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NARRATING "RACE" IN 1950S' WEST GERMANY

THE PHENOMENON OF THE *TOXI* FILMS[1]

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In the spring of 1952, West German moviegoers flocked to the feature film *Toxi* (R. A. Stemmle), the fictional story of a black German girl, making it one of the top ten box-office hits of the year. The film was notable on a number of counts. First, it was the first feature-length film to explore the subject of black "occupation children" born to white German women and fathered by occupation soldiers of color in postwar Germany. Released to coincide with the start of the school year for the oldest of the postwar black German children, the film had the explicit purpose of cultivating, in addition to profit, "social understanding" for the children as they made the difficult transition from the privacy of home to the public arena of school and classroom. Second, it was one of the few postwar films—and to my knowledge the only one in the early 1950s—to explicitly thematize the "race problem" (*Rassenproblem*) in Germany and call it by its name.[2] Finally, the film initiated the popularity and brief acting career of Elfie Fiegert, who played the title character of *Toxi* and later reprised the role of black occupation child (this time as Moni) in the 1955 West German film *Der dunkle Stern* (The Dark Star, Hermann Kugelstadt). I argue in this essay that the thematic treatment of *Toxi* yields insight into the precise ways that "race" was renarrativized after 1945 as a social category and national marker. Critical attention to Elfie Fiegert's brief career and the so-called sequel to *Toxi* provide a context in which to

assess the contours and evolution of racial ideology in Adenauer's Germany.

By the time of the film's release in early 1952, black German children numbered over three thousand in West Germany, and despite their small numbers had already become its premiere minority group, to judge from the continual coverage of the children in the print media. In scores of articles in newspapers, popular magazines, and scholarly journals, the children were described as posing a significant social "problem" for postwar Germany and were either pitied or pilloried due to the racial and national heritage of their fathers and the perceived provocative and censorious behavior of their mothers, who fraternized with the nonwhite soldiers of enemy armies.[3] Through the 1950s, the children were treated as marked by their white mothers' moral failings and their black fathers' racial ancestry by German commentators of all political and ideological stripes. This strategic (if common Euro-American) practice established the children's fundamental, essentialized difference from white children, along with the social need for German contemporaries to seek solutions to this "problem" of difference. And although the children's fathers represented a wide range of nationalities and ethnicities (coming, for example, from such diverse places as French Indochina, Morocco, Senegal, Chicago, Alabama, or Puerto Rico), the children were consistently assigned a homogenous racialized group identity that assumed their affinity for things African, or more typically, African American, regardless of the specific national affiliation or ethnic heritage of their individual fathers of color.[4] As a result, interracial children were never viewed as unproblematically German in a social or cultural sense, although their legal status as German citizens was inarguable, since they took their mothers' nationality due to their out-of-wedlock births.[5]

Within a year of the founding of the Federal Republic, an official census had been taken to count the number of occupation children in Germany. Children of color (the so-called *"farbige Mischlingskinder"* or *"farbige Besatzungskinder"*) commanded special attention from the authorities, and their numbers were segregated from the white cohort through separate tabulations.[6] Since the late 1940s, West German officials at the federal, state, and local levels had been interested in encouraging adoption of occupation children abroad, particularly to the United States. The authorities' efforts focused most closely on interracial children, and through the mid-1950s, one of the most popular "solutions" advocated for the "problem" of black occupation children was emigration via intercountry adoption.[7]

This social policy was consistent with the liberal discourse of race that was emerging in post-fascist, post-occupation Germany.[8] The film *Toxi* is significant because it helped both to constitute this liberal discourse of race and to popularize it for the West German public at large. Attention to the narrative strategies of *Toxi* and its cinematic "sequels" reveals some of the precise ways that race was revalued after 1945 and indicates the centrality of race in the reconstitution of postwar German mythologies of national belonging.

Toxi's Liberal Discourse of Race

I begin with a brief description of the film's storyline. *Toxi* opens in the evening with a street shot of a handsome single-family home. The main action is the return from work of Dr. Theodor Jenrich at the end of the day. Entering the home, he finds the household in the throes of hectic preparations for a birthday celebration for Grandma Rose, Theodor's mother-in-law. It quickly unfolds that Theodor, his wife, and two young daughters share the house with Theodor's parents-in-law, Grandfather and Grandmother Rose, and their grown daughter, Herta. This German home, it seems, has two patriarchs, and much of the domestic drama of the film centers on the battle between their diverging views on race and social responsibility.

This battle is first unleashed and articulated when Toxi, a black German child, arrives unexpectedly on the doorstep of the white German family. Toxi's African American father is absent, and her mother is dead, which leaves only an ailing maternal grandmother who is unable to care for the child and deposits her at the door of the middle-class home. Toxi's arrival disrupts Grandma Rose's birthday party, causing consternation and establishing the central conflict in dramatic drawing-room scene that will be played out in the film.

After Theodor and Grandpa discover a suitcase left outside the house with Toxi's belongings, the assembled conclude that they are confronted with a case of child abandonment and call the police. In the meantime, Herta and her beau, Robert, tend to Toxi and feed her leftover dinner before the child is questioned by the police. As the police officer prepares to depart, Theodor questions why he is not taking Toxi with him. His protest initiates an exchange that exposes the adult characters' racial attitudes and sketches the topography of the possible dramatic solutions to the problem of race that the film invokes.

As Toxi is led off to bed by Grandma Rose, Theodor expresses his strong disapproval that Toxi is staying overnight in the house.

Grandpa Rose: You'd rather we put her out on the street, suitcase and all?
Theodor: If you want the child to stay in the house tonight, fine, it's your house. . . . But I forbid her to be with my children in the morning.

Herta's fiancé, Robert, objects to Theodor's attitude, but Theodor is adamant and counters that the child could have a communicable disease. When a guest who is a doctor leaves the room to examine the Toxi, Theodor continues, "But even if the child is healthy, I don't want her with our children." As Robert criticizes Theodor's focus on skin color, and Grandpa Rose agrees, Theodor gets to the heart of the matter:

Theodor: I can't speak to you about this problem. This Negro child [*Negerkind*]. . .
Robert: . . . is also just a person [*Mensch*].
Theodor: Right, but nevertheless there are differences.
Robert: I don't see any differences, perhaps because I'm not a philistine [*Spiessbürger*].
Grandpa: Don't make such a big deal of this. I don't see any problem either. One child more in the family is only a problem if there is no food. Otherwise there is no problem.
Theodor: I mean the race problem.

Silence, exchange of meaningful looks. Closeup shots of Theodor and Grandpa together in one frame, Herta and Robert in another, then back to Theodor and Grandpa, as Grandpa recovers: "Of course, that still exists. But I think we've learned to see with different eyes." Theodor's wife tries to interject, but is cut off.

