

(Inter)cultural investigation: Kenya in German crime fiction

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Abstract

Despite its marginalised appearance in politics and economics and being reduced to crime, chaos and catastrophes, the African continent has lately featured regularly in crime fiction (Picker 2011). African crime fiction, meaning crime fiction written by African authors, but also crime fiction set in Africa and written by non-Africans, is on a rise. Kenya has been among the popular crime settings in German crime fiction since the 1970s. A number of crime novels make use of a German investigator and an African setting and feature cross-cultural as well as intercultural investigation teams. This paper presents Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions and analyses the German crime novels of Henry Kolarz, Detlef Wolff and the trilogy of the Swiss author Peter Höner, all set in Kenya. The paper investigates the portrayal of cultural encounters and multicultural cooperation and to what extent the novels show an intercultural investigation. Furthermore, it outlines similarities of novels in regard to the (inter)cultural set up.

Africa/Kenya in German Crime Fiction

African crime fiction, or crime fiction in Africa is a relatively new field. The popularity of crime fiction in general (Matzke, 2006, p. 1) and the rise of African crime fiction (Picker, 2011, p. 26) have led to an increase of this genre in academic research, too. The first German crime novels set on the African continent were written in the 1970s, followed by the first academic works on German crime fiction in Africa by Dieter Riegel (1991) and Peter Bräunlein (1996), both discussing German crime fiction from the 1970s and early 1990s. Riegel analyses why German authors choose Africa and how the continent is portrayed while Bräunlein gives a historical overview on Africa in crime fiction and focuses on racism and stereotypical portrayal of Africans. Jochen Schmidt (2009, p. 1005) states that German crime fiction has never had a tradition of being set in an international sphere, but that some examples, nevertheless, are set on the African continent. Despite Schmidt's reluctant statement, over the past ten years there has been quite a substantial output of German crime fiction with a crime scene set in Africa. Kenya is the most popular setting among all African countries. While Nusser (2003, p. 10f.) states that the genre has had a reputation of being unrealistic and trivial, Roth (2001, p. 44) points out that there are a number of crime novels that portray cultural encounters as well as cooperation between investigators

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from different cultures. The following article will shortly outline Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions since they are suitable for distinguishing cultural differences in intercultural cooperation. The cross-cultural and (inter)cultural investigation teams in German crime fiction will be analysed to see, if they feature cultural or intercultural encounters according to Hofstede's differentiations of cultural dimensions, and to point out similarities of the novels.

(Inter)Cultural Encounters – Encountering Investigators

The encounter of cultures involves language, values, social conduct and traditions, work ethics and ways of thinking also play an important role and are pertinent to the visible as well as invisible aspects of culture. Geert Hofstede, pioneer in cross-cultural and intercultural research, identifies five major categories that are relevant to describe a culture: Thus "power distance" refers to hierarchies within a society, the importance of rank versus equality plays an important role, too. Depending on status as well as visibility of these hierarchies, their acceptance or ignorance can cause tension and misunderstandings. The second category is "uncertainty avoidance" which is the threat of unfamiliar situations and how this insecurity can be evaded or played down, e.g. with an arrogant or superior behaviour. In this dimension the perception of the unknown as threatening or inspiring is important. The third category discusses "individualism vs. collectivism" and refers to the role of an individual in his/her surrounding and his/her responsibilities in society. This refers also to the priority of the individual versus the family or community which differs in various cultures, especially the German and Kenyan. Under the aspect of "masculinity vs. femininity" Hofstede subsumes gender related values or the distribution of emotional roles in societies, as for example competitiveness as a masculine value and relationship as for female attribute. Gender roles in society are also considered under this aspect. Lastly, he differentiates between "long term vs. short term orientation", which entails not only the planning of actions and a more future orientated action, but, as in the short term orientation, how traditions are preserved and the role of traditions in a culture. Hofstede developed his theory looking at work situations and his theory is often applied in business related research on international management as well as intercultural communication. Intercultural does not only mean the encounter of cultures, but rather the encounter of cultural differences. In their mutual influence they create a third space: the intercultural (Hofmann, 2006, p. 10ff.). Hofstede's theory reveals important aspects that describe the differences of the German and Kenyan culture and therefore come up in cross-cultural cooperation and intercultural investigation teams, in reality as well as in fiction.

The German crime novels set in Kenya present cultural encounters in cross-cultural investigation teams. The views and perception of the investigator are often influenced by stereotypes and prejudices, biased collective of individual views and show, how the other and the own culture are seen and recognised (Gutjahr, 2002, p. 354). The encounters of culture and the dialogue between cultures (Zimmermann, 1989, p. 12) can lead to a deconstruction but also a confirmation of prejudices and existing stereotypes (Lüsebrink, 2003, p. 321). The aspects of "power distance", "uncertainty avoidance" as well as "individualism and collectivism" in particular, but also gender based values and long/short term orientation are issues that come up in some of the respective novels. The novels portray encounters of the Germans/Swiss and Kenyan¹ culture in the characters of the usually German/Swiss and Kenyan investigators. The analysis of their encounters and cooperation will show, if one can speak of an intercultural investigation.

