"Stereotypisch Deutsch": An Examination of Stereotypes of Germans and the Effects in the Business Environment

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Abstract
Stereotypes can be seen as a tool to understand why a person or group of people behave the way they do. These stereotypes adapt over time as culture and cultural perceptions change. The purpose of this research is to analyze what stereotypes Americans have held of Germans over the years, starting in 1940, a couple years before the United States entered World War II, then the Cold War Era between 1947 and 1990, through today. The purpose of these time frames is to see how Americans viewed Germans just prior to entering the war, how the war may have changed those views, what happened to those views after the war was over, and what has become of those views since the fall of the Berlin Wall leading to today. The sources analyzed will be public opinion surveys, film, and comic books from this time, to have multiple sources of representation. The analysis includes what stereotypes remain, which have dissipated, and which have simply been modified, as well as questions why such changes, or lack thereof, have occurred. Additionally, this study contemplates in what way these present stereotypes affect doing business with Germans.

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"STEREOTYPISCH DEUTSCH": AN EXAMINATION OF STEREOTYPES OF GERMANS AND THE EFFECTS IN THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

Stereotypes can be seen as a tool to understand why a person or group of people behave the way they do. These stereotypes adapt over time as culture and cultural perceptions change. The purpose of this research is to analyze what stereotypes Americans have held of Germans over the years, starting in 1940, a couple years before the United States entered World War II, then the Cold War Era between 1947 and 1990, through today. The purpose of these time frames is to see how Americans viewed Germans just prior to entering the war, how the war may have changed those views, what happened to those views after the war was over, and what has become of those views since the fall of the Berlin Wall leading to today. The sources analyzed will be public opinion surveys, film, and comic books from this time, to have multiple sources of representation. The analysis includes what stereotypes remain, which have dissipated, and which have simply been modified, as well as questions why such changes, or lack thereof, have occurred. Additionally, this study contemplates in what way these present stereotypes affect doing business with Germans.

Introduction

In order to analyze the stereotypes that Americans hold of Germans, it is first important to understand just what a stereotype is. In 1922, Walter Lippman explained that stereotypes are used “...to help impose order onto a complex world” (Haerle and Schulz 29). Haerle and Schultz further explain that after stereotypes started to be seen as regular cognitive structures, the purpose of stereotypes shifted: “...stereotypes help simplify and
categorize information obtained from a complex and at times over-stimulating environment. With the help of these cognitive structures, we manage to process, store, and retrieve input faster and more efficiently" (Haerle and Schulz 30). With this in mind, the goal of this research is to view how the stereotypes changed as the environments and cultures changed.

Inspiration for this research came through personal experience. Although I am a student of the German language and culture, I still have a preconceived notion as to how Germans may act and behave. When I went to Germany for a five month study abroad in the Winter semester of 2016, I took those preconceived notions with me, and they were quickly shattered through some experiences I had there. For example, I was under the impression that Germans may be stand-offish and avoid small talk, but my second day in Germany proved that wrong when I was lost on the bus system and a gentleman not only kindly helped me with directions, but we chit chatted about the closed American Army base in the area and the impact it has had. While this may be beyond the typical small talk about the weather, it was still more than I anticipated, seeing as I had gone to Germany with the idea that Germans would not want to converse with strangers at all. This shattering of expectations made me wonder what other stereotypes of Germans exist in American culture and how they have come to be, as well as how the stereotypes held by my generation may be different from those held years ago.

The first part of the research begins around 1940, prior to the involvement of the United States in World War II, into 1947, slightly after the end of World War II. The reason for starting here is to create a sort of base stereotype, one that had formed through
prior experience with Germans in World War I and the times when many Germans immigrated to the United States. Two years before entry into the war is a brief time to analyze, but they are pivotal years leading up to the entry into the war. In order to view stereotypes it is important to understand the general attitude of the United States in this time and what forms of media may have influenced the stereotypes of this time: the film and comic industries.

The next section starts off where the last ended: in 1947. The reasoning for this lies in the fact that at this point, World War II has ended, Germany has been divided and the Allies have taken over, but the Cold War has begun. At this point in history, primary focus is not on Germany or the Germans, at least from the American standpoint; a majority of this focus is on the war at hand. Some have their eyes turned to Germany, questioning the stability of the economy and government, but for most, that is not the primary concern. The Cold War Era will carry on into 1990, just months after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

To look at what stereotypes exist in modern times, the focus will lie between 1990 and today. This is because starting in 1990, focus shifted back to Germany, but not nearly as negatively as with World War II. This time, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of the once divided Germany, eyes are once again on Germany to see where it will go, what it will do, and if it will manage to maintain stability. With this shift in attention, it marks a change in opinion and a change into a more modern era, with continued depictions of Germans in the media.
After viewing the stereotypes of the past and present, an analysis will be made in regards to the changes. Have any stereotypes gone away? Are there any new ones? Have any simply been modified? Why? These questions are important in analyzing changing emotions and opinions, and the possible implications of historical events and media portrayals on stereotypes. With this, a personal analysis of what ways these stereotypes could affect how Americans do business with Germans will be made. Any stereotype can influence how one interacts with others of that stereotyped group, but casual interactions have different outcomes than interactions in the business environment.

_Stereotypes During the World War II Era_

World War II brought about many emotions: hatred, fear, mistrust, anger, and an overwhelming sense of patriotism. These emotions, targeted towards the Germans and the Japanese and the overall atrocities of war led to a change in American views of these groups. These views can be seen in various forms, ranging from the general overall opinion and feeling of the American people, to how media outlets, namely Hollywood and comic books, portrayed these groups in the midst of the war.

General overall opinions and feelings is a rather difficult thing to observe, because it often requires public opinion surveys and often does not regard the causes of these general opinions. In her article “Elusive Affinities: Acceptance and Rejection of the German-Americans”, Christine M. Totten makes mention of two different public opinion surveys: one taking place in 1942 and one again in September of 1944; the former of these surveys viewed not only public opinions of the Germans, but also that of the
Japanese, and the latter surveying the general American belief as to who was to blame for “the cruelties in this war” (194). Interestingly enough, in the former survey, it was found that only 12% of the Americans who responded personally hated the Germans whereas 28% personally hated the Japanese, the cause of which being explained as cultural differences as well as the fact that there were more “…traditionally friendly, favorable stereotypes” for the Germans than for the Japanese (Totten 194). When the second public opinion survey was performed in 1944, the general American perception of the Germans was still less damaging, despite the war nearing the end. It found that 2% of Americans blamed the German people for the cruelties of the war, 58% having blamed Nazis specifically, and a surprising 38% who blamed a combination of leaders and citizens (Totten 194).

This finding is rather interesting because at this point in the war, many, but not all, of the atrocities that came with World War II and the Holocaust were known by the American people. To have just over half of the survey participants blaming specifically the Nazis and a relatively high percentage, but still lower than half blaming both leaders and citizens shows that the general perception of the Germans was not much worse than it was in the 1942 survey. It is interesting to contemplate why the percentage was so low in regards to the Nazis and a bit higher than leaders and citizens. The lower number in regards to Nazis is one of the reasons it could be deemed that the perception of Germans was not much worse, but the 38% blaming leaders and citizens shows a rising distrust of the Germans, due to the focus not just lying on leaders but also that of citizens.
However, not all perceptions were negative, in part thanks to well-known Germans. With the violence and danger that came with living in Germany during World War II, many people fled to the United States, including the von Trapp family, who fled Austria and inspired *The Sound of Music*, Albert Einstein, and for a time Bertolt Brecht. The people who fled ranged in profession and status, from writers and scientists, to politicians and actresses, and everything else in between. The concept of the ingenious German began to resurface with this influx of immigrants, who were lumped together in such designations as “Operation Paperclip” or “brain drain”. As Totten explains, there was controversy at times, and the potential for other issues as well, as a mixture of stereotypes became present: this positive stereotype of being ingenious and the ever-present image of the evil Nazi (195).

In his article “An Untidy Love Affair: The American Image of Germany Since 1930”, Victor Lange also discusses how the influx of refugees altered American perceptions of Germans; ultimately, there are two types of Germans: “…one thoroughly hateful, the other oppressed, persecuted, and disenfranchised, largely but not exclusively Jewish, and entitled to the traditional American sympathy for dissenters and underdogs” (234). With these opinions on the types of Germans that exists, it becomes confusing as to what the overall perception of Germans for Americans was, however, it does clear up the results of the earlier mentioned public opinion surveys, in regards to the rising distrust of the Germans.

