization of Helmut Kohl’s vision of normalization in 2006, despite its flawed reading of Kohl’s policies as a continuation of the Ost-Politik. He states that Germany “is now a country that is willing and able to use its military force in conjunction with its allies, even without a UN mandate, but that is also willing to oppose even its most powerful ally, the United States, occasionally when it disagrees with that ally on a specific tactical issue” and that “Germans were not just perpetrators but also victims of crimes during the Second World War” (Brockmann 24-6).
following the Goldhagen debates and *Wehrmacht ausstellung* controversies. These accounts and their exposure and repetition indicated a popular breakthrough and tolerance of Andreas Hillgruber’s initial equation of the suffering of German refugees with the suffering of the Jews during the Holocaust. The popularization of accounts of the German victim supported those previous accounts in which the German soldiers were depicted as emotionally victimized youth which directed attention away from their victims.

The popular success of films such as Oliver Hirschbiegel’s *Der Untergang* (2004) provided an antagonistic account to the dominant narrative concerning Hitler. Bruno Ganz, one of Germany’s leading actors, portrays a sympathetic Hitler, who through growing isolation and an inept and fearful staff is driven into a delusional madness. The Hitler in *Der Untergang* is not portrayed as villainous madman, but rather a pitiful schizophrenic, so that he can join the soldier as victim of the racist ideology of the times that his illness latched onto. Other contemporary films moved Hitler out of the position of villain and into that of a bumbling fool. For example, Dani Levy’s ill-conceived comedy

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79 Kohl’s push for “normalization” received support from conservative newspapers and what Jakob Heilbrunn has termed a growing *Neue Rechte* intellectual movement, which by the late nineties was making very controversial headlines with Walser, Enzensberger, Augstein all framing the remembrance of the Holocaust as a hindrance to developing national pride. The New Right perceives of itself as “the generation of ‘89” and to be in opposition to the generation of ‘68, opposing leftist and socialist traditions and institutions that had grown out of popular sentiment and opposition to the fascism of the years before (Heilbrunn 80-81).

80 Wim Wenders criticized the film as a “Verharmlosung” of Hitler’s ideas, policies, and crimes by presenting scenes that mythify him (Showing all types of gruesome images, but not Hitler’s death or dead body) and to which are imagined, but still claim authenticity by being associated with Joachim Fest’s book and Traudl Junge’s interview (Wenders)
Mein Führer – die wirklich wahrste Geschichte über Adolf Hitler (2007) attempts to satirize the revisionist tendencies of the New Right by depicting an inept Hitler and desperate Goebbels asking a Jewish concentration camp prisoner for help with their propaganda speech writing. This further loosening of Hitler from his position as villain by questioning his mental capacity to lead as either a pitiful schizophrenic or an imbecile destabilizes the narrative of the German soldier as the victim of his political leadership and supports alternative narratives to take hold. Volker Pispers noted such representations, point out that “Intellektuellen messen alles im Hitler” referring to those New Right intellectuals who label a dictator such as Saddam Hussein or Slobodan Milosevic as a “neues Hitler” (Pispers min. 0:30-5).

The popularity of Der Untergang that followed the New Right intellectual movement’s promotion of German victim narratives provides some evidence that normalization of the military in terms of transforming the image of the German soldier has been partially achieved. Combining the presence of these cultural artifacts with the uncontested use of the military to secure economic resources and the transport of minerals and oil, whether in the form of securing oil pipelines running through Afghanistan or waterways from Somali pirates, the economic argument for military involvement in the 2006 White Paper established itself as a viable one. Even if most of the benefits of this security goes to protect the assets of multinational corporations that may or may not be affiliated with Germany or pay them any taxes, the current deployment of the Bundeswehr incorporates the economic stability of Germany as part of
their security mission.\textsuperscript{81} The narrative consequence of this normalization is the relativizing of the image of Hitler and the Holocaust transferred to the signification of enemy images for which the Bundeswehr can be deployed.

4.1 Historical, Ideological and Material Background

Several events precede and shape the image of the enemy that emerges in the 2006 White Paper, most of which occur at the end of the nineties. Building off of the license gained in the 1994 reinterpretation of the German Basic Law to allow for out of area operations, the equivalence of enemy leaders with Hitler and foreign conflicts with the Holocaust developed into a key argument to justify Bundeswehr combat missions. The idea of a West German responsibility as an economic power to take on a more active military role was already being argued by Kohl, Strauss and Schäuble throughout the eighties and nineties, but it was first with the Green Party’s Joschka Fischer in 1998 and SPD chancellor Gerhard Schröder in 1999 that this was stated in terms of a moral obligation owed because of Germany’s collective guilt and the crimes of the past (Erb 171).\textsuperscript{82} The Bundestag debated the combat mission in Kosovo with a focus on the

\textsuperscript{81} On April 17\textsuperscript{th}, 2012 the Bundeskabinett decided to extend the Bundeswehr ability to follow (invade) Somali pirates up to two kilometers into the interior of Somalia. Helicopters can be used to pursue into the interior, and when necessary, troops may be sent in to retrieve pilots if the helicopter is disabled or shot down (Deutsche Presse Agentur par. 2-3). The very same year, Kohl compares Gorbachev to Goebbels (as a purveyor of propaganda) in an interview published in the American magazine Newsweek.

\textsuperscript{82} 1998 marked the passing in the Bundestag of the political mandate for the first combat mission since the end of World War II to be carried out in Kosovo by German Armed Forces. The argument of Joschka Fischer (Green Party) and chancellor Gerhard Schröder (SPD) was surprisingly the association of these events with the Holocaust and the comparison of Milosevic to Hitler (Cohen-Pfister, Rape 330). The Holocaust no longer became a mechanism for pacifism, but became instead a motivation for action. The rescue narrative involved in this transition positioned the German soldier as hero opposing an oppressed
German responsibility to protect the human rights of the potential victims of Milosevic, who was identified as the new Hitler (D. Becker 347-8).\textsuperscript{83} It was not a surprise that this measure found support in the CDU and opposition in Schröder’s own party and coalition partners (Erb 172).\textsuperscript{84} The Kosovo war became the first of a series of combat missions characterized as humanitarian efforts to enforce peace through lethal means. The equivalence of oppression abroad with the Holocaust served to symbolically lift the burden of the past and its associations from the German military. With the intellectual right harnessing a collective guilt of the Holocaust to argue for the obligation to participate in conflict, the German soldier could finally be positioned in a rescue narrative as hero, rather than villain or victim.

The terrorist attacks on September 11\textsuperscript{th}, 2001 shifted attention towards non-state actors as the enemies and given their declaration of \textit{Jihad}, there emerged a popular understanding of the terrorist threat as an Islamic extremist. The shock of these attacks

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\textsuperscript{83} Other equivalences with Hitler and the Nazis appeared under the Bush presidency with Saddam Hussein being equated with Hitler and in the State of the Union address in 2002, Bush labeled Iran, Iraq and North Korea as the “Axis of Evil” borrowing and modifying those associations for the German-Japanese enemy of WWII labeled by FDR as the “Axis Powers” (Heradstveit and Bonham 421-2)

\textsuperscript{84} In 1999, ground troops (2,813) and air support (bombers) were deployed as part of the NATO led KFOR contingent, for a mission that continues today. SPD party Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who was supposed to offer an alternative to Kohl’s policies, simply continued with them, forming what was termed the “New Middle” and earning him the nickname “Genosse der Bosse.” The losses of the SPD in local elections in October coupled with large demonstrations in Berlin calling for Schröder to go home indicated dissatisfaction with Schröder’s austerity plans and his decision to bring German troops into the Yugoslavian War (Glauber 2). As public disapproval continued over the controversial deployment, a second came in August of 2001, as 600 German soldiers were sent to Macedonia to help with the disarming of UÇK insurgents.
were intensified in Germany as details led back to Hamburg as a planning, training and recruitment center for the terrorist plot. Because the terrorists had took advantage of freedoms of private citizens in Germany to make their actions covert, restrictions to these freedoms came under consideration as a means to counter-act terrorism. These enemies as non-state agents were not recognized by President George W. Bush, who intended to invade Iraq and invoked the comparison of Saddam Hussein to Hitler with an argument of hidden weapons of mass destruction bent on destroying the US and Israel.

As George Bush Jr. pressured Schröder to invade Iraq, Bush found support from conservative politicians, such CDU party leader Wolfgang Schäuble, who argued that Germany should join the US as an act of good faith and were obligated to because of their mutual alliance (Harnisch 70). The political and public majority did not support an invasion of Iraq since it would constitute an illegal action clearly prohibited by the language of the German Basic Law (article 26), German Criminal Law (Section 80 of the German Criminal Code) and International Law (UN Charter article 2 (4)) (Ambos 248-9). Schröder’s opposition to the US invasion of Iraq arguably won him his narrow 2002 re-election with the help of the coalition partner Green Party, even after years of voter disappointment with his austerity measures, entrance into the Kosovo war, and his

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85 In 2010, the mosque where Muhammad Atta met with other 911 hijackers came again under suspicion of encouraging extremism (members receiving training in Uzbekistan) was closed and the group banned (BBC News par. 4).

86 Justice Minister Herta Däubler-Gmelin compared Bush’s use of a potential Iraq war with Hitler’s use of foreign policy to distract people from economic problems (Erb 206).

87 In 2003, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld had Germany listed alongside Libya as those refusing to cooperate with the US (Erb 209).
political maneuver to force Germany through a vote of confidence into the Afghanistan War (Biehl par. 1-2).

Bush’s rhetoric on Iraq often used a simple narrative of revenge that cited threats made towards his father which resonated with certain segments of the American people, but was rejected by German politicians and institutions (Sanger par. 5-29). Antje Vollmer (Green Party) then vice president of the Bundestag reiterated that the alliance with the US and their role in the NATO was based upon shared values and that revenge was not one of these (Erb 193). Support for the war among Germans was subdued if not oppositional with Churches calling for protection of civilians and pleading against a war of revenge, which because of the deceptive claim that Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction received broader support in the US (194). Schröder was unwilling and unable to gather support for such an invasion, as he had already spent much of his political capital on tying a vote of no confidence to a vote on Afghanistan, which if it had failed would have triggered a parliamentary election (Schwarz par. 1). As the 2005 election produced no clear coalition majority, a grand coalition was formed ceding Angela Merkel (CDU) the chancellorship.88

By the time the White Paper is produced in 2006 under new chancellor Angela Merkel, the Afghanistan conflict entered its fifth year, the German troop contribution has been increases to 4,500 soldiers, there have been 47 wounded and 20 German soldiers

88 Schröder declined to take on a political post and signed a lucrative deal to become lobbyist for Gazprom and the Nord Stream project functioning as chairman of the shareholder’s committee for the company that now provides Germany and much of Europe its natural gas (Deutsche Presse Agentur par. 7-9).
killed, and the image of a culturally distinct enemy has been further established. Other enemy images that populate the White Paper are often those that are described in general and abstract terms, such as the terrorist, drug dealers, pirate and even the danger of uncontrolled migration to civilian populations justify the development and deployment of rapid reaction forces. Because of their abstract nature, these enemies have the potential to be generalized to stereotype cultural minorities living in Germany and the West, especially those cultures typically associated with Islam. The Bundeswehr was given the task of combatting foreign as well as domestic terrorism. A majority vote in 2008 backed by both CDU and SPD ratified the German constitution to allow for the use of the military domestically in emergency situations which envisioned the aftermath of a terrorist attack (Deutsche Presse Agentur par. 1-3).

As the image of the enemy was crystalizing around a culturally distinct opposition to the German European Christian soldier, other events were moving the German from the position of perpetrator and villain of the Goldhagen debates into the position of victims of the aftermath of the war. The accounts of German victimization that became more popularly accepted were those focusing on the expulsion of German refugees from

89 The Bosporus murders, also known as the Döner-Morde, of 6 Turkish citizens, 2 Turkish Germans and one Greek occurred between 2000-2006 and were originally considered to be the work of a Turkish mafia, only to later be confirmed as a Neo-nazi act of terrorism. That these acts may have been aided by a member or members of the Hessen Verfassungsschutzgesetz officers is still under investigation.

90 The Notstandsgesetze that were added to the constitution in 1968 under massive protest (by the student movement), were feared to allow for a legal means for authoritarian government (such as Fascism) to seize power and remove political enemies and opposition. Now with the coupling of the use of the military in a domestic realm (terrorist attack cited as an example in the White Paper) with these laws, a military coup can be imagined as an extreme, but still possible legal means of a party to establish authoritarian rule.
East Prussia, the victims of Soviet forces during this expulsion, and the victims of the Allied air-raids (Taberner 134). While the German victim narrative was present throughout most of the post-war years, W.G. Sebald’s poetics lectures in Zurich in 1997 criticized the Gruppe ’47 authors for their silence on German suffering. The following year in his Peace Prize acceptance speech, Martin Walser positioned authors like himself as victims of the memory of the Holocaust, Jewish critics and authors of the ’68 generation.

