

Justus Liebig University of Gießen

Department of English

S: Migration/Law/Gender

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## Creative Project

### 'Ich bin hier'

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## 1. The Basics

During our seminar “Migration/Law/Gender” we talked frequently about visual representations of refugees and how the images moved from being symbols of victimhood to images of menace.

Since music is a great part of my life, I started to wonder how refugees and/or fellow citizens with a migrant background are portrayed in the musical sense. A song that immediately came to my mind was Samy Deluxe’s “Mimimi” from his album *Berühmte letzte Worte*, released in early 2016. Going further into my research I found a lot of German and English songs that dealt with racism, being discriminated and not being completely at home although being born in Germany etc. as topics. As a result I started to think about my brother, myself and friends that I have, who have a migrant background. How do we/I feel living in Germany?

The next thing that came to my mind was, why not write a song of my own life, about my point of view on racism and living in Germany with one of my biological parents being an African-American?

## 2. The Idea

So that is what I did, I sat down and thought of everything that came to my mind about racism in general in Germany and what I think about it. I realized that I have never really experienced racism towards myself as far as I can say, but that made me wonder how that could actually have happened. Am I not “black enough” to be excluded by certain people? Was I always protected by my surrounding from it? Is racism not happening to me, because I do not allow it to? Am I too confident to let myself being reduced to my skin color, to see it happening to me? Do I need to be more active to point out racism or am I just not able to see it when it comes to myself, since I am perfectly able to expose racism when it happens to other people in our society or in other countries.

Considering that I am also a student of art history, connotations on the colors black and white came to my mind and without surprise I happened to find more negative connections to the word/color black than as to its counterpart white. For example, black market, black labor, and black money, fare-beating (ger:

schwarzfahren), their connotations are always about something being illegal, forbidden or without permission. In western societies we wear black to express grief. We have sayings in German like “Das ist der schwärzeste Tag meines Lebens“, “Er/Sie ist das schwarze Schaf der Familie“ or “Da kannst du warten bis du schwarz bist“. All these express something sinister, pessimistic, negative or bad. But there are also some positive meanings to the color black, for example for a company “to operate in the black”.

The connotations to the color black contrast with those of the color white, for this color is connected with purity, happiness, innocence, sanctity and honesty. In war there is a white flag as a sign of surrender; the white dove represents peace; on a wedding a bride usually wears white, or in the bible Christ is referred to as the white lamb. I started to wonder why it always has to be white and black, day and night, good and bad. Has today’s society learned nothing from its own history? Do we have to react xenophobic to everyone who looks different or could we overcome that ridiculous fear and learn to welcome changes when it comes to skin color?

Meanwhile I started searching for a melody that I could use for my song. I am a singer, but have never written a song on my own, so I wanted to have a song as a basis for mine, that has already a strong message on its own and was from a singer that would promote my own message. So I chose Beyoncé and her song “I was here” from her album *4* from 2013. Beyoncé performed “I was here” at the United Nations World Humanitarian Day in 2012. I love this song because of its already powerful message for people “to do something good, no matter how big or small, for someone else”, and that is exactly the message I want to get across. I decided to write the song in German, because it is my native language, I still live in Germany and my topic is about racism in Germany.

### **3. The Progress of writing a song**

#### a) Texting and arranging the words and tones

It was quite easy to decide what I wanted to say in my song, yet I had to get help from a friend, who himself is a song writer, to create a whole song. John-Patrick Dörhöfer studies Geography and Music at the JLU since 2009. As of

2009 he is also the musical director of the “Theater Traumstern” in Lich. 2013 he started to write his own songs and performs them as a piano cabaret artist. We sat down and formed my message into words fitting the rhythm. An idea that came to my mind was to include famous songs about racism by other artists into my own lyrics, as homage to their songs.

b) Recording of the instruments/ creating a beat

Patrick then started to record the different instruments and produced the beat for the musical background to the song. He started to record the piano and after that we decided which instruments should accompany this tune. We added violins, guitars, bells; electrical bass and I played the triangle.

c) Recording the lead and backing vocals

After Patrick recorded the instrumental for the song, we met again to record my vocals. We started recording the first verse and realized that we can't do one after the other, since every verse flows into the next one. So we just made breaks where we thought it would fit. After recording the leading vocals for the whole song we started to decide at which part of the song we would need backing vocals. At these parts I then recorded different melodies and tunes to lay under my vocals.

d) Mixing

By mixing the song we had to arrange each and every sonority and note of the song to balance the ration between the vocals and the instruments. Meaning that in the end the instruments are not louder than the vocals or vice versa.

e) Mastering

The point of mastering a song is that it is possible to play the song on different devices without it sounding different. So now one can play it on a cell phone, with headphones, but also on big hi-fi equipment.

