Journal of Language and Literature
Vol. 25 No. 1, April 2025, pp. 94 – 105
DOI: 10.24071/joll.v25i1.9408
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The Good German? German Colonial Fantasies in Indonesia in Rudolf Utsch's Trilogy

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Abstract

The relationship between Germany and Asia is characterized by its complexity and uniqueness. Unlike other European nations, Germany established close connections with Asia by drawing inspiration from its rich cultural heritage. Germany's historical background, being overpowered and defeated by France at the beginning of its formation to nationhood, led German thinkers and philosophers to seek sources of national self-identity other than those imbued with antiquity and Western culture. Germany's perception of itself about the East (as well as other regions) can be understood through the lens of German colonial fantasies, which depict Germany as a benevolent colonizer capable of establishing harmonious colonies. This concept of colonial fantasy is dynamic and evolves in line with German historical stages. In this study, we will examine Rudolf Utsch's three-part series of German adolescent adventure texts set in Indonesia by employing a textual analysis approach and focusing on the concept of colonial fantasy by Susanne Zantop. The research outcomes suggest that both German characters were depicted as benevolent colonizers, yet their efforts to establish a harmonious colony proved unsuccessful. Several biases stemming from colonial fantasies are discovered, including gender bias, the marginalization of local characters, and an imbalance in the portrayal of space and location.

Keywords: *Colonial fantasies, German colonial, Indonesian-German Studies, Adolescence & Travel Literature.*

Article information

Received: 5 August 2024

Revised: 23 November 2024

Accepted: 29 November 2024

Introduction

During colonial enterprise, Spain, Britain, and France were significant players who imposed their power on new territories. The so-called- Germany was left behind due to internal problems and the absence of a unified national state. Having to deal with in-land problems and national German identity, Germany needed more resources to expand their territories to other parts of the world (Okafor, 2013). Germany was known as the "verspätete Nation" (the late nation), late in developing a unified national state over the then German-speaking areas. As Germany began to free itself from the monarchy and

build a concept of national identity, one of which was encouraged by the collection of folk tales by the Brothers Grimm, Germany was shaken and humiliated by the French revolutionary army that overpowered and defeated it (Rowe, 2023).

Germany thus associated itself with the colonized nation. German thinkers and philosophers began to seek sources of national self-identity other than those imbued with antiquity and Western culture. It is found in the Oriental Indian repertoire. Schlegel, one of the critical German thinkers, stated that Germany is Oriental Europe (Germana, 2010)

> *German Kultur was "Asiatic"- as opposed to the rest of Europe, which was "Greek"- that the Romantics sought to establish Germany's uniqueness and preeminence* (Figueira, 2002, pp. 31-34; Müller 55; Kontje 89-91 in Germana, 2010)

The oriental preference of German thinkers and poets can be seen in some of their significant works. J.W. von Goethe is known as one of the driving forces of *Weltliteratur,* which elevates Eastern repertoire through his phenomenal work *East und Westliche Divan*. Nitzche's work *Also, Sprach Zarathustra* is also oriented toward Eastern philosophy. In the early 20th century, the great German poet Herman Hesse explored Eastern philosophy in his work *Sidharta* (Marchand, 2001).

Although the German view of the Orientals is unique, it does not necessarily mean less nefarious. In her article entitled "Self-Othering in German Orientalism: The Case of Friedrich Schlegel," Germana said:

> *I do not wish to suggest that German identification with the Asian Other had any real substance beyond the "imaginative geography" (to use a Saidian phrase), or that it was necessarily less nefarious than the images of the Orient constructed by their French and British counterparts* (Germana, 2010, p. 80).

The complex relationship between Germany and Asia provides space to explore how German and Asian images and relations have evolved. This could be traced from a colonial perspective. German Studies experts found that although Germany did not have a significant colonial history, colonial fantasies and racial discrimination were still found in German literature and culture (McGetchin, 2020; Zantop, 1997). The German colonial fantasy imagined Germany as a good colonial state and provided policies accepted by the people of its colonial territory (Zantop in Sperber, 1998). The German colonial fantasy also depicts Germany as a civilizational hero who strives to benefit (Grewling, 2007). Grewling explains that the German colonial fantasy formed long before Germany had colonial territories. Germany, at that time, only became an observer and criticized the colonial policies of Great Britain, Spain, France, and other European countries. This colonial fantasy is always profoundly remarkable, with different details (Sperber, 1998). Germany's colonial fantasy was put to a severe test when Germany in 1884 had its colony and faced various problems with its colony (Grewling, 2007). There was a tension between reality and fantasy as the image of a benevolent colonizer faded away, and cruelty became prevalent in German colonial enterprise (Laaksonen, 2021; Okafor, 2013).