¹ Although Kenya has more than 40 different ethnic groups, I will refer to the individuals portrayed as Kenyans.

Nusser (2003, p. 42) argues that the investigation teams² in crime fiction function mostly as a narrative technique which creates suspense by formulating suspicious facts and revealing new information to the reader. According to Nusser (2003, p. 38) the detective is a central figure and Riegel (1991, p. 51) points out that the investigators are in general often outsiders. Together with an assistant they either form a trusting team or they compete with each other in their investigations (Nusser, 2003, p. 38). In the examples of German crime fiction in Africa the investigators also portray encounters of the different cultures and give insights into cultural and intercultural aspects, such as work ethic, tradition or social conduct.

Kenya in German Crime Fiction

Since the beginning of German crime fiction set in Africa in the 1970s, Kenya has always been among the most popular settings. Back then, Kenya was considered a “tourist paradise for adventurous West Germans” (Riegel, 1991, p. 51) and now has become an international tourist destination, with the German tourists as the majority. Furthermore, Kenya has always been and still is “the most popular site for Western novels and films stages in Africa“ (Berman, 2004, p. 180). Most authors who choose Kenya for their crime scene have lived in the country, e.g. Peter Höner and Ellen Alpsten, others, such as Detlef Wolff, Henry Kolarz and Edi Graf, have travelled the country.

Bräunlein (1996, p. 34f.) criticises Edgar Wallace or Agatha Christie, the earlier accounts of crime fiction set in Africa, as racist and their portrayal of Africa as a negative one. The first two German crime novels set in Kenya though, *Die roten Elefanten* (1981) by Henry Kolarz and Detlef Wolff’s *Katenkamp in Kenia* (1983), portray mixed or cross-cultural investigation teams and illustrate cultural encounters and a positive portrayal of Kenya. However, intercultural investigations happen especially in Peter Höner’s trilogy *Rafiki Beach Hotel* (1990), *Elefantengrab* (1992) and *Seifengold* (1995). The following analysis will concentrate on these five novels, their (inter)cultural encounters and (inter)cultural investigation.³

One important cultural aspect is language. Due to the fact that the novels are all written by German speaking authors and apparently for a German speaking audience they are in German. Interestingly enough, there seem to be no language barriers between the investigators from Germany or Switzerland and their Kenyan partners. Language is hardly ever mentioned, only *Katenkamp* observes the “guttural sound” (Wolff, 1983, p. 15) of his colleague’s Kenyan English when they first meet. However, all three authors use Kiswahili words to give their novels local flavour or to create authenticity. Höner even adds a German-Kiswahili glossary at the end of his novels. Wolff usually explains the terms within the text e.g.: “‘Kufa’, he whispered. “Dead” (Wolff, 1983, p. 11) when they find the dead prostitute. But Kiswahili is reduced to single common words or expressions such as “askari” (Wolff, 1983, p. 28); “rungu” (Wolff, 1983, p. 53) or “juju” (Kolarz, 1981, p. 43). Greetings like “Jambo” (Kolarz, 1981, p. 27; Wolff, 1983, p. 82) or even “Jambo Bwana” (Höner, 1995, p. 80), a tourist greeting, which a Kenyan seldom uses. Often there are mistakes in spelling as e.g. “wazungus” (Höner, 1995, p. 222), using a double plural for “mzungu” or “wakuti” (Wolff, 1983, p. 87) instead of “makuti” for the roofing material. Höner calls Mettler’s wife Alice “Mama Alice” (Höner, 1995, p. 34) instead of “Mama Ali” after her first born child. In Kolarz’ novel, his protagonist uses various Kiswahili proverbs to sum up a conversation and to indicate an African style (Kolarz, 1981, p. 130). In addition, the proverbs function as

2 A substantial number of international and German crime fiction set in Africa have not only a European or a German detective respectively, but feature an intercultural investigation team of a German/European investigator and an African counterpart.

3 Other novels set in Kenya are Edi Graf’s three novels *Löwenriss* (2005); *Nashornfieber* (2005) and *Leopardenjagd* (2009). They tell the story of the German journalist Linda Roloff and her investigations in Kenya. The latest novels are Ellen Alpsten’s *Die weiße Schuld* (2011) and Christiane Weller/Michael Stuhr. *Projekt Katumbati* (2012).

mottos for the respective chapters in the novel. Kiswahili is, besides English as the official language, not only the national language, but nowadays also official language of Kenya. However, it is an African language and is used in the novels to underline the exotic and African setting. But its use shows that the authors do not master the language and use it on a rather superficial level as picked up by tourists.