Unlike public opinion surveys, the portrayal of Germans in Hollywood was relatively straightforward, because a large portion of the movies that pertained to the war
had the same general characterization for the Gennans. While it is difficult to gauge just
how much Hollywood influenced public opinion and stereotypes, it is important to look
at how different forms of media, especially film, portray another culture, because they
give a hint to some extent the public opinion, seeing as people would generally not pay to
see a film if it went against their beliefs.

As mentioned earlier, refugees of the war ranged in professions, some of which
directly related to the film industry. With this came a new wave of perception and
portrayal of Germans. In Die Deutschen sind schrecklich: Geschichte eines europäischen
Feindbildes (The Germans Are Dreadful: the History of a European Enemy Image),
Manfred Koch-Hillebrecht explained that several refugees, some of which were film
directors, were often critical “...not only of Hitler and the Nazis, but also often of
Germany and the Germans” (“Diese Flüchtlinge, die oft unter demütigenden Umständen
ihre Heimat verlassen mussten, äußerten sich kritisch nicht nur über Hitler und die Nazis,
sondern auch über Deutschland und die Deutschen”; my trans; 142). In 1939, the first
anti-Nazi film was made, entitled Confessions of a Nazi Spy, in which several German
emigrants aided in its production (Schalk 46). Oehling describes the characterization of
Germans in this film with such adjectives as: cool, calculating, crude, dumb, ugly, mean,
sadistic, and one character even looking “sub-human” (R. A. Oehling 24). These
characterizations, which were not uncommon for Germans, in comparison to the more
positive depictions of the American characters built an obvious us vs. them image, one
that did not end in 1939.
In his article “Germans in Hollywood Films: The Changing Image, The Early War Years, 1939-1942”, Richard A. Oehling states that between 1939 and 1945, “...Hollywood produced over fifty feature films in which portrayal of ‘Germans’ constituted a significant aspect. Despite the number, most fell into three types: stories of German spy activities, accounts of Nazi occupation of conquered peoples, and portrayals of Nazi personality types and life in Germany” (R. A. Oehling 22). This is valuable information because it puts in perspective the opinion Hollywood has of Germany and its citizens. Many of the films mentioned in the article are along the lines of Nazi Agent and Nazi Spy Ring, movies depicting Germans as spies, attempting to steal American secrets, and generally shown as people not to be trusted. Other films depict Nazis as devious, clever and brutal. These were common traits in earlier films as the general mistrust of Germans rose in the general population, and these films added fuel to the fire.

In the third part of his “Germans in Hollywood Films” articles, Oehling makes mention of Hotel Berlin (1945), a film which dealt with multiple types of Germans and displayed nearly all types of Germans ever portrayed. The most interesting character portrayals in the film are that of van Dahnwitz and von Heisler. Oehling states that General van Dahnwitz “...plotted against Hitler because he saw that Germany was losing the war, not because Nazism was evil. He hoped to save Germany, but mostly to save his precious army...” and von Heisler “...admits that the war is lost, but recommends better preparations for the next war” (R. Oehling 42).

These violent and war hungry characterizations were present in World War I films as well. Anton Kaes states in his article, “Mass Culture and Modernity: Notes Toward a
Social History of Early American and German Cinema”, that America’s entry into World War I made the image of “the Hun” a common portrayal of Germans in film, with German soldiers being sadistic, torturing and raping women (323). While it is understandable that these are characterizations present in war films during times of war, it is important to note that because the wars were close enough apart that they could lie within the same lifetime of some, these could be portrayals that make their way into becoming commonplace stereotypes and ones that get passed down to the next generation.

The continued popularity and production of such films also aided in stereotypes being passed along through time. It is estimated 374 feature films made by Hollywood between 1943 and 1944 pertained to the war, 107 of which “...spent considerable attention on the depiction of the enemy” (R. Oehling 43). As in Confession of a Nazi Spy, the use of comparing the villainous Nazi to the heroic American made it easy for film viewers to identify the enemy and point out traits that would be attributed to the Nazi, for example being arrogant and methodical (R. Oehling 43). This heavy use of depiction and comparison was used to sustain the interest of the audience, but could have ultimately created stereotype images to be used beyond that of the Nazis, but on the average German people.

It’s clear why during times of war, the topic would be reflected onto film, literature, and any other form of media of the time, but to have a bulk of German portrayals be that of the evil Nazi only bolsters the idea that the whole of the German population and Nazis are closer than expected, and makes it more difficult for the
American public to differentiate between the two. This may have been accidental in film, but was purposeful in other forms of media.

During the 1930s and 40s, comic books became a growing sensation, becoming increasingly popular not just with younger audiences, but with adults as well. During this time, comic books became a popular form of wartime propaganda, in large part thanks to the Writers' War Board (WWB), and new heroes were created. These new heroes need enemies, and with the war raging on, who better to depict as the enemy than the Germans and the Japanese?

The WWB was a quasi-governmental agency which had “...received funding and support from the federal government through the Office of War Information (OWI)” (Hirsch 451). The WWB worked with publishers, comic writers and editors, ranging from the popular Detective Comics, commonly known as DC, to All-American Comics, and starting in 1943, “...used comic books to shape popular perceptions of race and ethnicity, as well as build support for the American war effort” (Hirsch 449). The WWB believed comics to be a useful means of pushing propaganda for four distinct reasons: they were immensely popular and affordable to produce, they had an adult audience of both civilians and military members, they were easy to understand regardless of educational background, and the most important reason of all, they were not suspected to be government propaganda because they seemed to be such an unlikely source (Hirsch 456-58). This was quite clever, because with the negative perception of government propaganda following World War I, this was an easy way to get ideas into the hands of the people without backlash, because like film, it was simply viewed as a means of
entertainment, and for the armed forces, as a means of distraction from the brutalities of war.

As the war raged on, the depictions of the enemy that these readers were receiving began to change, and progressively became worse. Between 1943 and 1944, the focus of the WWB shifted from that of labor relations and inflation to “...encouraging very specific hatreds based on race and ethnicity,” using a template made by the board with distinct racial stereotypes (Hirsch 460). The way in which this was executed not only removed traces of humanity from them, but also made them out to be worthy of receiving hatred. Prior to this time, Germans had been depicted as buffoons or, as in World War I films and Hotel Berlin, as bloodthirsty, and the line that divided the two was citizens and simple soldiers on the one hand, and Nazis on the other, but this line was erased with the template, equating Germans to Nazis (Hirsch 461). To use a template to define a people is powerful tool for propaganda because it builds a consistent image, making the message easier to identify and to internalize. Whether or not the message was in fact internalized remains to be seen, but to some extent the footprint of this time is still visible through the heroes that survived the decreased popularity of superheroes that came following the war.

If it were not for the propaganda that came with World War II, we would not have one of the most beloved superheroes of our time: Captain America. At the time of his creation, multiple superheroes had already engaged in battle with either Nazis or Hitler himself, but the first issue of Captain America remains one of the most iconic comic images of the time, showing Captain America punching Hitler himself (Strömberg 42). Like several of the films from this time, Captain America “...was created by two Jewish
cartoonists, Joe Simon and Jack Kirby...”, although unlike many of the Jews that had worked on Hollywood films, they were not refugees of war, rather the children of emigrants (Stromberg 42). It is possible that Captain America could have been created as a means for the authors to project their desire to help and their own personal attitudes, or it could have been created in response to the mood of the American people; either way there is no denying that the Captain America Comics were a hit, with a million copies being bought each month (Hirsch 456). This emphasized to the WWB, who had no direct relation to Captain America Comics, that comics were a successful means of getting their message to the American people.

In 1944, the WWB worked to compile that message in one story in particular: “This Is Our Enemy,” which was produced and published by All-Star Comics, although the original draft was done by DC. The plot of the story was written by members of the WWB, the focus of which was on how the German people did not resist the Nazi leaders, rather portraying them as willing, if not eager to help. In the final version, blame is placed on the German people for World War II, due to them being “inherently violent”, and “condemned all Germans as members of ‘a degenerate nation whose people throughout the centuries have always been willing to follow their military leaders into endless, bloody but futile war’” (Hirsch 463). This depiction was used as a means to justify total war, and in the end, their use of the comic book medium was successful in getting this idea into the hands of the American people, with 600,000 copies having been sold and reaching an estimate of several million adult and children readers (Hirsch 464). With this high number, it shows that comic books were a successful means of pushing
propaganda ideas and had to potential to be just as impactful on the perception of Americans as film.

