SATIRE AND GENOCIDE: SIMPLICISSIMUS’ ANTI-COLONIAL PROTEST AND GERMAN INTELLECTUAL COLONIZATION

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This article examines an anomaly, the forty-first issue of the satirical German weekly magazine, Simplicissimus. This 1904 Special Issue was dedicated in its entirety to the European imperialism project. In the sixty-one years the magazine was published, from 1896 until 1967 (with an interesting ten year pause from 1944 to 1954), this was the only issue that fully and explicitly addressed colonialism. Its particularity underscores the existence of a rare and overlooked middle-class backlash to African colonialism and the ideology of imperialism. The current historiography of European public dissent to colonialism and imperialism during this period is understudied and deserves much more attention. This article is an attempt to draw scholarly focus to the existence of one episode of unique anti-colonial protest, while at the same time elucidating the colonized mindset of the German anti-colonial artists.

I begin this article by setting up the history of the magazine in order to show that Simplicissimus represented the attitudes and political mindset of its middle-class authors and audience, who were responding to their lack of political power within the authoritative

\[9^9\] In fact, only in the last few years have scholars begun to seriously research the short and long-term effects German colonialism had on European and American cultural and political history. Volker Langbehn is one of the few and certainly one of the best authorities on this subject. See specifically, German Colonialism, Visual Culture, and Modern Memory, ed. Volker M. Langbehn (New York: Routledge, 2010).
and militaristic system of government. Next, the article contextualizes the global events surrounding the publication of the forty-first issue, specifically the South African War (1899-1902) and the beginnings of the Imperial German genocide of the Herero and Nama in Southwest Africa (1904-1907). By connecting the *Simplicissimus* colonial issue to the larger historical context, the illustrations can be read as texts in order to unpack deeply ingrained signs and discourses. This paper concludes with a thick analysis of three political illustrations that best represent the ways in which the anti-colonial artists were captured by the very imperial discourse they protested against. The first image stands in for a larger discussion of intellectual tropes vis-à-vis racial paradigms and the “civilization mission,” the second picture documents various yet interconnected dimensions of the “colonial duty,” while the third image is ripe for a gendered analysis. When taken together, these three pages from the forty-first issue offer invaluable insight into the mindset of the Wilhelmine bourgeois intelligentsia and the larger issues they were protesting against.

In April 1896, Albert Langen, a Munich-born publisher, and Thomas Theodor Heine, a gifted art student from the Munich Academy of Fine Arts, founded *Simplicissimus*, a satiric weekly magazine that was dramatically influenced by the emerging aesthetic style of the Jugendstil movement, the German version of Art Nouveau. It is worth noting that from its inception, *Simplicissimus* was centered in Munich, the epicenter of Germany’s modern movements of art and literature during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Langen and Heine named their publication after the protagonist in the 1669 novel *Der abenteuerliche Simplicissimus Teutsch*, or *The Adventures of German Simplicissimus*, by author and satirist Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen. The novel is one of Germany’s first and best works to use the *picaresque* style, a satirical type of prose fiction which details the humorous adventures of a witty and socially lower-class hero through the corruptions of society. With its allusion to Grimmelhausen, Langen and Heine’s magazine underscore its direct connection to a Germanic legacy of satirical social commentary. In naming the publication after a working-class hero, the title *Simplicissimus* implies, while a product of left-leaning intellectuals, the

authors and artists were in favor, theoretically, of the lower-class masses and directly opposed to the traditional oligarchy of right-wing conservatism.

Simplicissimus' critiques of authoritarian structures in government most often took the form of caricature. In a promotion of the Jugendstil style, the magazine eschewed lengthy text and instead relied on large, often full-page, colorful illustrations. As a literal translation of its name suggests, *Simplicissimus* presented itself in one of the simplest forms of expression, cartoons and political illustrations, and was thus more accessible to all segments of society. The standard format of the magazine featured a provocative cover illustration, followed by numerous smaller cartoon strips or and illustrations, a few poems and short stories, and an assortment of advertisements. The brief poems and stories were penned by young leftist authors, and in the early years of publication these authors helped shape *Simplicissimus*' sharp satirical style.\(^5^4\) *Simplicissimus*' provocative style and substance often caused controversy, which added to its appeal.