Prior studies have demonstrated the presence of colonial fantasies in regions beyond Germany's colonial dominions, notably South America (Zantop, 1997), North America (Grewling, 2007), and German colonial holdings like East Africa ((Okafor, 2013), and Southwest Africa(Laaksonen, 2021). However, a notable gap exists in the literature concerning German colonial fantasies in Asia, in Indonesia. This is a matter of concern, particularly in light of the extensive historical ties between Germany and Indonesia, which trace their origins as far back as the 16th century (Reuter, 2019; Seemann, 2000; Siebert, 2002). Furthermore, it is evident that several prominent German individuals, such as Walter Spies, Siebold, Max Dauntley, and Junghun, have left a lasting imprint on Indonesia across various domains, including social advancement, cultural arts, natural sciences, and the Indonesian economy (Rabbani, 2022; Rahiem, 2021; Seemann, 2000).

In light of these gaps in the academic discourse, this article explores the representation of German colonial fantasies in Indonesia through a comprehensive analysis of the trilogy *Gefährliche Abenteuer auf Sumatra* (Dangerous Adventure in Sumatra) written by Rudolf Utsch in 1960-1965. This trilogy consists of three series: *Umheimlicher Dschungel* (Foreign Jungle), *Tödliche Feindschaft* (Deadly Hostilities), *Flücht aus der Wildnis* (Escape from the Wildness) and tells the adventures of Friedrich, a 15-year-old teenager, who asks to join his father, a mining expert assigned to Sumatra. His mother, who had accompanied his father in Sumatra, died of poisoning by an unknown person. Since he only had two years left on his contract, Friedrich's father allowed him to come along. Friedrich and his father were the only white people in the settler mining settler community deep in the Jungle of Sumatra. These series use chronological plot and tell mainly about Friedrich's adventures in the jungle interior of Sumatra, the various problems he faced, and the process of solving them (Utsch, 1970c, 1970a, 1970b). This trilogy has been chosen as the research dataset to investigate how works from the 1960s-1970s, an era marked by the emergence of new ideas and the youth movement, manifest colonialism-related themes.

Regrettably, the biographical information on Rudolf Utsch is restricted in availability, and specific resources about his life cannot be accessed. Rudolf Utsch was born on 31 January 1903 in Brachbach/Sieg and died on 30 November 1960 in Kirchen Sieg. He is the author of many stories and, since the 1940s, wrote exotic adventure stories for teenagers. Utsch experienced two world wars. After the Nazi era, Utsch was accused of being a Nazi and was banned from writing (*Rudolf Utsch*, n.d.). Like the hard-to-find biography of Rudolf Utsch, so are the trilogy of novels. The Utsch trilogy of novels can be obtained through a rare book collector in Hamburg.

Similar to the exceptional nature of his published work, there needs to be more scholarly investigation into this particular body of texts. However, the theme of constructing a "Good German" identity is found in Zantop's research on colonial fantasy in Joachim Heinrich Campe's text entitled *Robinson der juengere*. The text elucidates the portrayal of a German character who assumes the role of a father figure and mentor to his (native) son, providing intellectual and emotional guidance (Zantop, 1997). Furthermore, additional research on the topic of "the good German" can be found in Dominika Ferens' article titled "A Confidence Man in Africa: Karl May and the German Colonial Enterprise" (2008). Ferens' analysis focuses on Karl May's works, where the German characters emerge as exceptionally superior figures. The German protagonists in Karl May's texts embark on journeys to unfamiliar regions to explore new cultures and languages. However, they consistently demonstrate a remarkable understanding of the local culture, language, and geography, surpassing even the knowledge possessed by the indigenous inhabitants. These German characters command authority, enjoy widespread acceptance, and prove indispensable to the local communities they encounter. Their unwavering self-confidence is critical in fostering a sense of national pride among German readers who seek to establish their own identities (Ferens, 2008).

Research on German colonial fantasy has yet to be found in all studies related to Indonesia. It is worth noting the impact of German colonial fantasy in Indonesia based on the long history of Germans in Indonesia, as noted in the introduction. The relationship was formed through the close relationship between German and Dutch, which was broken by the invasion of Hilter to the Netherland in WW II. In this research, we will explore the question: “How does the German colonial fantasy influence the portrayal of "The Good German" in Rudolf Utsch's novel, and how are Germans and Asians (specifically Indonesians) projected to German readers through this narrative?”