One idea that appeared in both film and comics was the idea that after the war, Germans would need to be re-educated and "de-programmed", further asserting the idea of the savage, calculating German, making them out to seem almost robotic in their willingness to follow orders. This re-education was meant to teach them to be less hostile and violent, and as shown in the 1945 propaganda film *Here Is Germany*, it was assumed that unlike in World War I, Allied occupation after World War II would be successful, stating "'This time, we shall remain, for 10 years, for 20 years, until Karl Schmidt [the movie's nasty German John Doe] learns a new way'" (Fisher 283). The fact that this sentiment appears in both film and comic propaganda confirms that it was an important concept to the government, seeing as the film was made for the Army and the comics were made by a quasi-governmental board.

Comparing the general public opinion obtained through surveys with the portrayals of Germans in film and comics, especially those that were specifically governmental propaganda, begs the question how much influence the media had in this time. The public opinion appeared much less critical than the films and comics, with there being a lower percentage of personal hatred towards the Germans and the stereotype of the ingenious German recirculating. The most critical it seemed to get was a higher percentage of people blaming citizens and leaders combined for the atrocities of the war, and the belief that there were two kinds of Germans: hateful and oppressed. Meanwhile the films and comics portrayed Germans through the Nazi imagery as violent,
cruel, cold, calculating, and the citizens as willing helpers to the Nazi leaders. While these images may not have influenced public opinion to an incredible degree immediately, that imagery of the Nazi was nearly the only portrayal of Germans so it may have had a lasting impression on the following American generations who inherited these perceptions.

*The Cold War Era*

This next section focuses on the time following World War II, through almost the entirety of the Cold War, up until the fall of the Berlin Wall. At this time, America’s focus is on the war and communism, but attention still lies on the Germans in some aspects. First, there is a new general opinion of the Germans after the war. Second, German characters and World War II stories are still present in Hollywood film and television, and finally, Germans are still being portrayed in comic books as well as other forms of literature, despite the end of the war and the falling popularity of hero comics.

In regards to public opinion surveys during the Cold War Era, they were not as easy to find as those from the World War II Era. This could be because of the shift in focus to a new war and new concerns, but also because Germany was divided at this point, and it was hard to poll public opinion when there was a large amount of uncertainty within Germany itself.

While there was a shortage in public opinion surveys after the war, there was not a shortage of newspaper articles about Germany. According to Jürgen Reiche, “Between May 1945 and November 1963, American newspapers published 5,292 articles about
Germany, only 3,851 over France -- despite the Indochina and Algerian wars" ("Von Mai 1945 bis November 1963 veröffentlichten US-Zeitschriften 5292 Artikel über Deutschland, nur 3851 über Frankreich -- trotz der Indochina -- und Algerien-Kriege"; my trans; 18). While it did not state what a majority of these articles were about during this time, it can be estimated that directly after the war there was a large amount about the war and the political issues following, as well as Germany being divided, with others observing the economic and political issues facing Germany in this time. Regardless of topic, so many articles, just as so many films covering the Germans, keeps them fresh in the minds of the Americans, not allowing time for the hypothetical dust to settle and for the Germans to break free of any stereotypes.

Once the dust had time to settle, public opinion surveys began to resurface. In his interdisciplinary analysis of German stereotypes, Paul Monaco made reference to a survey he conducted at the University of Texas in Dallas in 1986, in which he analyzed "...the transference of a stereotype or image to actual opinions and values..." (410). He randomly and anonymously selected 100 students, which were then given a questionnaire with questions regarding Germany as well as "...value questions about perceptions and attitudes toward Germans" (Monaco 410). It was surprising to see how well the students did in regards to the size and population of Germany, whereas they did not do as well on when it was founded, with 20% believing it was in 1933, and 10% in 1954. Following the trends of the public opinion surveys conducted during World War II, only 6% of total responses were along the lines of "militaristic," "regimented," or "disciplined", while "artistic" was more popular than "militaristic" by two-to-one. "Intelligent" was another
favored response with a total of 75% of students having chosen it. In regards to perceptions of young Germans, 8% described them as “anti-American” and “confused” being the dominant descriptive term. Ultimately, Monaco points out that “The questionnaire did produce evidence that these students had ample exposure to the images of Germans conveyed in popular Third Reich, World War II, and Nazi survivor fiction, which we might have assumed would suggest militarism, regimentation, and authoritarianism” and wanted to make clear that it “...points out probable dissonance between fictional and informational media images which contribute to certain stereotypes as opposed to the actual generalizations which people hold about particular groups” (410). This is noteworthy because there are virtually no ways of discerning how media impacts our perceptions of other cultures and people.

Monaco makes several points in conclusion to discussing his survey: first, the vast amount of Third Reich fiction as well as documentaries on the Third Reich “...produces a base of imagery susceptible to stereotyping of German traits and German mentality which may lead to prejudices” (410). Second, we can not assume or predict how imagery is handled by viewers, in what ways it is processed, and in regards to younger viewers, they may be more neutral in response because they are more separated from the issues at hand, getting all their information of World War II second hand, making them much more emotionally distant from it than their parents and grandparents. Finally, he believes that the stereotypes of Germans is fostered by the education system, and that “…all cultural education runs the risk of promoting, fostering, and abetting stereotypes, especially as it is conceptualized, organized, and disseminated in ‘national’ frameworks” (Monaco
410-11). These are all important factors to keep in mind when analyzing public opinion of cultures, because with media being as widespread as it is, there are many opportunities to lay the groundwork for certain beliefs, and to recognize how the education system reflects other groups is essential, because learning about history is of the utmost import, but how that history is taught and framed may lead to unintended stereotypes.

In a similar manner to public opinion surveys, it is rather difficult to analyze film during this time, mostly because of the longer time frame in question. Additionally, media truly was more widespread in this time, with films being made much more rapidly than they were during World War II. Despite this, others have made observations in regards to film and the issues it brings during this time, and there are multiple films worth mentioning.

Throughout the Cold War Era, there have been multiple forms of media focusing on the Third Reich or Nazi survivors, and as Paul Monaco points out, this could in part be a projection of the self-fears and doubts held by the American people in regards to the Vietnam War, focusing on the destructiveness of the Third Reich (404). While this is difficult to measure in regards to validity, it could be a potential explanation for the large number of films focusing solely on the Nazis after the end of World War II. In this way, society could be attempting to prevent history from repeating itself by producing Nazi and Hitler stories at a rate rendering them unignorable. Monaco also explains that “...the stereotype is rooted in and fostered by the semantic blurring of the words ‘German’ and ‘Nazi’...People in general, even the most educated...are more than likely to say such things as ‘the Germans killed the Jews,’ rather than saying the ‘Nazis’ or the ‘SS’” (406).
Whether this is a direct result of this continuous depiction of Germans as Nazis or simply due to an epoch is difficult to discern; regardless, it becomes problematic for the Germans who are trying to escape this image.

Some films that Monaco specifically mentions from this time include *The Marathon Man, Julia, Sophie's Choice*, and *The Boys from Brazil* (404), all of which were rather successful films in their own right, and all of which tied back to the Nazi theme. Of course there are other classic movies from this time with German characters, but the focus here will lie on *Marathon Man, Die Hard, Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.*

*Marathon Man* (1976) was "...a critical and box office success, with [Laurence] Olivier earning a Supporting Actor Academy Award nomination" as well as having been "...nominated for an Oscar for Best Actor in a Supporting Role and he won a Golden Globe in the same category" ("Marathon Man"). The story focuses on Thomas "Babe" Levy and his brother Henry, also known as "Doc", played by Dustin Hoffman and Roy Scheider respectively, and Dr. Christian Szell, played by Laurence Olivier. The premise of the movie is that Doc is a secret government agent working to hunt for Nazi criminals, aided by Dr. Szell who himself was a fugitive Nazi criminal in exchange for diamond sales. Szell's brother is killed in a car accident which he assumes was no accident and suspects everyone in the courier network in which he is working with Doc. There are multiple characters working for and with Dr. Szell, including a pair of Nazi fugitives who

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1 The information accessed for these films, as well as the films discussed from Modem Times, comes from their corresponding Wikipedia pages. While these pages are written by fans and their validity is recognized as questionable, all other sources providing a synopsis of these films are also fan based, and more relevant information is provided on the Wikipedia sites.
mug Babe, as well as Babe’s girlfriend Elsa Opel who lies by saying she is from Switzerland, as well as Peter Janeway who is a double agent ("Marathon Man").