Henry Kolarz' *Die roten Elefanten (The Red Elephants)*

Kolarz' novel *Die roten Elefanten* (1981) is the first German crime novel set in Kenya. A special unit, the Mobile Anti-Poaching Strike Unit (MAPSU) is established as a subgroup of the Anti-Poaching Unit that actually existed under the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife in the 1970s (Tinker, 1975). In the novel, Kimani Adipo, a Kenyan officer, who was trained in Britain, is responsible to set up a group of specialists. However, he is criticised to have set up a team of "freaked out originals on probation" (Kolarz, 1981, p. 101)⁴. Adipo, a Kamba⁵ heads the team and is respected by the others. He recruits a German salesman, who used to work as a hunter in Kenya, but had left the country when it banned hunting and marketing trophies. A Kenyan-British doctor, a former alcoholic, joins the team. He, however, no longer treats people since he killed his wife by operating on her while under the influence of alcohol. He is merely selected, because he owns a plane and has a flying license. A young Kenyan herdsman from the Kipsigis tribe is added due to his excellent running. A wild bushman from Turkana, who was caught as a poacher, also joins the team since he was not aware of his wrongdoings and he turns out to be a terrific tracker and is able to talk to wild animals. A spoiled young Kenyan-Indian womaniser, who owns a helicopter, completes the team, now a fragmented kaleidoscope of the Kenyan society, besides the German. Furthermore, an American zoologist, who works for the WWF and who is responsible for preserving wild animals in Kenya, assists the team from time to time. The group combines their knowledge, skills and equipment and forms a multi-ethnic "harmonious cooperation" (Riegel, 1991, p. 60). However, the team does not encounter any cultural or intercultural issues, only personal ones: The young runner Koski befriends the wild Turkana because of their similar language, and the Turkana Drako and the young herdsman, defend and protect each other (cf. Kolarz, 1981, p. 57). The German hunter Wegener falls in love with the American zoologist and his contradictions with the group, especially with the womaniser Mirza, are caused by his jealousy (Kolarz, 1981, p. 105). Mirza, the spoiled young Indian, has two main standards in life: to do what he likes to do and never to give your money, wife or toys to anyone (Kolarz, 1981, p. 97). This is the reason why he joins the team – he is not going to lend his toy, his helicopter, and he is currently bored with life. Robertson, the elderly doctor, has withdrawn from his children and people and only plays long distance chess with a Russian pilot. They exchange their moves with little messages pinned on the thorn tree, the famous notice board at the New Stanley Hotel in Nairobi. Adipo is mostly respected by everyone, only Wegener, who used to work with him when he was still a hunter and Adipo carried the gun, has to be reminded once in while who the boss is (cf. Kolarz, 1981, p. 78). When they work, they usually discuss the strategy and if contradictions arise, they quickly agree on a solution. Often Adipo signals the end of discussion with one of his African proverbs (Kolarz, 1981, p. 130). They solve cases of poaching and smuggling of ivory, rhino horn and skins, which even lead to Germany. But in the end, the criminals remain unpunished (cf. Riegel, 1991, p. 60) since important people are involved and need to be protected. Thus

4 All quotations from of the novels are translated by me since none of the books have been translated into English.

5 Kimani Adipo is not only mentioned as a Kenyan, but specified as a Kamba, a tribe in mainly central Kenya. However, his names are very typical names of two other tribes, the two biggest tribes in Kenya: Kikuyu and Luo. The intension of the author for this selection is not clear. The question rises, if he does this intentionally or if he was not aware of the tribal connotation of names in Kenya.

the smugglers of ivory and rhino horns are linked to Mama Ngina, the former first lady of Kenya, the wife of Kenya's founding father Jomo Kenyatta. Kolarz alludes here to rumours in the 1970s of the Kenyatta family's involvement in ivory smuggling (Tinker, 1975). The MAPSU team fails in this respect, but succeeds in their individual issues: Wegener proposes to the American lady, Mirza decides to grow up, get married and take over his father's business, Robertson has made peace and starts socialising again, just before he is killed by the smugglers. The Turkana Drako returns to his cave in the North of Kenya and Koski, the young herdsman, returns back home. Kolarz' investigation team members differ in their nationalities and cultural background, but the novel does not portray intercultural encounters nor an intercultural investigation. Nonetheless, the novel does not show any racist tone and all Kenyan characters are positively portrayed. Warmbold (1982, p. 195f.) criticises Kolarz' first crime novel set in Africa *Kalahari* (1977) as an example of the inability of German authors to describe African scenery and African people in their African characteristics. This is equally true for Kolarz' novel set in Kenya.