Jeder kennt unsere geschichtliche Last, die unvergängliche Schande, kein Tag, an dem sie uns nicht vorgehalten wird. Könnte es sein, dass die Intellektuellen, die sie uns vorhalten, dadurch, dass sie uns die Schande vorhalten, eine Sekunde lang der Illusion verfallen, sie hätten sich, weil sie wieder im grausamen Erinnerungsdienst gearbeitet haben, ein wenig entschuldigt, seien für einen Augenblick sogar näher bei den Opfern als bei den Tätern? Eine momentane Milderung der unerbittlichen Entgegengesetztheit von Tätern und Opfern. (Walser par. 5)

Walser accuses authors, such as Grass, of hypocrisy, of positioning themselves alongside the victims of the Holocaust in a synthesis of German and Jewish victimization to alleviate their own guilt and complicity in the German atrocities. Walser goes further to

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91 In Hans-Georg Betz study of German victimization, he points out a particular case from 1994 involving the views of Günter Deckert, who agreed with the views of Fred Leuchter, an expert in gas chamber construction, who doubted the claim of the mass genocide by gas during the Holocaust. After an initial sentencing of 1 year for Holocaust denial, the case bounced from Federal to the state court of Mannheim, where the judges found him not Anti-Semitic, but rather claiming that Jews continued to persecute Germany fifty years after the end of the war “while the mass crimes committed by other peoples remained unpunished” (Betz 45).

Betz maintains that the national identity of the unified Germany is of a post-conventional nature as a civilian power, this ignores, however, those steps being undertaken by the German government in using the Bundeswehr in more combat oriented missions (support like UNOSOM II and the Persian Gulf War), and Betz paints this effective and highly rational stance of pacifism as a shirking of responsibility, much in line with the rhetoric of conservative politicians, and predicts that this will soon come to an end (Betz 59).
accuse Jews of using the Holocaust to their advantage, and he positions New Right authors like himself as their victims, who have felt that “Auschwitz eignet sich nicht, dafür Drohroutine zu werden, jederzeit einsetzbares Einschüchterungsmittel oder Moralkanone oder auch nur Pflichtübung” (par. 6). Because of the content of Walser’s next novel, Tod eines Kritikers (2002), he was accused of propagating a latent Antisemitism in his depiction of figure modeled after Marcel-Reich Ranicki, about whom he had said in 1998 that “in unserem Verhältnis ist er der Täter und ich bin das Opfer” (Süddeutsche Zeitung 8).

These positions expressed by two contemporary literary intellectuals the stature of Sebald and Walser precipitated a surge in production of German victim narratives from the end of the war (Brünger 4). The first novel to breakthrough critically and popularly was Hans-Ulrich Treichel’s Der Verlorene (1998) in which the fate of a German refugee family is described from the perspective of a young boy, whose brother had been lost while fleeing from an advancing Soviet army. In 2003, Eine Frau in Berlin (1953), a women’s diary recounting the last days of Berlin originally was republished and was developed into a film in 2008 that was criticized as turning a sensitive topic into melodrama (Cohen-Pfister, Rape 327-9). 2003 also saw the publication of Jörg Ignatz Bubis, head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, took offense to Walser’s speech, calling his speech a “geistige Brandstiftung,” which he later retracted, and which much later after Bubis’ death, Walser apologized for his own polemical position. Walser later apologized for his behavior in a Hamburger Abendblatt article in 2007, Bubis had passed away in 1999 (Spiegel Online par. 3-5).

92 After the initial publication brought public outrage, the book was been pulled at the author’s request because of its negative reception at that time, and only published by Joachim Fest after she passed. The historian Joachim Fest had also been credited as co-author of Der Untergang (2004).
Friedrich’s *Der Brand*, which described the devastation of the US and British bombing of Dresden and drew criticism from historian Hans Ulrich Wehler for equating the bombings with the Holocaust and decontextualizing the events from the War (Feld 4).

The growing acceptance of narratives of German suffering during this period was a further sign that German national identity had separated itself from a pacifist self-conception. “So viel Hitler war nie” stated Norbert Frei amidst the obsessive media coverage of Germany’s past in 2004 and the ensuing “Opferkonkurrenz” (Frei 1). The popularity of these narratives also saw contributions from writers typically associated with the left, such as Günter Grass, whose *Im Krebsgang* (2002) concerned itself with the sinking of the *Wilhelm Gustloff* by a Soviet submarine while evacuating civilians, troops, and Nazi officials out of East Prussia. Grass presents accounts derived from a vibrant subculture of *Geschichtsverfälschung* and Anti-Semitic passages without much counter-argument for which the book has been criticized (Hrdlík 27-31). Other critics have read the book as a satire and critique of the obsession with German victimization (Krimmer 113). The style in which his narrator distances himself to his actions by referring to them in the third person creates the sense that the connection of suffering between generations is an illusion and a memory game of dissociation. This turn towards a project that supported the New Right surprised many critics; his next book surprised them even more. Grass reveals in his literary autobiographical novel *Beim Häuten der Zwiebel* (2006) that as a boy he had joined the anti-aircraft auxiliaries, then the *Wehrmacht*, and finally the SS. Grass’ memory is fuzzy in those moments in which he implicates himself as an agent
seeking out war, while in recounting his fascination with the sinking of the Wilhelm Gustloff, his memory is clear, precise and full of details, just as it is in witnessing the aftermath of the bombing of Dresden. Grass’ admission that he had served in the SS, the military wing of the Nazis, surprised his readership and his political allies.\(^94\) This admonition brought those comments of Walser to bear upon Grass’ position

At the start of the new millennium and concurrent to the growing popularity of the German victim narrative were rescue narrative accounts, both historical and fictional, that began to use an image of the soldier as a sacrificial hero. The most predominant narrative account that does this is the July 20\(^{th}\) assassination attempt on Hitler and subsequent failed coup.\(^95\) The narratives of these events provided a positioning of Wehrmacht officers as resistance fighters attempting to rescue the German people from the Nazi regime.\(^96\) As the narrative account of the July 20\(^{th}\) conspirators moved the Wehrmacht into a position of hero, a revision of the image of the soldier was being proposed by US secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld for allies like Germany to develop a rapid reaction force for the NATO in 2002. The transformation of the Eurocorps into such a force had already been considered in 1999 so that by 2001, the European Security and Defense

\(^94\) Grass maintains that he volunteered for submarine service, but due to a shortage of submarines, he was placed in the SS.

\(^95\) The year 2004 marked the 60\(^{th}\) anniversary of the events and television and film producers took advantage of the timing with the TV film *Stauffenberg* airing at home as Hirschbiegel’s *Der Untergang* ran in the cinema. The documentary on Dietrich Bonhoeffer by Martin Doblmeier, released in 2003, earned a variety of accolades and press in 2004.

\(^96\) The moral voice of the group, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, supported the justification of the use of lethal force in certain matters of conscience that aligned with the argument for military deployment found in the White Paper that supported intervention in and elimination of governments that are actively engaging in genocide.
Rumsfeld’s vision of the new soldier was that of a lightly armored and stealthy soldier that has been used effectively in pilot recovery operations, assassinations, kidnappings and extraditions, but as a combat soldier has fallen under heavy criticism.97

A quick response-reaction force implies quick decisions to deploy them, which in a German context circumvents the requirement that the Bundestag debate and consider, weigh and reflect upon such decisions (Erb 191). The development of such a force is one way in which the restructuring of the Bundeswehr has undermined the political process that is constitutionally required to be involved in decisions concerning their deployment. Likewise, engaging in conflict abroad separates the soldier from civilian society for long periods of time and contributes to the growth of a military subculture separate from civilian life and poses challenges to the ideal of the civilian-in-uniform no longer practically attainable (Axer-Dämmer 103). These and other changes are addressed in the 2006 White Paper which details the integration of the German command structure into international forces, thereby further sidestepping the political process required by the German Basic Law through the relinquishment of the command of forces.98

97 Rumsfeld described a “quick and agile” force, also referring to it as an “expeditionary force, a strike force, which can move fast” (Erlanger par. 1). This led to the curtailing of body armor for infantry, armor in vehicles, and allowed for insurgence, but was flawed for holding territory. The lack of armor became an issue for those reservists being deployed who thought they may be getting inferior equipment, and when asked Rumsfeld at a town hall style meeting, he replied "If you think about it, you can have all the armor in the world on a tank and a tank can be blown up" skirting around the concerns of those being deployed (E. Schmitt par. 8).

98 Lühr Henken and Peter Strutynski argue that the 2006 White Paper outlines actions that are in conflict with German and International Law. For example, preventative action is conflict that would be initiated by the Bundeswehr and should be understood as aggression, or preventative warfare, which brings Henken and
transition in the image of the German soldier from victim to hero came fairly rapidly and provided a social position with increasingly positive associations. It brought about another shift with the European court decision on equality to allow women to volunteer for combat duty in the *Bundeswehr*.

For women to serve in combat was forbidden by the German Basic law. The prohibition was a result of the conscription of women into the Wehrmacht in numbers that reached more than 45,000 with most serving in support roles, such as anti-aerial, during the Second World War (Seifert, Soldiers 186). Because these women were not classified as soldiers, they were not afforded the protections of international law that males were and were at war’s end at the mercy of the advancing armies (186). A combination of chauvinism and the memory of atrocities against women committed at the end of the war by the Soviet army and in their forced service by the Nazi government

Strutynski to claim that the suspicion of terrorism is argued to be fought with pro-active German government sponsored terrorism (Henken and Strutynski, Bundesregierung). The German constitution is similarly at odds with 1) using the military to secure the raw materials for economic means, 2) forcing the army to operate beyond its borders to protect private corporate interests with public moneys and 3) promoting a forward defense which has led to the procurement of weaponry that is of an primarily offensive nature, such as U-boats outfitted with surface to surface missiles to combat piracy. In the name of effectively combating piracy, in 2012 attack helicopters and extraction teams were granted allowance to pursue pirates up to 2 km inland, effectively allowing invasion on a limited scale (Deutsche Presse Agentur par. 1-2).

99 This number does not include medical personnel but does including a battalion of women soldiers trained for combat towards the end of the war, which never had a chance to deploy.

100 On the other hand, some women had achieved recognition both for achievements within the *Reichswehr*, such as the test pilot Hanna Reitsch, who was the only woman to ever receive the Iron Cross (1942) (Bundeswehr par. 5). While other women were mentioned for their role in opposition to National Socialist leadership, who in 2005 were recognized in the commemorative speech by Peter Struck for the July 20th assassination attempt, though when going into detail to discuss key figures, only men were specifically named (Struck par. 10).
provided the impetus to include an article in the German Basic Law to forbid women from bearing arms and from being conscripted.

The inclusion of women into the armed forces was suggested already in the mid-eighties as a solution to the projected shortfall of conscripted males by the end of the decade. In a 1986 interview, Inspector General Wolfgang Altenberg refutes the idea of conscription for women but suggests that women be allowed to serve in accordance with the German Basic Law, i.e. non-combat, and leaves this question open to public discussion (Der Spiegel 77). Kohl deleted the paragraph concerning the inclusion of women in the military from the funding request written by Altenberg to be presented to the Bundestag (40). The idea was likewise dismissed by his Generals, such as Brigadier General Heinz Karst, who thought the inclusion of women, even restricted to non-arms bearing roles, would be detrimental to the inner functioning of the military (Karst 87).

Mixed criticism came from journalists, such as Cora Stephan, who characterized the female soldier muck like a Private Benjamin (1980) with “rote Lippen, leicht geöffnet, große Kinderaugen, blonde Zöpfchen – und das alles unter einem runden Blechtopf: So etwa sähe sie aus, die bundesdeutsche Soldatin” that emphasized her sexuality and naiveté (Stephan 86) Stephan described the physical and emotional make-up of the female soldier as "zwar physisch schwächer…dafür aber ausdauernder,

101 This does not include medical personal. Women had been serving as Sanitätshelferinnen since 1975.
102 For reasons, such as Claire Marienfeld (CDU) explained, in which the male instinct to protect a female would be detrimental to the military (Seifert, Soldiers 192).
widerstandsfähiger, effizienter und –leidensfähig“ in a stereotypical caricature of real women (86). The possibilities for women to serve in a more combat-oriented role appeared to Stephan to be unproblematic as technology progressed and new types of warfare emerged and battles would be fought from much longer distances (87). At this stage, there is no serious attempt by women to break into the armed forces, as the predominance of thinking thought that women should not be put in harm’s way, in the same manner that a man would.

In 2000, Tanja Kriel took the Bundesregierung to European court to force Germany to alter its stance on women bearing arms. The Court’s decision found German law to be in conflict with European law on the equality of genders in the workplace and so the language of Germany’s constitutional Article 12 §4 was altered to forbid the government from conscripting women, but to allow for their volunteer combat service (Raible 301-2). The argument of equality which had earned Tanja Kriel her right to serve in Afghanistan was extended in the last half of the first decade of the new millennium by CDU politicians to the abeyance of conscription, producing a fully professionalized military by the century’s end.