There are several characterizations of Dr. Szell that occur in this film that could be described as the stereotypical Nazi villain. First, he stabs and kills Doc with a blade he had hidden in his sleeve, which fits the characterization of deceiving often applied to German and Nazi villains. He is also a dentist, having tortured Jews in a concentration camp, and in an iconic scene later in the film, torturing Babe by first using a dental probe on a cavity, and then drilling into one of his healthy teeth, in order to get information on whether it is safe to retrieve his diamonds, repeating the iconic line “Is it safe?” several times ("Marathon Man"). While not entirely fitting into the mad scientist trope, he does echo real life mad scientist Dr. Mengele.

Another echo of World War II can be seen in cult classic Die Hard (1988). The main plot of the story is that American John McClane, played by Bruce Willis, faces German terrorist Hans Gruber, played by Alan Rickman. The echo of World War II lies in the fact that both Germans and Japanese are present in this film, in the form of Gruber and his henchmen, and in Nakatomi Corporation in which most of the action takes place, as well as the executive Joseph Takagi, who Gruber singles out and says “…he intends to teach the corporation a lesson for its greed” ("Die Hard"). It is interesting that at this point, 43 years after World War II, the stereotypes of the Japanese have changed, but the Germans can not escape this harsh, villainous stereotype.
While Gruber is the main villain of the film, it is worthwhile to look at his henchmen as well, many of which are German. Interestingly, of the German henchmen, only one, James, has brown hair. The rest have various shades of light blond hair, fitting the aryan ideal of Hitler which has become a stereotype in depicted Germans on the screen. Ironically, Gruber does not have this blond haired trait, however, neither did Hitler and many other Nazi leaders. Additionally, it is interesting that many of these German henchmen speak in a German accent and speak German together, but Alan Rickman maintained his British accent in his portrayal of Gruber and spoke some German, most of which was incorrect (*Die Hard*).

This use of grammatically incorrect German can be analyzed as a means of stereotyping. Ultimately, this movie could have been made without the primary villain being German; Hans Gruber could just have easily been Henry Green or some other American variant, and the story would have been essentially the same. This further portrays the stereotypes of Germans being the villains, despite not being a member of the Third Reich. The intentional use of German, albeit incorrect, emphasizes their Germanness and the harshness of the accent perpetuates the stereotype of German itself being a brash, violent, and ugly language, let alone the characters also being portrayed as such. Additionally, some of the stereotypical German names being used; James, Tony, and Alexander are not inherently German, but Fritz, Heinrich, and Karl are. While the stereotypes are not entirely based on the actions of the characters, other more subtle aspects are used as a stereotyping tool, which may be more damaging, because they are
smaller and easier to brush off as unimportant, but as these stereotypes accumulate from movie to movie, they could become reinforced and normalized (Die Hard).

The normalization of Germans being the major villains in films can be credited to many films, but one of the most iconic is Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981), which was the first in the franchise, as well as Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (1989). Similar to Die Hard, both of these Indiana Jones films include characters who speak German and with a German accent. In these cases, the main villains, Major Arnold Toht played by Ronald Lacey, and Dr. Elsa Schneider played by Alison Doody, utilize this accent, despite the former being German and the latter being Austrian.

Unlike other films about Nazis, the Indiana Jones movies tend to focus on more occultist and mythical elements; in the case of The Raiders of the Lost Ark, it is the hunt for the Ark of the Covenant in order to make the Nazi army invincible. Inspiration for this storyline, as well as in The Last Crusade, could partially be based in truth. Many have speculated that Hitler was interested in the occult, which could stem from the real semi-occultist group run by Heinrich Himmler known as the Ahnenerbe. The Last Crusade deals with another holy relic: The Holy Grail.

Aside from the accent and the use of the German language, The Raiders of the Lost Ark features a common occurrence with German characters: some kind of disfigurement. In the case of Arnold Toht, it first occurs in the form of him burning his
hand in an attempt to retrieve the needed headpiece for the Staff of Ra. Later, when Toht and his soldiers have the Ark and plan to test it, a vortex of flames forms, which kills several Nazi soldiers. After this, Dietrich, a Nazi officer, Belloq, an archaeologist working with the Nazis, and Toht are all killed by the angels of death that emerge from the Ark, and in gruesome ways: “Dietrich’s head shrivels up, Toht’s face is melted off his skull and Belloq’s head explodes” ("Raiders of the Lost Ark"). One can also make note of the name choice for Toht, which is how the German word Tod, meaning death, sounds and close to how it would be transcribed with the International Phonetic Alphabet: [toːt]. The use of names relating to death for German and Nazi characters is not uncommon, especially in film, which provided many opportunities to do so based on the quantity of films being produced alone.

Although comic books aren’t nearly as popular as the film industry, they were still being mass produced even after World War II, some displaying the fears that arose with the start of the Cold War, but in a way that was not as definable as propaganda. At this point, Marvel and DC have already stepped away from the Writers’ War Board entirely to produce their own material on their own terms. Despite this, DC still makes use of German characters, although not nearly as many as Marvel, which has multiple German characters. In order to analyze the Marvel characters, the Marvel wikia, accessed through the Marvel website, had to be used. Due to the fact that the articles are written by fans as contributors to the page, there is the potential for discrepancies; however, because the
page is published on the Marvel website, it has been deemed credible because Marvel would not sponsor fan-based information if it was not accurate. Additionally, this information source is significant in part because it is written by fans who are the lifeblood of the comic's success.

DC, who had done the original draft for “This is Our Enemy”, started producing the Batman comic series in 1940, and in 1959 introduced one of the most iconic and well known villains in the DC universe: Mr. Freeze (formerly called Mr. Zero). Mr. Freeze was originally Victor Fries, an expert in cryogenics, who was attempting to save the life of his wife who had become terminally ill; he managed to cryogenically freeze her, but it ultimately led to him getting cryogenic powers through an accident with coolants. In order to survive, he made a suit to maintain a freezing temperature, and thus became Mr. Freeze, constantly attempting to save his wife, causing chaos and icy destruction in Gotham along the way (“Mister Freeze”). While Mr. Freeze is American in citizenship, there are multiple references to his German heritage. First, his name: Victor Fries; both Victor and Fries are quite German in origin.

There is also the issue of his profession. Being that he is an expert in the cryogenics field, marking him as a scientist, and describable as a mad scientist, which “[i]n a culture saturated with fear of possible nuclear annihilation, the mad scientist was not only a powerful image for an antagonist, but was also almost automatically endowed with distinctly German traits, a tendency that stemmed from anxieties in post-war America in which former Nazi scientists played a key role in advanced sciences” (Drenning 131).
Mr. Freeze had good intentions in saving his wife, but was ultimately corrupted; this allows one to contemplate a correlation to Nazis, in a sense that not all those who joined the Nazi party or the war did so because they believed in the cause of mass extermination of the Jews and other minorities. In fact, some may not have even been aware initially that was a goal. Some may have joined because they thought they were doing their duty to serve their country, and in the case of Mr. Freeze to serve and protect his wife.

Unlike DC, Marvel has a variety of different German characters, some of which appear in some of the most well-known Marvel comics, with many of their German characters having some connection to World War II and the Holocaust, and some depicted as scientists in a similar manner to Mr. Freeze. First appearing in 1963, Magneto from the X-Men comics brings the Holocaust into the Marvel universe in multiple ways. First, he himself was a survivor of the Holocaust. Originally known as Max Eisenhardt, he watched his family be murdered by the Nazis and was later sent to Auschwitz where he was a member of the Sonderkommando, "...the squad of Jewish men forced to helped [sic] their Nazi masters operate the gas chambers, ovens, and fire pits of the camp" ("Magneto"). He survived the Holocaust, moved to Israel, and met Charles Xavier, the later leader of the X-Men. They revealed their powers to one another after having debates about what a race of people with mutant powers would do to humanity, and eventually the two fought Nazi war criminal Baron Wolfgang von Strucker, which resulted in Magneto killing him and Magneto realizing that he holds a different opinion of
mutant/human relations than Xavier ("Magneto"). This view of the relations is another aspect that involves Nazism and the Holocaust into the X-Men story arc.