Detlef Wolffs *Katenkamp in Kenia* (*Katenkamp in Kenya*)

Detlef Wolff's *Katenkamp in Kenia* (1983) illustrates the cultural encounter and the joint investigation of the German police officer Gernot Katenkamp and his Kenyan colleague Assistant Superintendent Azhar Shikuku⁶. Katenkamp is one of the first fictitious German detectives on the African continent (Bräunlein, 1996, p. 39). He is sent to Kenya to conduct a training workshop on investigation techniques for the Kenyan police in Nairobi. He is not very keen on the given task and decides to spend a week of holiday at the coast in Mombasa beforehand. Upon his arrival in Mombasa, Shikuku requests his assistance in the murder of a German tourist. Katenkamp is reluctant as he feels he has no legitimate reason to participate in the investigation. He gives in, however, and at first only assists in the interrogations of the German tourists. Gradually he gets more and more involved. Katenkamp explains later: "We share the work a little. I take care of the whites and Shikuku of the black people." (Wolff, 1983, p. 135) Finally, Katenkamp and his Kenyan counterpart solve not only the two murders, but also discover a gang engaged in human and drug trafficking. Riegel (1991, p. 53) points out the good cooperation of the two policemen in the novel and Katenkamp's "sympathetic view on the country" (Riegel, 1991, p. 52). Bräunlein (1996, p. 40), however, criticises Katenkamp's portrayal as unconvincing and states that his prejudiced view is visible at various stages of the novel. Both observations are true. In the beginning, Katenkamp's opinion is juxtaposed with his superior's and colleagues' in Germany and with German tourists visiting Kenya. Katenkamp's superior in Germany talks about "Bimbos" (Wolff, 1983, p. 13). The German tourists at the immigration counter in Mombasa criticise the pace of the process: "Negroes are also just human beings. But we will teach them Prussian discipline. Three weeks should be enough." (Wolff, 1983, p. 14) While the tourists complain, Katenkamp describes the immigration officer as "intelligent," with a "professional, investigative, trained view" (Wolff, 1983, p. 14). He puts his first impressions of the country as poor into perspective by referring to his European view: "People were flocking into the city. Some even started running. They were in shacks according to European standards" (Wolff, 1983, p. 17). He speaks about "Kenyans" or "black colleague" (Wolff, 1983, p. 21) rather than using derogatory terms. Throughout the novel, most tourists and Katenkamp's colleagues in Germany, who get involved since

6 As in Kolarz' protagonist, the two names do not convince in their combination: Azhar is a Muslim name, generally found at the coast whereas Shikuku is a Luhya name from Western Kenya.

7 One could argue that the German word "Neger" was not labelled as derogative in the early 1980ies, but since Katenkamp never uses the term, it clearly indicates the racist view. Wolff therefore uses the juxtaposition in order to criticise the language use and mind set. But it cannot be agreed with Bräunlein's statement that the literature is racist. It only uses racist vocabulary to portray certain people, such as package tour tourists in Kenya.

the tracks lead to Germany, personify the racist view and their assumed superiority also in their language. Katenkamp does not only use a different language, he also distances himself from the tourists, he considers himself a “visiting outsider and not a typical tourist” (Riegel, 1991, p. 51). Furthermore, he criticises: “This hotel, these people on their deck chairs, this slight smell of sun lotion – without the African waiters and gardeners, he could also be at the Canary Islands or at the Costa Brava” (Wolff, 1983, p. 76) – major German tourist destinations in Spain. Instead, Katenkamp wants to get to know Africa and wants to travel to Shikuku’s hometown (Wolff, 1983, p. 76). Ironically, he reduces the African continent to Kenya or generalises Kenya as Africa, a very stereotypical Western portrayal. More of his biased view is revealed in his thoughts on the skills and equipment of his colleagues in a developing country like Kenya as well as the training of the forensic experts. He insinuates how easy it is to commit a crime in Kenya and go unpunished (Wolff, 1983, p. 41). Furthermore, the marks of the crime scene remind him of “a primitive grave mounting” (Wolff, 1983, p. 59). Still, Katenkamp questions almost instantly his mission and if he can actually teach his colleagues anything (Wolff, 1983, p. 21). He is impressed by Shikuku’s explanation and interpretation of the crime scene: Shikuku can prove that the dead German was not killed by the blood stained coconut that was found next to his body. The nut was lying too close to the palm tree and there were no fresh cuttings at the tree from where the nut could have fallen. But the most impressive clue is the fact that the coconut is a different kind than the tree, as every Kenyan knows, but obviously not the murderer. Therefore, the murder was arranged to look like an accident and the murderer must be non-Kenyan (Wolff, 1983, p. 21). At the end of the novel, when the two police officers convict the suspect, Katenkamp translates this fact culturally using the example of different kind of German apples to illustrate the murderer’s mistake by mismatching the coconut and the palm tree: “Gravensteiner apples cannot fall of an august tree” (Wolff, 1983, p. 154).

Wolff also illustrates the two protagonists’ standpoints towards negative aspects such as corruption and the use of “violence to intimidate the suspects” (Riegel, 1991, p. 54). On the one hand, Shikuku himself is the one who mentions several times corrupt Kenyans, e.g. the Minister of Tourism (Wolff, 1983, p. 23) or the hotel director (Wolff, 1983, p. 31). He explains how votes can be bought with a pound of maize in elections (Wolff, 1983, p. 35). On the other hand, he accepts a monthly allowance from a night club owner to ignore his drug business (Wolff, 1983, p. 105). When Katenkamp finds out, he does not directly accuse Shikuku, but suggests to end it: “The case of Shikuku does not have to be among them” (Wolff, 1983, p. 147), meaning among the other cases corruption.