Theodore: You know that our opinions differ on certain points.
Grandpa: Yes, I know and I don't take offense at you for it. But you must break the habit of approaching all people and things with prejudice.
Herta: You have your opinion and we have ours, as every person does. But you have to recognize that the child can't be blamed; such a child is innocent.
Male guest: In any case, the child will leave the house tomorrow.
His wife: No, tomorrow is Sunday!
Male guest: Ok, then the day after.

His wife:	I know what Herr Doktor Jenrich means. It's a child of shame.
Male guest:	Anna! Please be quiet. [Closeup of Theodor and Grandpa.]
Theodor:	You spoke of prejudice. I find it a matter of sensibility [*Gefühlssachen*].
Grandpa:	Sensibility!? A small black child comes to us, helpless. Who knows what has been done to the child. And your first emotion is "racial difference!" Now listen . . .
Robert:	Herr Doktor, I've only just met you today, but . . .
Herta:	Please be quiet!
Robert:	If I'm not permitted to speak I'd rather leave. [Leaves, slamming the door].
Grandpa:	It appears he wasn't properly raised.
[Robert returns]:	I'm sorry, the door slipped. [Leaves again, this time the front door slams off camera. Herta starts to exit room].
Grandpa:	Please stay here, Herta. Don't run after him.
Herta:	But I may be allowed to go upstairs. Excuse me. [Camera follows Herta into front hall, where Doctor emerges, pronouncing Toxi healthy. Guests depart.]

As this scene illustrates, and the film bears out, the family's response to Toxi and her black skin divides along generational lines. She is treated sympathetically by the family's young adults, Herta and her fiancé, Robert. While Herta's and Robert's formative years technically would not have postdated the Third Reich (they appear to be in their early twenties in the film), they—along with Theodor's younger daughters, who later befriend Toxi—are meant to represent the "new" postwar generation, graced by late birth and therefore unmarred by the racist ideology of the Nazi past. Grandpa Rose, in contrast, is clearly of a generation whose coming of age predated the Third Reich. This grace of early birth, the film seems to suggest, inoculated him against the disease of racism that ravaged his son-in-law's generation, freeing him to see in Toxi "only a child" and not a problem. Thus in this scene, the film defines the postwar *Rassenproblem* as Theodor's inability to dispense with racial classifications and hierarchies when encountering individuals or social situations. Grandpa, in effect, articulates the problem by suggesting that, rather than "learn[ing] to see with new eyes," Theodor continues in the habit of confronting the world through the prejudices he continues to carry with him like so much outdated baggage. It is precisely this act of locating the problem of race in the skewed perspective of the *white* beholder (rather than the body, culture or intellect of a black individual or group) that constitutes the liberal kernel of this film's own ideology of race.

Nonetheless, there are some notable amendments to this liberalizing discourse of race in the film. As noted above, the film identifies the residue of racist perspective and practice as adhering most stubbornly to the middle-aged ranks that came of political age under Hitler. While the film avoids explicitly demonizing Theodor as a Nazi holdover—opting instead for a softer, less controversial approach to characterization to avoid alienating its postwar German viewers—the generational topography produced by the film anchors racist ideology firmly and exclusively in the Nazi past (rather than a longer German history) and in the belief system of its adult generation (rather than Germans in general). The problem is thereby minimized and made manageable: broad-minded Germans need only help reeducate the tainted cohort of the Nazi years.

Thus far I have argued that *Toxi* is unambiguously liberal in the way it articulates the problem of race early in the film, but I am sorry to have to report that this dramatic scene of articulation also represents the culmination of the film's liberal perspective. In fact, the liberal perspective is unsettled—and the dialogue on race terminated—as the scene breaks down due to Robert's impassioned exit, quickly followed by that of Herta and the rest of the group. This scene and its disruption point to the perceived dangers of race in postwar Germany, for it indicates Germans' inability to confront the issue of racial prejudice—even within that most intimate social grouping, the family—without the threat of social dissolution. This becomes clear as we move from a consideration of the problem posed by the film to the solutions it proposes, for it is here that we run smack into the limits of postwar racial liberalism in 1950s West Germany.

Before I launch into a critical discussion of the full range of the film's solutions for Toxi, I would like to take a quick look at what first seems the likely solution, but one quickly betrayed as a fleeting utopian moment in the film.[9] Toxi has been taken to stay in an orphanage (*Kinderheim*) following the weekend she made her appearance at the Rose/Jenrich home. To fulfill his promise to her, Grandpa Rose arrives at the orphanage for a visit, where he sees a clean, orderly home for mostly black (and a sprinkling of white) German children. As Toxi greets Grandpa and leads him into the room, the children begin to sing in unison: "I would like so much to go home/I would like to see my homeland again/I can't find my way on my own/Who will love me and take me along?"[10] This song of homelessness—which not incidentally generalized Afro-German children as unloved orphans—is reprised throughout the movie at critical points and comes to serve as Toxi's theme song.

Soon Grandpa Rose's visit comes to an end, and Toxi is permitted to accompany him to the outside gate. Grandpa, clearly moved by the sight of the roomful of unwanted children and concern for Toxi, uncomfortably comments on the time and begins to say goodbye to her. But then he says, "Wait, I'll bring you back," takes Toxi's hand, and proceeds to walk her back in the direction of the orphanage. This begins the filmic moment (lasting fewer than thirty seconds) of promise and possibility. The camera pulls in for a close-up of Grandpa's face as they walk, which observes Toxi with affection and enjoyment; a reverse shot shows her smiling back at him, innocent and undemanding. Again, a reverse shot follows to Grandpa, and back to Toxi. It is during these brief fleeting seconds that we see Toxi and Grandpa interact as individuals outside of a racialized perspective, as individuals who share a human connection, a compatibility that renders race irrelevant. Within a few minutes, we realize that he had decided not to "bring her back" to the children's home, but to his family's home. Racial integration—even in the most intimate sphere of the family—appears imminent.

However, this moment is over just after it begins, and the scene concludes with the camera settling on a less fortunate black German girl, nose pressed against the window glass, apparently observing the happy scene from inside the orphanage. This concluding shot reminds us of the children left behind and, not incidentally, begins to transform the race problem within the film. It is no longer a narrow issue of white racism but has been broadened to include the social alienation and loneliness experienced by forsaken, institutionalized children. One might suppose that attention to the plight of black German children might have had a salubrious social effect, but there is little evidence that that was the case. Rather, it diffused (one is tempted to write *de*fused) the issue of white responsibility, since the camera lens shifts focus from the social fact of white racism to that of the putatively unwanted black children yearning in vain for love, family, and home in the Federal Republic.[11] Later in the action, moreover, the film closes off the possibility of Grandpa becoming the solution for Toxi and children like her. The utopian moment of mutual enjoyment gets subverted, as we will see.