103 At the time, Stephan is most likely thinking of the prevalence of missile warfare and the role women could play in that, while drone warfare has come to play a large part in both surveillance and combat missions.

104 In 1975, women gained the right to serve in Bundeswehr support roles that were typically associated with female caregiving, such as veterinarians, pharmacologists, nurses, dentists and doctors, and two women achieved the highest rank of Generalarzt in 1994. In 1998 women were allowed to serve as musicians.

105 By eliminating conscription and alternative social service, the cost of social welfare programs increased and created budget shortfalls that necessitated the reduction of these social services, while the elimination of conscription required the full professionalization of the military. As the alternative social service was
With women now able to fight and die alongside their male counterparts, politicians and experts was continued anxiety over the effect the mixing of gender would have upon the effectiveness of the combat unit.\textsuperscript{106} One study revealed that the integration of women into a combat unit generated a polarization effect in which males reverted to traditional male behavior (Kümmel 361).\textsuperscript{107} This polarization suggests a further effect in which the males identify their role with more dangerous and aggressive forms of combat duty as means of differentiating themselves from the females now surrounding them. Following the logic of the construction of identity through binary opposition, the male soldiers would be willing to take on combat missions in order to define their masculinity and disregard support missions as feminine. Extrapolating this psychological dynamic onto the collective identity of the Bundeswehr, after the introduction of women into combat missions of the armed forces, there is still a disproportionate amount of male soldiers that seek combat duty, while the vast majority of women continue to serve in sometimes used as a type of apprenticeship, its elimination left the military with its professionalization as a viable career choice for young adults.

\textsuperscript{106} Sabine Collmer conducted a survey of attitudes towards women in the Bundeswehr in 2000, the year before women were allowed a combat role. She found that the question of women soldiers robbing a man of his identity were more prevalent in the lower ranks, whereas officers were more likely to see them as equals, and a quarter of those questioned did not see any place for women in the military (Collmer 141). Opposition was framed in terms of feminism and chauvinism. For example, Sibylle Raasch questioned whether women bearing arms in the military should be seen as a victory for feminism when it necessitated the defeat of pacifism, whether it can be viewed as an issue of equality, when it furthers incorporates the women into a system of patriarchy (Raasch 248-9). On the other hand, Martin van Creveld proposed that by allowing women to participate in war, an army was reducing the social privilege of the male role, thereby destroying men’s reason for existing and his existential grounding (Creveld 5-6).

\textsuperscript{107} The males in this study provide evidence to support a theory of social identity in which genders are intuitively defined through binary opposition, so that when the one gender encroaches upon the social functional space of the other, they adopt the stereotypical behaviors culturally attributed to that space. In this case, both males and females adopted more traditional masculine behaviors to lay claim to the social functional space of the soldier.
traditional support roles, such as medical personnel (363-4). In 2000, Tanja Kriel broke into a position previously held exclusively by males, Angela Merkel became the first female chairperson of the CDU and in 2005, the first female chancellor of Germany. A year after Merkel became chancellor the 2006 White Paper was produced and defined the enemy as non-state entities, religious extremists, terrorists and pirates, who could attack both abroad and at home. While careful of using the language that would stereotype these enemies as non-Christian, the implications of the terrorist and pirate attacks associated with developing countries and Islamic extremists, followed the predictions of Huntington and the narrative of the CDU as voiced by Schäuble in the previous decade. The concept of German *Leitkultur* became part of the party program in 2007 and demanded that other cultures subordinate themselves to the German majority culture. The majority culture was defined by the CSU as the language, tradition, and Christian-occidental values of Germany and by the CDU as, among other things, the “konfessionelle Tradition, das besondere Verhältnis zwischen Staat und Kirche und die Verantwortung, die den Deutschen aus den Erfahrungen zweier totalitärer Regime auch für die Zukunft erwächst” (GRA Stiftung gegen Rassismus und Antisemitismus par. 3). The concept of a *Leitkultur* led to Horst Seehofer’s controversial comment that “Multikulti ist tot” or in Merkel’s own words “Multikulti ist absolut gescheitert” (Schrader par. 2-4). Seehofer believes that immigrants are coming to Germany to live off of welfare, and that Germany should not become the “Sozialamt für die ganze Welt”

108 A good number of women serve now: 18,000 in the Bundeswehr with the largest number (7,000) serving as medical support staff.
while Merkel supports the German *Leitkultur* argument that requires immigrants adopt a “christlichen Menschenbild” and whoever does not do this “ist fehl am Platz!” (par. 4). These statements implied a warning to minority cultures living in Germany to either adopt a German identity or risk deportation, while providing further justification for the reduction of the welfare state and the depiction of immigrants and refugees as a nonproductive drain on society. The change in immigration policy was heralded as moving away from an ethnic conception of nation, but then produced a notion of cultural conformity in the concept of *Leitkultur* that based German identity on “christlich-abendländischen Werte” (GRA Stiftung gegen Rasismus und Antisemitismus par. 2).

The suggested requirement of adopting, among other things, Occidental-Christian values for immigrants wanting to attain German citizenship parallels the shift in identity presented for the German soldier in the 2006 White Paper. The Christian soldier is presented in stark contrast to the stereotype of the immigrant, who is listed among the victims of oppressive foreign regimes. This new relationship of the German soldier to foreign populations is evidence of a major change in the functioning of the *Bundeswehr* as a normalized military. Those thoughtful restrictions written into the Basic Law and integrated in the structure and ideology of the *Bundeswehr* by Wolf Graf von Baudissin have gradually been removed, reinterpreted, and revised, so that just 21 years after unification on the 11th of July, 2011, the *Bundeswehr* become an exclusively professional army. Through a strategy of assuming an expanding role in supranational and federal cooperative political and security structures and taking advantage of opportunistic and
deliberate changes to security policy, Kohl’s vision of a normalized military has been realized. There is still popular opposition against the use of the military in Afghanistan and elsewhere and to the growth of nationalism in Germany, but for this period, these actions have become tolerated and a new sense of German nationalism and global presence has been established. As the Bundeswehr continues to operate as a normalized military and this receives political and media backing, the dominant rescue narrative account will position the soldier as hero and the enemy along the cultural and economic lines predicted by Huntington in 1993 (25-9).


This section begins with a brief discussion of Wolfgang Hohlbein and Thorsten Dewi’s alterations to the *Nibelungen* material that position Siegfried as a compassionate warrior and depict foreign populations as suffering under illegitimate leadership. *Der Ring der Nibelungen* (2004) ends promising new hope for the next generation. *Die Rache der Nibelungen* ends with the protagonist’s renunciation of military power for the simple life of a fisherman. *Das Erbe der Nibelungen* ends with a narrative bridge from the *Nibelung* material into a new basis for Pan-European narrative in King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, which offers hero positions to members of different groups in a narrative of cooperative defense. This narrative turn stabilizes the German soldier with an identity within a greater European context and with a common Christian
background. The first of these narratives follows upon the wave of renewed interest in *Nibelung* material after the entry of the *Bundeswehr* into the Afghanistan War in 2001.

The establishment of a new institution in the form of the *Nibelungen Myth* museum and its annual production of Hebbel’s *Nibelung* plays provided ideological support for the image of the German soldier in combat. With the opening of the museum, the airing of the TV movie *Die Nibelungen* (2003/2004) and numerous adaptations, including Hohlbein and Dewi’s *Nibelung* trilogy (2004, 2007, 2010), the public was exposed to new versions of the traditional ideal representations of the German warrior. The adaptations geared towards the broadest audiences incorporated changes that echoed the contemporary image of the German soldiers and their global context.

The Hohlbein and Dewi *Nibelung* adaptation made several changes to the plot and figural representation that reflected new views on the image of the ideal warrior. The traditional position of Siegfried as masculine ideal and Hagen as villain were accompanied by Brünhild as a powerful woman warrior and Kriemhild as a cunning political power. Brünhild’s representation as a warrior is a traditional depiction, but she is

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109 The idea for the museum began shortly after unification in the early 90’s at which it initially met resistance from the people living in Worms, but by 1999 the mood had shifted and the *Nibelungengesellschaft* began on construction of the museum. The initial opposition and eventual acceptance indicates the development of the public’s opinion in terms of Nationalism within a single community, but also is representative of the overall trend throughout Germany. The museum is a collective symbol of the preservation of nationalism in a new age, a hyper-tomb that accumulates and constructs an artificial digital memory with the promise of the inescapable longevity of eternal plastic. The museum’s phallic tower makes it a focal point of Worms and within the phallus, the visitor is surrounded by visual and audial artifacts of the “myth”, so that one sees film clips, paintings, pictures and other media cascading down from the ceiling amidst the multilayered sensual overload of Wagnerian opera. The guest is entrapped within an aquarium of liquid myth that unashamedly does little to conceal its historical and national aspirations.
often shrouded in mystery that rarely allows her to be developed as an identificatory figure. Kriemhild is traditionally part of the royal family but rarely makes or engages in any political decisions of the kingdom for the first part of the epic in which she awaits or defers to her brothers or Siegfried’s wishes. The greater explicit emphasis on these roles demonstrates that author and reader expectations and interests have changed to allow for a fuller development of these women as powerful martial and political figures. While Kriemhild and Brunhild are not allegorical figures, they do reflect those strides made by women in the contemporary context of Germany, such as the European court ruling in favor of Tanja Kriel’s application to become a combat soldier and Angela Merkel’s chancellorship, so that their depiction is something recognizable, progressive, and current.

The arrival of Siegfried to Worms signals a departure from the traditional depiction of the prestige and power of the Burgundian kingdom. Rather than present Burgundia as the formidable threat of a rival nation, the impression made upon Siegfried is one that represents a kingdom torn by war and famine that implies illegitimate rule. Siegfried’s arrival echoes the conditions that describe the expectations of those areas typically serviced by Bundeswehr relief missions.

Je näher sie der Stadt kamen, desto mehr häuften sich die Zeichen, die Weiber und Pfaffen als böse Omen gedeutet hätten. Vögel lagen mit halb verbrannten Gefieder am Wegesrand, ein einsames Schwert steckte im Boden, als wäre es ein Grabstein. Wie bleiche Finger kroch ein Nebel aus Utgard zu formen schienen. Das Skelett eines Mannes, schon lange vom Fleisch befreit, hing irgendwo in einer Baumkrone, lächerlich und mahnend zugleich. (Hohlbein and Dewi, Der Ring 83)
The text creates a sense of foreboding with imagery of death and battle and similes that point to the despair of a defeated people, such as the sword like a grave, fog like pale fingers and the image of a fleshless skeleton perched upon a tree. Siegfried’s first impression of Burgundia is one that presents the people’s need for his aid as a warrior to provide relief. As Siegfried continues to make his way to the castle, he is confronted by more images that support a reader’s interpretation of the illegitimate rule of the Burgundians. Siegfried meets a man who “legte ein schwarzes, brüchiges Bündel dem Kronprinzen zu Füssen” so that “was er erkannte, wollte er gleich wieder aus seinem Kopf verbannen” (116). These first impressions provide Siegfried his motivation to offer his help to the Burgundian people who are suffering. Siegfried is moved by compassion and empathy to defeat the dragon, rather than his traditional motivation to prove he is the best warrior. In this passage and others like it, the influence of the new Bundeswehr identity makes itself apparent: combat is interpreted as a means to relieve foreign oppression, not prove one’s manhood.

As Siegfried arrives at the castle, he finds those living within its walls insulated from the poverty and famine outside. This juxtaposition allows the text to relate the motivation for combat that replaces a philosophy of life as Kampf with a philosophy of responsibility of the stronger to protect the weak. This switch from an egocentric motivation to conquer and dominate foreign populations to one of compassionate defense of foreign populations is a new motivation for the hero Siegfried. This new motivation provides positions as found in the integration of national self-interest through
supranational organizations in relief missions in the White Papers. To further illustrate this new direction, the dragon’s hoard won by Siegfried is used to pay the victims for their damages, compensating those who had suffered, rather than being sent to Burgundia as tribute (244). In this rescue narrative account, the positioning corresponds to the account provided by the White Paper: the hero warrior enters a foreign land and provides relief to the victims of a villainous leadership.110

As the action moves toward exotic location of Etzergom, there are further representations of the identity of the warrior in relation to those developing areas in which conflicts arise. Kriemhild’s arrival in Etzergom mirrors that of Siegfried’s arrival in Worms in that the reader’s attention is drawn to the plight of the people. Kriemhild’s awareness of the poverty in which the children grow up provides an empathetic and compassionate motivation for her to protect them. The narrator describes the children as “nicht minder dreckig als die Tiere...um die sich niemand recht zu kümmern schien” (445). The image of neglected children, as dirty as animals and cared for by no one, moves Kriemhild to consider her home and the destitution of those that live impoverished in the East. This cultural hierarchy is identifiable in Kriemhild’s joke that Etzergom is not quite like the “modern” courts of Europe and in her idealization of the East as a colonial opportunity.111 Her statement that “die Barberei ist auch in meinem Volk erst seit

110 The dragon is an effective representation of traditional motivation for the exploitation of populations, such as greed, but also symbolizes the modern means of warfare with death coming from missiles, bombs, and other projectiles from above.