Regarding interrogation techniques, Katenkamp expresses his dislike of Shikuku’s method to intimidate or even abuse the suspects in order to get information (Wolff, 1983, p. 45). At some stage, Katenkamp outlines Shikuku’s character and as well as his working methods: “He is a hunter, thought Katenkamp. He is not someone who solves the crime at his desk. He takes every person individually, grills them and beats the truth out of them, if necessary.” (Wolff, 1983, p. 47) The suspect Kazungu confirms the usual method: “Three had been holding him while the fourth man had treated him with a wooden stick. They only feel strong when holding a rungu in their hand; these stupid policemen” (Wolff, 1983, p. 53). Later, Kazungu points out the contrast of white and black policemen: “Police is not good. But black police men are not good at all. White police officers do not beat at least.” (Wolff, 1983, p. 135) This also stereotyped picture of the good white policeman is contradicted by Katenkamp. In his investigation, he intimidates the suspect and reflects: “No one took the minutes, nothing was recorded and there was also no attorney, he could do this.” (Wolff, 1983, p. 76) This example shows an inconsistency in Katenkamp, as pointed out by Bräunlein (1996, p. 40) and leads at the same time to a deconstruction of

the German or Western superiority. Wolff presents with these examples general negative aspects often related to Africa and often being stereotyped, but nevertheless true. But he qualifies these aspects contrasting them with Katenkamp's similar interrogation style and furthermore with the information that he himself had been expelled from the German police once and only got his job back due to connections (Wolff, 1983, p. 42) – a form of corruption. Other similarities are even pointed out explicitly, as for example to interview a suspect without revealing what the police already knows: “We also use this technique [in Germany]” (Wolff, 1983, p. 35). Also the police stations resemble each other: “Such police stations seem to be alike everywhere in the world. Our telephones and desks are not that old, but we do not have fewer files and forms lying around, also our duty roster hangs next to the map outlining the district.” (Wolff, 1983, p. 58)

As indicated in the beginning, the German tourists in Kenya are portrayed negatively as racist and supremacist and unable to appreciate the country and culture of Kenya. Katenkamp criticises the little contact the tourists have with the country and its people indicating the author's critical standpoint. However, Kenyans are portrayed, but perceived mainly through Katenkamp's perspective and Wolff tries to portray them objectively. He might not succeed in every aspect, but Bräunlein's (1996, p. 40) harsh criticism of Wolff being unable to describe a consistent and convincing Katenkamp and a realistic Kenya, cannot be supported. Riegel (1991, p. 54) indicates that the major theme of the novel is to illustrate the negative impact of tourism and its consequences for Kenya. The growing tourist industry is responsible for the increasing prostitution and sex tourism in the country as the protagonist Shikuku states: “Generally speaking, Tourism only creates problem. Well, it does create jobs, but this is the only positive thing” (Wolff, 1983, p. 42). Wolff is interested to portray Kenya as it is, not entirely bad, but with its problems. On the background of this, the novel shows the two investigators working over and across differences and prejudices and working successfully: They solve the two murders of the German tourist and the Kenyan prostitute. Looking at Hofstede's theory, one can see that his dimensions do not play a very prominent role in the encounter of the German and the Kenyan culture. Wolff portrays the two cultures, but he does not present them in depth and with their entirety. One can see tendencies in the aspect of hierarchy, which Shikuku obeys more than Katenkamp or the German tourists, questioning the efficiency of the immigration board. Furthermore, the aspect of “long term vs. short term” is visible in the interrogation technique: Shikuku is only interested in immediate results and does not consider consequences. Wolff's portrayal shows therefore a cultural encounter, where differences as well as similarities are illustrated, but he does not portray the core of the cultures and their differing dimensions.

Peter Höner's crime trilogy: *Rafiki Beach Hotel, Elefantengrab (Elefant Grave), Seifengold (soap gold)*

More recent German crime fiction set in Kenya is the crime trilogy by the Swiss author Peter Höner, who himself lived for some years in Nairobi. He uses his novels mainly to criticise tourism as well as the expat community in Kenya in a highly ironic way. According to Bräunlein (1996, p. 43), Höner's novels are among the best German African crime fiction. Roth (2001, p. 47), however, criticises the moderate amount of crime and lack of suspense. These two contradictory opinions derive from their two different perspectives: Bräunlein interprets the novels from the perspective of German crime fiction in Africa, whereas Roth analyses them in terms of the genre of crime fiction. Höner's crime fiction might have been criticised for its missing suspense, but the novels show an interesting intercultural encounter between Europeans and Africans and at the same time serve as a

criticism of Western arrogance.⁸ Höner, as he expressed in an interview, is interested to tell stories that show some of the difficulties when different cultures meet, especially when stereotypes are involved that prevent an equal encounter (Höner, quoted in Lehner, 1994, p. 236). His two investigators, their encounters and dialogues, show therefore more insight into their cultures than creating suspense. It is thus clear that Höner is more interested in foregrounding the intercultural encounters that drive the story forward than creating a highly suspenseful narrative that might detract from this. The two cultures do not only meet during the investigation, but a dialog between the two men and the two cultures starts. Höner gives the Kenyan protagonist his own voice, which obviously reflects Höner's own perceptions of what the Kenyan police officer might think and be like.