The second solution proposed by the film is—predictably enough, following the generational analysis of the film—adoption by the young couple, Robert and Herta. In reaction to Theodor's continued insistence that Toxi leave his home, Robert and Herta decide to marry quickly and raise the child. This decision follows an earlier scene in which Herta and Toxi visit Robert at his studio and Robert photographs the child after handing her a chocolate bar to nibble. When Herta asks what he's doing, Robert, who is in advertising, answers simply, "poster." The scene in which

Robert and Herta agree to care for Toxi opens with a shot of the advertising poster he has made, which features a coal-black caricature of a girl with white saucer-shaped eyes and protruding lips. Robert clearly required no photo of Toxi to draw this image that, rather than betray a likeness of the child, draws liberally on familiar tropes of racist black stereotype. He marvels at his work, declaring that the company "will have to reorganize production around it." In fact, shots of the poster and his response to it serve to frame the short scene in which the couple decide to adopt the child. After appearing to admire the poster, Herta leaves rather abruptly following Robert's prideful display. As the camera follows them to the door, the poster of Toxi moves out of the frame and the backdrop to the action is dominated by another advertising poster of a sheep inscribed with the word "Dura-wool" (*Durawolle*). The imagery is subtle, but can be taken as a critical comment on Robert's willingness to commercially exploit and objectify Toxi in a way that established a representational equivalence between (black) child and (white) sheep. As Herta moves towards the door to leave, and the scene concludes, the couple's embrace is filmed through a divider in the room that resembles a wire fence. Both the "Dura-wool" poster and the fencing visually indicate the inability of even this younger generation to break out of the constraints of enduring cultural norms and values since Robert—at some less-than-conscious level—appears as conditioned by racial stereotypes and careerist ambitions as Theodor. This scene, in fact, is the first and last in which Robert and Herta are proposed as surrogate parents to Toxi. The film abandons the theme of their marriage and adoption altogether although they continue to appear as a couple. Thus solution number two is quietly killed as an option.

The third possible solution the film proposes revolves around Theodor's character. Throughout much of the film, Theodor protests Toxi's presence as an economic burden and epidemiological hazard and prohibits his young daughters from playing with her. That command is quickly subverted by the curious girls, but he continues to devote his energies to having Toxi removed from the family home when he's not busy pursuing business investments. The dramatic culmination comes when Grandpa suffers a heart attack after a heated show-down with Theodor, which allows Theodor the opportunity to act. Early the next morning, while the household sleeps, Theodor awakens Toxi and readies her for a drive to the orphanage. On the way, however, his car breaks down. While the car is repaired, the two become better acquainted over breakfast. In a comedy of errors, Toxi gets lost. Theodor gets worried and searches frantically for the child, and in the process gains a healthy dose of both paternal and social responsibility.

Figure 5.1. Film still from *Toxi* (directed by R. A. Stemmle, 1952). Robert proudly admires his advertising poster of Toxi, which draws on the visual lexicon of black stereotype, while Herta looks on. This scene signals the end of the couples' aspirations to adopt the child in the film.
Photo courtesy of Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

Following a telephone lead, Theodor and the police rescue the hapless Toxi just before she is spirited away in a gypsy caravan by a disreputable family of street performers who have realized her economic value as a curiosity for their panhandling. The rescue scene concludes with a medium close-up of a relieved Theodor warmly hugging a grateful Toxi, as an instrumental reprise of Toxi's theme song swells on the soundtrack. Thus Theodor's conversion story and Toxi's search for home appear to reach a happy, shared conclusion.

Blood Is Thicker Than Good Intentions: The Failure of Integration

In the film's narrative, the German father is successfully weaned from his recidivist racial prejudices of yesteryear, and Toxi finds herself in the embrace of white father and family. However, the filmmakers do not leave it at that. One of the most striking things about the film is that it refuses to end on the high celebratory note of this first, transformative ending. Rather, the first ending turns out to be a false one, and the drama continues. Toxi is returned to the family home and readily included in the family's preparations for the Christmas holidays. The long final scene that concludes the film begins with the apparent effacement of race as Theodor's white birth child plays one King of the Magi in blackface in the family Christmas drama, while Toxi performs in whiteface.

Yet rather than undermine the significance of race and the salience of the color line, the painted faces initiate a scene that reasserts both, vigorously reestablishing racial boundaries and race-based definitions of German identity by insisting on the power of blood and heredity. In the second—and final—happy ending, Toxi's African American father arrives unexpectedly at the family's door that Christmas Eve to collect his child and take her "home" to the United States. This overdetermined sentimental finale was foreshadowed in the Christmas drama, in which Toxi, while performing as a King of the Magi, abruptly steps out of character to reprise her theme song. The camera moves in for a tight close up of Toxi, establishing a psychological moment that betrays her ongoing yearning for a home and sense of belonging that she has not yet found. Within minutes that search is over, and the film concludes with Toxi's introduction to her African American father. The last sequence of shots in the film, in which the camera pulls in for increasingly tighter close-ups of the reunion and filial embrace, visually disengages the pair from the German domestic scene and releases a carefully choreographed crescendo of emotion that

Figure 5.2. Film Still from *Toxi* (directed by R. A. Stemmle, 1952). Toxi and Theodor's daughters in their Christmas eve pageant. Toxi (left) plays one King of the Magi in whiteface, while Theodor's white daughters perform in blackface.
Photo courtesy of Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

anticipates and justifies Toxi's imminent emigration. As a result, the German family—and German identity—is first healed through inclusion of the racialized other, then restored to whiteness by her *elective* exit.

This second ending reveals that the film, all along, has been advocating the principle of tolerance rather than integration. In fact, it seems to suggest that racial integration would have destructive social and psychological consequences for (white) family and (black) child alike. This suggestion is dramatized toward the end of the film in a confrontation between Theodor and Grandpa, two scenes before Theodor loses Toxi on the drive to the orphanage. In the scene, Theodor again demands that Toxi be removed from the house, but this time threatens that if she is not, he and his family will leave instead. The threat triggers a violent reaction from Grandpa, who condemns Theodor's "heartless principles" and declares that he never wants to see his son-in-law and daughter again. With this, Grandpa appears to have a heart attack and collapses. While Grandma rushes to his aid, Theodor mutters to his wife that Grandpa's "love for this exotic [*fremdartigen*] child is not normal." After Grandpa is seen by the doctor and his condition stabilizes, Grandma Rose, who has been sympathetic to Toxi all along, tells Grandpa that he "cannot allow his grandchildren to leave the house on Toxi's account." Strikingly, neither Grandpa nor the film argue with this. Delivered by Grandma with calm demeanor, her counsel is treated as indisputable assertion and common sense. It is precisely this "common sense" response that begins to defuse the ideological rift between Grandpa and Theodor and shift the terms of the conflict. For Grandma's response implicitly questions whether Grandpa has the right to assert equivalence between Toxi and his own white grandchildren, whether Grandpa is right to stubbornly elevate Toxi and the principle of racial integration over their own progeny and loyalty to bloodline. Confronted in this manner, and assured by the doctor that Toxi will thrive in the healthy, stable environment of the orphanage, Grandpa immediately relents and agrees to have Toxi returned there. But do it quickly, he orders, "I can't look her in the face." Commitment to intact family trumps commitment to intact principle. And so Theodor wins the battle, if only to be converted from his most overtly racist ways a bit later in the film, and the scene ends without seriously challenging the reasonableness or racial assumptions of Theodor's demand.[12]