111 This colonization of the East can be seen in Adalbert Stifter’s Brigitte (1844) and in the Karl May inspired vision of the Wild East by Hitler and Himmler.
wenigen Generationen gebannt“ establishes common ground and a trajectory for the Huns that anticipates the development of civilization and a modern court of Europe as a goal (445). She implies that barbarism is an evolutionary stage, which Burgund is now past only by a few generations, which provides an analogous situation for the German self-understanding of the first half of the twentieth century as a process of nation building and that the goal for intervention abroad is to prevent and push developing nations past this stage.¹¹² The image that follows is somewhat farcical in that Kriemhild forces the integration of her soldiers with the Huns. This juxtaposition depicts the knights wearing armor, the symbols of European wealth and power, and caring for and commiserating with the destitute and “savage” Huns. Not only does this scene provide an image of the warrior upon a relief mission, but it also emphasizes the economic and cultural differences between the Christian European and the Pagan savage in cadence with the concept of Leitkultur.

When Etzel suggests that Kriemhild would not be happy away from her home and that “verglichen mit deiner Herkunft muss es dir hier wie einem Schweinestall vorkommen,“ she merely replies that she will be fine and jokingly points out she may need more clothing as hers were “vollgesogen…mit Kot und Dreck” (446). The depiction of the living conditions as a pigpen and her clothes soaked with excrement and muck is further emphasized by the acute awareness of both Etzel and Kriemhild that these are

¹¹² One of the narratives proposed by Ernst Nolte in the eighties was that the Holocaust was comparable to other genocides and implied that it was a typical feature of nation building.
substandard in relation to the courts of Europe. This brief conversation provides a concise explanation of the German relief mission abroad in those terms also found in the 1994 White Paper.

The novel addresses past tradition and images as dangerous temptations to immorally seek self-aggrandizement that must be guarded against that is akin to the sin of pride in the Christian worldview. The disembodied voices of the Nibelungs warn Siegfried to return to the barbaric past that Kriemhild alluded to in her conversation with Etzel. The voices present the danger of transforming Siegfried’s initial impulse to help provide relief into a self-serving venture that would lead to the exploitation of the people in need. In the following passage, Siegfried uses the following logic to claim the treasure as his own that he finds after defeating the dragon.

Nimm nicht, was nicht dein!
Siegfried, bis zu den Schenkeln im Wasser, drehte sich um: „Wer seid ihr? Wie könnt ihr mir versagen, was ich mir erstritten habe?“
Erstritten nur den Kopf des Drachen...
„Und alles, was ich in seinem Besitz finde!“ (230)

The voice reminds readers that what motivated Siegfried to defeat the dragon was to alleviate the people’s suffering, and therefore by removing the head, the people have gained their freedom. The voice continues to warn him from taking those resources that have become available to him through this act, which he uses in part to compensate the people for their losses, it also brings him political power. Such considerations are antagonistic to the motivation of compassion, as the opportunity for self-enrichment and
aggrandizement presents itself to Siegfried and analogously to Germany through its missions abroad.

In this version, Brünhild takes the matter of revenge into her own hands, rather than entrust it those who she knows had willingly deceived her. Such an active role is new to the plot and echoes the more active role women can take in the military. These innovations produce a vastly different confrontation between the queens than in traditional adaptations. The two queens forge a bond of solidarity by recognizing their mutual deception. Kriemhild punishes Siegfried by banishing him to sleep with the pigs and apologizes to Brunhild for his behavior in the hopes that a diplomatic solution can deter her from wanting revenge. This solidarity between the queens allows for a unified voice to deem the men’s political and physical humiliation of Brünhild unacceptable. Kriemhild’s request that Brunhild forgive her and her husband emphasizes her belief in a Christian ethos and in using diplomacy to avoid conflict, and although it is ineffective, it illustrates the importance of seeking a political resolution in order to avoid violence.

In the traditional narrative, Brunhild wishes to be wed only to a man who is her equal, in order to ensure that she is not marrying below her status and will relinquish her ability to rule to her husband. The Brunhild of Hohlbein and Dewi’s adaptation, however, views a weaker king as an opportunity to rule the kingdom herself, since “es wäre ratsamer, sich einen schwachen Mann in starker Position zu erwählen, um in der Ehe die Fäden in der Hand zu behalten” (136). The strengths of these female figures move the plot to its tragic conclusion. Brünhild becomes obsessed with revenge, while Kriemhild
uses her diplomatic skills to lure her brothers and Hagen to her new kingdom with Etzel. In addition to characters traditionally inhabiting the *Nibelung* material, new figures appear that introduce more contemporary perspectives into the novel and provide the basis for sequels.

The new female character introduced in the narrative is Elsa, the daughter of Hagen. Elsa suffers under her father’s care and provides a figure in which a generational conflict can be expressed and a romantic narrative can be introduced between her and Gernot, the youngest of the Burgundian royal family and aspiring artist. The two lovers are depicted as idealists who refuse to follow in the footsteps of the previous generation. Elsa recognizes her father as a murderer and because of this her relationship to him causes her great inner turmoil. Gernot, like Kriemhild, despises war and would rather spend his time devoted to studying the fine arts. After the death of Siegfried and Kriemhild, their son is entrusted to the care of Else and Gernot, who in the final act of the narrative take the cursed ring from the baby and throw it into the woods in a symbolic act of rejecting power gained through force of arms. The novel ends with an epilogue that focuses on the values of the new family that rejects the power the ring represents. The survival of Siegfried and Kriemhild’s offspring indicates the potential for the serialization of the narrative.

In the sequel *Die Rache der Nibelungen* (2007), the authors depart from the *Nibelung* material in creative ways that signify moving beyond the traditional narrative that create new positions for the figures. Apart from the departures in the representation
of new figures, the plot maintains the main points of the traditional narrative structure of revenge found in the traditional material, but other elements, such as the setting for the second half of the narrative, move from an external conflict with other groups of different nationalities, to the monsters of a spiritual realm. The increased use of fantasy elements moves the narrative further away from the claims of historical, legendary, and authentic material associated with the traditional narrative. Despite the many possibilities in varying the plot that a sequel offers, the story must still meet the expectations of the reader as a Nibelungenlied narrative in order not to alienate the reader and hurt future sales. Therefore the plot follows a similar pattern already established by the epic material and the variations come primarily from the introduction of new characters and worldviews that contrast those in Der Ring.

The plot begins as Gernot and Elsa raise Sigurd in Iceland as their own child. Sigurd has grown to become a young adult and wishing to experience life abroad travels to Denmark against his adoptive father’s wishes. Eolind, his mentor, is sent to fetch him from his time abroad with friends and a girl named Liv. Meanwhile, Iceland is attacked and his family killed by Wulfgar, the ruler of Xanten. Sigurd returns to Iceland and decides to avenge his family prompting Eolind to suggest that he reclaim the treasure of the Nibelung in order to have the funds to raise an army and go to war. Brünhild watches him from above as a Valkyrie and deceives the Nibelungs and spares Sigurd from being possessed by their curse.
Xandria, the daughter of Wulfgar, is the love interest of Sigurd and provides a generational dynamic similar to Else in the previous novel. Xandria recognizes the suffering of her people and her compassion for them provides her the motivation to dethrone her father. She works together with Sigurd, who is motivated by a wish to avenge his family and please his love interest Xandria. As readers are introduced to this generational conflict, Sigurd meets Nazreh, a wise old man from the Orient, in Britain who agrees to tutor him. When Sigurd arrives on the continent he rejects the sword and treasure of his father from the Nibelungs, but dons his father’s name Siegfried and raises an army among the poor by offering them citizenship if they succeed in deposing Wulfgar. Arriving at Xanten, he convinces himself that by marrying Xandria instead of defeating Wulfgar, he can eventually rule the entire continent. Nazreh looks into the future and sees the destruction that Siegfried’s return would mean to Europe and plots to murder him and so “wenn die Zeit kam, musste er tun, was möglich war, um diesen Irrsinn zu verhindern” so that he might spare “das Leben tausender” (Hohlbein and Dewi, Die Rache 287). The notion that the future is the past in Nazreh’s vision touches upon those fears that a normalized military could mean a return to the form of nationalism that nearly destroyed Europe in the wars of the twentieth century. Nazreh cannot bring himself to go through with Siegfried’s murder, and so he kills Wulfgar instead and frames Siegfried for the murder. Nazreh convinces Siegfried that as visiting ruler, Siegfried has no other choice than to execute Nazreh as a foreign assassin. Without

113 The introduction of Nazreh and the incorporation of Vollbürgerschaft into the plot intimate those tensions in the Leitkultur debate at the time of its publication.
Wulfgar, Xanten is threatened to be destroyed from factions within the city and by armies gathering in the nations that Wulfgar had oppressed.

Against the warnings of Brunhild, Siegfried still seeks to lay claim to Xanten and rides out to recover his father’s sword and treasure to prove his birthright to the Xantians. Nazreh’s intervention into the fate of Europe angers Odin who sends out a horde of creatures from the supernatural realm of Utgard to destroy Xanten and kidnap Xandria while Siegfried is away. Siegfried travels to the other world and is tested by a variety of puzzles. He escapes these traps by willing away his identity, at which point he finds a catatonic Xandria, whom he then tearfully suffocates. Despite Siegfried’s best efforts to reject the use of arms, he succumbs to his desire for power that leads to the destruction of his kingdom and his love. After returning to the land of mortals, Siegfried renounces his claim to the throne, reassumes the name of Sigurd and seeks to begin a new life as a commoner with the girl Liv.

The dichotomy of Sigurd/Siegfried as two sides of a single figure represents competing ideals of masculinity with one as pacifist and the other as conqueror. In traditional tales of his youth, Siegfried possesses enormous strength, so that when he comes across the dragon, he kills it without hesitation. In this novel, Sigurd is restless, but possesses a pacifist philosophy. On a hunt with his friends, he is told that “Jede Jagd fordert Opfer” to which he replies that „wenn wir sie alle töten – was werden dann unsere Nachfahren jagen?“ (Hohlbein and Dewi  Die Rache 44). Sigurd values the life of the animal and what will be left for the next generation. These values disappoint his
companions who view the hunt as training for combat and the belief that Kampf implies the elimination of the other. Siegfried relates his friend’s view that “dieses Spiel ist für einen Sieger gemacht. Wenn du noch siegen willst, muss ich dich nun töten” and then counters with his own point to “respektiere den Kampf und nicht den Tod” (45). This view predicts his later inaction and rejection of the symbols and means of his father’s power in that “die Beute nicht zu nehmen – was sollte das überhaupt? Wer gräbt nach einem Klumpen Gold, den er dann doch nicht heimtragen will? Wer rührt eines Mädchens Herz, wenn er sie dann doch nicht auf sein Laken ziehen will? Es ist gegen die Natur der Dinge!” (61). Sigurd’s rejection characterizes him as unique among his peers, but despite his efforts to maintain this alternative ideal, other forces intercede and bring him to using his father’s weapons.

The High Fantasy in the novel begins in earnest after Siegfried seeks his father’s sword. The enemy is introduced as monstrosities from the supernatural world as Siegfried’s battle symbolizes an inner struggle. Siegfried achieves a victory with tragedy in that he defeats the horde, but Xandria is lost. The advice Sigurd received from Nazreh was that “selbst wenn man keinen Kampf zu führen trachtet, so mag es doch von Vorteil sein, wenn man ihn beherrscht. Nicht immer hat man die Wahl, dem Gegner auszuweichen” (225). Nazreh’s advice justifies the preparedness for war in times of peace, but in the narrative it was Sigurd/Siegfried’s own grasping for power that brought tragedy upon Xantia which emphasizes the effect of seeking power as the cause of the destruction.
The tale ends with Sigurd’s renunciation of the name Siegfried and all the political implications that this entails. Similar to Der Ring der Nibelungen, Sigurd chooses Liv, the woman he met in his youth, and returns with her to Iceland to begin anew. The final passage adds a promise of renewal with Sigurd’s return to his pacifist beliefs and his refusal to let notions of fate influence his decisions. For Sigurd, he chooses her precisely because she is not his “Schicksal” (479). The final scene is a rejection of the concept of fate that establishes a sense of hope for the future. For the first time in a Nibelung adaptation Sigurd survives the novel. His survival provides a new, more hope-filled direction of living through the catastrophe and leaving the possibility for another book.