.

Methodology

This postcolonial study employs a method of textual analysis. McKee elucidates that textual analysis is a methodological approach for acquiring data to comprehend a particular cultural group's self-perceptions and life perspectives. Throughout textual analysis,

researchers formulate hypotheses rooted in specific concepts and knowledge, constructing interpretations related to the signified meaning inherent within the text (McKee, 2003). This textual analysis aims to critically examine and deconstruct the language, narrative structure, and symbols that embody colonial ideology.

The research involved the following technical steps: 1) performing a comprehensive and critical analysis of the entire Rudolf Utsch's text as a corpus text, 2) data collection: Systematically classifying and constructing a matrix of key elements within the novel, including characters, settings, and dialogs, and 3) interpreting the classifications and character constellations using the concept of German colonial fantasy popularized by Susanne Zantop.

In examining German colonial fantasies, Zantop articulates how Germany envisioned itself as potentially superior to other European colonial powers. The surge of 18th-century travel literature gave German readers to engage with the colonial projects of neighboring nations vicariously. This lack of direct colonial involvement allowed Germans to detach themselves from the moral burden of colonial guilt, framing themselves as impartial, morally upright, and thus inherently more capable of being "better" colonizers in the future.

Zantop also highlights how many colonial narratives mirrored familial structures. The colonized were frequently depicted as "The Other," infantilized and feminized. They were represented as children in need of guidance from colonizers, who assumed a paternal role, or as daughters expected to submit and become suitable partners only after voluntary compliance.

Results and Discussion

1. The Ultimate Good Germans

The narrative begins by introducing the figure of Friedrich, depicted as a perfect 15-year-old German teenager. Friedrich's intellectual and physical traits are portrayed in the first book's initial paragraph within the trilogy.

> *Er gehörte zu den begabesten Schülern seiner Klasse und auf den Sportplätzen zu den stärksten und gewandtesten Kämpern seiner Schule (Unheimlicher Dschungel, S.5)*
>
> *He was one of the most talented students in his class, and on the sports field, he was one of the strongest and most agile fighters in his school.* (Mysterious Jungle, p.5)"

Friedrich is portrayed as his cohort's most talented and exceptionally skilled combatant, excelling in academics and athletics. The initial emphasis on his intellectual, physical, and mental prowess can be interpreted as a groundwork to establish Friedrich as a character with a significant impact on the adventures undertaken within the Sumatran jungle. These abilities serve as Friedrich's primary assets in surmounting the challenges encountered in the Sumatran jungle. Following delineating his intellectual, physical, and mental fortitude, the author expounds on page nine of Friedrich's physical appearance.

> *Friedrich war ein hübscher Junge, gross, blond, sportgestählt, mit einem klugen und ebenmässigen Gesicht. (Unheimlicher Dschungel, S.9)*
>
> *Friedrich was a handsome boy, tall, blond, athletic, with a smart and well-proportioned face.* (Mysterious Jungle, p.9)

Friedrich's admirable physical, intellectual, and mental attributes are accompanied by his attractive physical appearance, tall stature, blond hair, athletic physique, and intelligent and symmetrical facial structure. The inclusion of a symmetrical face in the description appears to accentuate Friedrich's physical perfection. Throughout the narrative, the author underscores the significance of skin color by referring to Friedrich and his father as *die Weissen* (the white people). The portrayal of Friedrich's physical and intellectual traits aligns with the idealized standard of perfection associated with the *Herrenrasse* (Master race), a concept espoused by the Nazi regime (Spielvogel & Redles, n.d.). It is worth noting that the author's background as a sympathizer

of the Nazi party may strongly influence the depiction of the characteristics of the German Aryan race as representative of the German identity in this story.

In addition to possessing an attractive appearance, a robust physique, and high intelligence, Friedrich is portrayed as possessing a heightened sensitivity compared to his father. He exhibits excellent caution in evaluating the dangers that loom over them. While his father continues to place trust in Djulan, a duplicitous mine worker, Friedrich suspects and firmly believes that Djulan is an untrustworthy individual. Throughout the narrative, Friedrich expresses his suspicions regarding Djulan, yet his father - driven by notions of justice and wisdom - harbors doubts regarding Friedrich's viewpoint. His father maintains that Djulan has demonstrated loyalty in their past journey and exhibited genuine friendship. Eventually, Friedrich finds and substantiates Djulan's criminal activities. This portrayal highlights Friedrich's depiction as "superior" to his father. Such superiority is consistently demonstrated through Friedrich's heroic demeanor, which pervades the story's entirety.