The German government's attempts at censorship only succeeded in dramatically increasing *Simplicissimus*' readership. In just a four year period, between 1903 and 1907, the magazine was confiscated twenty-seven times.\(^5^5\) In its second year of publication, the thirty-first issue of *Simplicissimus* featured a caricature and short poem mocking Kaiser Wilhelm II during his 1889 visit to Palestine. In response, the German police force cracked down on the *Simplicissimus* contributors. In order to avoid arrest, publisher Albert Langen fled to Switzerland, and for five years edited the magazine in exile. Illustrator Thomas Heine and author Frank Wedekind were arrested and given six-month prison sentences for the crime of *majestätsbeleidigung*, publicly insulting the monarch.\(^5^6\) The scandal, dubbed "The Simplicissimus Affair," greatly increased demand for the magazine, and served to popularize the antiestablishment reputation of the artists.

*Simplicissimus* can be credited with launching the careers of Bruno Paul, a famed architect and illustrator, Frank Wedekind, the well-known dramatist, authors Gustav Meyrink, Heinrich and Thomas Mann, and, most famously, authors Hermann Hesse and Rainer Maria

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Rilke. It also made cover illustrator and co-founder Thomas Heine “the most popular and well-known illustrator in Germany” during the Wilhelmine and Weimar period. The founding members and subsequent contributors of Simplicissimus were usually members to the Munich-based Jugendstil art movement. Generally, they were leftist aligned, internationally versed members of the German liberal middle-class, who, like the Social Democrats, lacked political power for much of the late 1800s and early 1900s. Both groups claimed to feel an affinity for the broad working-class. The cartoon format made the magazine quite popular with the masses, allowing the style and medium of the cartoons to convey the artists’ layered meanings and messages. Simplicissimus was widely circulated across all segments of German society. It was not the working-class, however, who were the target audience, but rather the emerging German middle-class.

The creation of an urbanized middle-class within Germany was a product of the Second Industrial Revolution (1870-1914). During this period, most of Europe experienced profound social and economic changes. Within Germany, however, the strong ethos of Prussian conservatism and militaristic culture continued to shape the domestic and foreign policy of the ruling elites. In Germany, writes historian Felix Gilbert, “aristocratic values were not replaced by bourgeois values; instead, the German high bourgeoisie became feudalized.” Unlike other European great powers, Germany industrialized without a bourgeois revolution. The nascent political and economic liberalism was crushed beneath the state-sponsored system of big industry and banking cartels, and the inherited legacy of Prussian conservatism.

Lacking political power, the German middle-class was most receptive to a magazine that made a mockery of the status quo right-wing rule. The popularity of Simplicissimus among the liberal middle-class shows

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60 Felix Gilbert and David Clay Large, The End of the European Era: 1890 to the Present (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 79.
61 Ibid., 79.
that the magazine exemplified their frustrations with the conservative Prussian-based ruling group.

The magazine served as an important form of expression for bourgeoisie protest and progressive dissent. In her comparative work on satire and society during this period, Ann Taylor Allen concludes that the popularity of Simplicissimus reflects "not only the disenchantment of a considerable segment of the middle-class public with the ruling elite whose prestige had been seriously eroded, but [also] their tentative search for a new political ideology."63 Logically, the favored targets of Simplicissimus' satire were the aristocracy and political institutions of Berlin—the Kaiser, the clergy, the military, and the industrialists—symbolic representatives of the crushing influence of rigid conservatism and the Prussian tradition of authoritative rule. Simplicissimus, as a bourgeois product for a largely bourgeois audience, stood in as a manifestation of the middle-class mentality. Its images and writings, therefore, offer a window into how this newly established class viewed both themselves and their society.