Having survived the Holocaust, Magneto fears another one occurring, yet his beliefs reflect those of Hitler and the Nazi party. He refers to mutants as Homo sapiens superior, not so subtly implying his belief in their superiority to humans, but he also believes that over time, mutants will become "...dominant life form on the planet..." and struggles with whether he wants mutants to "...exist in harmony with humans, wanting a separate homeland for mutants, and wanting to enforce his superiority over all humanity" ("Magneto"). There are even multiple occasions where he works on genetic experiments, much like the infamous Dr. Mengele. He is described as being "...an expert on genetic manipulation and engineering, with knowledge far beyond that of contemporary science. He is considered a genius in these fields" and has managed to figure out how to create mutants with powers, create clones and manipulate their genetic structures, and create artificial life ("Magneto"). These characterizations all play into the genius German and the mad-scientist Nazi, despite his not being a member of the Nazi party.

Magneto is a rather interesting character because while he hates the Nazis and all of the atrocities they have committed, his belief system in regards to humans is rather similar to that of the Nazis and Hitler. This is possibly where his struggle with how he wants the mutants to interact with humans comes from. It is also interesting to note the meaning that could come with his last name: Eisenhardt. "Eisen" means iron in German, and while hardt does not mean anything, "hart" means hard, or it could be a play on it sounding like the English word "heart". Either way, they both come back with a similar
meaning: iron heart. This is just an additional characterization to him being cold and at times brutal towards humans.

There are, however, other X-Men characters that co-exist with humans, and German characters that are not villains. One of these is Nightcrawler, also known as Kurt Wagner, who first appeared in the Marvel universe in 1975. Kurt was born in Bavaria to Mystique, saved by his birth father Azazel, and given to Margali Szardos to take care of him. She then took him to a Bavarian circus, where he was cared for by all of the members. They accepted him as one of their own and the audience simply thought he was in costume. The circus was later bought by Amos Jardine which resulted in Nightcrawler being transferred to the United States. After some time of being mistreated there, he fled back to Germany which is where he ultimately met Professor Xavier and was recruited to join the X-Men, after having been chased by a mob who blamed him for murders he did not commit ("Nightcrawler").

This portrayal of Nightcrawler follows the idea Lange had presented in his article of the two types of Germans; in this case, Nightcrawler is the oppressed, having been abandoned by his mother and in essence his father, and blamed for crimes he was not responsible for. While the original idea of the two types of Germans generally referenced Jewish people as the oppressed, Nightcrawler being an oppressed character is significant in light of Magneto, because it could potentially justify his cause in his eyes: here is a mutant that got along well with humans who were deemed rather like “others” due to their odd circus profession, and was chased by a mob of “normal” humans. Here the mutants are portrayed as a societal “other” much like the Jews were.
Marvel has provided other German characters with much more direct ties to the Holocaust and Nazism through the Captain America comics, which dealt with World War II in many of its comics, though not all. One of the most popular villains in the series, aside from Hitler himself, is Red Skull, who first appeared in Captain America Comics #1 in 1941, but appeared again in more modern comics such as Tales of Suspense #66 and Captain America #298, in 1965 and 1984 respectively ("Red Skull"). Originally known as Johann Schmidt, he is a former member and leader in the Nazi Party, who had been recruited and trained by Hitler himself, and from whom he received his red skull mask. Captain America was created as a counterpart to Red Skull, and as the result of a battle between the two, Red Skull was exposed to a gas that caused him to be in suspended animation much like Captain America. He was "...eventually rescued in modern times by the terrorist organization, HYDRA" ("Red Skull"). In another battle with Captain America, Red Skull was exposed to the Dust of Death which resulted in his face taking on the appearance of his red mask ("Red Skull").

Red Skull's appearance is rather interesting. By wearing a mask, he is hiding his true self, but adopting the ideology of Hitler and the Nazi party, and outwardly expressing his commitment to both. When exposed to the Dust of Death and his appearance being mutilated to look like the mask, not only is that making the beliefs and wickedness concrete, but it follows a trope of the German or Nazi villain somehow becoming disfigured in some way, be it relying on a mechanical suit to survive, being in a wheelchair, or some kind of facial disfigurement, as seen with Mr. Freeze or as discussed later in the context of the comic Preacher.
It is also interesting to compare his appearance on multiple comic covers, and how it progressed over time. Published in 1941, the cover of Captain America Comics #3 depicts Red Skull wearing a purple suit with a large white swastika on the front, and his red skull mask being rather rounded. He is also off to the side of the cover, neither him nor Captain America being the primary focus of the cover, and it appearing rather busy and chaotic ("Captain America Comics (1941) #3").

The cover of Captain America #115, published in 1969, is quite different in comparison. It could in part be because of the different cover artists, but here Red Skull appears at the center of the cover, much larger than Captain America, giving the impression that he will impose plenty of danger. Also, his skull mask is not nearly as rounded and has sharper features, building intensity, and his uniform is simply green with black gloves, with no reference to the Nazi Party ("Captain America (1968) #115").

Finally, Captain America #298, which was published in 1984, seems like a mixture of the two in that the cover is rather busy, and Red Skull takes up a majority of the cover with Captain America appearing only in the bottom right hand corner. Red Skull is depicted here three times: first, at the center of the cover with half his face as the
mask, which appears far more defined and angular than previous masks, and the other half his normal human face, which appears rather wrinkled and potentially deformed. Second, he appears on the left wearing a green suit, and lastly he appears again in the same green suit in the bottom right hand corner punching Captain America while wearing a swastika on one arm. Directly above this appears Adolf Hitler and another Nazi in a running position. In comparison to comic #115, as well as #3, this is rather interesting, because the former had no reference to Nazism and the latter showed only the swastika on his chest, whereas this newer edition references Nazism twice ("Captain America (1968) #298").

In a similar fashion to the World War II Era, the public opinion surveys of this time gave much more positive feedback than the depictions of the Germans in film and comics. These surveys yielded responses favoring such stereotypes as artistic over militaristic, yet despite the war being over, the Nazi image is still consistently represented, as well as the German villain depiction. This further emphasizes the disparity between public opinion of the Germans and the entertainment they consume from Hollywood, and comic book companies. While this is nothing new, it is problematic for the Germans hoping to break free of these images.
Stereotypes in Modern Times

Modern times are hard to define because depending on the context, this could range anywhere between 2000 and today, or in some situations, 1815 to today. In this section, the focus will be from 1990 to 2017. The rationale behind this is that in the 1940s, attention was on Germany because of the war. The end of 1989 into early 1990 was a pivotal time for Germany on an internal and global scale, and with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany, it brought attention back to Germany. This shift in attention could bring about a change in perspectives and stereotypes. Since this time, more public opinion surveys have been conducted, and the German character and story seems to have been consistently popular, if not increased in popularity. Surprisingly enough comic books have endured the test of time, but most of this German popularity comes in the forms of television and film.

With the historical fall of the Berlin Wall, it comes as no surprise that the American public opinion of Germans would once again be brought to question, but what is interesting is the different viewpoints that these public opinion surveys have taken. In the poll Assessment of the Germans by the U.S. Population, 1991, described in Hartwig Haubrich’s Deutschlandbilder im Ausland (Images of Germany Abroad)\(^2\), the largest portion of respondents, 70%, described Germans as hard working, 50% described them as intelligent, followed by roughly 35% using progressive, 25% practical, and brave and honest both equaling 10% (31). These stereotypes, in contrast with those of Nazi imagery following World War II, are far more positive; it is noteworthy that both this public

\(^2\) Translations associated with this document were made by the author from the original German text.
opinion survey and the ones conducted before and during U.S. involvement in World War II describe more positive qualities.

Haubrich makes mention that despite these positive stereotypes being noted in the poll, the negativity has not yet vanished. "On the one hand, associations with Germany contain images from the Holocaust and Nazis, and on the other hand images of diligence, punctuality, and precision work. 'Made in Germany' means engineering, quality and reliability" ("Assoziationen mit Deutschland enthalten auf der einen Seite immer wieder Bilder vom Holocaust und Nationalsozialismus, auf der anderen Seite Bilder von Fleiß, Pünktlichkeit und Präzisionsarbeit. „made in Germany“ steht für Ingenieurkunst, Qualität und Zuverlässigkeit"; my trans; 30) and that "In surveys, Germans has been receiving quite positive responses in the US for years, even when Germany played only a marginal role in the media. If Germans are shown in advertisements, they appear as trustworthy...on the other hand, TV movies are still dominated by Nazi atrocities" ("Bei Umfragen erhalten die Deutschen in den USA seit Jahren recht positive Werte, auch wenn Deutschland in den Medien nur eine marginale Rolle spielt. Werden in der Werbung Deutsche gezeigt, so erscheinen sie immer als vertrauenerweckend, z.B. mit weißem Kittel und Brille als Konstrukteure hochwertiger technischer Produkte. In TV-Spielfilmen dominieren dagegen immer noch-Nazi-Gräueltaten; my trans; 31).