Friedrich's heroism was cultivated from the outset of the adventure, exemplified by his role as a savior during critical moments. One notable instance was when he successfully incapacitated a tiger that intruded upon the mining settlement. The pinnacle of his heroism was reached when his father succumbed to a severe malaria case, and the laborers abandoned them. Solely Saroji, the devoted cook, remained willing to accompany them. Tragically, Saroji also fell ill after being bitten by a venomous creature. Friedrich confronted and resolved all their challenges on their journey out of the Jungle. Despite his apprehension and feelings of helplessness, Friedrich ultimately secured aid for his father and Saroji. Friedrich's self-doubt was portrayed as a transformative process, showcasing his development into a resilient individual, an aspect that young readers can relate to and absorb. Friedrich's strength manifested through his ability to conquer internal struggles and emerge as a hero. Notably, Friedrich's heroism transcended his young age as he persevered and surmounted obstacles that originated both externally and internally while the adults around him faltered and relinquished hope.

Friedrich's accomplishments propel him towards the embodiment of ultimate Goodness, symbolizing the amalgamation of Goodness in all its aspects, reminiscent of the triumph of a knight in a tale or fable. The depiction of physical and character perfection constitutes a prominent characteristic in traditional folklore and classical fairy tales. Protagonists are often portrayed as attractive and handsome, whereas antagonists are depicted as unappealing or physically repulsive (Walker, 2021). This pattern persists in fantasy colonial narratives, as evident in Zantop's study on der Jüngere Crueso, where the protagonist is described as an ideal embodiment of physical and intellectual qualities. Rudolf Utsch likewise employs this pattern to unite the perfection of Friedrich's "Goodness" in terms of character and physical attributes.

While Friedrich is portrayed as strong, intelligent, and skillful, Utsch highlights Rocker, Friedrich's father, as a sagacious individual enriched with life experiences. Rocker, a distinguished geologist, and seasoned gold prospector, is depicted as highly astute, equitable, and benevolent. He exhibits exceptional leadership qualities in effectively guiding his expeditionary team. Moreover, Rocker's gold-seeking endeavors span various locations worldwide, including an expedition in Sumatra, Indonesia.

> *Der Vater, ein geschätzer Geologe und Prospektor, wurde einmal hierher, einmal dorthin gerufen, meist weit über die Grenzen Deutschlands hinaus. Seit vier Jahren stand er im Dienst einer Grubengesellschaft Indonesiens und trieb sich in den Urwäldern Sumatras und Borneos herum. (Unheimlicher Dschungel, S.5)*
>
> *The father, a respected geologist and prospector, was called here and there, mostly far beyond the borders of Germany. For four years, he had been in the service of a mining company in Indonesia, roaming*

Journal of Language and Literature
ISSN: 1410-5691 (print); 2580-5878 (online)

around in the jungles of Sumatra and Borneo. (Mysterious Jungle, p.5)

The act of deforesting, establishing new territories, and forming their settlements can be regarded as a condensed manifestation of colonial endeavors enacted by Rocker. He gathers and guides individuals to exert control over a newfound region. This portrayal resembles the concept of settler communities, wherein colonial subjects migrate and settle in designated areas. As a non-native, Rocker assumes the role of a colonial overseer, leading and shouldering the responsibility for establishing the settlement. Rocker's colony consists of himself as the leader, Friedrich as his steadfast companion, a foreman named Raja Lelu originating from West Sumatra, and workers from Sumatra and Java. In his dealings with the workers or members of his colony, Rocker demonstrates remarkable patience and wisdom, a nuanced representation of German colonial fantasies as posited by Zantop.

The depiction of the two leading German characters described above demonstrates a classification of characters that are inherently different yet complement each other. Friedrich, portrayed as intelligent, strong, meticulous, and heroic, is juxtaposed with his father, a knowledgeable and wise figure. The father serves as a mentor for Friedrich's journey towards maturity. Both characters are presented as "good Germans" who consistently prioritize morality and fairness in leading their group. This portrayal aligns with the concept of colonial fantasy, projecting Germany as a harmonious and benevolent colonizer in its occupied territories. Rocker and Friedrich represent German men who possess the capabilities to embody the qualities of a harmonious and benevolent colonizer.