In explaining the origins of the 1904 "special issue" of Simplicissimus, it comes as no surprise that German colonial expansion under the direction of Kaiser Wilhelm II would be an ideal target for satire. German colonialism was a perfect combination of Prussian military tradition, industrialists' capital expansion, and the Kaiser's seemingly corrupted search for monarchal power. What is shocking, however, is that in its sixty-one years of publication, Simplicissimus only directly addressed the Kaiser's colonial policies on May 3, 1904. Subsequent issues in the 1930s do take up colonial planning again, but never as an entire Special Issue, and only in reference to Eastern Europe, never Africa (fig. 1).

The historical context of the May 3, 1904 issue is quite telling. Germany had already become an emerging colonial power in the 1880s. While public opinion had originally persuaded Chancellor Otto von Bismarck to begrudgingly take a few geo-strategic colonies beginning in 1884, by 1904 the colonial project had failed to live up to the Kaiser's promise of giving Germany its "place in the sun." In his essay on German public opinion during this period, Wolfgang J. Mommsen wrote that the popular enthusiasm toward imperialist overseas expansion waned following "the apparent failure of the colonial policies on which Bismarck had embarked with considerable hesitation."64 Furthermore, Mommsen argued "New Imperialism" was

63 Allen, Satire and Society, 227.
a failure for Berlin, as “virtually all...imperialist ventures ended in
disappointment. They seriously undermined Germany’s international
position and no longer paid off in domestic affairs.” While imperial
expansion benefited the massive German industrial and banking
monopolies, it also caused the domination of both the working class
and the small and middle-sized economic enterprises, such as those
operated by Simplicissimus’ primary audience. The opportunity to
protest the colonial mission crystallized with the conclusion of the
South African War in 1902.

 FIGURE 1

Simplicissimus, 11 October 1936

Title: “To the German Colonial Congress”

The caption underneath reads: “Muscles of humans strong through the work,
muscles of the nation [strong] by the work for the nation, and such work is the
Colonization, and the only limit is the range of the world.”

—Note the contrast in artistic style and the less overt lampooning of this image
when compared to the others discussed in this article.

the term “New Imperialism” to refer to the rapid and industrialized overseas territorial
grab by European powers beginning around the 1884 Berlin Conference and ending
following the First World War in 1918.

65 Ibid., 390.
The *Simplicissimus* colonial issue was released less than a year after the conclusion of the South African War. In many ways, the issue was a reflection of the prevailing middle-class mindset as well as an overall example of German public opinion at this time. While there is a great deal of historiography pertaining to European public opinion surrounding the events of the South African War, the great majority of scholarship focuses on public reaction within Britain. The British media exposed the public to the harsh realities of colonialism, including detailed reports about the concentration camp system used by the British to subdue the civilian South African populations. The result was a significant public outcry against the supposed civilizing mission of colonialism. What is often overlooked in the current historiography is the specific German affinity toward the Afrikaners.

Feelings of *Burenbegeisterung* (Boer Enthusiasm) existed within the larger German *Völkisch* movement. Following the massive surge of urbanization in the industrial period, much of the German public experienced widespread feelings of dislocation. As workers abandoned the rural countryside and became industrialized manufacturers, they become inwardly isolated and outwardly alienated. Historian George L. Mosse, the foremost authority on the German *Völkisch* movement, argued that the movement began as a desire for unity, as individuals wanted "to feel like they belong to something greater than oneself." German nationalism, itself largely shaped by the *Völkisch* movement, was therefore a response to industrialization and an embrace of the "organic" and "natural" opposing elements of modernity. Romantics praised the notion of the *Volk*, the original people of Germany, with heroic statues, creating a mystical understanding of German-ness. If the ethnic Germans were imagined to be the fierce dissenters of Tacitus' barbarian tribes that held off Roman incursion, then *Völkisch* ideology, wrote Tilman Dederding, depicted the Boers to be "Teutonic 'blood-brothers' in the African diaspora, who fought for survival in the wilderness, under constant pressure from 'perfidious Albion' [antiquity England]."