In fact, the film establishes a symmetry that works to reinforce and ultimately *reify* the black-white binary, since it insists that the pull of race is as strong among black as among white characters. Despite Toxi's being welcomed into the family at the end, we hear a reprise of her theme song,

"I would like so much to go home/ I would like to see my homeland again," at the very moment her father enters the family home. This refrain is intended to serve as a window into her emotional and psychological state, to signal a condition of incompleteness. As a result, heredity and belonging is envisioned as inherently racialized, and racial segregation is depicted as unconscious *natural* mandate.[13]

Toxi's Plight

"I guess that's the dream most of us black children had," commented a black German woman I know after she viewed the film.[14]

Thus far, my discussion has focused on the way the film's treatment of the *Rassenproblem* helped construct a normative national identity predicated on whiteness in postwar West Germany. Yet my friend's comment indicates that certain aspects of the film resonated with her experiences and fantasies growing up in the Federal Republic of the 1950s. Initially I was surprised by her response, perhaps because my analysis focused so single-mindedly on reading the film as text in order to determine the racial ideology it articulated for the white German audiences it addressed. My friend, however, viewed the film in terms of its "accuracy"—judging it by how well it conformed to, or diverged from, her personal experiences and social treatment. In fact, the film cultivates an aura of sociological accuracy in order to make its case for racial tolerance but also, ultimately, for segregation through expatriation. And it does this precisely in the ways it chronicles and dramatizes the "plight" of Toxi—and by extension, that of any and every black German child of the era—as one of abandonment, social isolation and marginalization, and cultural stereotyping.[15]

Toxi is deposited on the doorstep of the Rose/Jenrich home by her grandmother early in the film. Aside from a couple of shots of child and grandmother outside the home, which convey little about Toxi or her emotional state (except to establish the characters' liminal qualities in terms of race and class), the film introduces meager biographical details of the child only during interrogations by the white police officer and family members. Within the film, neither the child nor her plight exists apart from them. Any psychological or emotional depth she has as a character is revealed in interaction with white family members or white society. The film accords her little independent subjectivity; rather, her character functions as a kind of cipher onto which white Germans project their racial attitudes and fears.

I have discussed the film's depiction of racial attitudes in terms of their generational taxonomy above. Now I want to consider briefly the way the film articulates white fears regarding racial difference and its social consequences. Significantly, these fears were displaced from their white source to Toxi's fate: they are represented as threatening her emotional and physical health and cinematically dramatized as potential dangers, not explicitly to white German society, but to Toxi herself. So, for example, while Toxi is depicted as receiving the compassion and concern of most family members in the Rose/Jenrich household, barring Theodor and perhaps his wife (who is interrupted as she tries to speak her mind on the issue), Toxi's brief forays into public in the beginning of the film show the opposite: hostile glances, contempt from the friends of Jenrich daughters, treatment as a curiosity. The film suggests that while black German children may be able to find the necessary "*Nestwärme*" (warmth of home) in the private sphere of home, their experience in public is fraught with dangers. But even here, the film's depiction of home is ambivalent and ultimately problematic for Toxi—for the child is bounced among an ailing white grandmother who cannot care for her, a home inhabited by a surrogate white family riven by conflict over her, and an institutional home peopled by abandoned children like herself. None, then, are presented as optimal solutions or as places where Toxi unambiguously *belongs*.

Although *Toxi* is fundamentally a domestic drama, with most of the film's action occurring within the confines of the family home, there is one noteworthy scene in which Toxi wanders the city alone after being separated from Theodor. Intercut with shots of Theodor's frantic search, this sequence provides hints about the dangers confronting Toxi, which are not, for the most part, immediate dangers, but rather incipient ones. Toxi wanders the city nearly free from racist remarks (except when a man dubs her a "little black beast" in a clearly disreputable part of town), but she is also nearly free from social interaction. We see her nose pressed against store windows: the first shot shows her hungering for food. In a second shot, a night scene, she inspects the showcase of a lingerie store, with the camera positioned from within looking out through the window at her. Toxi is shown peering in, occupying barely a quarter of the frame to the far left, while two pairs of white opaque mannequin legs displaying women's stockings dominate the rest of the frame and tower over Toxi. Her placement at the edge of the frame, with the window acting as a barrier cutting her off from the symbols of white female sexuality, is telling. It depicts her as an observer, suggesting her outsider status and the unattainability of German norms of femininity, desirability, and reproduction which are coded as

exclusively white. That shot fades to a tilted-angle shot of Toxi on some stairs, indicating her dislocation. We hear the sounds of a toy piano, and she is drawn to its player, a boy panhandling. A gathering crowd of white adults assume Toxi is part of the show and readily hand her loose change. When the boy senses the police, he folds up his piano and runs with Toxi back to his caravan home and unsavory parents. When they register Toxi's commercial value as curiosity—their son has brought home more money than usual, which he attributes to Toxi's presence—they resolve to take her with them, without consulting the girl, when they depart later that night, thus initiating the rescue scene with Theodor and the police.

In sum, this extended scene indicates that the filmmakers could only imagine a future of social isolation, commercial exploitation, and economic marginality for Toxi and children like her. In the lingerie window shot, the film obliquely raises the question of what would happen when Toxi reached sexual maturity. The panhandling scene and intended abduction, along with Robert's earlier advertising poster of Toxi's stereotyped caricature, suggest that she would always be treated as an exotic object of curiosity, that exploitation was inevitable. It also, however, signals her anticipated social and economic status in West Germany if left to her own devices: not the lofty ranks of the respectable bourgeoisie that Theodor and family inhabited, but the more lowly ranks of "gypsy" street performers or ailing indigent grandmothers.