In a more specific context, portraying both characters as men further reflects a prominent element of Colonial Fantasy, namely, the presence of gender bias. European colonizers are depicted as male figures, while indigenous populations are metaphorically associated with children and women (Zantop, 1997), representing their marginalized status. Within this narrative, gender marginalization becomes evident, with only two female characters referenced: Friedrich's mother and the village chief's wife. These characters are not fully developed within the storyline but are merely mentioned in passing. Both characters experience illness and eventually pass away. The absence of female characters in this adventure narrative suggests a deliberate "sterilization" of the colonial-themed space from the inclusion of female figures.

2. Enigmatic Eastern - harmonious Western

The severe illness of Friedrich's mother, whom an unknown person in Sumatra poisoned, becomes the driving force behind Friedrich's adventure in Sumatra. Despite receiving treatment in Hamburg, Germany, Friedrich's mother eventually dies. The poison remains unneutralized, and the identity of the secret poison remains unknown.

Ich weiß es selbst nicht, Junge. Auch die Ärzte Wissen nicht. Auf dem Rückmarsch von meiner letzten Expedition war sie schon kränklich. Ich brachte sie ins Hospital in Padang. Die Ärzte schüttelten den Kopf und wußten ihr nicht zu helfen. Als sich das Leiden immer verschlimmerte, mußte ich den letzten Weg zu ihrer Rettung beschreiten. Im Flugzeug habe ich sie hierher in Tropenkrankenhaus gebracht. Seit Sieben Tagen sind wir hier. Doch auch von den deutschen Ärzten wieß keener einen Rat. Hilflos stehen sie dieser Krankheit gegenüber. Und einer der Professoren gestand mir, daß deine Mutter ein Gift bekommen haben könne – ein schleichendes, unheimliches Gift, das der ärztlichen Wissenschaft noch wenig bekannt sei und gegen das sie noch kein Heilmittel entdeckt habe... (Unheimlicher Dschungel, S. 7)

I do not know myself, my boy. Even the doctors do not know. On the return journey from my last expedition, she was already sickly. I took her to the hospital in Padang. The doctors shook their heads and could not help her. As the suffering worsened, I had to take the last step to save her. On the plane, I brought her to this tropical hospital. We have been here for seven days. However, even the German doctors had no

> *solution for this disease. Helpless, they faced this illness. Furthermore, one of the professors admitted to me that your mother may have been given a creeping, eerie poison that medical science knows little about and for which no cure has yet been discovered...* (Mysterious Jungle, p.7)

This portrayal depicts the pervasive, enigmatic, and deadly nature of the crimes occurring in Sumatra. The narrative further accentuates the sense of Eastern mystique by presenting the laborers, particularly Djulan, as adept at concealing their true identities. The two primary indigenous characters - Raja Lelu and Djulan - are portrayed as mutually distrustful, filled with animosity, and engaged in antagonistic behavior. Raja Lelu assumed the foreman position responsible for supervising the entire mining operations and attending to the workers' requirements. He held the position akin to a 'local overseer' for the local laborers. Concurrently, Djulan, an experienced worker with prior involvement in preceding projects, shared a history of friendship with Raja Lelu, yet their relationship was marked by mutual mistrust and animosity. Moreover, there is a notable absence of camaraderie or close relationships among the indigenous characters. Throughout the three series, Raja Lelu's benevolence towards Makatib, a laborer who tragically fell victim to a tiger attack while returning to the barracks, is the only scene of camaraderie.

Notable distinctions characterize the portrayal of laborers from Sumatra and Java. The Sumatran laborers, represented by Raja Lelu and Djulan, are characterized as intricate and troubled individuals. Raja Lelu, portrayed as a dependable supervisor, exhibits a gambling habit. Consequently, Raja Lelu's character is characterized by an enduring lack of financial stability and contrasting traits. This portrayal is exemplified by the contrast between Raja Lelu's devotion and involvement in deceitful practices despite his pious nature. Friedrich bears witness to the profound transformation of Raja Lelu. Initially appearing as a devout individual dedicated to prayer and surrendering himself to God, Raja Lelu undergoes a rapid change and becomes an unscrupulous gambler, unwilling to accept defeat in cockfighting matches. Friedrich finds this transformation particularly intriguing.