The Boer struggle against England, was therefore of genuine interest to the German public, beyond the context of geopolitical rivalry, which popularized an Anglophobic public opinion. The German

67 Ibid., 14.
public sympathized with the Afrikaners' struggle. They embraced the Afrikaners as "low Germans," and emotionally and vocally supported the Boer Republic cause. Perhaps, the debut of the *Simplicissimus* colonial issue intentionally coincided to address the rising zeal for German colonialism under *Burenbegeisterung*. Certainly, the timing of the 1904 colonial issue shows that, similarly to England, within Germany the South African War triggered a profound reaction to the imperial discourse.

The anti-colonial illustrations of the *Simplicissimus* issue stand in as intellectual and liberal dissent to the Pan-German Nationalist movement. Following the South African War, physical German colonialism only increased. In part, this was the result of nationalist circles, which used the outcome of the South African War and the surge of *Burenbegeisterung* to push the government toward a more aggressive colonial policy. They argued that only increased German colonialism would protect the Volk's Boer cousins from British domination. The German imperial discourse went one step further, arguing that the *Verdeutschtung* (Germanization) of colonialism would force the Boers to "eventually accept the supremacy of their German siblings and merge with [the] expanding German settler population."\(^7^0\)

Within the Southwest African colony, the Boer immigrants and refugees continued to maintain their own strong cultural independence, despite efforts to turn the Boers into the German Volk. Using the Southwest African school system, colonial agents attempted to force the assimilation of Afrikaner children. One official proclaimed, "[p]ursued with the right means and necessary consideration, it will be a question of only decades to make out of the Boers in German Southwest Africa true Deutsch-Afrikaner (German-Africans)."\(^7^1\) While the Boers could be won over, in the words of another colonial official, "to Deutschtum (German-ness) through the geistigen (spiritual/intellectual) weapons of German culture," in the minds of the colonial agents and settlers, the indigenous populations of Southwest Africa represented the greatest threat to colonial stability.\(^7^2\)

While the Boers in Southwest Africa were marked for assimilation, the indigenous Herero and Nama ethnic groups were to be exterminated. On January 14, 1904, just five months prior to the publication of the *Simplicissimus* colonial issue, the Southwest colonial government wired

\(^{70}\) Ibid, 45-52.


\(^{72}\) Quoted in Ibid., 328.
Berlin the following message: “All farms in the vicinity of Windhuk (the capital of the Southwest Colony) plundered by Herero. Whites living on isolated farms murdered. Situation very grave.”73 The revolt of the Herero population was a direct response to years of settler encroachment. In 1894, the same year the German imperial government took formal control over the settler-colony, the colonial governor Theodor Leutwein, announced that “15 years from now, there will not be much left for the natives,” but warned that “if they learn about this now, revolution is inevitable.”74 While containing only 4,674 colonists, German Southwest Africa nevertheless comprised the largest overseas population of German settlers.75 Colonists fenced off the best grazing land, the colonial police routinely brutalized the local population, and coinciding with increased European settlement, the Herero pastoralists experienced a widespread cattle plague. In short, German rule had dispossessed, impoverished, and subordinated the Herero population. As their power slipped and their living conditions worsened, the Herero united in rebellion. The uprising was subsequently met with nothing short of genocide.