This cultural conceit, which preached racial tolerance but insisted on maintaining racial difference and gauging relative worth, was pervasive in the liberalizing discourse of 1950s West Germany and, I would argue, accounts at least in part for the alignment of *Toxi*'s fictional ending and my friend's desire to be united with her unknown father. As it was not culturally permissible for my friend to be classified according to her white maternity, her social experience taught her not to self-identify that way. Rather, she fantasized about embracing her black paternity in order to escape the subordinate social status assigned her as racialized other. The desire may have been motivated in part by geneological pull, but it was certainly also a self-preserving strategy to foster a personal sense of dignity and worth by shaking off a destructive, socially ascribed identity of immutable difference.

Toxi's Trajectories

Although *Toxi* is a highly ambivalent text that forsakes the principle of racial integration in favor of racial tolerance—and ultimately exhibits more concern about rehabilitating the German patriarchal family through the

maintenance of racial boundaries—it nonetheless represented a banner moment in the cultural expression of postwar racial liberalism in West German popular cinema of the 1950s. Plainly stated, it was downhill from here. This becomes evident when one examines the next film Elfie Fiegert appeared in, *Der dunkle Stern*, released in 1955.

Der dunkle Stern has been dubbed inaccurately a "sequel" (*Fortsetzung*) to *Toxi* in the film's promotional materials and press reviews from the 1950s—and even by an archivist at the federal film archive in Berlin when I was doing research there a few years back. The film, however, is not a sequel in any meaningful sense of the word. Although its script, like *Toxi*'s, was authored by Maria Osten-Sacken, and both films featured Elfie Fiegert in the role of a black occupation child, the second film represented neither a continuation of the story nor its fictional characters. Any continuity between the films has to do with the ways the second film selectively amplified some of the themes of the first within its new fictional constellation. And this selective amplification, I would argue, resulted in a retreat from the expressly (if inadequately) liberal commitments of its predecessor. Specifically, a reading of *Der dunkle Stern* reveals a noticeable narrowing of the definition of tolerance; a marked unwillingness even to entertain the possibility of racial integration, if only for most of the duration of the film, as in *Toxi*; and an overwhelming obsession—from the film's very beginning—both to locate a suitable place for the black German child outside the white German nation and to reconcile the child intellectually and emotionally to the wisdom, and indeed compassion, of this choice.[16]

The film opens in an "idyllic village" in the mountains of Upper Bavaria in winter. Moni, the black German child played by Elfie Fiegert, lives in a small cottage with her foster mother, Frau Lechner, loves rural life, skis to school in winter, and is well-regarded by the villagers, none of whom remind her of the "the blemish of her heredity [*Makel der Herkunft*]."[17] One day in school, Moni's teacher, Fräulein Rieger, asks the children what they want to be when they grow up. Few of the children have well-formed answers, but Moni replies with passion, "I'd like to have a farm [*Hof*]! I'd like to be a peasant-farmer [*Bäuerin*]!" The children quickly taunt her, "A black peasant! . . . Even the chickens would laugh! There's no such thing!"[18] Moni's aspirations, and not the other children's responses, stimulate Fräulein Rieger to take action on Moni's behalf. Convinced that Moni's dreams cannot be realized, Fräulein Rieger consults the village veterinarian, who puts her in touch with an agent for the circus where he once worked. In short order, the Italian circus artist Casseno shows up at the village to collect Moni, who will live and work with him

and his family. Frau Lechner agrees to the plan since she has been notified that she will lose her rental cottage soon and cannot continue to care for the child. Moni, meanwhile, is told that the arrangement is temporary and embarks on the adventure, but quickly develops a case of homesickness for the Bavarian mountains. Once at the circus, she is readily befriended by the circus performers. She helps a traumatized young woman get over her fear of the trapeze after witnessing her mother's fatal fall from the ropes. She becomes surrogate sibling and caretaker to a blind orphaned boy-clown, and after a stint serving as a human target for Casseno's knife-throwing, ultimately discovers her own stereotypical "natural talent" as a clown and trapeze artist, as well as her popularity with audiences. By the end of the film, as the circus director announces that they will be embarking on an international tour through South America, and after a brief reunion with Fräulein Rieger, Moni finally surrenders her dream of returning to her mountain village and accepts the circus as her new *Heimat* (home).

The film's treatment of racial difference is so outrageous by our contemporary standards that it begs the question of how this was justified and rendered acceptable within the context of the film's fictional space. The answer, I would argue, resides in the way that the film's narrative was organized around the cultural logic and postwar mythology of *Heimat.*

Der dunkle Stern opens by invoking the visual conventions of *Heimat* and *Heimatfilme*, with shots of the natural majesty of the Bavarian Alps and nostalgic scenes of rural village life. Postwar *Heimatfilme*, the most prolific and popular film genre in West Germany between 1950 and 1956, sought to locate an "authentic" Germany—unmarred by passing political regimes—in the values and practices of hearth, village, and church. At the same time, however, they also recognized recent traumas unleashed by the war and frequently peddled new norms of moral German masculinity and femininity to postwar German audiences. In short, *Heimatfilme* appealed to their audiences because, unlike Hollywood imports, their orientation was fundamentally *national*; they addressed their audience first and foremost as Germans. *Heimatfilme* released through the mid-1950s tended to acknowledge and engage critical issues of the day, such as the benefits and boundaries of national belonging, the desire for national rehabilitation, and the need to adjust to new postwar realities—albeit in ways that emphasized the reassuring stability and longevity of the German *Heimat*, which was accorded an existence independent of the more volatile, transitory, and politicized German *Vaterland.*[19]

Heimat, then, was ideologically encoded as something fixed and eternal, Christian and white. Its evocation of natural beauty, community, and

security could stimulate longing in the child, Moni, but by definition it was not something that could readily assimilate *her*. This is made apparent in the school essay Moni writes on the topic "What I want to be when I grow up," which Fräulein Rieger reads aloud to her veterinarian friend, and in the exchange between the two that follows:

> I want to be a farmer. Just like I said today at school when everyone laughed. But that's the most wonderful thing there is in the world. It's lovely to walk through the grain fields when the stalks are high. It's lovely to lead the cows to pasture. They have large and small bells hanging around their necks that jingle and ring all together—its wonderful, just like in church. It's lovely to be in the fields early in the morning when the sun rises, and to spend the whole day working together with the farmhands [*Knechten*] and milkmaids [*Mägden*]. But my favorite time is the harvest festival when everyone is happy and dances and sings. I would like to marry a hardworking farmer, have a farm, and many children.

"And she'll get him!" responds the vet, impressed by the author's conviction and unaware that the author is Moni.

"She will not get him," counters Fräulein Rieger. "Or do you really think that some farm boy will lead Moni to the altar?"