Höner's trilogy⁹ entails *Rafiki Beach Hotel* (1990), *Elefantengrab* (1992) as well as *Seifengold* (1995). The trilogy portrays a Kenyan-Swiss investigation team, their intercultural encounter and their cooperation, but notably also their prejudices, which they, nevertheless, slowly overcome. The Swiss detective, Jürg Mettler, is sent by his Swiss client to Kenya, more precisely to Lamu, an archipelago in the north of Kenya, to find out about the whereabouts of her mother. Mettler finally ends up solving a murder, becomes friends with the Kenyan police officer Njoroge Tetu and decides to settle in Lamu as a hotel owner. In the second case, *Elefantengrab*, Mettler and Tetu solve a poaching crime in a national park in central Kenya. The last novel, *Seifengold*, is the most complex and sophisticated, and more critical towards corruption in Kenya but also in Switzerland. One knows at quite an early stage who the criminals are (Bräunlein, 1996, p. 44), and the main part of the novel is concerned with putting the puzzle pieces of what led up to the crime together. The novel illustrates how the two investigators try to crack a case of gold smuggling and money laundering. Furthermore, they discover a criminal cooperation between Kenya and Switzerland thereby juxtaposing corrupt Kenyan politicians with corrupt Swiss banking and consulting companies. While Mettler is the driving force in the first novel, it is Tetu who saves Mettler's life in the second. In their third case they are not only separated, but they are defeated by the stronger, more powerful and well-connected opponents and end up as victims: Tetu is imprisoned and goes blind, Mettler has to leave the country and settles in Tanzania (Bräunlein, 1996, p. 44). The trilogy thus ends on a rather bitter note.

Before Höner introduces his two protagonists and investigators, he presents general or collective biased views of each culture. He articulates them through the comments and thoughts of an Italian tourist and a Kenyan donkey guide at the beginning of his first novel *Rafiki Beach Hotel*. The tourist praises the old colonial Kenya and complains about the now bad, corrupt and crime striven country (Höner, 1990, p. 26f.). He considers the "negroes" responsible for this change (Höner, 1990, p. 26). The donkey guide observes and reflects on the behaviour of the Western tourists, their carefree behaviour – wearing hardly any clothes, untidy outfits and touching each other in public. He considers this an insult to the mostly Muslim society on Lamu island (Höner, 1990, p. 28f.). These two contrasting pictures and negatively perceived differences, behaviour and ideas, introduce the two cultures. Against these stereotyped views, mirroring a collective perception, the Kenyan and Swiss protagonists are introduced as individuals before they finally meet. As the narrative structure suggests (introducing the stereotypes) their idea of each other's culture is influenced by stereotyped notions. The white supremacy and arrogance as we encounter in the Italian tourist is confirmed in the feelings of the donkey guide, but it also affects the

8 Sonja Lehner analyses in the chapter on Höner's novels intercultural communication in intercultural love relationships. Cf. Lehner (1994, p. 84ff.).

9 Peter Höner's novel *Wiener Walzer. Mord im Euronight 467* from 2003 takes the story even further and to Europe. However, the Swiss detective Mettler investigates and the Kenyan police Tetu is only mentioned in memories. Therefore, one cannot talk about an intercultural investigation. But strictly speaking, the series contains four; if one refers to the novels set in Kenya, one can speak about a trilogy.

first encounter of the two criminalists. Höner presents Mettler initially as a pedantic wise guy, fussing about the “slowness” and “slovenliness” of the Kenyan police and he wants to teach “the lazy crowd how serious police work is done” (Höner, 1990, p. 75). Ironically, Mettler is the one, who as an outsider demands access to the files – not really what one understands under serious police work. Mettler’s ridiculous and conceited behaviour is still very vivid as Tetu remembers later. “A pale mzungu and soaked with sweat had appeared in his office and had annoyed him with his pedantry and hair splitting attitude” (Höner, 1992, p. 7). Höner here contrasts two cultural stereotypes: the Kenyan is “lazy” whereas the Swiss is “pedantic”. But more so, the different status or rank plays an important role: Mettler, as an outsider and only a private detective, ignores Tetu’s higher rank as a chief inspector, which forms their initial intercultural conflict.