> *Nachdenklich schlenderte Friedrich nach Hause. Wie wechselhaft doch die Menschen sind!dachte er. Am Morgen war Radja Lellu noch ein frommer Beter, gleich darauf ein leichtsinniger Spieler und jetzt sogar ein unfairer Verlierer, der sich seinen Verpflichtungen entzog. Und das war der Mandur, ein Mann, den sein Vater zum Aufseher der Kulis erhoben hatte! (Unheimlicher Dschungel, S. 51)*

> *Pondering, Friedrich strolled home. How fickle people can be! he thought. In the morning, Radja Lellu was still a devout worshiper, soon after a reckless gambler, and now even an unfair loser who evaded his responsibilities. And that was the Mandur, a man whom his father had elevated to the position of supervisor of the workers!* (Mysterious Jungle, p. 51)

Meanwhile, it is revealed that Djulan is a perilous witch and a wanted criminal. He is responsible for poisoning Friedrich's mother but successfully deceives Rocker by assuming the guise of a dependable laborer. Djulan repeatedly attempts to harm Rocker and Friedrich through various means, including introducing two cobras into their residence and falsely accusing them of the death of a sacred white fish. In this narrative, Djulan's malevolence is likened to the ruthlessness exhibited by a tiger in its pursuit of prey. Remarkably, a parallel scene unfolds when Friedrich confronts a tiger and Djulan in a life-or-death scenario. Friedrich becomes the target of the tiger's attack, yet he manages to shoot it just before it reaches him, mirroring the encounter with Djulan, where Friedrich successfully shoots him before Djulan can stab him. This highlights Friedrich's role as a victim who only resorts to self-defense. Friedrich does not possess the traits of a hunter or killer and engages in such actions solely under duress. Following the incident, Friedrich experiences profound guilt and seeks reassurance from his father regarding the justification of his actions. Here, Friedrich's father provides a rationale that aligns with the truth Friedrich questions. In the context of colonial Germany, efforts were made to

Journal of Language and Literature
ISSN: 1410-5691 (print); 2580-5878 (online)

rationalize the violence perpetrated by Germany in its colonies. The German colonial fantasy, portraying Germany as a benevolent colonial power, faced significant challenges when Germany established its colonies in 1884 and encountered various complications. Germany's failure to embody a morally upright colonial force impacted a portion of children's and youth literature during that time. To justify Germany's policies and firm stance in the colonial territories, Friedrich Pajeken, a highly esteemed author of youth literature at that time, created Native American Indian characters depicted with highly negative traits. This was intended to convey that the native tribes required strict education to attain civilization, or else they were deemed worthy of eradication (Grewling, 2007). This storytelling approach is known as *Tendenzliteratur*[1]. Moreover, it faced criticism from advocates of *pedagogical reform* (Kuhn & Merkel in Grewling, 2007). Rudolf Utsch's work partially aligns with the principles of *Tendenzliteratur* by presenting negative portrayals of indigenous characters from Sumatra in the story.

In contradistinction to the Sumatran, the Javanese laborers are depicted as exhibiting greater loyalty, diligence, and trustworthiness. Towards the narrative's conclusion, when all the other workers abandon Rocker and Friedrich out of fear of being cursed by the sacred white fish, only Saroji, the Javanese cook, remains steadfast. However, to underscore the superiority of the Western perspective, Saroji's faithfulness is also attributed to his assimilation of German rationality, which he acquired during his prior interactions with German individuals. Saroji rejects the superstitions surrounding the sacred white fish due to his capacity for logical reasoning. Moreover, he places his trust in Rocker and Friedrich. Saroji's loyalty and *vernünftig* disposition are shaped by his adoption of a "German" identity, enabling him to recognize and value those who have treated him well.

Weshalb bist du den geblieben, Sarodji?

Ich nahm den toten Affen und warf ihn ins Wasser des Flusses. Dann life ich weiter in den Rimbu und verbarg mich dort, bis alle fort waren. Über die Rache des heilligen Fische lache ich. Ich war lange Zeit Koch im Hause eines deutschen Tuan. Und als der Tuan nach Borneo reiste, empfahl er mich deinem Vater. Dein Vater war gut zu mir. Und ich verdiente gut. Ich konnte ihn nicht verlassen (*Flucht aus der Wildnis*, S.34).

Why did you stay, Sarodji?
I took the dead monkey and threw it into the river. Then, I went deeper into the Rimbu and hid there until everyone was gone. I laugh at the revenge of the holy fish. I was a cook in the house of a German Tuan for a long time. Moreover, when the Tuan traveled to Borneo, he recommended me to your father. Your father was good to me. Moreover, I earned well. I could not leave him. (Escape from the Wilderness, p. 34)

In contrast to the character of Raja Lelu, who is portrayed as a gambling addict, Saroji demonstrates prudent financial management. Saroji invests his earnings from work and bonus rewards into establishing a food business, while Raja Lelu consistently faces bankruptcy despite previously earning a substantial income, forcing him to embark on additional mining expeditions. The depiction of the Javanese character, imbued with German qualities and receiving preferential treatment, marginalizes the representation of the Sumatran character in their land. This portrayal reflects one of the inherent characteristics of colonialism, whereby indigenous individuals are positioned in subordinate roles.