The veterinarian considers a moment, "Yes, well, what with our tiny village here! As long as she's a child it's still all right. But as soon as she turns seventeen or eighteen, she'll be run out of town like a unwanted dog!"[20]

The scene conforms, at least initially, to the conventions of *Heimatfilme* in Moni's veneration of the natural beauties of the rural landscape and the cyclical yet steadfast quality of agrarian life which, even in their most mundane details (bells on cow's necks), are infused with Christian imagery—or at least aurality, in the form of church bells. Moni has demonstrated through her essay both her love of *Heimat* and her intimate cultural familiarity with its iconography. Yet this mastery is rapidly revealed to be transgressive. She may fervently *desire* it—along with marriage and children within the *Heimat*—but her love must remain unrequited since *Heimat* by definition is constant, unchanging, and therefore unable to accommodate "difference." This is made manifest in an earlier scene, when Moni tells her foster mother of the schoolchildren's taunts. "Black peasant!" her mother questions, "Where did they get that?" As Moni explains how she responded to the teacher's question at school, her mother effectively dismisses the child's aspirations as inappropriate, admonishing her, "Well, it really would have been best if you hadn't said that." Thus the film, through its responsible adults, consistently declares Moni's heartfelt desire an impossible and,

more significantly, a *forbidden* one. The dramatic action of *Der dunkle Stern* pivots and is predicated upon an unquestioned affirmation of the exclusionary ideology—and racial immutability—of *Heimat*, that dominant cultural category of 1950s West Germany.[21]

A related point is that the putatively apolitical concept of *Heimat* (precisely because it was invested with the function of encapsulating an authentic, unchanging German nation untouched by transitory murderous politics of National Socialism) *enabled* filmmakers and other cultural producers to envision and enforce a fundamentally racialized definition of the German nation without having it appear to be an overtly political or even racist move. *Heimat*, after all, resided in locality, home, family, emotions; as such, it was understood to stand apart from politics. It was rooted not only in the soil, but in the very viscera of Germans. This sense of intimate connection is what gave it its strength and staying power as a cultural concept. This is also what accounts for the fact that most Germans "knew" that their *Heimat* was traditionally, historically, irrevocably white.

Placing the issue of racial difference within the context of *Heimat*, then, nullifies integration as a possibility precisely because of the hundred-year history of the concept. The film *Toxi* could entertain the issue of integration, at least temporarily, because the drama played out in the urbanized context of modern postwar family life in which the need for reconstruction and rehabilitation was at least recognized. *Der dunkle Stern*, by opening in the Upper Bavarian *Heimat*, set as its stage the supposedly timeless German community, that bedrock of German identity that could tolerate no reform without jeopardizing its imagined essence. As a result, the question of integrating Moni could not be raised, for racial integration would alter the very nature of that timeless "essence." *Heimat*, then, continued to be a fundamentally racialized concept.[22] So in spite of the fact that it was presented as an innocuous cultural building block of German (and not incidentally also gender) identity after 1945, *Heimat* played an important role in *reconstituting* racially exclusive notions of national belonging after National Socialism.[23]

And so at the end of *Der dunkle Stern*, Moni is exiled to the circus, that "colorful world" of diverse ethnicities where she "must—no! wants to—to find a new *Heimat*," and is booked to depart for a year-long tour of the great cities of South America: from Rio to Buenos Aires to Montevideo.[24] Coincidentally, or not, perhaps, Elfie Fiegert next lands on the screen in *Das Haus in Montevideo* (The House in Montevideo, 1963). By now a young woman, Fiegert plays a bit part as the exotic attendant in a hypersexualized fantasy villa owned by lead character Herr Professor Doktor Nägele's

recently deceased sister, who left Germany years before under a cloud of shame due to an out-of-wedlock pregnancy and subsequently made a fortune, which the white German patriarch has now come to claim on behalf of his teenage daughter. The film treats the sexual impropriety with a light touch, engages in double entendre, and finally teaches the Herr Professor to be less judgmental and morally rigid. As such, the film evinces a more general transition in mores occurring in popular commercial feature films by the early 1960s. For the purposes of this essay, however, the important points are three. First, the onset of puberty demoted Elfie Fiegert from leading roles to bit speaking parts. Second, it altered the roles into which she was typecast from black occupation child to exoticized, sexualized beauty. And third, it changed the location of her character from Germany to abroad—a transition that was already underway in *Der dunkle Stern.* She no longer played the exotic German girl, but rather the exotic foreign one. And most importantly, perhaps, no explanation or apologies were deemed necessary for this ascription. The retreat from the liberal discourse of race—at least as it concerned the intersection of blackness and Germanness—was complete.

Despite this evolving disassociation of Elfie Fiegert's characters from Germany, Fiegert continued to be referred to—and refer to herself—as "Toxi" or even "Toxi Fiegert."[25] In part, of course, this was a marketing ploy that attempted to capitalize on her early success and popularity in her original role as black occupation child. Even so, it is telling. Because even before the film's release and box office success, the historical Elfie Fiegert was literally reinscribed as her fictional counterpart: while the names of all other actors are provided in the film credits and publicity materials, "Toxi" is listed as played by "Toxi." As a result of the repeated identification of actress with character (in a stream of personal appearances, interviews, and press releases), the story of Toxi became the story of all West German "colored" occupation children, and the name "Toxi" entered the German language as a generic term for Afro-German children. And the term stuck. The print media, over the course of the next decades, would continue to invoke the name "Toxi" when titling articles discussing black Germans and their social condition.[26]

Elfie Fiegert, too, took the stage name "Toxi," it seems, and by the early 1960s, as she continued to have trouble getting parts, expressed her intention to have her name legally changed to "Toxi." This insistent identification with character can be attributed to her attempt to build a professional career by reminding the industry of both her early professional success and the critical recognition she received in the role. Yet she also seems to have experienced a certain wistfulness about playing Toxi: positive

attention from public and press, media events fêting her as a budding and adorable star, and, one would suppose, the professional career these seemed to portend. By the time she reached her teens, Elfie Fiegert, like her characters, had become trapped by a socially ascribed identity of immutable difference. Industry interest in her had dried up; the promise of her early career had dwindled into a couple of bit parts; and her part-time agent was encouraging her to reorient her career aspirations downward—to the secretarial job she held in Munich. "There is just no demand in Germany for an actress like you," her agent put it bluntly. By the turn of the 1960s, Elfie Fiegert—and indeed the earlier sustained public attention to the "fate of the postwar colored occupation child" had been rudely pushed from the limelight.