American perceptions of Germans appear to be highly inconsistent, ranging from extremely good to extremely bad. This could in part be caused by the education Americans have of Germany and Germans. Gary Maris, a political scientist, wrote to Haubrich stating that his students knew surprisingly little of Germany, aside from Hitler
and the occasional student who had beer and wine come to mind. He made a point to mention that none of them knew who Kant or Hegel were, both of which who were famous German philosophers (31). It was wise to point out how education can affect knowledge of a culture, which in turn can affect the stereotypes held of that culture.

This concept of the effect of education on stereotypes was analyzed in Haerle and Schulz study “Beer, Fast Cars, and…. Stereotypes Held by U.S. College-Level Students of German.” This study was conducted twice at the University of Arizona, first in 1992 involving 340 students and again in 1994 involving 129 students. The reason the study was conducted twice was in order to see if language proficiency would have any effect on the results; the first test was conducted in German with 100, 200, and 300 level German language students, and the second in English with German language students in those same levels (Haerle & Schulz 31-32). Ultimately, one could argue that language proficiency did in fact have an impact on which stereotypes were most prevalent.

When looking at the results of the initial test conducted in German, the three most common responses had to do with personal characteristics (51.76%), beer (12.94%), and cars (7.06%). Only 3.24% of participants gave an answer that involved history or historical events, and those ranged from “The Germans have an interesting history” ("Die Deutschen haben eine interessante Geschichte"; my trans; 36) to “The Germans love war” ("Die Deutschen lieben Krieg"; my trans; 37). A majority of the responses given had to do with personal characteristics of the Germans; 92.05% of these responses were deemed positive, and 16.48% were deemed negative or neutral. This number did not add up to 100% because some students gave multiple responses. These responses include:
friendly, interesting, nice/sympathetic, intelligent/clever, diligent/hard workers, funny, punctual, good, happy, clean, and organized ("freundlich," "interessant," "(sehr)nett (sympathisch)," "intelligent (klug)," "fleißig...arbeiten hart...", "lustig," "pünktlich," "gut," "glücklich," "sauber," "organisiert"; my trans; 35). Meanwhile, the negative responses consisted of: not always nice or friendly, do not like Americans, boring, serious, introverted/reserved ("nicht (immer) nett/freundlich; mögen Amerikaner nicht gern," "langweilig," "sehr ernst," "introvertiert/reserviert"; my trans; 36). The references to beer and wine included drinking and liking beer, as well as having and making the best beer. Finally, the responses to cars were along the lines of making the best/great cars, having and making fast cars, having many cars in general, and driving small cars (Haerle & Schulz 35-36). The responses conducted in German seem to lean on the more positive side of stereotypes.

The English responses were also positive, but they leaned more on the negative side than those of the original responses conducted in German. The top three categories of responses were personal characteristics (50.38%), history and historical or current events (19.38%) and some reference to schooling and culture (14.73%). Of the responses on personal characteristics, 73.21% were positive opposed to 36.92% negative or neutral; like with the German responses, this does not equal 100% because some students gave multiple answers. These positive responses included interesting, friendly, kind, hard working, fascinating, casual, polite, and generous, whereas the negative and neutral responses were serious, strong beliefs/strict/order and perfection, not very friendly, like
any other people, and similar to Americans. These may not sound more negative than the German responses, but the fact that there are more negative responses is noteworthy.

References to history/historical and current events included “The Germans have a (very) interesting/eventful/very complex and rich history...have a long history/are people with an extensive history” (Haerle & Schulz 38). These seem very general, but the responses that were only mentioned once are more detailed: “...are still feeling guilt from the rest of the world for mistakes and horrors of the past...cause a lot of unnecessary concern worldwide; cause wars; are blamed today still about what Hitler did even though they had nothing to do with it; despite their recent history are historically interesting people...have played a major role in our world’s modern history...over the past ten years, created a remarkable history of themselves due to reunification” (Haerle & Schulz 38) and multiple other responses. It is possible that more responses to history occurred due to language proficiency, based on how detailed these are, but the appearance of more historical references is noteworthy alone, especially the fact that they seem to be a mixture of negative and positive.

Finally, the increased mention of culture and schooling is interesting, with such positive remarks as: “The Germans have an (extremely) interesting/lovely/fascinating culture...have a rich heritage/culture” and such individual responses as: “...are a cultured and traditional volk; were responsible for some of the most wonderful art movements like expressionism; have a very good school system; are lucky in that they begin learning other languages when they are young...” (Haerle & Schulz 38). These were quite positive
responses, and it is more than likely due to being students of German language and culture.

This study is noteworthy because it gives insight into the mindset of American college students in regards to the Germans, which is a rather niche group. One could argue that these perceptions are softened due to the fact that these students have gained a cultural understanding and likely appreciation through learning the German language, so their responses may not reflect that of those who do not have as solid of an education in German culture. However, it also shows that despite having this cultural awareness, some stereotypes and responses are still prevalent, such as diligence, being reserved, and the obvious cultural aspects of cars, beer, and Nazism. If nothing else this provides more of an insight into what stereotypes are most common amongst Americans because these were stereotypes that a college education could not remove completely.

Similarly, Hollywood could not get rid of some of the stereotypes that were found in films from the 1940’s despite the changes in technology, style, and culture. This includes stories of World War II, the Third Reich, and the Holocaust. However, there are new types of stories about the Germans in the mix: more comedic and heavily stereotyped, and stories of resistance. While stories of resistance can fit into the World War II category, it depicts Germans in a way that past films did not, so it has a style all its own.

There are a multitude of American films focused on World War II and the Nazis that could be analyzed, including but not limited to *U-571*, *Hart's War*, *Fury*, *The
Monuments Men, and Inglourious Basterds, however, this section will look at Saving Private Ryan (1998) in regards to its depictions of Germans.

Saving Private Ryan focuses on Captain John H. Miller, played by Tom Hanks, and his team of seven men on their mission to find Private First Class James Francis Ryan, a missing paratrooper, and bring him home to his mother. This search occurs after the Normandy Invasion in which one of Ryan’s brothers dies, and later General George Marshall finds out that three of the four Ryan brothers fighting in the war had been killed in action, leaving James as the final son. Captain Miller and his crew search throughout Normandy, coming across enemies and allies along the way.

Saving Private Ryan has a rather interesting depiction of the enemy Germans overall. First, there is the depiction of Steamboat Willie, who had surrendered after a fight resulting in the death of medic Irwin Wade. In fear of being killed, Steamboat Willie is shown pleading for his life by attempting to convince the team that he likes America, mentioning Betty Boop and attempting to sing the National Anthem, but failing. T/5 Timothy Upham, played by Jeremy Davies, speaks German and relays to Captain Miller, that he was sorry for Wade’s death and reminds him that he had surrendered. Not only does this depict the real struggle, faced by both American and German soldiers, of maintaining their humanity, but it also humanizes Steamboat Willie to extent through this plea for his life.

However, that humanization stops there, and the common theme of the deceptive Germans comes forward. Captain Miller had let Steamboat Willie live “...on the condition that he give himself up as a prisoner of war to the first Allied unit he
encounters” (“Saving Private Ryan”). However, after finding Ryan, the crew run into the 2nd SS Panzer Division, resulting in the deaths of several members of the group, and Miller is “...shot and mortally wounded by Steamboat Willie, who has rejoined the Germans” (“Saving Private Ryan”). This fits the deceptive, untrustworthy imagery of past World War II films and films of Germans as a whole, seeing as he went against the condition in which his life was spared, which is not too surprising. When Upham finds Steamboat Willie, he once again attempts to surrender thinking that Upham will accept this. Instead, Upham shoots Steamboat Willie, while letting the other German survivors free, still trying to maintain that certain level of humanity.