## 4. The Lyrics

### Verse 1:

Wieso der Hass,  
dein Blut ist rot,  
genau wie meins,  
Ich bin **farbenblind**  
in meinem Kopf sind Alle gleich  
Wo sind sie bloß hin  
**Liebe und Verstand**  
Es kann nicht sein, ich fühl mich  
**Fremd im eignen Land.**

### Refrain:

Nein ich kenn sie nicht  
Bruder und auch Schwester nicht  
Doch das Vorurteil  
Peinigt wie ein Messerstich  
Und ich dachte Deutschland bessert sich  
Doch der Weg führt uns durch braunen  
Sumpf  
**Deutsch sein und schwarz dazu**, was  
sollen wir tun?  
Ich bin hier.

### Verse 2:

Ich stehe fest im Gegenwind  
Du bist nicht allein  
Reich dir die Hand und nehm dich mit,  
Zusammen sind wir frei.  
Statt **Schwarz oder Weiß**  
gibt's nur den Farbenkreis  
Am Ende des Regenbogens liegt unser  
Reich.

### Refrain:

Wir sind hier,  
Doch laut Medien und Gesellschaft  
nicht  
Genug angepasst  
Sind nicht nur **Deutsche mit 'nem**  
**Bindestrich!**  
Aber was genau hindert mich  
Mein Meinung hier frei kundzutun?  
Eine **letzte Warnung**, sind wir soweit  
schon?

### Refrain:

Ich bin hier  
Ich bin kein **Superheld**,  
ich verspreche Dir,  
denn ich liebe dich  
Ich lass nicht zu,  
dass es dir geschieht.  
Du bist mehr als ein **Mitbürger**  
**mit Migrationshintergrund.**  
Lass Rassismus nicht zu, auch du kannst  
was tun.  
Ich bin hier

### Bridge:

**I just want them to know  
That I gave my all, did my best  
Brought someone some happiness  
Left this world little better just  
because...  
I was here!**

### Refrain:

**I was here...  
I lived, I loved  
I was here...  
I did, I've done, everything that I  
wanted  
And it was more than I thought it  
would be  
I will leave my mark, so, everyone will  
know**

### I was here...

**I lived, I loved  
I was here...  
I did, I've done  
I was here...  
I lived, I loved  
I was here...  
I did, I've done**

Ich bin hier!

## 5. Lyrics used in the song

### 1. Overtone "Colorblind"(2009)

"Hear me say it's time we stopped our hate. Eye to eye we see a different fate. Yes we we've conquered the war with love at the core. I stumble, I fall, but I'll stay **colorblind**."

Lyrics: <https://genius.com/Overtone-colorblind-lyrics>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DB-PVwRpXM0>

### 2. Sister's Keepers "Liebe und Verstand"(2001)

"Es ist schön dich zu seh'n, komm reich uns deine Hand. Auch wir sind hier gebor'n und trotzdem fremd ich diesem Land. Schön dich zu sehn. Wir können etwas ändern mit **Liebe und Verstand**."

Lyrics: <https://www.golyr.de/sisters-keepers/songtext-liebe-verstand-479027.html>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eglBxGzWJM>

### 3. Advanced Chemistry "Fremd im eigenen Land"(1992)

"Und wenn es drauf ankommt, kämpfe ich Auge um Auge, Zahn um Zahn. Ich hoffe die Radiosender lassen diese Platte spielen, denn ich bin kein Einzelfall, sondern einer von vielen. Nicht anerkannt, **fremd im eigenen Land**."