The trajectory of Elfie Fiegert's career—as well as the narrative structures of *Toxi* and *Der dunkle Stern*—are part of the as yet unwritten history of the cultural devolution of Nazi-era racial ideologies. The 1950s was an extended moment when the issue of race and its postwar meanings were explicitly addressed and performed for West Germans. But this was accomplished by shifting the location of race from Jewishness to blackness in order to distance it from the Holocaust and Germans' crimes against humanity (which, after all, were still on trial in these postwar decades). This displacement rendered the issue one of juvenile stewardship and German control, and thus facilitated the articulation of a liberalized discourse of race as proof of West Germany's successful racial reeducation and rehabilitation. Yet the focus on blackness also allowed white Germans (like their white American contemporaries) to draw the line at interracial sex and reproduction. By the time that black German children reached puberty, these earlier discussions were muted, and "race" was on its way to becoming a taboo topic.

This resulted in a silencing of public discussions regarding the role of race in German society and identity. What is more, it authorized a cultural atmosphere of racial exclusivity in defining the nation. That is, while contemporary Germans since the 1960s have recognized an increasing ethnic diversity within their borders as demographic fact, they have interpreted this as resulting from an influx in *foreign* laborers and asylum-seekers, attracted by Germany's strong economy and social welfare provisions. However, membership in the nation was culturally imagined (and until a few years ago, to a large extent legally prescribed) as the more exclusive domain of homogenous whiteness. This has left little space—social or psychological—for German citizens of color who, to borrow from W. E. B. DuBois, daily feel the "doubleness" of their lives as blacks and

Germans in a hostile, or at best, indifferent society that is their own. The silence that overtook issues of race in West Germany muted discussions of the relationship between blacks and Germanness for nearly two decades. The silence has now been broken, but a serious and sustained dialogue between black Germans and white has yet to occur.

Notes

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All translations from the original German are mine.

2. On the representation of Jews in postwar German cinema, see Frank Stern, "Film in the 1950s: Passing Images of Guilt and Responsibility," in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968*, ed. Hanna Schissler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 266–80; Robert R. Schandley, *Rubble Films: German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001), 77–115.

3. Among the more serious studies were: World Brotherhood, Gesellschaft für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit, *Protokoll der Arbeitstagung über das Schicksal der farbigen Mischlingskinder in Deutschland* (Wiesbaden, 15–16 August 1952); Walter Kirchner, "Eine anthropologische Studie an Mulattenkindern in Berlin unter Berücksichtigung der sozialen Verhältnisse" (Ph. D. diss., Freie Universität Berlin, 1952); Hans Pfaffenberger, "Farbige Kinder im Heim—ein Prüfstein," *Unsere Jugend* 5, no. 12 (1953); Luise Frankenstein, *Soldatenkinder: Die unehelichen Kinder ausländischer Soldaten mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Mischlinge* (Munich: W. Steinebach, 1954); Hermann Ebeling, "Zum Problem der deutschen Mischlingskinder," *Bild und Erziehung* 7, no. 10 (1954): 612–30; Hans Pfaffenberger, "Hilfe für unsere Mischlingskinder—aber wie?" *Neues Beginnen* 8 (1955): 113–15; Rudolf Sieg, "Mischlingskinder in Westdeutschland: Eine anthropologische Studie an farbigen Kindern," *Beiträge zur Anthropologie* 4 (1955): 9–79; Gustav von Mann, "Zum Problem der farbigen Mischlingskinder in Deutschland," *Jugendwohl* 36, no. 1 (January 1955): 50–53; Hans Pfaffenberger, "Zur Situation der Mischlingskinder," *Unsere Jugend* 8, no. 2 (1956): 64–71; Herbert Hurka, "Die Mischlingskinder in Deutschland. Ein Situationsbericht auf Grund bisheriger Veröffentlichungen," *Jugendwohl* 6 (1956): 257–75; and Klaus Eyferth, "Die Situation und die Entwicklungsaussichten der Neger-Mischlingskinder in der Bundesrepublik," *Soziale Arbeit* 7, no. 11 (November 1958): 469–78; Klaus Eyferth, "Gedanken über die zukünftige Berufseingliederung der Mischlingskinder in Westdeutschland," *Neues Beginnen* 5 (May 1959): 65–68. Press reports appeared widely in newspapers and in magazines such as *Stern, Der Spiegel, Quick*, and *Revue.*

For a discussion of German women's fraternization with American soldiers, and one German community's response, see Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German–American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

4. See Heide Fehrenbach, "'Ami Liebchen' und 'Mischlingskinder'—Rasse, Geschlecht und Kultur in der deutsch-amerikanischen Begegnung," in *Nachkrieg in Deutschland*, ed. Klaus Naumann (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2001), 178–205.

5. In the American zone of occupied Germany, marriage between U.S. soldiers and German women was permitted during 1947, but continued to be officially discouraged and subject to rigorous review and approval of one's officer and military chaplain. Evidence suggests that in large measure, such officers refused permission to interracial marriage applications. National Archives, College Park, Maryland. Office of the Military Government of Germany—U.S. (hereafter OMGUS), Circular 181.

6. The federal ministry of the interior petitioned state ministries of the interior in the former French and American zones of occupation for a head count of "Negro mixed-blood children" in November 1950. By mid-1951, a survey of all occupation children was initiated by the Deutscher Verein für öffentliche und private Fürsorge, which requested separate tabulation of white and black children. This survey was undertaken with the assistance of the state ministries of the interior as well as state and local youth offices, and commanded the interest of the federal ministry of the interior and the foreign office. In 1955, a federal nationwide survey of all occupation children was taken. See Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BAK), B153: Bundesministerium für Familien- und Jugendfragen, no. 342: Fürsorge für uneheliche Kinder von Besatzungsangehörigen, insb. für Mischlingskinder. Also see Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (BayHStA), MInn 81089 and Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart (HstAStg) EA2/007, Nr. 1177.

7. For an expanded discussion of issues surrounding adoption, see Heide Fehrenbach, "Of German Mothers and '*Negermischlinge*': Race, Sex, and the Postwar Nation," in *The Miracle Year*s, ed. Hanna Schissler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 164–86.

8. A dominant feature of this postwar liberal discourse was the instrumentalization of race for the purpose of rehabilitating postfascist German identity and masculinity. On this point, see Heide Fehrenbach, "Rehabilitating Father*land*: Race and German Remasculinization," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24, no. 1 (Fall 1998): 107–271; also Susan Jeffords, "The 'Remasculization' of Germany in the 1950s: Discussion," *Signs* 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1998): 163–69.

9. This shot occurs in *Toxi* at 0:37:28–0:38:00.

10. "Ich möcht' so gern nach Hause geh'n, ay ay ay. / Die Heimat möcht' ich wiedersehen, ay, ay, ay, ay / Ich find' allein nicht einen Schritt, ay, ay, ay / Wer hat mich lieb, und nimmt mich mit? ay, ay, ay."