If the portrayal of the workers' relationships is characterized by significant challenges, the German characters are depicted as intimately connected, placing strong trust in one another, providing support, and relying on each other. Within this narrative, family harmony emerges as a prominent value. At the outset of the story, it is mentioned that during Friedrich's youth, he only encountered his busy parents, who were

[1] *Tendenzliteratur* refers to the literature in which specific ideological beliefs are promoted.

constantly engaged in global expeditions, on three occasions. Nonetheless, the bond between Friedrich and his father is exceptional. This aspect is noteworthy due to the notable generation gap prevalent in Germany during the 1960s (the period of the novel's publication), specifically between the older generation (parents) and their children (Siegfried, 2005). The absence of such complexity is remarkable within Rudolf Utsch's narrative. The harmony within the family is fortified by the strong presence of Christianity as a framework of values and moral teachings consistently underscored by Rocker and Friedrich. Throughout their hardships and adversities, they consistently involve God. Right from the opening chapter, the Cologne Cathedral tower symbolizes the pledge of enduring friendship and loyalty between Rocker and Friedrich, ushering in new chapters of adventure they embark on together in the Sumatran jungle. This portrayal highlights the evident role of Christianity, the religion embraced by Friedrich and Rocker, in cultivating their moral uprightness, while the adoption of Islam by Raja Lelu fails to shape him into a virtuous individual.

Apart from the delineation of characters and their relationships, the captivating mystique of the East and the harmonious ethos of the West are also manifested through the portrayal of spatial elements and forests. Germany exhibits a pronounced kinship with forests, which is prominent in shaping its national identity (Zechner, 2011). Within this narrative, the untamed expanse of the Sumatran jungle, teeming with unforeseen enigmas and latent perils, starkly contrasts the organized and serene German forests.

> *Sumatra ist nicht Deutschland, mein Junge, und der Dschungel ist kein deutscher Wald. Wie viele Geheimnisse stecken noch in ihm? Und den Eingeborenen sieht man nicht hinter die Stirn. […].* (Unheimlicher Dschungel, s. 7)

> *Sumatra is not Germany, my boy, and the jungle is not a German forest. How many secrets are still hidden within it? And one cannot see behind the forehead of the natives. […]* (Mysterious Jungle p. 7).

Another distinctive aspect of the chosen spatial setting is its "sterile" nature, devoid of inhabitants. The absence of anthropological traces, such as history and culture within a particular area, is introduced by Marc Augé as a non-place (Auge, 1997). Non-places are typically transient spaces that do not leave generational imprints. This non-place location isolates Rocker's settler community as a colony where cultural norms are scarce. The absence of shared values prevents any horizontal intersection in the cultural understanding of Rocker and Friedrich. They remain Germans in the Sumatran jungle. The power relations with the workers also impede cultural blending within the mining settlement.

The cultural conflict experienced by the Germans arises from the tensions with a neighboring village close to their settlement, serving as another territory. An unidentified individual, presumed by the villagers to be Rocker and Friedrich due to their exclusive access to dynamite, detonates the sacred white fish pond. The demise of the revered white fish is believed to bring about calamity. While Rocker and Friedrich remain skeptical of such superstitions, the rest of the community, including their laborers, firmly adhere to these beliefs. Any misfortunes are immediately attributed to the wrathful spirit of the white fish. The villagers, driven by anger, launch an assault on Rocker's settlement. The conflicts arising from interactions with the external territory and the destruction caused by an earthquake compel Rocker and Friedrich to depart from the Jungle in search of assistance. Eventually, they relinquished the Sumatran jungle, abundant in gold deposits. Although Germany may lack tangible reserves of gold, it possesses the "true gold," represented by loyalty, friendship, and harmonious relationships, embodying integrity and benevolence. This thematic message is communicated through the character of Tuan Dehman, a high-ranking leader of the Padang expedition, who emphasizes its significance. Similar to Rocker and Friedrich, Tuan Dehman anticipates his imminent return to Germany, where he will relish the "gold" he discovered in Sumatra— the loyalty and friendship of Friedrich and Rocker.