The swift and immediate response of the German colonial administration, under General Lothar von Trotha, was to “annihilate the rebelling tribes with rivers of blood and rivers of gold.”76 Beyond violent armed suppression, the campaign of genocide relied on the tactic of driving the Herero into the eastern Omaheke Desert, while seizing and poisoning waterholes. After pushing the surviving Herero into the colony’s dry and arid region to die of dehydration, Trotha issued his infamous Vernichtungsbefehl (Extermination Order). In the October 2, 1904 proclamation, Trotha stated:

The Herero people must leave this land. If it does not, I will force it do so by using the great gun [artillery]. Within the German border every male Herero, armed or unarmed, with or without cattle, will be shot to death. I shall no longer receive women or children, but will drive them back to their people or have them shot at. These are my words to the Herero people.77

73 Quoted in Isabel V. Hull, Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War In Imperial Germany (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 7.
74 Quoted in Ben Kiernan, Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 381.
77 Quoted in Kiernan, Blood and Soil, 383.
The settlers of German Southwest Africa did not, however, support a campaign of total genocide.

As with most African colonies in the late nineteenth century, German settlement depended on Africans as a force of cheap labor. The editor of the leading German newspaper in Southwest Africa summarized the prevailing settler view by decrying the genocide on the basis that, "[the] Herero are needed as laborers" and thus should not be destroyed. The editorial did, however, condone the genocide of the Nama, who were "an insignificant tribe." That frustrated over Trotha's tactics and unlimited authority, in 1904 colonial governor Leutwien resigned, only to see Trotha appointed governor in his place.

As a general and governor, Trotha frequently corresponded with German newspapers, both in the colony and in Germany. He justified the tactics of annihilation to a Berlin newspaper, stating, "[a]gainst 'Unmensch' (nonhumans) one cannot conduct war 'humanely'." In a second news article, Trotha wrote, "the destruction of all rebellious Native tribes is the aim of our efforts." In response to settler demands, Trotha set up "prisoner-laborer" camps. The German colonial strategy was to fill labor shortages by creating a slave labor force. The few weakened and emaciated Herero and Nama survivors, however, could not be used for practical labor, and the abysmal living conditions of the prison camps only exacerbated death rates. According to Benjamin Madley, "a continuing desire to destroy the Hereros played a part in the German maintenance of such lethal camp conditions." Overall, the campaign of genocide decimated the Herero and Nama, reducing the populations by at least fifty percent. The great majority were murdered without direct violence, rather they perished in the desert, far outside the colonial and public gaze. Nevertheless, the 1904 Herero and Nama uprising and the violent colonial response received a great deal of public attention within the German metropole. It was in this context of publicly reported genocide, just five months in the making and immediately following the

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78 Quoted in Kiernan, Blood and Soil, 383.
79 Quoted in Hull, Absolute Destruction, 33.
80 Quoted in Kiernan, Blood and Soil, 385.
81 Hull, Absolute Destruction, 74-76.
82 Benjamin Madley, "Patterns of Frontier Genocide 1803-1910: The Aboriginal Tasmanians, the Yuki of California, and the Herero of Namibia," Journal of Genocide Research Vol. 6, No. 2 (June 2004), 188.
83 The overall death toll remains debated. Drawing off of census data, Isabel Hull puts the Herero death rate much higher, at 66-75 percent. See Hull, Absolute Destruction, 88. See also, Madely, From Africa to Auschwitz, 431.
conclusion of the South African War, that the artists of *Simplicissimus* questioned the system of colonization.

The May 3, 1904 issue of *Simplicissimus* featured a particularly striking cover image by Bruno Paul (fig. 2). The image is titled “The End of *Zivilization* (Civilization),” and the caption has two African natives stating that they must mine for gold again, lest the “Europeans bring us their *Kultur* (culture).” The illustration’s text immediately sets up a dichotomy between the signifiers “*Zivilisation*” and “*Kultur*.” For Germans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the term *Zivilisation* had very negative connotation. Under *Völkisch* ideology, *Zivilisation* was a corrupting influence of western industrialization, a threat to the idealized, rural *Volk*. *Zivilisation* was a representation of materialism, internationalism, capitalism, and most importantly, urbanization and industrialization. *Kultur*, therefore, represented the opposing aesthetic elements—spirit, community, values, and, of course, a sense of rootedness—to the rural German landscape. This illustration equates *Kultur* to the “civilization missions” of other European imperial powers. Colonialism is challenged in this image by showing that, under imperialism, the uniquely Germanic notion of *Kultur* has been corrupted and transformed into *Zivilisation*.