Not all Americans held fast to their level of humanity, however. In one particular scene, there is fighting in the trenches, and after the ceasefire is called, two enemy soldiers appear with their arms up in surrender, shouting something in another language. Two American soldiers approach, one asking: “What? I can’t understand what you’re saying?” and then shooting the two enemies on the spot. The other American then asks “What’d he say?” and is given the response: “Look, I washed for supper” followed by a laugh (Saving Private Ryan). Not only is a war crime being depicted here, but there was also a blatant disregard for life through the joke. This act reflects both on the Americans in the war, but also how they perceived the Germans, because in this case, the two they shot were not German, rather Czech, and that did not matter. They were speaking another language that they did not understand and were thus categorized with the German “others” despite not being German themselves.
The humanization issue not only happens with the characters but with the general depiction of the war. There are several cases where life is valued in the sense of characters, namely Upham, letting German survivors free. However, the remainder of the film downplays the Germans' lives. When an American character is injured, dying, or dead, the death is prolonged, there are loud moans of agonizing pain and an excess of blood, but when a German is killed, it is almost immediate, there is mostly silence or minimal sound, and minimal gore. With the film being targeting originally for the American market, it is clear the emphasis on American suffering was to encourage empathy, but the downplaying of the German characters has a negative effect. Not only does this remove any empathy the viewer may feel for the lives of the Germans, but it ultimately dehumanizes them, taking away the pain that comes with death and discounting their lives as valuable. This is a difficult thing to state in regards to war films, because all lives could be argued as being devalued, but by specifically making the death experiences of Germans different from that of the Americans creates a separation of humanity.

Comedic films also diminish a sense of humanity to extent by making jokes of entire cultures, using stereotypes and tropes to depict their characters. These comedies generally do not focus on one nationality to make as the butt of the joke, rather hyper-emphasize stereotypes of multiple races, nationalities, and ethnicities, usually in the form of “low-brow” comedy.

One example of specifically German stereotyping can be found in the Austin Powers films, with Frau Farbissina, played by Mindy Sterling. There are many aspects to
this character making her a prime example for stereotyping being used in comedy depictions. First, her occupation: she is an attack and defense specialist and founder of the militant wing of the Salvation Army. While militant did not seem to be a common response in public opinion surveys, it is commonly used in depicting Germans, even outside of war films. Her name also has meaning in that it is wordplay on the Yiddish word “farbissen,” which is “verbissen” in German, “...or ‘embittered’; a ‘farbissiner’ is an angry, bitter, vocal person” (“Frau Farbissina”). This fits the cold and angry image of the German, which is only further emphasized by her thick German accent which is used to make her sound angry and harsh, and she is often shouting.

She is humanized, however, through her son and her romance. Her son was the product of artificial insemination using Dr. Evil’s semen, and she is shown as being the only one who cares about him, and prevent Dr. Evil from killing him in Austin Powers in Goldmember (2002). She is also seen having had a sexual relationship with Dr. Evil, and in Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me (1999), she is shown in a lesbian relationship. This relationship plays on further German stereotypes, with her significant other being named Una Brau, a play on German names and the fact that she has a unibrow (“Frau Farbissina”). This imagery is stereotypical of German characters, specifically German women, who are depicted as cold, rigid, and often ugly.

In the 2006 film Beerfest, German women are depicted as rather pretty, but still harsh and angry. Paul Soter and Erik Stolhanske play main characters Jan and Todd Wolfhouse, whose great grandmother appears pretty and as a normal great grandmother, but she speaks in a thick German accent and an angry tone. The plot of the story is that
Jan and Todd’s grandfather dies, and it is their duty to go to Munich during Oktoberfest to spread his ashes on the Theresienwiese; there, they discover an underground beer drinking tournament called Beerfest, which is run by relatives who go by the more Germanic form of the name: Wolfhausen. They are accused of having the recipe for the family beer in which their great grandfather supposedly stole, but it turns out that he was the rightful heir to the recipe. They return to America to train to form an American Beerfest team to exact revenge on the Germans. In the end, they beat the German team and win the brewery (“Beerfest”).

There is a great deal of general stereotyping in this film through characterization and imagery. Aside from the great grandmother, other German characters are heavily stereotyped in this film; these characters, when not speaking German, speak with a thick German accent and speak in angry tones, and in fact are angry for much of the film. There is also the fact that the entire film focuses on beer and the mass and fast consumption of it by the Germans. This also fits the topic of stereotyping more than one nationality because it stereotypes the Americans as doing so as well, and as overcoming the Germans. Additionally, because it is set during Oktoberfest, many if not all of the German men are clad in lederhosen, which has become a stereotypical image based on the increased popularity of Oktoberfest events being held across the globe.

The popularity of beer continues to play into the stereotyping, and the buffoon imagery is used once again. In order to get into the competition, the team needed to have the password, and when they did not know it, Barry, played by Jay Chandrasekhar, had the idea to sneak in using a keg as a Trojan horse. In this scene, the guard hears a knock
on the door only to find a large keg with a scroll that reads “Good luck mit ze competition,” supposedly from Baron von Wolfhausen, which of course would not be written in English with stereotypical German pronunciation had it been from him, so when the guard accepts it, this makes him appear the buffoon (Beerfest). There is also wordplay behind the name of the family beer: Schnitzengiggle. This is meant to sound German while sounding like “shits and giggles.”

While comedy humanizes the Germans to some extent by making them less serious than in war films, they are still highly stereotyped, so it is not much better of a depiction. For the ultimate style of films about Germans that works to emphasize the humanity of them, resistance films must be analyzed. While these films carry on the depiction of World War II, continuing some of the Nazi imagery, they also specifically set some characters apart to show that not all Germans aligned with the Nazi ideals.

Amiee Shelton explains in her dissertation that due to the domination of American films, the images they provide had an impact on the “...memory, knowledge and perception of Germans during Nazism,” stating that this impact cannot be over emphasized (272). She further explains that based on the number of Holocaust films produced since the mid-1980s, Holocaust films have received their own category of film, but “…despite the large number of films depicting the Nazi years, or referring to these years, a much smaller number of films depict or reveal resistance activities of ethnic Germans” (Shelton 273). While there are significantly fewer films depicting resistance, there are some that leave a lasting impact.
"Schindler's List" is an iconic film depicting such resistance. In the film, Oskar Schindler, played by Liam Neeson, arrives in Kraków as a member of the Nazi Party in hopes of making a fortune in making enamelware. He enlists the help Itzhak Stern, played by Ben Kingsley, despite his being Jewish. He also hires Jewish workers because they are cheaper, which saves them from being put in concentration camps. As the film progresses, Schindler witnesses the mass killings of Jews, which scars him, inspiring him after some time to use his factory as a means to save as many people as possible. It requires a lot of bribery along the way, ultimately diminishing his fortune, but in the end, by hiring Jewish workers in, he saved thousands of lives.

Despite the fact that this film looks at the atrocities the Nazi Party committed, it is dedicated to showing "...the human component and what it took to remain human in a time of evil" (Shelton 275). It helps that this film is based on truth; though based on a book, it is based on the actual story of Schindler who did save thousands of Jewish lives. This could have a positive effect on the German image because it separates other Germans from the Nazis, and although Schindler himself was a member of the Nazi Party, it depicts how people can change, and with it being a feature film, this historical knowledge which may not be taught in classrooms is being shared.

Another film depicting ethnic German resistance with historical truth is the 2008 film *Valkyrie*. Although not as successful or widely accepted as *Schindler's List*, *Valkyrie* focuses on the real life plot to assassinate Hitler, using Operation Valkyrie as a means to take control of the country. The film depicts Tom Cruise as Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg, Kenneth Branagh as Major General Henning von Tresckow, and Bill Nighy
as General of Infantry Friedrich Olbricht, all of whom were real Germans who had their part in the assassination plot. The plan depicted in the movie was to get Stauffenberg into Hitler’s bunker, the Wolf’s Lair, to plant a bomb that would kill him and Heinrich Himmler. The first attempt failed because Himmler was not present, the second attempt failing as well because the bomb was relocated to behind a table, ultimately protecting Hitler from the blast. Hitler’s survival was unknown, so Operation Valkyrie begins, putting out the arrest orders for Nazi leaders and SS officers and convincing lower level officers that the Nazi Party and SS were planning to stage a coup. In the end, Olbricht, Stauffenberg, along with Albrecht Ritter Mertz von Quirnheim and Werner von Haeften, played by Christian Berkel and Jamie Parker respectively, are sentenced to death and executed by firing squad. The last act of Colonel Stauffenberg was to cry out: “Long live sacred Germany!” The epilogue states this was “...the last of fifteen known assassination attempts on Hitler by Germans. It also mentions Hitler’s suicide nine months later ...” (“Valkyrie (film)

*Valkyrie*, although historical, does something many other films about Germans do not: set the Germans as the heroes. Although they are members of the Nazi Party themselves, and the viewer knows they are destined to fail, they still find themselves rooting for these characters, feeling suspense, anticipation, and a longing for a happy ending, which comes with most thriller films. By separating the good Nazis and bad Nazis, defined by who the audience is rooting for, there is to some extent a separation made between Germans and Nazis as a whole, which some films do well, while many others do not. This separation is one of the biggest issues with stereotyping the Germans
in film because it reinforces the Nazi imagery. While it is important to never forget the history and the horrible acts involved, this lack of separation condemns present day Germans to be stereotyped and forever connected with the history of their country. With the imagery we are given being mediated by the films and literature produced, it is crucial that the audience contemplates what message the media sends about other nations and cultures, German or otherwise.