Lyrics: <https://genius.com/Advanced-chemistry-fremd-im-eigenen-land-lyrics>

Video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hU5j\\_RqUjas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hU5j_RqUjas)

### 4. Theodor Michael "Deutsch sein und Schwarz dazu. Erinnerungen eines Afro-Deutschen"(2013)

Theodor Wonja Michael, born 1925 in Berlin, tells the story of his life, living in Germany before, while and after the Second World War, not only as an orphan child, but also about the difficulties and challenges he had to face due to his skin color.

(<https://www.dtv.de/buch/theodor-michael-deutsch-sein-und-schwarz-dazu34857/>)

### 5. Michael Jackson "Black or White"(1991)

"Don't tell me you agree with me, when I saw you kicking dirt in my eye. But if you're thinkin' about my baby. It don't matter if you're **black or white!**"

Lyrics: <https://genius.com/Michael-jackson-black-or-white-lyrics>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2AitTPI5U0>

## 6. **“Bindestrich-Deutsche”**

The feeling of plural belongingness to different cultures and describing yourself with at least a double affiliation.

(<http://tvv-verlag.de/publikationen/bindestrich-deutsche-mehrfachzugehoerigkeit-und-beheimatungspraktiken-im-alltag/>)

## 7. *Brother’s Keepers* “Adriano”(2001)

“Dies ist so was wie eine **letzte Warnung**, denn unser Rückschlag ist längst in Planung. Wir fall'n dort ein, wo ihr auffallt. Gebieten eurer braunen Scheiße endlich Aufhalt. Denn was ihr sucht ist das Ende und was wir reichen sind geballte Fäuste und keine Hände. Euer Niedergang für immer! Und was wir hören werden, ist euer Weinen und euer Gewimmer!“

Lyrics: <https://genius.com/Brothers-keepers-adriano-letzte-warnung-lyrics>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXawL-LFgi8>

## 8. *Samy Deluxe* “Superheld”(2010)

“Wär' ich so gern dein **Superheld**, dein Superheld mit brauner Haut, aber ich kann nicht durch die Lüfte fliegen, kann aus den Händen keine Blitze schießen, aber was ich kann, ist für dich da zu sein und dir versprechen, dich zu lieben.“

Lyrics: <https://genius.com/Samy-deluxe-superheld-lyrics>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JEY1dQcpZI>

## 9. *Samy Deluxe* “Mimimi”(2016)

“Bist du auch ein Mimimi? Mimimi, Mimimi - „**Mitbürger mit Migrationshintergrund**“!“

Lyrics: <https://genius.com/Samy-deluxe-mimimi-lyrics>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwlb88ppYDk>

**10. Beyonce "I was here"**

**"I just want them to know that I gave my all, did my best. Brought someone some happiness. Left this world little better just because... I was here!**

**I was here. I lived, I loved. I was here.**

**I did, I've done, everything that I wanted and it was more than I thought it would be. I will leave my mark, so, everyone will know I was here.**

**I lived, I loved. I was here. I did, I've done. I was here. I lived, I loved. I was here. I did, I've done."**

Lyrics: <https://genius.com/Beyonce-i-was-here-lyrics>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i41qWJ6QjPI>

## 6. Credits

### 1. I was here (2013)

Written by Diane Warren

Published by Realsongs

Produced by Ryan Tedder and Brent Kutzle for Patriot Entertainment

Vocal produced by Beyoncé Knowles and Kuk Harrell

Recorded by Ryan Tedder and Brent Kutzle

Engineer for mix: John Hanes

Drums by Ryan Tedder

Cello and Guitar by Brent Kutzle

Piano and additional programming by Ryan Tedder and Brent Kutzle

Background vocals by Beyoncé Knowles and Ryan Tedder

### 2. Ich bin hier (2017)

Produced by John-Patrick Dörhöfer

Vocal produced by Lisa Schurtakow

Vocal Arrangement by Lisa Schurtakow

Recorded by John-Patrick Dörhöfer

Engineer for mix: John-Patrick Dörhöfer

Drums and Bass by John-Patrick Dörhöfer

Cello and Guitar by John-Patrick Dörhöfer

Piano and additional programming by John-Patrick Dörhöfer

Background vocals by Lisa Schurtakow

Triangle by Lisa Schurtakow