11. My point here is not to minimize the suffering of marginalized and institutionalized children, but to make the point that the film, in formulating the "problem" it seeks to solve, shifts the focus from racism (a white-generated problem) to the children themselves. The sociological data on interracial children in postwar Germany show that just over 10 percent of the children were uncared for by their mothers or mothers' relatives. Nonetheless, commentators continually assumed that black German children were in the main raised in institutions and not by their families. This assumption, of course, affected both the way the "problem" of the children, and its solution, were formulated. For a longer discussion, see Fehrenbach, "Of German Mothers."

12. To be fair, this occurs before Theodor learns his lesson as a result of Toxi's unexpected disappearance. Nonetheless, even after his conversion, and just before Christmas Eve, we see a scene in the kitchen between the cook and the police investigator in which the latter discloses that he has learned the identity of the ailing grandmother who left Toxi

on the doorstep. When asked why he had not made a more general announcement of the fact, he responds that he wanted the child "to enjoy a peaceful Christmas first," thus indicating that her status is the home was necessarily temporary and nearing an end.

13. Again, the interracial children were "raced" as black rather than white. The pull of blood was never perceived to work in the direction of their white mothers.

14. My friend did not see the film as a child, nor, I suspect did most Afro-German children at the time.

15. For a discussion of how these issues were represented by social welfare workers, psychologists, academics, educators, and state officials, among others, see my discussions in "Of German Mothers" and " 'Ami Liebchen.' "

16. My discussion of this film will necessarily be schematic since it is based upon descriptions culled from film bills, publicity, press reports, and a more detailed novelized account of the film. Despite multiple attempts with German film archives and the German film company holding its rights, I have been unable to locate or gain access to either a film or video copy of *Der dunkle Stern.* Unlike many films from the 1950s, it has not been screened on German television, perhaps for obvious reasons, given the film's narrative. See Lia Avè, "Der dunkle Stern: Ein Roman," *Hermes Film-Roman Magazin* 17 (Munich: Hermes Film- und Bühnen-Verlag, n.d.).

17. This is a quotation from the publicity material of WEGE Film for *Der dunkle Stern.* Schriftgutarchiv of the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin.

18. Avè, "Der dunkle Stern," 5.

19. For a longer discussion of the ideology of the postwar *Heimatfilm*, see Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), esp. 148–68. For a discussion of postwar films that respond more overtly to the war and its aftermath, see Robert G. Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Useable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 123–70. The history of the modern concept of *Heimat* is explored in Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) and Alon Confino, *The Nation as Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany and National Memory, 1871–1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

20. "Ich will Bäuerin werden. Wie ich das heute in der Schule gesagt habe, haben alle gelacht. Dabei ist es doch das Schönste was es auf der ganzen Welt gibt. Es ist schön, durch die Getreide zu gehen, wenn die Aehren schon ganz hoch sind. Es ist schön, die Kühe auf die Alm zu treiben. Sie haben grosse und kleine Glocken um den Hals hängen und es bimmelt und läutet durcheinander, so wunderbar wie in der Kirche. Es ist schön, frühmorgens auf dem Feld zu sein, wenn die Sonne aufgeht, und den ganzen Tag mit den Knechten und Mägden zu arbeiten. Um am schönsten ist das Erntefest. Da freuen sich alle und tanzen und singen. Ich möchte einen fleissigen Bauern heiraten und einen Hof haben und viele Bauernkinder."

"Sie würden ihn schon kriegen!" meinte er darum . . .

"Sie wird ihn nicht kriegen." Fräulein Riegers Antwort war mutlos und endgültig. Oder glaubte Herr Doktor vielleicht, dass jemand von den Bauernbuben die Moni zum Altar führen würden? . . .

"Na also! Und gerade das Negermädchen . . ." Was tat es, dass das Kind eine besondere Liebe für das bäuerliche Leben mitbrachte, ja, geradezu ein ausgesprochenes Talent für Stall und Feld zeigte? Dieser Berufswunsch musste ein nebelhafter Traum bleiben, ohne

geringste Aussicht auf Verwirklingung. "Tja,—und dann unser kleines Dörfchen hier! Solange es ein Kind ist, gehts ja noch—aber wenn sie mal siebzehn oder achtszehn ist, da werden sie sie hier wohl rausbeissen—wie einen fremden Hund!" Avè, "Der dunkle Stern," 8.

21. At the end of *Der dunkle Stern*, Moni joins the community of circus performers and ponders her fate: "Would she really become a trapeze artist in the world-renowned act of the Bellanis? Really a famous, if also dark, star in the circus heaven as was predicted? She wished it from the bottom of her heart because she must—no, she wanted to—find a new *Heimat* in this colorful world." Avè, "Der dunkle Stern," 55.

22. It is interesting in this connection that neither Celia Applegate nor Alon Confino discusses the relationship of Jews to "*Heimat*" in their studies. For examples of postwar *Heimat* histories that build their mythology on descriptions of racial violence (especially black-on-white rape and murder) see Rudolf Albart, *Die letzten und die ersten Tage: Bamberger Kriegstagesbuch 1944/46* (Bamberg, 1953) and Hans Rommel, *Vor zehn Jahren. 16.–17. April 1945. Wie es zur Zerstörung von Freudenstadt gekommen ist* (Freudenstadt, 1955); for a brief analysis of this mythology see Fehrenbach, "Rehabilitating Father*land*," 110–12. For a critical discussion that deals explicitly with the issue of race and *Heimat* after 1945 in terms of social experience, see Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins*, 85–125.

23. Also of interest in this regard is that 1950s' *Heimatfilme* sometimes did thematize integration—both the need for newcomers to adapt to local ways and the need for locals to accept the new arrivals. But this applied exclusively to white ethnic German refugees from the former eastern reaches of the Third Reich. Perhaps the most popular of these *Heimatfilme* was *Grün ist die Heide* (1951).

24. Avè, "Der dunkle Stern," 50 and 55.

25. The instances of this are too numerous to list, but a couple of the more popular article titles are "Toxi speilt ihr eigenes Schicksal" or, in the case of *Der dunkle Stern*, "Toxi landet im Zirkus," "*Der dunkle Stern*—ein neuer Film mit Toxi!" In the credits for *Das Haus in Montevideo*, Elfie Fiegert is listed as Toxi Fiegert.

26. In 1967, for example, *Welt am Sonntag* published a feature article on black Germans titled, "Die 'Toxis' sind erwachsen—und haben Heiratssorgen" [The 'Toxis' are grown up—and have marriage worries], *Welt am Sonntag*, 26 March 1967. This article clipping was found in BAK, B189/6858: Bundesministerium für Jugend und Familie, "Untersuchung des Situation der Neger-Mischlingskinder in der Bundesrepublik."