In their second crime case, *Elefantengrab*, Höner juxtaposes their differing work ethics: Mettler criticises Tetu’s calmness as phlegmatic, as indifferent and thick-skinned attitude (Höner, 1992, p. 35) and considers this as slovenliness and laziness. Tetu is angry about Mettler’s patronising behaviour (Höner, 1992, p. 25) and his hurried actions (Höner, 1992, p. 25; p. 32) as he starts investigating the missing scientist. He is annoyed by Mettler’s arrogance, a character trait Tetu encounters with white people in general: They “know everything better, even if they don’t know anything” (Höner, 1995, p. 202). Even when they meet him as a police chief, they look down on him or ignore him. They present themselves as the expert and “they believe, Kenya belongs to them.” (Höner, 1992, p. 40) Tetu comments accordingly: “Also after uhuru, the Kenyan independence, those people appear so superior as if they are still the masters in the country. Even in situations Kenyans would be ashamed, they look straight into your face and tell you the truth, whether you want to hear it or not. These are people who do not know how to behave.” (Höner, 1990, p. 37) Tetu’s remark illustrates the unequal relationship between Europeans and Kenyans, as represented in the superior behaviour of the whites and ignorance of status. But the example also indicates differing cultural customs: to say the truth or to criticise openly is considered impolite in African/Kenyan culture (Mayer, 2003, p. 97ff.) and leads to embarrassment as well as insecurity, one of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions. Höner again constructs a Kenyan perspective, but more convincingly in referring to Kenyan customs. Tetu’s encounters with the Europeans therefore do not lead to a revision of his prejudices rather confirms them.

However, Mettler’s opinion about Western tourists in Kenya is even more critical and on several occasions he explains – just like Wolff’s Katenkamp – that he is not a tourist: He came to work, to investigate the Swiss lady. In the second novel, *Elefantengrab*, he already owns a hotel and talks even more negatively about the tourists as a noisy, loud and colourful bunch of white and overweight people (Höner, 1992, p. 22f.). They “play game hunter for a bit, dream of Hemingway and OUT OF AFRICA and enjoy the luxury of a perfect lodge [...]. Black servants serve drinks while they clean their video and camera guns” (Höner, 1992, p. 64). With this colonial image Höner shows the tourists’ attitudes, but also the unsymmetrical relationship between the Western tourists and Kenyan employees.¹⁰

Both investigators undergo changes in the course of their cooperation. In the beginning, when Mettler claims information on the case, Tetu only agrees to work with Mettler in order to hand over tasks he does not like, such as talking to the Swiss embassy (Höner, 1990, p. 137). But Mettler detaches himself from this superior thinking and patronising manner and he is interested in the other culture, he even “lets Tetu explain what he does not understand as a European” (Höner, 1995, p. 79) and he therewith extends his perspective by understanding and learning about the other culture, which is essential in a intercultural understanding (Bredella, 2001, p. 12). Along Mettler’s change, the Kenyan

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Similar observations are shared about the expat community in Kenya (cf. Augart, 2008, p. 95ff.)

policeman also starts to accept and to “appreciate the white man, his calmness and thoughtfulness” (Höner, 1992, p. 32), attitudes he had criticised before. However, the main turning point is when they get to know each other better over a bottle of beer and talk about family (Höner, 1990, p. 170). That evening, they part as friends (Höner, 1990, p. 182).

As they get closer and deconstruct a collective prejudice through an individual friendship they adapt some of the others traits: Mettler, on the one hand, gets, consciously and subconsciously, a feel for the Kenyan culture and leaves for example his European haste behind (Höner, 1995, p. 33). On the other hand, Tetu adjusts to Mettler’s work ethic and even adopts his style. Initially Mettler criticises Tetu of not working thoroughly and of his short term orientation: “Tetu had made up his mind. Facts get adjusted accordingly.” (Höner, 1990, p. 167) But later Tetu criticises his colleagues in a similar way: “They put the few things they had together and put the case aside, before they even knew anything about the whereabouts of the lady” (Höner, 1992, p. 108). At first, he also disagrees with Mettler’s directness “to articulate what you think” (Höner, 1990, p. 136). Later he starts the interrogation without any introduction or the “usual enquiries about the family as it is done in Africa” (Höner, 1992, p. 13). He is criticised by his brother in law since he seems to like the truth more than his family (Höner, 1992, p. 127), putting individualism over collectivism and the family. While the two protagonists learn in their common investigation from each other and start discussing rather similarities than differences (Augart, 2008, p. 100f.), the other culture remains incomprehensible to some extent. Whereas there are things “Tetu does not understand, but the whites apparently like” (Höner, 1992, p. 6f.), Mettler laughs about Tetu’s jokes although he does not understand them (Höner, 1992, p. 73). They are alike, but they remain different and they remain as two people from two different cultural backgrounds (Höner, 1995, p. 33).