> *Grüß mir die Heimat aus Padang und sagt ihr, daß sie auch mich bald noch einmal sehen wird. Auch in der Heimat möchte ich mich dann wieder des Goldes erfeuen, das ich hier auf Sumatra entdecke. Es war das Gold der Treue, das immer noch das edelste Erz ist und das euch beiden nie verloren möge! Ein alter Bergmann muß es wissen.*
> *Glück-auf!*
> *Dehmann.*
> (*Flucht aus der Wildnis*, S. 69)

> *Greetings to my homeland from Padang, and tell her she will soon see me again. Even in my homeland, I want to enjoy the gold I discover here in Sumatra. It was the gold of loyalty, which is still the noblest ore and should never be lost to both of you! An old miner must know it.*
> *Good luck!*
> *Dehmann.*
> (Escape from the Wilderness, p. 69)

The cited passage underscores a stark juxtaposition between Sumatran gold, symbolizing material worth, and pristine gold in Germany, representing ethical value. It suggests that material affluence inevitably diminishes over time and fails to nourish the spirit and life, as exemplified by the character Raja Lelu's recurrent financial downfall despite accruing material gains. The depiction of the tumultuous state of Sumatra is conveyed through the multifaceted, enigmatic, and mysterious characters therein, mirroring the untamed and unexplored nature of its Wilderness. Sumatra, depicted as a land of hostility, chaos, and enigma, is left behind as they return to their harmonious homeland of Germany, where the virtuous German is tested as a magnanimous colonizer and triumphs.

The narrative might skillfully portray the concept of colonial fantasy, yet the fact that the harmonious colony is not achieved proves the colonial failure undertaken by the two "good" Germans. It also does not reflect the notion of the German colonial fantasy that sets Germany apart from other colonial powers like France, the Netherlands, and Spain. In this narrative, Germany's actions align with those of other colonial nations, characterized by their return to their home countries upon successful resource acquisition (gold). Additionally, it provides insights into the impact of the German author's perception of Indonesia as 'the other.' This sense of 'otherness' within the narrative effectively underscores the significant contrasts and opposition between Germany and Indonesia.

This study contributes to the discussion on German colonial fantasy operating in Asian regions, alongside research conducted in South America (Zantop, 1997), North America (Grewling, 2007), East Africa (Okafor, 2013), and Southwest Africa (Laaksonen, 2021). As in all these regions, the concept of the Good German is also portrayed in Utsch's text. However, there is greater complexity in Utsch's text, which was published long after the German colonial era had ended.

As noted earlier, the concept of German colonial fantasy is not fully applicable in this context, as the two "Good Germans" fail to establish a harmonious colony. This outcome more accurately mirrors the realities of Germany's colonial history, which was marked by numerous obstacles and diverged significantly from the idealized image of colonial harmony.

Conclusion

The objective of this study was to explore how German colonial fantasy influences the portrayal of "The Good German" in Rudolf Utsch's novel, and how Germans and Asians (specifically Indonesians) are projected to German readers through this narrative. Through a close examination of a text, this research reveals a substantial impact of German colonial fantasy concept on shaping the portrayal of the "good German" within the narrative of Rudolf Utsch's trilogy *Gefährliche Abenteuer auf Sumatra* (Dangerous Adventure in Sumatra). By employing the mining location as a microcosm of a settler community, the story presents Rocker and Friedrich as benevolent colonizers with physical, intellectual, and moral prowess. They are characterized by their attractive appearance and capacity to govern their territory with benevolence and sagacity, even when confronted with numerous challenges. Although their depictions differ, the virtues and flawlessness ascribed to Rocker and

Friedrich, both German characters, complement one another. However, attributing the label of 'good Germans' to them does not distinguish them from other European colonizers. The enigmatic description of Sumatra's environment and characters compelled them to return to Germany prematurely once it had acquired natural resources. However, the influence of the colonial fantasy concept is strong in this story and apparent through gender bias, which marginalizes female characters, as well as the marginalization of local Sumatran characters, the contrasting relationships between enigmatic Eastern characters and harmonious Western characters, and the portrayal of spatial and environmental elements. The story's culmination bestows a superior status upon Germany, accrediting it with the "true" and most precious gold in the form of friendship, in stark contrast to Sumatra, where actual gold is discovered but marred by predicaments and hostilities. It provides insights into the impact of Rudolf Utsch''s perception of Indonesia as 'the other.'

As in all previously studied regions, the concept of the Good German is also portrayed in Indonesia through Utsch's text. However, there is greater complexity in Utsch's text, which was published long after the German colonial era had ended. By unveiling these dynamics, the study contributes to a broader understanding of how German Colonial Fantasy operates in postcolonial texts, particularly in Indonesia, and Asia. Due to resource constraints, this study did not include other texts published in the same period in Asia. Future studies could explore these potential texts in greater depth to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

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