In keeping with *Simplicissimus* usual satirical style, the title “The End of Civilization” brings up a post-apocalyptic notion, which is underscored by portraying Africa, not as a lush paradise, but rather a barren and rocky wasteland. Perhaps the small tree and lizard in the foreground are meant to represent Eden and the serpent, now withered and nearly destroyed by colonialism. It is important that the caption has the Africans saying that they must mine for gold again. This signifies that the Africans are responding to a second wave of colonialism, perhaps this time led by Germany, rather than their two rival powers, Britain and France. Beyond its literal meaning, the title “The End of has Civilization” also suggests that as Germany, the latecomer to colonialism, increases its role as a Great Power, *Kultur* will no longer protect the *Volk* but rather become a stand-in for *Zivilisation*. Under colonialism, the illustration argues, *Kultur* will become a weapon of exploitation, used to benefit the German industrial and banking cartels, not the *Volk*.

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The cover illustration also reveals the artist’s, perhaps unconscious, view of Africans. Bruno Paul’s mental colonialism is filled with early twentieth century racial stereotypes. The Africans exist as pure “others.” Hairless and dressed in grass skirts, the natives are drawn to represent primates. The pose of the second native, perched on the rock at the top of the image, is distinctly ape-like, and the added facial hair, absent on the other two natives, only adds to this conception. The image shows Africans as primitive people, wandering through the country in search of survival. There are no cities or even villages in the picture, just fierce but curious tribesmen. Without the caption, the image would appear to show the natives are more concerned with the lizard than with the golden colored rocks. The notion that the gold is waiting for European consumption also alludes to the colonial notion that Africans were not using their land properly. The gold does not have to be mined as it is just lying on the ground, waiting to be picked up. The Europeans exist only as a threat. The picture sells the notion that if Africans want to save themselves from the horrors of the

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civilizing mission, they had better forage for gold themselves, and hand it over to the Europeans. The artist's purpose was to highlight the true nature of colonialism, using the loaded terms Zivilisation and Kultur. The image, however, also reveals the dominant paradigms of highly racialized colonial thought.

The next image is the most famous picture from this issue (fig. 3). Here the artist, Simplicissimus co-founder Thomas Heine, illustrates a comparison of the colonial projects by the four largest European colonizers of Africa. The first panel reveals the typical anti-Prussian militarism of Simplicissimus. In the German colony, order reigned supreme. All the animals have been lined up and numbered. The giraffes have been taught to goose-step, and the crocodile has been tamed. The small sign in the background indicates that all noises and claws are forbidden. Conspicuously absent from the German panel, but present in all the others, are any images of Africans. Africa, from the German panel's perspective, appears as a zoo. The colony is a laboratory. It is a place where order can be imposed through violence, and where society and animals can be studied. The violent campaign of genocide, occurring as Heine created this image, may very well have shaped this first panel. The presence of the absent Herero and Nama speaks the loudest.

In the British panel, the plaid suit-wearing businessman is forcing his product, in this case a jug of whisky (the label written in English), into the native mouth. Clearly the native represents the colonial market, being force-fed European manufactured goods. The businessman has cooped the soldier into literally pressing every cent out of the native, while the missionary idly proselytizes. This panel underscores the perspective that empire is economically motivated, with the military working for the interests of big business. The presence of the pastor creates a trinity of civilization, commerce, and Christianity, all three of which were simultaneously used by the British to justify their colonial expansion.

