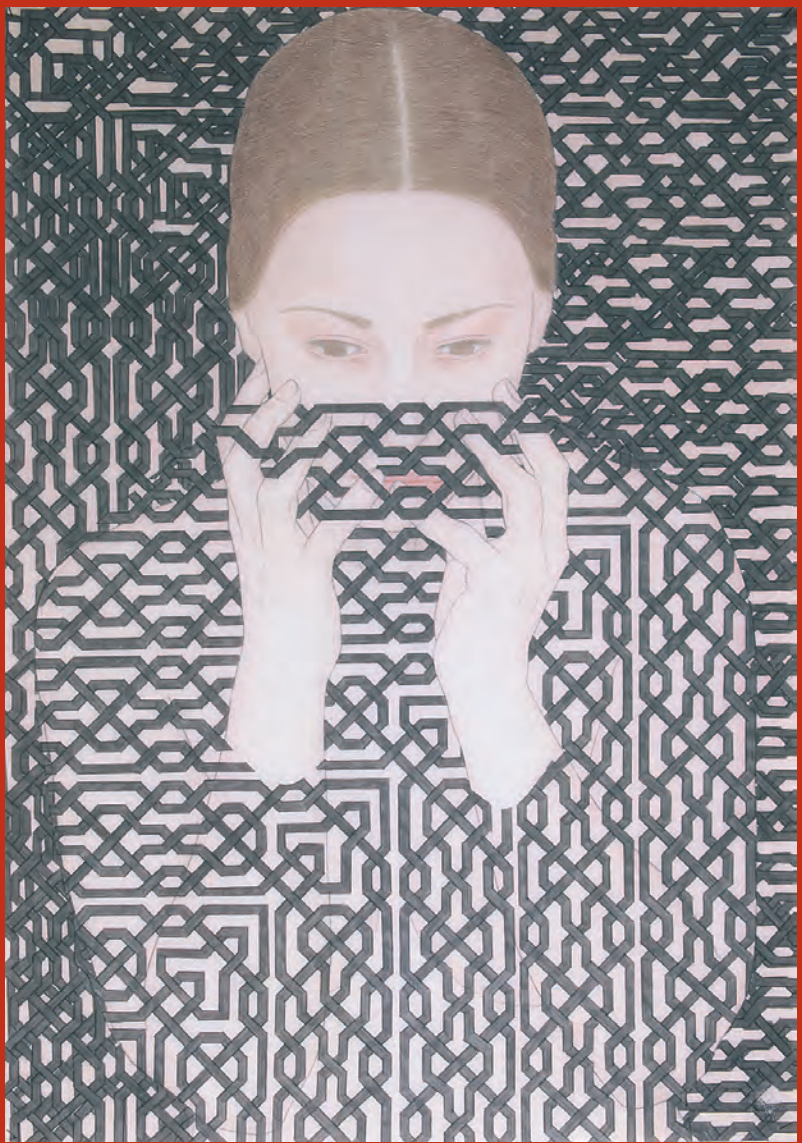
To Veil or not to Veil

Europe's Shape-Shifting 'Other'

Kamakshi P. Murti



Peter Lang

Immigration has become a contentious issue in Europe in recent decades, with immigrants being accused of resisting integration and threatening the secular fabric of nationhood. The most extreme form of this unease has invented and demonized an Islamic 'other' within Europe. This book poses central questions about this global staging of difference. How has such anxiety increased exponentially since 9/11? Why has the Muslim veil been singled out as a metaphor in debates about citizenship? Lastly, and most fundamentally, who sets the criteria for constructing the ideal citizen?

This study explores the issue of gender and immigration in the national contexts of Germany and France, where the largest minority populations are from Turkey and North Africa, respectively. The author analyzes fictional works by the Turkish-German writers Emine Sevgi Özdamar and Zafer Şenocak and by Francophone writer Malika Mokeddem. All three deconstruct binary oppositions and envision an alternate third space that allows them to break out of the confines of organized religion. In the latter part of the book, the voices of young Muslim women are foregrounded through interviews. The concluding chapter on the pedagogical tool Deliberative Dialogue suggests ways to navigate such contentious issues in the Humanities classroom.