The third book Das Erbe der Nibelungen (2010) is a portal fantasy that moves the young adults Sigfinn and Brynja, the son and daughter of Lif and Sigurd, between a real world shaped in the tradition of the Nibelung material and an alternative reality with fantastic elements. This opens the novel up to the authors’ conjecture upon an alternative European history within an allegorical frame that situates the “reality” upon the well-known traditional Nibelung material. As a belief in Odin replaces Christian faith in the world, the Nibelungs are awoken and plot to revise their past through a temporal spell. The Nibelungs proclaim that “Esss wird wiiieder unsere Zeeeiit …Und wiiieder unser Oooort … Verraaat! Verraaat! Am Spiiiel und am Schicksaaal! ...Uuuns gehört der Siieieg” (Hohlbein and Dewi, Das Erbe 45). The Nibelungs’ voices are an intangible force that represents the temptation to revise history and to win past wars that were lost. The
Nibelungs are interested in changing the traditional account and their loss of the treasure by keeping Siegfried from slaying the dragon. The dragon and Siegfried become puppets of Hagen, who has been granted magical powers from the Nibelungs to conquer Europe. Siegfried’s killing of the dragon is depicted as the “Keim aller kommenden Heldentaten” that presents young men with an heroic ideal. When Sigfinn and Brynja ask about this story in the new world, they hear „Wenn es so gewesen wäre…dann hätten wir sicherlich fröhlichere Lieder zu singen, mein junger Freund,“ and that men would have been inspired to courage (89-91). The witch is one of the few who remembers the old world and describes the change as „die Welt war über Nacht vermodert, verdorrt, verdorben…was gut und schön war, fand keinen Platz mehr im neuen Reich der alten Götter, die nun wieder mit eiserner Faust regierten und den Nibelungen als ihren Vasallen grausig freie Hand ließen“ and this dystopia produced „eine Zeit ohne Helden, eine Gegenwart ohne Zukunft“ in which social relations were inflexibly fixated in a world without heroes or future (53).\(^{114}\)

In this alternate history, there no longer exists a hero that can defeat the dragon and so Europe lay is laid to waste by the dragon controlled by Hurgan/Hagen. This alternate history touches upon the imagined future of Europe under a Third Reich that won the war, such as Philip K. Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle* (1962). The slaying of

\(^{114}\) This hides the fact that the ideal heroic warrior holds within it the seed of fascism. The concept of the heroic warrior assumes inequality and privileges the use force over all other means of engaging conflict, which represent the greatest danger to a democratic society – that freedom is reserved only for the powerful and is to be maintained by force. This is the role of Hagen, the fallen hero.
the dragon is presented as a key event, so that in this alternate world “…Siegfried unterlag dem Drachen - und mit ihm Worms, dann Burgund, schließlich der Rest des Kontinents” (89). The dragon defeated Siegfried, then Worms, Burgundia and the rest of the continent so that its master Hurgan/Hagen was able to establish an „ewigen Reich“ and transform the people of Europe into the mindless demons of his army.

ihre Körper sich deformierten, bis sie alle gleich seelenlos, gleich tumb und gleich grausam waren. Was eben noch ängstliches Jungvolk war, verwandelte sich in Sekunden in Nachschub für die Horde, in bedingungsloser Unterwürfigkeit zu Hurgan, dem König. (100)

Their transformation is described as a magical process which makes those in his army his victims. The youth and victim position of these members of his army draws upon that strategy used by Reagan and Kohl to describe the Wehrmacht soldier as victim.

Siegfried is alive in this alternate world, but he has been corrupted by Hurgan/Hagen’s spell. Siegfried is „ein Tier, ein Wolf - dennoch ein Mann“ (187). At the novel’s climax, Siegfried is reminded by Sigfinn of who he is when he holds his sword. Once he remembers himself, he slays the dragon and then Hurgan/Hagen. Hurgan/Hagen’s spell is broken and the demon army reverts back to their human forms. The inclusion of magic positions the villain as Hurgan/Hagen, the leader who had forced the demons into obedience. In this sense, the demons are victims of Hurgan/Hagen as evidenced by the torture scene in which Elea, Hurgan’s daughter, forces the human side
out of the demonic shell in order for its punishment to have a greater effect on the “tumen, aber doch menschlichen Soldaten” (118).115

Moving the empire from Worms and Burgundia to encompass Europe supports a reading of a transition from a focus on German to a European identity by the shift in context. The Christian worldview again plays a role in defining central figures along Brynja’s journey. This worldview is defined as being a central aspect of Sigfinn and Brynja’s national identity in the old world, whereas in the new world “die Fahne unseres christlichen Glaubens fehlt ganz…kein christliches Zeichen mehr…sie wollte zur Kapelle, um ihre Ahnung bestätigt zu finden” (54). This implies that the fictional world from which Sigfinn and Brynja travel is based upon a Christian heritage that in the new world is replaced by the rule of the dragon king. The arrival of Sigfinn and Brynja to this other world is, as in the other novels, filled with symbols of poverty, death, and destruction.

Teile der Ortschaft waren ausgebrannt, das war schon von weitem zu erkennen – Rüß an leeren Fenstern erzählte von Feuerbrünstchen, die niemand hatte löschen können oder wollen… Trotzdem führte auch hier der Tod sein Regiment - ein Ochsenkadaver verweste am Wegesrand, und verkrüppelte Hunde zerrten wütend an seinem Fleisch. Knochen lagen überall, und Sigfinn kannte sich gut genug aus, um zu erkennen, dass einige davon nicht von Tieren stammten (60-61).

The fires still burn that no one can or cares to extinguish, and a dead ox is ravaged by crippled dogs with bones lying everywhere, some of these belonging to men. The images

115 The depiction of the Horde soldiers combines Klaus Theweleit’s analysis of the imagined hard disciplined bodies of the Freikorps who fear the fluidity of emotion with a recognition of these soldiers as part of Germany’s past and the fear that they will again become part of its future.
of devastation are associated with the destruction of the dragon as well as the dictatorship of Hurgan/Hagen.


The rules in this alternate world are simple. There is one ruler, Hurgan. He demands that all citizens and soldiers become his Untertanen or die and that everyone live in squalor.

In this alternate world, all women are enslaved, and Brynja’s journey recounts her rise to power from enslavement. After her capture and initial conversations with another slave girl Rahel who convinces her to try to use her sensuality to gain her freedom. Brynja seduces the Christian soldier Laertes because his beliefs set him apart from the other soldiers, who have no interest in the women other than for sex. Laertes frees Brynja and at her request, Rahel. Brynja leaves Laertes and joins and then leads a resistance army to reclaim Worms from Hurgan and the possessed demons who now occupy it. Brynja’s army infers many of those views of the Bundeswehr’s involvement in Afghanistan in her statements.

Wir kommen nicht als Eroberer,… sondern als Befreier. Zuoft wird beides für eines gehalten…Brynja grüßte sie selbst, ging durch die Reihen, verteilte frisches Brot und sauberes Wasser. (207)

Brynja clarifies to the people that their mission is not to conquer them, but to free them from their oppressor and then distributes clean water and fresh bread in the manner of a relief mission. With this liberation come acts of revenge and the elimination of images of past soldiers.
In ihrer Ungeduld, die Horden-Krieger endlich tot zu sehen, hieben die Menschen mit Stöcken und Steinen auf sie ein, warfen sie von Brücken und in Feuer…nur wenige dachten daran, dass sie damit auch die Körper der eigene Söhne, der eigenen Männer geschändeten. (203)

This presents a position of the soldier turned from villain to victim. The soldiers were under a spell and had with the death of the leader regained their humanity, but this was barely noticed as the people were quick to eliminate them. That these soldiers were their sons and husbands went unnoticed. This last statement provokes some reflection upon the nature of the other especially in the context of returning soldiers who are readily forgotten. This suggests criticism of the remembrance of the young soldier as villain and supports the view of their victimization first under the spell of a criminal leader and second in the public scorn upon their return.

The triumph and stabilization of the warrior in both a Christian and European context at the end of this Nibelung novel leads to a final passage in the epilogue, in which the central symbol of power and corruption in the narrative, the sword Balmung, is prepared for a sequel based upon another legend.\textsuperscript{116} In the epilogue, Regin sets the sword into a stone and marks it as “dem wahren König” implying that the sword has become the sword in the stone of King Arthur legend. And with the final lines of the book, the Authors hint at a future project, but also in the relationship of the text to the reader.

Nicht mehr. Mehr wäre zu viel gewesen. Die genaue Bedeutung der Wörter musste den Menschen überlassen sein. Ihre Fantasie wurde Wege finden, aus den drei Worten alles zu lesen, was ihnen die Gier diktierte.

\textsuperscript{116} A legend that also finds representation in the Volsunga saga, the Scandinavian version of the Nibelung material estimated to be written in the mid to late 13\textsuperscript{th} century.
Diese drei Worte konnten Krieg bedeuten und Untergang, aber auch Glanz und Glorie…
Ein neues Spiel. Auf nichts anderes kam es an. (285)

The sword in the stone offers a bridge to other epic material for future sequels, such as the legend of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. This material intimates both the cooperative aspect of current Bundeswehr missions and Arthur’s association with Christian tropes, such as the quest for the Holy Grail, provides a European and Christian identity for future sequels. The many German medieval adaptations of these works provide textual sources that originated during the same period of the first Nibelungenlied manuscripts.

In all three of the books, there is a progression away from the traditional Nibelung material which eventually leads into the identification of an alternate world in which Hagen and the Dragon were never defeated. This narrative allows a German identity to be positioned as hero rescuing the older generation from the criminal leadership of the past and emerging victorious over those associations that remain. At the end of Der Ring, an epilogue promises new hope in the next generation, while in the epilogue of Die Rache there is the renunciation of military power for the simple life of a fisherman, and in Das Erbe, there is a narrative bridge from the Nibelung material into a new basis for Pan-European narrative in which many members of different backgrounds participate together as symbols of defense of the round table. This narrative turn stabilizes the German soldier with an identity within a greater European cooperative institution of defense with a common Christian background.
4.3 Stephanie Zweig’s Das Haus in der Rothschild Allee (2007)

Stephanie Zweig’s Das Haus in der Rothschildallee offers a counter-narrative to the declaration of the German soldier as hero and as Christian. She presents the reader with the destruction of a bourgeoisie Jewish family via the false promise of integration that through propaganda first idealizes War through images of the warrior, such as Siegfried, and then scapegoats minorities as the profiteers of it. These themes address the contemporary issues involving the concept of Leitkultur and the problems of identifying the soldier with a specifically German or Christian identity. Zweig does this by connecting Siegfried’s betrayal with the propaganda that convinces the young and naïve German Jew Otto Sternberg to volunteer for service and then blames all Jews for the losses of the war. By connecting Otto’s betrayal to Siegfried’s, Zweig complicates those claims to Siegfried as representative of German victimization in an account that emphasizes the common suffering of Jewish and German soldiers and the unjust characterization of the Jewish minority as an oppositional group that leads to intolerance and racial prejudice. The text emphasizes that Siegfried can just as easily and more aptly become an ideal for the German-Jewish soldier, who volunteered for the war and was betrayed.

117 Stephanie Zweig is a German-Jewish author best known for her autobiographical and semi-autobiographical work dealing with her family’s exile in Kenya during WWII. Alongside her considerable experience working as an editor for the Bedpost Nachtausgabe for nearly three decades, Zweig has established herself as a critical and popular author with Ein Mund voll Erde (1980) and gained international attention with the success Nirgendwo in Afrika in 1995, which garnered further interest with Caroline Linke’s acclaimed film adaptation in 2001. Her most recent literary endeavor is the Rothschildallee series of novels that chronicle the life and times of the Sternberg family in Frankfurt throughout the tumultuous first half of the 20th century. Other Zweig novels include Die Kinder der Rothschildallee (2009), Heimkehr in der Rothschildallee (2010), and Neubeginn in der Rothschildallee (2011).
Das Haus in der Rothschildallee is the first in a series of novels that follow the Sternberg family throughout most of the twentieth century and covers the years of 1914-1917. The novel opens with a semi-idyllic depiction of an affluent German-Jewish family in Frankfurt, who despite their best efforts to integrate into German society and cultivate a German identity, suffer from veiled discrimination that is exacerbated by wartime propaganda. Zweig’s narrative comes in the wake of a series of several laws concerning integration and the resurgence of a debate on Leitkultur in 2006 that asserted Germany as an ethnic nation of Christian background to which an Islamic minority would have to subordinate itself (Miera 5-7).\footnote{The concurrent security debate in the 2006 White Paper further supported the German military serving a colonial function that hierarchized the prosperity of the German economy that justified their participation in global military actions (Henken and Strutynski, Bundesregierung par. 5-6).} Both at home and abroad, the White Paper positioned the German soldier as the hero of an account in which foreign populations were in need of rescue by the German soldier and his European Christian culture, either from an identified despot abroad or from oppressive cultural beliefs at home.\footnote{The 2006 White Paper introduces a rescue narrative in which the German soldier functions as the hero, in which their mission is to secure areas abroad for foreign populations to prevent the “Nährboden für illegale Migration und säkularen wie religiösen Extremismus” (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 19). By combatting the enemy abroad, the military is preparing these areas for the return of refugees living in Germany (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 21). The German soldier is positioned as the one, who can help not only those suffering abroad, but also contribute to the resolution of the multicultural dilemma in Germany by making conflict areas safe enough for the deportation of refugees. The character of the enemies constructed in the White Paper are abstract nicht-staatliche Akteure which leaves open the possibility for any person to be positioned as enemy, even those living within the state. This characterization of the enemy leaves those minorities that have become associated with its image vulnerable to scapegoating, racial prejudice, and other forms of social ostracizing. While the paper avoids the controversial invective and denunciations of leaders like Milosevic and Hussein as new Hitlers that threaten new Holocausts that are otherwise found in German mass media, it confirms in part that the threat lies in migration and in Islamic cultures.} In this section, I examine how Zweig’s text presents a counter-narrative to those that position the German
soldier as hero and male ideal as well as those that position him as a victim. The text contests an ethnic German national identity that alienates its minorities and demonstrates its role of war in the development of intolerance.