Höner himself lived in Kenya for a couple of years and therefore knows the country and its inhabitants (Lehner, 1994, p. 236) and tries to deconstruct biased views and the assumed superiority of Westerners. He constructs not only a similarity in his protagonists, but, like Wolff, stresses similarities in almost similar words: “offices, around the world, [being] the same” (Höner, 1990, p. 58). Nevertheless, he writes from a Western and European point of view, even if he tries to overcome it. His European opinion and critical observation of tourists in Kenya (Lehner, 1994, p. 236) lead to an ironic presentation of the privileged life of expats in Nairobi (Lehner, 1994, p. 236). He illustrates his criticism in various characters and his ironic description. Besides the above mentioned cases, further examples are the elderly Swiss lady and her romantic view on Kenyan men, which presents a ridiculous myth, and the Swiss ambassador, who considers his love affair with his Kenyan secretary as his personal development project. Furthermore, Mettler is criticised, since he used to travel Lamu as a hippie tourist (Bräunlein, 1996, p. 44) and lastly Höner himself, who is mentioned as “the Swiss, who has written a book about our hotel” (Höner, 1995, p. 199), is ironised.

The Eurocentric perspective in Höner’s novels dominates, especially portraying the efficiency and work ethic, rather masculine values and Western attitudes such as lower hierarchies, individualism and long term orientation. But also female values such as warmth and calmness, more African attitudes, are achieved and seen positively. Höner portrays in his three crime novels the two cultures more precise and displays their cultural differences according to Hofstede’s theory. The intercultural encounter of the two investigators have influenced the other and created a third space. Therefore, one can speak of an intercultural encounter and intercultural investigation in Höner’s novels.

(Inter)Cultural Investigations in German Crime Fiction

Looking at the selected novels of German crime fiction set in Kenya that have been discussed, the cross-cultural cooperation is obvious and forms a common aspect of the five novels. However, only Höner's crime fiction features a truly intercultural investigation – not a surprise, considering that intercultural themes only became a popular in the 1980s and 1990s (Göttsche, 2003 p. 163). The earliest example, Henry Kolarz's *Die roten Elefanten*, uses a multi-ethnic group, even if it does not discuss cultural aspects or cultural clashes. The protagonists' dimensions of culture, stated by Hofstede, are very similar despite their very different backgrounds. Kolarz' novel can be criticised for its ignorance or lack of these important facts. However, the novel presents a positive portrayal and gives the reader an insight into Kenyan society without any negative cultural impacts or strong biased and stereotyped views. Kolarz only applies an implicit criticism when he refers to the rumours of the Kenyatta family's involvement in the smuggling of ivory. The corruption and the defeat of the successful investigation team are aspects the novel shares with Höner's *Seifengold*. Both cases get solved, but the criminals go unpunished, because they are people of high rank in society or politics. This again strengthens the point that the crime novels are not merely constructed as crime fiction, but the genre is used to illustrate and criticise certain aspects such as corruption, tourism and its effects on the country. Nevertheless, Kolarz refers to actual facts, whereas Höner points out the entirely fictitious character of his novel *Seifengold* (Höner, 1995, p. 5).

Detlef Wolff's novel *Katenkamp in Kenia* and Peter Höner's crime fiction trilogy are about twenty years apart, but share more similarities than merely the crime scene in Kenya and a cross-cultural investigation team. Both of them juxtapose general Western prejudices about Africa and Africans with a more realistic and neutral view of the culture and portray a positive (inter)cultural encounter. More important than the crime fiction is the criticism of tourism (Wolff) or the expat community (Höner) in Kenya as well as a criticism of a prejudiced negative view. Compared to other members of society, introducing a general negative Western opinion on Africa, the German/Swiss investigator sets himself apart from his countrymen but a development in their attitude is presented: Hesitantly, they agree to work together, and the German/Swiss (visiting) police officer/detective with no legal permission for such work, has to deal with the European suspects or with European authorities. Successively though, they work together, form a team and finally appreciate the other's working style even to a point that Mettler and Tetu fail in their last case due to the lack in communication and lack of mutual assistance. Nevertheless, cultural differences are there and can be identified. The aspect of distance can be clearly seen in Höner's novels: Mettler has problems accepting the hierarchies and causing enmity on the other side, but also a more insecure counterpart. The dichotomy of "collectivism vs. individualism" is especially visible with the Kenyan police officer, whose family is no longer more important than finding the truth. In Wolff's novel this can be seen in the aspect of favours and corruption. Also, Hofstede's aspects of "long vs. short term orientation", related to planning and work, play into their mind sets and therefore investigation techniques. But the German and the Swiss investigator also compare the two countries and stress similarities, as do the authors by juxtaposing negative aspects such as corruption or unethical interrogation/work methods in both cultures/countries. Höner, more strongly than Wolff, shows that prejudices depend on perspective and interpretation and how they disappear with a growing (inter)cultural understanding of the two investigators.

Multicultural investigation teams have featured in German crime fiction set in Kenya. However, Kolarz' early novel *Die roten Elefanten* does not show differing cultural dimensions. In comparison, Wolff's *Katenkamp in Kenia* shows a few differences in cultural dimensions. Only the latest novels, Höner's *Rafiki Beach Hotel*, *Elefantengrab* and *Seifengold*

and the cultural cooperation of the Swiss detective and the Kenyan police chief, feature a real intercultural investigation team of two cultures that differ according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions.

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