Comic books, though less popular than film, still stand as a means to analyze current opinions on politics and other cultures, and their messages about other cultures are also crucial to analyze. While they are no longer used as a propaganda tool in the United States, multiple characters that were first created during and after World War II are still present, and there are some who are new. DC, who has a much shorter list of German characters than that of Marvel, produced a German character through their subsidiary, Vertigo Comics, and Mr. Freeze is still appearing in *Batman Comics* and stories. Similarly, Marvel’s Red Skull, Nightcrawler and Magneto are still present in *Captain America Comics* and *X-Men*.

At the present moment in comic book history, there do not appear to be many new comic book series being produced in the United States with German characters. Vertigo, being a more adult oriented subsidiary of DC, produced Garth Ennis’ comic series *Preacher* from 1995 to 2000. As with many other stories, *Preacher* is fronted by an American protagonist, with one of the villains being the German Herr Starr.

Herr Starr fits the mold of the German villain, with one aspect being is disfigurement. Unlike Red Skull, Herr Starr is already disfigured when introduced, but
throughout the story it becomes worse, making him appear "...progressively more
grotesque and less human..." which ultimately serves the purpose of showing him
"...losing control over his body mirror[ing] his increasingly monstrous and uncontrolled
behavior as his quest for order becomes a crusade for personal revenge" (Drenning 134).
It could be argued that this is commentary on the Nazis during World War II, in part
because Herr Starr has no first name, so he is just another villain causing chaos to the
innocent, but he was also already damaged, in this case disfigured. He was not altered
from a "pure" state, but rather from bad to worse, which could correlate to the question of
whether or not people are born evil or made that way.

There is also the issue of his obsession with order and war. This is a common
character trait associated with Germans; they are depicted by other forms of media as
brutal and militaristic, which Herr Starr is a hyperbolic depiction of these traits. To make
matters worse, these characteristics are displayed in a form of dark humor, changing him
from a concerning villain to something of a joke (Drenning 135). Despite the war having
ended 50 years prior to the creation of this comic, the Nazi imagery still remains,
perpetuating the image of Germans being villainous and evil.

Similarly, the depiction of Germans as a buffoon still remains. Magneto and Red
Skull are still depicted as villains and Nazi-like, but the more recent depiction of
Nightcrawler can fit this buffoon image. As mentioned, earlier depictions of Nightcrawler
show him as a sort of oppressed character, but in more recent comics, there have been
multiple cases in which Nightcrawler was tricked or coerced. One such event was when
he decided to become a priest, and went through the training, as seen in X-Men #100 in
2000, and believed he had been fully ordained, but in reality he had not. Instead, “...he had been telepathically coerced into believing so as a part of a plan by the Church of Humanity’s Supreme Pontiff to bring down the Catholic Church by installing Kurt as the next Pope then revealing to the world that he was ‘satan’” (“Nightcrawler”). On another occasion, he had been tricked into taking part in a ceremony on the Isla des Demonas with other teleporters in order to open a dimensional portal to allow an army of mutant demons to come through, though the X-Men came to his aid (“Nightcrawler”).

The question as to why some of these depictions are used is a difficult one to answer. It could very well be that these ideas are simply inherited through time, becoming somewhat of a subconscious decision in the writing process, or they could be unintentional. Regardless, this depiction of the Germans as the buffoon has somehow managed to continue on despite its World War I origins and there no longer being an inherently political reason for such depictions, namely war. While this is concerning, some comfort can be found in the fact that this depiction and the villainous, Nazi imagery do contradict public opinion, which seems to favor the idea of the clever and ingenious German, implying that media may not have has large an impact on certain stereotypes as expected.

As time goes on, the general opinion of the Germans seems to maintain a level of positivity, fluctuating here and there with the shadow of World War II looming over the American conscience, but opinions are otherwise hopeful, and consistent with some of the ideas of past surveys. Depictions of the Germans are also looking up in film, with a wider variety of depictions being produced, which may one day result in more realistic
imagery. These newer depictions, though highly stereotyped, help bring some humanity back to the Germans, and making them more relatable to some extent, which is much needed following the dehumanization of the Germans in World War II and the continuous Nazi imagery seen in films. It is unclear whether comics are becoming less popular or the depictions of German characters in comics, but the more negative stereotypes still remain here. Despite this, the small steps must be appreciated and encouraged, for with time, this may help diminish the negative imagery, freeing the Germans of the villain image.

**Conclusion**

When looking at the changes that have occurred in the stereotypes of Germans since the 1940’s, as well as the depictions, it may seem like there were not many. That is because in some regards, there have not been. However, looking at the the stereotypes in relation to the depictions brings about some feelings of hope.

Since the 1940’s, public opinion surveys generally seemed to yield positive images and stereotypes of the Germans, regardless of the war at hand in the earlier surveys. As time went on, it seems the responses remained positive, if not became more positive. Many of these surveys yielded responses such as creative, intelligent, and hard-working. Despite the constant depictions of Germans as Nazis and villains, these positive stereotypes still remain, and reflect the changing times. As relations with Germany have gotten better and Germany has established itself as a powerful, democratic nation, the public seems more at ease with the Germans, though not forgetting their history.
This can be seen in the depictions of the Germans. Part of the reason that this depiction, both in film and literature, may not have changed is because it was a war that yielded many potential stories to be made. That is why there are still new movies being made, such as *The Zookeeper’s Wife* (2017), and still having new material to use. Film is the setting in which most of the change seems to have occurred. While a majority of the films pertaining to Germans appear to be based on World War II, there are new stories emerging, such as the resistance films, and new styles in the form of comedy. While these are not always positive changes, they are change nonetheless and show that times are changing, and may hint at a coming change in the depictions of Germans.

The number of World War II films could also be in part caused by the fact that there are still people alive who have been in some way directly impacted by World War II and the horrific actions of the Nazis. There are not many Holocaust survivors left, but their children are still alive, and the children of Nazi leaders are still alive. It can be estimated that this war will be the topic of films for many years to come until the more recent wars, including the Iraq War, the War in Afghanistan, and the struggle with ISIS yields enough to create more films than have already been made. Until then, the history of World War II will be rehashed and revamped in many different variations of films, hopefully producing new stories to cover historical aspects of the war not commonly taught in the classroom. World War II was a complicated war with many interesting stories that would be worthwhile bringing to the big screen with no purpose other than educating through entertainment.
Hopefully, the depictions will begin to be less stereotypical in hopes of making international relations easier to handle. Many of these stereotypes would have the same effects on doing business with Germans as they would in regards to simply interacting with Germans outside of the business setting. If the stereotype that Germans are cold and unfriendly is held, it may result in behaving in an unfriendly or indifferent manner to the Germans to begin with. If the stereotype that Germans are hardworking is held, there may be an added expectation put on the Germans. However, it is important to note how stereotypes may affect already existing cultural differences.

To look at a real life example, there is the case of the DaimlerChrysler merger. There were several contributing factors to the failure of this merger, including finances, but cultural differences have been recognized as an issue. One was simply different styles in decision making. According to Sylvia Schroll-Machl, Germans plan their steps in advance for long-term projects, and allow for setbacks and problems in their plan “...so that each step of the job can be finished on time and without a rush” (124). This factors into all of their decision making and makes them appear conservative and safe, whereas the Americans seem more daring, with much more spontaneous decision making than that of the Germans.

With this in mind, the stereotypes held of Germans could result in much less cultural-understanding and lead to frustration, and ultimately failure. While that is a rapid escalation of issues, it further emphasizes the importance of learning about other cultures and their behaviors before initiating business deals with not only the Germans, but all
cultures, as to alleviate potential stereotypes and to differentiate between stereotypes and cultural behaviors.
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