The book opens to an idyllic Frankfurt and depicts the rise of the Sternberg family led by Johann Isidor and Betsy. After starting a successful business, Johann and Betsy move into the first floor of a four story apartment building with their son Otto, who is named after the first German Minister President who unified Germany in 1871. The business continues to do well and they soon welcome to their home the twins Erwin and Clara followed by Victoria, who is named after the Queen of England. Johann and Betsy are able to combine aspects of their Jewish faith with German traditions while living comfortably. During their vacation in Baden-Baden in 1914, news of the assassination of Arch-Duke Ferdinand breaks and Johann ends the stay in anticipation of war. He reasons that he and his family home should be home in case his fatherland needs him. With promises of equality by Kaiser Wilhelm II, Johann enthusiastically engages in

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120 Within this domestic setting, the parents have traditional roles with Johann earning his living outside of the home and Betsy running the household. Betsy is well read and presented as an intelligent woman who often anticipates future events and sees through the childish and naïve worldview of her husband. Betsy provides a skeptical voice throughout the novel with deft perceptions and literary allusions that help form reader expectations. For example, Thomas Mann’s Buddenbrooks is mentioned by Betsy as one of the few books that the father, Johann Isidor, has ever read, even though “er Romane nicht mochte und Männer, die solche lasen, für verweichlicht hielt” (Zweig, Das Haus 38). By mentioning the Buddenbrooks, the reader is prepared for a story of the decline of an affluent family over generations and situated within a real city and presents a masculine self-image of the period as one that rejects literature and is reflected in both Johann attitude toward reading and Otto’s loathing of school. Betsy presents a counterbalance to the men and shows that her literary knowledge provides her with practical insights that let her anticipate the coming events of the novel.

121 Johann is also the father of another child “Fritze” born of an extramarital affair around the same time as Victoria, who moves with her mother Anna Haferkorn into a new part of town and tells people the father is a deceased German soldier.
conversations with neighbors about the German strategy and Otto volunteers for armed service. After minimal training, Otto is sent into combat and killed in action. Johann and Betsy struggle on and help the war effort in any way they can, but as the conflict continues, rationing dominates the conversations at home. The tragedy of Otto’s death is compounded by accusations that Jews profit from the war while Germans risk their lives. This causes an identity crisis in Johann, who despite this defamation of Jews still thinks of himself as Jewish-German. The novel ends with Johann’s rejection of those images of the soldier and successful businessman that he had before the war began and a greater identification with his role as father and husband.

The text provides an antagonistic image of the German soldier by depicting the process in which the young Otto has fallen victim to the idealization of the heroic soldier in propaganda. This heroic image is constructed through a binary opposition to the enemy. The enemy is depicted in the narrator’s discussion of newspaper articles that describe him as wantonly killing women, children. Meanwhile, the German forces are lauded for their bravery in the papers and losses are never mentioned. The text presents the Kaiser as a politically unreliable manipulator and manufacturer of public opinion. The Kaiser first promises equality for Jew and German alike, but as the war drags the news turns upon the Jewish minority and blames them for the suffering and losses of the war.

122 In this war, the nations depicted their enemies as uncivilized with the image of the Huns being used to describe Germans by the British and in the US, while the Germans did the same for their Russian enemies to the East. One story that circulated in all of the nations involved was about a rare stamp that when soaked revealed a hidden message from the sender about the atrocities committed against them (Ponsonby 97-8). Such stories were commonly reproduced in newspapers to keep up hostilities towards opposing nations.
The Kaiser’s propaganda idealizes the war and supports those accounts of the soldier as hero that inspire Jew and German alike to volunteer, only later to the soldier as a victim of Jewish subterfuge. The text provides a counter image to the German soldier as a European Christian hero through its depiction of the disenfranchisement of the German-Jewish soldier and his contribution to the war effort. By presenting a counter-narrative to the positioning of the soldier as hero and as European Christian, Zweig’s novel addresses those positions found in the White Paper and in the Leitkultur debates of the previous years. The text depicts Otto’s anti-intellectual and naïve, childish perspective feeding into an enthusiasm for the war which ultimately leads to the slaughter of young men like him upon the battlefield. Zweig’s account rejects the position of the soldier as hero and relegates him to that of the young naïve soldier with the text serving as a warning of the process in which minorities are excluded and marginalized into oppositional binary identities as national identity becomes further defined in narrow ethnic and cultural terms.

This critique of the political utilization of promises of equality and the fantasies of young men is balanced with the substantiation of Jewish patriotism and service to Germany.

Otto, den der Vater beneidete, weil das Vaterland ihn brauchte, der Stolz des Hauses Sternberg, auf dem die Hoffnungen seiner Eltern und der gesamten Verwandtschaft ruhten.. (Zweig, Das Haus 133)

The text depicts Johann Isidor as a patriot who feels indebted to serve his nation. Johann’s enthusiasm motivates him to live vicariously through his son Johann Isidor and he envies his son for the chance he has been given to serve and be recognized as a man in
German patriarchal society. For his parents and relatives, Otto symbolizes the hope of the integration of Jewish and German cultures. Johann imagines the role that a Jewish hero returning home from war would play in bringing prestige to the family as a true German-Jewish family. The family believes that there is a better chance at breaking the stereotypes of Anti-Semitism that plagued Otto as a child after Kaiser Wilhelm II’s speech and the allowance of a generation of German and Jewish young men to fight alongside each other. This passage not only demonstrates the effectiveness of propaganda to produce positive associations with war, such as the opportunity for social advancement, but also in that the propaganda taps into the deep rooted desires of oppressed groups and manipulates them with images of power and prestige to initiate volunteerism from these groups.

The text presents the *Nibelungenlied* narrative and its figure of Siegfried as critical to establishing the relationship between an authentic masculinity and the German soldier. With sites such as the *Nibelungenallee* and the *Odenwald* in close proximity, it is not surprising to read that the young Otto imagines himself as Siegfried. The teenaged Otto longs to live out his fantasy as the invincible hero and imagines himself like the powerful Siegfried slaying imaginary dragons at the breakfast table.

Otto hob den Kopf, dem Recken Siegfried gleich, der strahlend und tapfer und unbesiegbar gewesen war. Auch der junge Ritter Sternberg vertraute der Zukunft, und wie einst Siegfried war auch er ohne Argwohn.

Mit einem einzigen Schlag köpft der designierte Verteidiger des Vaterlands sein Ei. Ein großes, braunes, Gesundheit verheißendes Ei in einem silbernen Becher mit einem Löffel aus Horn, damit der Geschmack nicht leide. Siegfrieds Vetter im Geiste, gerüstet, um in den Kampf um die
deutsche Ehre zu ziehen, fragte sich nicht, weshalb er als Einziger an einem gewöhnlichen Wochentag ein Sonntagsei bekommen hatte (137).

Otto’s fantasy is based upon the ideal of the German warrior from popular images of heroism that have made an impression on this young mind. Otto views himself as Siegfried’s cousin in spirit because of the role that Siegfried and the epic play in forming masculine ideals in 1914. Otto imagines himself to be like Siegfried fighting for the honor of Germany while conquering his boiled egg. The text combines Otto’s fantasy not just with the heroic figure of Siegfried, but also with Siegfried as a tragically naïve figure, emphasizing his trust in the future and not thinking of possible betrayal. At this moment in the text, the young Otto is without apprehension and is not cognizant of the realities that his military service entails, nor is he appreciative of the Sunday egg that he only is given before he departs for the front.

Zweig’s text presents Siegfried as the heroic ideal for young soldiers who are eager to enter into combat and like Siegfried, and underscores that despite his reputation and self-perception of being an invincible warrior, he was murdered by those he served. After the loss of their son, Johann and Betsy take solace in the fact that he will be honored as a war hero alongside other German and Jewish sons. In their minds, at this moment Germany is united in the mourning of their sons, but soon this collective is

123 The Siegfried of the epic was an outsider at the court of Worms and a foreigner from a foreign land whose attempts to assimilate into courtly society was met with growing distrust after every social misstep. From this perspective, the Nibelungenlied can be argued to be a tale of failed integration that is not only relevant to the service of Jewish soldiers in the First World War and their subsequent defamation, but also touches upon the contemporary situation of minorities living in Germany whose culture is deemed to be in opposition to German Leitkultur.
divided through the spread of lies through the Kaiser’s propaganda. Zweig presents the case of the Jewish family that has suffered in common with other families, but in order to deflect resentment away from the elites who decided to go to war, propaganda disseminates the narrative that the Jewish minority has not only been avoiding service, but has been profiting from the war. The perception that the Jewish minority is taking advantage of the German suffering creates a schism and animosity between the two groups. By associating Siegfried with Otto, the text not only emphasizes their common victimization by the political elite, but also their status as members of an out-group trying to balance their integration into the dominant culture while keeping their cultural traditions and language alive.

The buildup to Otto’s departure is depicted in excited anticipation by him and his family. Only momentary hesitations indicate that Otto may doubt the conviction with which he has made his decision. Otto's excitement is contrasted by the abruptness with which the news of his death is reported. The news shatters Johann’s expectations of Otto returning home as a war hero. Otto’s death is tragic for three reasons. First, Otto’s age positions him as victim because of his naiveté. Second, propaganda encouraged him and his family to support an impulsive decision to volunteer for the army. Third, Otto and all of the other Jewish volunteers are not only discredited as poor soldiers, but they are also accused of hiding from the war. The Jewish mothers, fathers and families are pushed into a binary opposition to Germans, instead of being allowed to share in the common grief and thereby emotionally bind their loss with others to form a cohesive group.
conceptualized as one German nation. This schism robs Otto’s family of the psychological placebo that could provide them with the sense that Otto’s death was for the greater good of the nation. Instead, the propaganda discredits the grieving of his family and their claim to shared suffering.

The more information the family finds out about Otto’s preparation, the more bitter his mother and father feel. After receiving a few postcards from Otto, Johann and Betsy learn that he has had one day of target practice and another day of playing cards before being sent into combat. The next news they receive of Otto is that he is dead. The telegram is full of the language of sacrifice and honor that provides his father Johann with some consolation that his son had contributed to the nation. The telegram reads that “er fiel auf dem Feld der Ehre als treuer deutscher Sohn für seinen geliebten Kaiser und sein geliebtes Vaterland,” which provokes his brother Erwin to ask whether this was thanks for “dass eine einzige Sekunde gereicht hat, ihn auf immer tot zu machen? Oder dass er so blöd war, sich freiwillig zu melden? (178-9). Erwin’s comments emphasize two points about the war. First, that there is no place for romantic notions of courage and valor in modern combat, but rather an efficient slaughter of men with the industrial production of war machines. Second, Erwin points out that Otto volunteered for duty, implying that he was stupid for believing in the delusional romantic fantasy of war as it was depicted in propaganda that played upon his masculinity. The loss of Otto makes Betsy, his mother, bitter and angry at the Kaiser, who she holds responsible for going to war without seeking a diplomatic solution. She recognizes that the Kaiser, who led the
nation into the war and asked for the lives of her son and the sons of other Jewish and German mothers, is the one most distant from the front and most likely to profit from its outcome.