The final panel shows pure exploitation of Africans via brutal measures. King Leopold II of Belgium is shown devouring the head of a roasted native. As the final image, it conveys the notion that no matter what the other European powers are doing, it is not as bad as what is happening in the Belgian Congo. The use of King Leopold himself underscores that unlike the British, who are using business, the military, and the church in the services of empire, the Belgian Congo is run as a private colony to benefit only King Leopold. The use of a monarch figure may also be an attempt to reflect back on Kaiser Wilhelm, Simplicissimus' favorite target. Like most of the Simplicissimus images during the Wilhelmine period, the mocking of a monarch underscores the general disenchantment of the middle-class artists with ruling elites. Here we see that each panel, while supposedly a representation of national characters, actually all exist within Germany. For Heine, only German big industry and banking, presented in the British panel, motivated and benefited from colonialism.
The Kaiser, often accused as being a puppet to the aristocracy and industrialists, feasted on the spoils of the colonial exploitation gained through violent means.

The penultimate French panel is the most interesting. Unlike the somber faces of the other European caricatures, the French soldiers and the native women are all smiles, frolicking together in the tropical jungle. The racial mixing in the French panel is represented by the small child figure in the foreground. Colored slightly lighter than the rest, the child is a subtle reference to the creation of Afro-Europeans, existing not as whites, but not as Africans. While every other figure in the French colonial panel is embracing a carefree, free-love spirit, the child is on the verge of tears. The French are able to ignore the child for the moment, but perhaps the artist is attempting to draw the viewers’ attention to a problem in the making. The child will grow up, and existing in the middle ground, it is a threat to the established color line deemed so necessary by colonial officials. In the French panel, the relaxed racial relations, while perhaps meant as a humorous stereotype of Frenchmen, serve as a subtle warning of danger to all the other colonial powers.

In 1905, German Southwest Africa became the first German colony to formally ban Rassenmischung (race mixing). It is no coincidence that this image was created in the month proceeding the publicized Reichstag debates surrounding the drafting of a similar ban on interracial marriage within Germany. According to Benjamin Madley, it was the press coverage of these debates that allowed terms like “Rassengefühl (race feeling), Mischlinge (mixed-race people), die Mischlingsfrage (the mixed-race question)” to enter the general public’s lexicon. Heine’s final panel shows that he too has been captured by the imperial discourse. The inherent evil of colonialism is its corrupting influence, most prevalent in the overt racial mixing occurring the colonies.

The final illustration image takes up racial relations in a much more overt, and gendered fashion (fig. 4). A colonial agent, shown in the first panel, is enjoying an intimate moment with a docile and submissive native woman. Literally colored in deep black, the female character represents Africa. Unlike the French panel in the preceding cartoon, the whip in the hand of the colonial agent shows that this is not consensual relationship, just like the European relationship to Africa. In the next panel, the agent returns to his home in a generic European metropole and is met enthusiastically by his innocent wife.

Madley, “From Africa to Auschwitz,” 439.
She embraces him, but he does not embrace her in return. Dressed in an all black coat, the agent wears the skin of Africa, foreshadowing that colonialism, like a sinister stowaway, has been carried back to Europe. In the third panel, domestic life has set in. The colonial agent has lost his wild-west outfit, and sits in a chair bored and drunk, watching his wife perform her domestic duties. If the color black stands in for Africa, painting the stove black shows an incorporation and transference of colonialism into the European home. From there, it spreads. In the next three panels, he paints his wife black, puts his colonial cowboy outfit back on, and gleefully whips her into submission.

A gendered analysis of this illustration says a great deal about relationships between men and women at this time. We see the male figure as a colonial man-on-the-spot, pushing the empire forward while his wife stays behind. The image maintains that in the colonial setting, there is no place for European women. The female slave, once dominated into submission, fulfills the sexual needs of the European male. Like Heine's illustration on comparative colonial powers, racial mixing has corrupted the colonizer. He returns from his duties abroad, only to find that his experience has placed him outside of society. There is no place for colonial fighters back home. As a retired man, he does not assist his wife in any domestic duties, despite the fact that painting a cast iron stove seems to fall outside of feminine responsibility. He sits around the home, bored and intoxicated. His boredom is broken when his colonial instincts return to him. It is not enough that colonialism has been painted into the home; he must force it into his wife.