The death of Otto produces a different reaction in Johann Isidor than it did in Betsy. He clings to the sentiment of the message that his son “gab sein Leben für Kaiser und Vaterland” and that “Sie können stolz auf ihn sein” (176). Otto’s obituary relates the same information with one change. A small cross, instead of a Star of David, is set erroneously beside Otto’s name to indicate to the readership that he had died in combat and that he was Christian. At first, Johann considers this cross to be a misprint that could have far reaching social consequences for the Sternbergs in their local Jewish community. Johann fears that their Jewish friends and acquaintances will assume that they have secretly converted and abandoned their Jewish roots (179). Within the year, the mistake reveals itself to have most likely come from the popular belief that only Germans are volunteering to defend the nation and that Jews are profiting from this sacrifice. The propaganda that encouraged Otto to volunteer is now being used to defame his contribution in order to deflect anger away from the Kaiser. As the war drags on, Betsy is confronted with occasional outbursts from her acquaintances that suggest that there is a Jewish conspiracy among shop owners to drive up prices in order to profit from the war. As more rumors begin to circulate implicating Jewish citizens as not contributing to the war effort, the government calls for a census “zum Anteil der Juden unter den deutschen Soldaten” (254-5).
Johann interprets the call for the census as stemming from those rumors that are defaming the Jewish contribution and the service that Otto and other Jewish sons have made. He assumes that the findings will be used to support the scapegoating of the German-Jewish minority for the hardships brought on by the war. Above all else, Johann is grief stricken because all that Otto represented in terms of Johann’s hope for a multicultural Germany is being denied. Johann understood the Kaiser’s speech as a promise of equality in that “Wir sind alle deutsche Brüder” and that the Kaiser promised to no longer know “weder Parteien noch Konfessionen” (138). When Otto volunteered and stood alongside Germans and Jews, Johann imagined that his son was proving himself a patriot and that this was a first step towards a brighter future for Jews in Germany. His son had become „ein deutscher Sohn,“ who had been given a chance to prove himself to his father who had daydreamed that he would „aus dem Krieg mit Offiziersternen und Tapferkeitsorden heimkehren“(138). For Otto, this meant doing something that his father never did and establishing for himself an identity that his father would esteem.

By examining the struggles of the German-Jewish family whose greatest desire is presented as a wish to live in harmony with their German neighbors, the text engages with the contemporary Leitkultur debate on the integration of minorities. Zweig’s novel serves as a warning of the process in which minorities are excluded and marginalized into oppositional binary identities as national identity becomes further defined in ethnic and cultural terms. Though a slow acceptance of immigration reality was reached in the late
nineties, the concept of Germany as an ethnic nation persists and the most recent *Leitkultur* debates point to a return to this ethnic conception of the German nation (Miera 4). While *Leitkultur* is argued to be based upon universal human rights, the establishment of a hierarchy of cultures presents the danger of stereotyping, discrimination, and a return to the racial thinking of the previous century. In comparison to multiculturalism, the concept of *Leitkultur* does not promote a mutual respect of cultures, but rather requires minority cultures to replace their culture with the majority culture. The rejection of minority cultures stabilizes an ethnic conception of Germany and closes off those attempts at constructing an identity in which both cultures are mediated and balanced, such as in Johann Isidor’s case. He has combined his religious traditions with German holidays and his own aspirations with those of his fatherland. The rejection of one half of his identity polarizes his position as a member of an out-group and stereotypes him as a Jew in a binary opposition to the in-group.

The tension in German and Jewish relations is demonstrated early in the novel through the social exclusion of Jewish children from interacting with their German neighbors. Betsy is protecting her son from the teasing and physical abuse that she anticipates for her son from the German boys living nearby. While the reader does not see the actual discrimination of Johann and Betsy, their apprehension in letting Otto play with German boys and girls provides the reader an understanding that they must consider

124 The 2006 White Paper’s identification of enemies provides further evidence of such a return to the conceptualization of the German nation in ethnic terms.
these things. Isolating their son is not to keep him from becoming German, but because of a fear that they will ridicule him because he speaks differently. These and other considerations of the majority culture that Johann and Betsy must constantly make provides the reader insight into what the Kaiser’s promise means to Johann and Betsy. The promise implies an end to the separation of the two cultures that begins with acknowledging both cultures as equally valuable.

When Otto grows older, he is bullied and chased on his way to and from school, until his new upstairs neighbor, the son of a social democrat, rescues him. With these episodes, the reader is presented with the undercurrent of racial prejudice present that is most easily expressed in children’s imitation of adults. These children use offensive terms such as “Saujud” for Otto and Otto’s relative uses “meschuggene Siegfried” for a German boy. The text presents a picture of two cultures living parallel and interacting only superficially with one another that sometimes leads to the occasional flirtation of a Jewish girl with a young German male, or the surprised German servant girl, who upon learning her new employers are Jewish pauses before declaring “Macht nichts…ihr seid’s ja auch Menschen” (Zweig, Das Haus 29). The emphasis on her decision implies that she would have to accept working for a Jewish family as something different from working for a German family. Her answer that Jews are people too implies that in order for her to work there, she must reject a counterclaim that Jews are not people. In this way, the text presents the reader indirectly to the racial prejudices that are framing the intuitive way the character’s in the book are thinking.
In the context of *Leitkultur*, Johann represents the aspirations of minorities to integrate into German society and Otto represents the attainment of these aspirations and the subsequent rejection of this integration. Otto presents the reader with the precarious position that the younger generation of a minority culture finds itself in. They meet the expectations set in the concept of *Leitkultur* in that they have acquired the language and cultural knowledge required of them, but in the example of Otto, the text presents the reader with the danger of the ethnic aspect of the concept in that even a well-integrated Jew could still be rejected from in-group status. The same can be said for Johann, who attempts to maintain a balance, whereas Otto did much less to actively keep Jewish traditions alive. The frustration and disappointment facing many minorities that attempt to integrate is that they can alienate themselves from the community of their minority culture, while risking rejection from the majority culture. This is expressed by Johann’s friend who thought that „die Taufe sei ,das Entreebillet zur europäischen Kultur‘,„ only to be abandoned by both groups so that he is now “als Jude und Christ verhasst” (Zweig, Das Haus 196). He is hated by members of his minority group, who feel that he has rejected them, while being hated by the majority group who reject his partial commitment, leaving him without any social network. Zweig’s account offers only disillusionment for those attempting to integrate because of the underlying concept of an ethnic nation that excludes them. The Sternberg’s striving to find a path that straddles

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125 The narrative works allegorically to provide insight on the question in a different historical context. While in the text the focus is upon German-Jewish relations, the contemporary context has shifted the debate ever since the terrorist attacks of 9-11, “from ‘foreigner’ to ‘Muslims’” (Miera 5).
German and Jewish identities alienates the orthodox Jews they know and challenges the progressive Jews who are conflicted between preserving their culture while negotiating the devaluation thereof through the act of conversion. At the heart of this conflict are the events that affect the family and its relationship among different collective groupings.

Zweig’s novel focuses on the domestic sphere and most of the plot develops within the confines of the home within the context of the family, even as world events shape this context, they are for the most part, reported from afar. In this way, the reader catches glimpses of the stereotypes and frames that are forming the character’s opinions and the decisions they make in living the life they lead. The text often uses the children to relate the cultural undercurrents as the children are depicted as readily adopting the stereotypes presented to them in propaganda. For example, there are the recurring rhymes that the children repeat in characterizing the way in which war is conceived of naively in the propaganda. The youngest Sternberg recites rhymes such as “jeder Stoss ein Franzos…Jeder Tritt ein Brit…Jeder Schuss ein Russ” and other phrases that dehumanize the enemy and depict different levels of violence committed against enemy nations that implies a racial hierarchy (151). The children provide the interruptions of propaganda into the lives of those in the house and are quickly corrected and scolded by Johann and Betsy for the “menschenverachtende Affront” expressed in the dehumanization of the enemy (212-3). This allows the text to demonstrate the effectiveness of propaganda while also dismissing it as unworthy of repetition in a mature worldview.
Unlike other German family novels of the past decade, Zweig’s novel is critical of using a child’s perspective as both dangerous and naive. The Sternberg children often repeat what they hear while among the Germans and introduce a sample of the effectiveness of propaganda on uncritical minds. The adults, however, realize the logical consequences of certain claims and the repercussions these have on stereotyping them as Jewish.

“Ich will nie erwachsen werden”, hechelte das Mädchen mit den Ringellocken.
“Willst du als Kind sterben?”, fragte der Vater. Seine Tochter wusste immer noch nicht, ob er sie streng angeschau oder gelächelt hatte. (13)

In this exchange between Sternberg father and daughter, there is a rejection of the willful ignorance that would be found in the typical idyllic narrative of the Heimatroman. The attempt to construct such an idyll is challenged by the father’s reply that foreshadows the tragic consequence of embracing childlike naiveté and mistaking it for innocence. The text directs our attention to the ambivalent nature of father’s comment by remarking upon the daughter’s inability to discern whether it was meant in earnest or in jest.

In this domestic setting, the horrors of war take place outside of Frankfurt, but the effects of the war on the people in Frankfurt provides a description of the process in which racial prejudices gain momentum in a society through economic hardship and a growing scarcity of necessities, so that “Antisemitismus in Deutschland im gleichen Masse wuchs wie die allgemeine Not” (257). The domesticity of the novel is further reflected in the distant relation that the family has to the political decisions being made in Berlin and the scant news they receive via postcards about the war being fought to the
West in France. The insular nature of their lives forces citizens to rely upon newspapers for their information through which the propaganda is spread. The disparity between the news and the reality of the situation is a recurring theme that provides the reader with a view of the objectives of the propaganda and how it differed from reality.

Obwohl in den Zeitungen regelmäßig zu lesen war, die Post würde so gut funktionieren wie in Friedenszeiten und deutsche Soldaten wären sehr viel anhänglicher und familienbewusster als der Feind, trafen im Oktober von Otto nur zwei Feldpostkarten in Frankfurt ein. (176)

The papers routinely promise little inconvenience to the citizens from the war and assert the moral superiority of the German soldier who cares for his family while implying that the enemies do not. The text undermines both claims presented in the paper and presents Otto, the Jewish soldier, as no different from his German counterparts. The reader does not follow Otto’s experiences, but only receives information about him and his fate from the narrator that is in the same measure as the family does from their home.

The text contains tropes from the Biedermeier literary tradition in order to deconstruct its core concepts, such as that of Gemütlichkeit of the bourgeoisie family home, as these become impossible to maintain during wartime. The Stube becomes a center of conflict between ideological markers of Gemütlichkeit and the war. For example, Betsy is sent into a rage at the sight of the box that Victoria brings home that bears a picture of the Kaiser upon it (190-2). Betsy’s idyllic home has been invaded by those ideals of the Fatherland and sacrifice for the Kaiser that cost her son his life and excited her daughter. This depiction of the ideological reach of Berlin into the home arrives in the very first paragraph of the novel.
Selbstbewusst flanierten sie auf ihren Prachtstrassen und ein jeder wusste, dass “Kaiserwetter einen Berliner Spezialität war. Weit weniger kaisertreu zeigten sich die Januarwinde, die von den Bergen in Taunus nach Frankfurt wehten. In der ehemaligen Freien Reichsstadt waren die Leute zu bürgerstolz und skeptisch, um auf neumodische monarchistische Mythen zu setzen (7).

The description of the weather establishes the difference in both in thought and disposition between the people of Frankfurt and the political leadership in Berlin. The Kaiserwetter, which in contemporary usage means sunny weather, is described as something specific to Berlin, the seat of the Kaiser’s power and a place where the people acknowledge him in mythical terms. In Frankfurt, on the other hand, the description of the wind presents the mentality of the city in terms of its history as a free city built upon reason and independence and rejecting the mythical thinking of Berlin.

The shadow of the Kaiser in Frankfurt produces a threatening undercurrent as he has invaded the town much like the outsider in a Heimatroman.126 This presence is felt in

126 The reader is presented with an idyllic pre-war Frankfurt that is carefully distanced from the mythological connotations. This juxtaposition allows the readers a sense of historical authenticity and a prosperous point in time from which the Sternberg family decline can begin. The story opens much like that of a Heimatroman in which a peaceful idyllic city will soon be thrown into disarray by the arrival of an outsider. The intruder in this case is the Kaiser, whose presence enters into the city in the first paragraph and who remains a ghost-like figure, whose war sends the social order in Frankfurt into disarray. Other elements from that are shared between the Heimatroman and the Biedermeier tradition are traditional gender roles and an emphasis on the everyday routines.

The figures are initially described in stereotypical gender roles that conform to the societal expectations of the period, but the text disrupts every trivial Gemütlich moment with opposition through the narration and through Betsy which point toward an illusory threat lurking in the subtext. For example, as Johann leaves for work, the neighbor comments to Betsy that “dein Mann ist dabei, ins Leben zu ziehen,” to which she retorts, “Aber ins feindliche” (Zweig, Das Haus 10). Betsy is eine gebildete Frau who often quotes poetry or discusses novels that would be considered examples of Leitkultur, such as Schiller’s Lied von der Glocke that she quotes here. The stanza she quotes concerns the expectation of gender roles in which the husband leaves the house and the “züchtige Hausfrau” remains at home (Schiller 296). By quoting this passage, Betsy is positioning herself in a traditional gender role that fulfills the expectations of German Häuslichkeit. In her comment “ins feindliche” implies an undercurrent of violent confrontation in the social sphere located outside of the home that threatens to disrupt the idyllic home life.
part due to the Sternberg’s continual negotiation of their German national and Jewish cultural identities. For example, Johann has effectively combined aspects of nationalism with his religion as demonstrated in visiting temple to ask for the Kaiser to be blessed on his birthday (12). Johann has named his first born son after the founder of the German Reich, Otto von Bismarck and has adopted the image of the soldier as a masculine ideal after the Kaiser declared, “wir sind alle deutsche Brüder und nur noch deutsche Brüder,” at the outset of the war (125). Until the Kaiser offers this incentive, Johann has rejected the idea of war with statements to a young Otto that “ein jüdisches Kind schießt nicht mit dem Gewehr” (52). The pacifist stance his father took at that point has all but vanished as newspapers continue to promote the war in positive terms, so that Johann and Otto “sprachen nur die mit den Heldenträumen und Soldatenherzen,” while believing that „der deutsche Kaiser ein Mann des Friedens wäre,“ and would not take the decision to go to war lightly (112). The transition in Johann’s pacifism to enthusiasm stems from his desire for the recognition of his German identity which leads him to adopt a wishful, but naïve perspective on German-Jewish relations. When this desire appears to be made possible through war, he ignores and suppresses its dangers and negative associations.

4.4 Summary

The 2006 White Paper introduced an accelerated path towards normalization and declared that the restrictions instituted by Wolf Graf von Baudissin and those written in the Basic Law as irrelevant for the new mission. The integration of the German soldier into international forces had proven to be a successful means for the Bundeswehr to
participate in combat while distancing themselves from negative associations with the 
*Wehrmacht*. The negative associations of the *Wehrmacht* with the crimes of National 
Socialism were placed upon those foreign enemies they now combat. In this account, the 
international German soldier as hero is rescuing foreign populations as victims from their 
oppressive regimes as villains. The broader acceptance of this narrative indicates the 
breakthrough of the policy of normalization began by Kohl and the successful relativizing 
of the Holocaust as genocide and Nazi Germany as a totalitarian state suggested by Nolte. 
As the new image of a heroic Christian European soldier stabilizes, those groups that are 
antagonistic to this image are positioned as either villain or victim. I interpret the 
*Leitkultur* debate that emerges mid-decade as a consequence of the establishment of a 
European identity based upon Christian culture that threatens to transfer concepts of an 
ethnic nation to that of a cultural Europe.

Wolfgang Hohlbein and Thorstein Dewi’s *Nibelung* trilogy published throughout 
the decade in 2004, 2007 and 2010 transitioned from a protagonist in the first novel who 
dies a victim of the political leadership into a heroic protagonist who survives a climactic 
apocalyptic battle and then in a third installment, the protagonist boy and girl not only 
survive, but restore order to the world. The tradition of strong warrior princesses in 
Lodemann’s *Siegfried und Kriemhild* (2002) and in Hohlbein and Dewi’s *Der Ring der 
Nibelungen* (2004) incorporate the image of the female in combat that were lacking in 
their previous versions, just as they enter into the second half of the *Nibelung* material in 
which the figures leave Worms for what turns into an Eastern conflict. In *Die Rache* from
2007, Sigurd exhibits pacifist beliefs until he travels abroad and bears arms to rescue his princess. His rejection of pacifism uses a similar logic to that used in the late nineties by Fischer and Schröder to make the case to enter into the Kosovo and Afghanistan Wars. In *Das Erbe*, Sigfinn and Brynja leave their peaceful and idyllic lives as they change events of the past that brings them to a dystopian Europe ruled by the totalitarian Hurgan, i.e. Hagen. The novel has loosened from the expectations of the readers as the plot moves beyond the structure of the *Nibelung* material. While this account warns of the dangers of changing the past, the text is itself a revision of the *Nibelung* material that allows the reader to imagine a Europe or Germany that had never dissociated itself from the villainous past.

Stephanie Zweig’s *Das Haus in der Rothschildallee* offers a counter-narrative to the declaration of the German soldier as hero and as Christian. She presents the reader with the destruction of a bourgeoisie Jewish family via the false promise of integration that through propaganda first idealizes War through images of the warrior, such as Siegfried, and then scapegoats minorities as the profiteers of it. Johann Isidor and Betsy lose their first son to these ideals and then must suffer through seeing his name and the name of all Jews defamed. The tensions of the novel reflect those concurrent in the *Leitkultur* debate that suggest a superiority of culture and the damaging effects this has upon those families who struggle to integrate new customs and beliefs with the old. The account positions a Jewish-German soldier as victim and re-affirms the binary opposition of the German perpetrator and Jewish victim through his defaming, while also
complicating the image of the German soldier as not simply German or European Christian.
Conclusion

The criminal legacy of National Socialism cast a shadow of perpetration and collaboration upon the post-war image of the German soldier. These negative associations impeded Helmut Kohl’s policy to normalize the state use of the military in the mid-eighties, which prompted a politically driven public relations campaign to revise the image of the German soldier. This influx of new narratives produced a dynamic interplay between political rhetoric and literature that informed and challenged the intuitive representations of the German soldier that anchor positions of German national identity in public culture. For the three periods of this study, I found that in the genre of security policy publications and their political and academic legitimations, several antagonistic accounts presented in the White Papers and by Kohl, Nolte, and Hillgruber gathered momentum over the course of three decades and dislodged the dominant association of the German soldier with the villainy of National Socialism. The new dominant account positions the German soldier as hero and displaces the villainy previously associated with his image onto foreign powers and their populace.

This new positioning of the German soldier was achieved through structural changes to the operation of the Bundeswehr that incorporated the soldier into
supranational mutual security institutions as per Basic Law article 24 §2 which allows for Germany to enter into agreements of collective security and by the reinterpretation of article 87a §2 which allowed the Bundeswehr to develop a global mission and profile. With the declaration of normalization of the military in the 2006 White Paper, those restrictions that were put in place by the founders of the Bundeswehr to deter the rise of nationalism and a return of fascist culture in Germany have been dismissed with the belief that the integration of the army into international frameworks will prevent the return of such an identity. In order to form a cohesive image of the European soldier, leading CDU politicians like Schäuble and Merkel have turned towards a Christian background as a common marker for a European identity, so that the danger may not come from a nationalist identity, but rather from a return to the language of the Crusades and the significance of the holy land because of its oil to the world economy.

An overview of the developments in the genre of popular Nibelung adaptations reproduces the antagonistic accounts of their periods. These begin with a treatment of the Nibelung material as an authentic representation of the German warrior and it is not surprising that the authors follow Nolte and Stürmer’s suggestions to revise history, which in this period focuses on the Dolchstosslegende. In Hohlbein’s Hagen von Tronje, Hagen is repositioned from his villainous role to one of victim wrongly labeled as villain. Lodemann’s first Siegfried novel positions Siegfried as the ideal German warrior and the philosophy of Kampf as the essence of German nationalism. Lodemann posits that these ideals have fallen victim to the ideology of a supranational foreign power represented by
Hagen and the Catholic Church. In the following decade, Lodemann revises his text to associate Siegfried with a broader European identity, so that his death becomes symbolic of the loss of the independence of nation states under the European empire of the Catholic Church. In the new millennium, Lodemann’s and Hohlbein & Dewi’s narratives include strong female politicians and warriors into their books as well as the second half of the *Nibelung* material in which the deployment of troops eastward has disastrous results. In Hohlbein and Dewi’s trilogy, I identify three main revisionist tendencies that include: 1) changing character motivation and description of setting to emphasize a heroic empathy to help foreign populations, 2) introducing new figures (Else, Xandria, Nazreh, Elea, etc.) that help represent generational conflicts, and 3) moving the *Nibelung* adaptations further away from the traditional epic material into the fantasy genre. The empathetic motivation is present in almost every arrival scene as the protagonists survey the devastation that influences their decision to assist the people they find there. This motivation is defined more clearly as a Christian worldview in the last installment. New figures provide opportunities for sequels, such as Else and Gernot, and for youthful defiance in the daughters of villainous fathers, such as Else and Xandria. The new figures represent new character motivations, most obviously in the shift in Sigurd to Siegfried as a representative duality for the pacifist and warrior sides to the question of how best to engage the world. The novels move progressively further away from the traditional expectations of the *Nibelungenlied* so that with the last book, readers find an epilogue that suggests that the narrative has shifted to the epic material King Arthur and the
Knights of the Round Table that emphasizes cooperative defense and Christian tropes, such as the quest for the Holy Grail.

In the genre of literature in the tradition of the *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, counter-narratives have coincided with broader public debates. For example, Jurek Becker’s role-reversal of the Jewish perpetrator and German victim offers a complex consideration of the consequences that such a position would produce in both the older and younger generation of Jews and Germans. The text suggests an alternative to the formation of identity through binary opposition in the often difficult recognition of the other’s suffering in order to find common ground to form a basis for a shared identity. This suggestion complicates the mere juxtaposition of the Holocaust with German expulsion that Hillgruber attempted and suggests a respectful distance and acknowledgment of the suffering of the other. By freeing the Jewish identity from that of victim, the identity of the German soldier was likewise loosened from that of perpetrator.

Marcel Beyer’s *Flughunde* presents the reader with two perspectives, one of a naïve child and another of an objective scientist, who do not remain naïve or objective for very long. This work centers on Hermann Karnau, a sound engineer working for the Nazis, who complicates the image of German soldiers in two ways: first, he records their sounds as they kill and die, thus showing them at victimizers and victims at an element level; second, he adopts the metaphor of combat to conceptualize his own field research, thus imagining himself as a German soldier in the domain of science, who seeks to eliminate “foreign” sounds, colonize audial territory, and participate in the planning and
execution of atrocities against “non-Germans” that he later denies. This allows Beyer to address the militarization of other domains of life during the Nazi period in a way that not only solidifies the position of the soldier as villain, but also expands the mindset of the soldier to broader populations of German society. These points filter into an account of collective guilt which becomes the central point of contention in the Goldhagen debates that emerge a year later, and continue on in disputes over the Wehrmachtausstellung into the new millennium.

Stephanie Zweig’s Das Haus in der Rothschildallee offers a counter-narrative to the declaration of the German soldier as hero and as Christian. She presents the reader with the destruction of a bourgeoisie Jewish family via the false promise of integration that through propaganda first idealizes War through images of the warrior, such as Siegfried, and then scapegoats minorities as the profiteers of it. These themes address the contemporary issues involving the concept of Leitkultur and the problems of identifying the soldier with a specifically German or Christian identity.

The end of conscription on November 22, 2010 simultaneously meant the professionalization of the military that had been strongly opposed by the founders of the Bundeswehr because of the Staat im Staat argument that a fascist culture arose in the military that despised civilian life.127 This perspective of military service as a viable path

127 These servicemen and women face long deployments abroad away from civilian life, so that the formation of their identity will possibly form via a binary opposition to civilians while stationed in Germany. With more involvement abroad, the revitalization of nationalism, and ideals of masculinity resurfacing to attract young males into the service, it is highly likely that the military will once again foster a subculture that defines itself through aggression and civilians as the helpless.
to a secure professional experience occurs only after the elimination of alternative social service and conscription. The military currently offers paid training for nurses, doctors, engineers, electricians, and other professions that are in high demand outside the military. The opportunities for technical training that the Bundeswehr presents young German men and women makes it likely to gain momentum in the genre that shape the image of the German soldier and the discourse on national identity.

Germany has now a normalized military that will most likely continue to function through its supranational organization of mutual defense since this provides the means to secure resources and can be a further means in which to argue for a federal Europe. Considering the incremental transgression of constitutional restrictions under both CDU and SPD governments, the next White Paper will most likely argue for an expanded role for the Bundeswehr within Germany and in the development of strike forces to be used in limited invasive missions, such as those that have already been approved (Deutsche

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128 Götz Aly argues in his *Hitlers Volksstaat: Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus* (2006) that Nazi Germany enjoyed broad popular support among the lower classes because the everyday German benefitted from the looting of Jews which funded the welfare state and made upward mobility possible. Arguing that benefits are popular among beneficiaries seems hardly worth mentioning, but by allying it with Fascism, Aly transfers the negative aspects of National Socialism onto the provision of social welfare programs and minimizes the benefits that big industry and banks gained from the looting at the expense of the average German (Aly, *Hitlers Volksstaat: Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus* 6-7).

Aly’s theory provoked controversy in Germany, and shared similar revisionist tendency with the *Historikerstreit* as well as parallels to Goldhagen thesis of German collective guilt. The strongest criticism came from Adam Tooze, who accused Aly of overlooking that dictatorial enforcement of Nazi policies, such as the high tax burden on the Germans placed upon the Germans under Hitler and the output the Nazi plans for war placed upon the workers to mobilize the economy and military for war. Aly saw the social state of the BRD as a continuation of Nazi era socialism, his argument became political useful for those wanting to implement austerity measures.
Presse Agentur par. 2). As Germany enters into the second decade of the new millennium, there are no indications that a pacifist opposition will amass to remove the positioning of the German soldier as hero. This lack of opposition means that the Bundeswehr will continue to develop its military capabilities and participate in missions abroad and continue to push for a permanent seat upon the United Nations Security Council. The account that positions the soldier as hero should remain stabilized for the foreseeable future with the argument that the soldier protects oppressed populations from villainous foreign groups and simultaneously protects the German people from an influx of refugees.
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