The message of the comic is that colonialism has corrupted German men. They are no longer good husbands, but excessive brutes. The violence in the colonial setting has returned home and threatens to turn good husbands into bad males. The man does not beat his wife but rather whips her. The illustration stresses that the victims of colonialism are the metropole's females. From this perspective, colonialism is not harmful because it is exploiting Africans. The problem with colonialism is that it corrupts paternalism and threatens the mothers of the imperial nations.
The illustration echoes Joseph Conrad’s message in *Heart of Darkness*. The corrupting power of Empire is a great threat to Europeans. The extent as to how much this particular image is meant as a direct allusion to *Heart of Darkness* remains speculative. The illustration was penned Ferdinand Reznicek, but the dearth of biographical information on many *Simplicissimus* artists makes it difficult, if not impossible, to uncover this artist’s intellectual influences. Certainly most of the bourgeois German writers and artists at this time would have known about Conrad’s groundbreaking work. Originally published in serial form in 1899, by 1902, the text had been bound into book form and was tremendously popular to Anglophone audiences. *Heart of Darkness* was not translated into French and German until 1925 and
1926, respectively, but the parallel messages of Conrad’s masterpiece and this illustration seem be more than coincidental.\textsuperscript{87} While intertextuality is difficult to prove, the concurring message shows that by 1904, the colonial backlash drew off of the same notion—the great horror of colonialism was that it is turning European men into brutes.\textsuperscript{88} “The force of habit” that has returned to the colonial agent in the cartoon of the same name, is “uncontrolled violence of individuals” learned and practiced in the colonial setting.\textsuperscript{89}

The contemporary events of rebellion and genocide in Southwest Africa, when converged with the outcome of the South African War, explain why the \textit{Simplicissimus} colonial issue appeared in May 1904. The ways in which the artists expressed their criticism of modern imperialism are show that, while on the surface each illustration was a rejection of the colonial doctrine, the artists were also captives to colonial thought.

In \textit{The Absent-Minded Imperialists}, Bernard Porter argues that most Europeans’ were not concerned with events in the world’s periphery. He claims that their day to day lives had “little sympathetic contact with the Empire” and in fact “[t]heir lifestyles and alternative discourses alienated them from it.”\textsuperscript{90} While the production of only one \textit{Simplicissimus} colonial issue seems to substantiate Porter’s claim, its very existence shows that his blanket statement is a fallacy. The context above shows that, at least in 1904, colonialism was very much on the mind of certain bourgeois intellectuals, as well as the mass public within Germany. \textit{Simplicissimus}, while a representation of middle-class thought, was also a product for consumption. Langen and Heine’s overall goal was to sell magazines, and this was done through satire of political relevant and highly topical subject matter. Their production of a special colonial issue should not be dismissed as a mere anomaly, but rather a reflection and interpretation of 1904 domestic and global events.

\textsuperscript{87} Translation dates found through author’s search of WorldCat.
\textsuperscript{88} For a superb discussion of Conrad’s message in Heart of Darkness, see Sven Lindqvist, \textit{‘Exterminate all the Brutes’: One Man’s Odyssey into the Heart of Darkness and the Origins of European Genocide} (New York: The New Press, 1992).
\textsuperscript{89} Lindqvist, \textit{Exterminate all the Brutes}, 123.

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While the artists of *Simplicissimus* were liberally aligned leftists, the art they produced was still very much a product of the times. Their questioning of African colonialism had less to do with its affect on Africans than it did on the ways in which colonialism was harming Europeans. Racial depictions of Africans as primitives come through in their art, as do nineteenth century concepts of masculinity and femininity. Nevertheless, in an era of increased colonial pursuits, the May 3, 1904 issue of *Simplicissimus* is one of very few anti-colonial protests in Germany. And yet, a thick analysis of these three images proves that even the mindset of anti-colonial artists was deeply colonized.

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