Kamakshi P. Murti is Professor Emerita of German at Middlebury College. She has published extensively on German colonialism and imperialism, minorities discourse, and second- and foreign-language education. She is the author of *India: The Seductive and Seduced 'Other' of German Orientalism* (2001).

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for my three parents

lallu (1919–1979)
daddy (1910–1982)
amma (1917–1994)

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INTRODUCTION

Borderlands and Identities

The year was 2002 – a cold spring morning in Middlebury, Vermont. I hurriedly finished my daily walk and dashed into the nearby supermarket to get fresh hot rolls. As I headed for the baked goods aisle, a little boy pulled a lollipop out of his mouth, looked up at me and smiled. I smiled back. The clerk at the checkout counter greeted me with a welcoming beam, and sportingly laughed at my lame joke. I came out feeling connected with the world. That same evening, I returned to the supermarket to pick up some groceries. As I threaded my way through the aisles, the usual chatter seemed to die down; I felt rather than saw the many stares, some of them blatantly hostile. A little girl looked up at me, stabbed a chubby finger at her forehead, pointed at mine, and grinned. I grinned back. The clerk at the checkout counter did not meet my gaze. I cracked another silly joke and observed the clerk's face cautiously relax into a reluctant grin. I came out saddened, not overly surprised at the way the planet had suddenly been sucked into a black hole. Simultaneously, my teacher's instinct kicked in as I filed away this teaching moment for the sophomores and juniors at a local college who were attending my course "To Veil or not to Veil." For my morning walk, I had worn a sweat suit, in the evening I was clad in a *Punjabi*,[1] my customary professional attire, and I had applied a *bottu* (an ornamental dot) on my forehead. The palpable anxiety that met me on my second visit to the store was deeply disturbing and depressing. In previous years, my South-Asian clothing had invariably led to attempts to commodify my "ethnicity." This had meant a mix of curiosity ("What does the dot on your forehead mean?"), pity ("Your clothing is lovely – so traditional. Do you wear this all the time?"), condescension mixed with envy ("Your dress

1 Clothing traditionally worn by women in Northern India, and now popular throughout India because of the combination of comfort and elegance that it offers.

looks both comfortable and elegant!" [My translation: "I wish I could wear something like that too. But I am a modern woman and can't be seen in clothes like that"]). But 9/11 had radicalized this thinking, empowering it to reduce encounters with anything that had the semblance of the non-West to an unequivocally and perplexingly evil common denominator called "terrorist." I thought of Zafer Şenocak's reminder that encounters happen, not between cultures, but between human beings (*Zungenentfernung* 62).[2] I began asking myself with increasing urgency questions about my US citizenship and what it meant, more than a decade after 9/11.

Natural(ized)-born citizen?

In his introduction to *Challenging Ethnic Citizenship*, Daniel Levy says:

> Not only does citizenship reveal how self-conceptions of nationhood are culturally inscribed; it also reflects the ways in which they are intertwined with institutional realities and political changes, and respond to migratory trends. In other words, debates about immigrants institutionalize the ways in which strangers are perceived. Conversely, they serve as a measure of how a society perceives itself. (1)

"The ways in which strangers are perceived" – this sentence resonated with me. I thought back to the year 1989. I had just taken the Oath of Allegiance to become a citizen of the United States of America, having relinquished my Indian citizenship of forty-seven years. The document that I took home that day was called a Certificate of Naturalization. I searched for the verb "naturalize" in the online Thesaurus, and found the following definitions that offered intriguing parallels to Levy's definition of citizenship:

2 "[E]s sind immer nur die Menschen, die sich begegnen und nicht die Kulturen." (= [i]t is always the human beings, and not the cultures, who encounter one another.) (Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from German into English are mine: KPM)

> Naturalize: Make more natural or lifelike.
> Naturalize: Cause to change; make different; cause a transformation
> Naturalize: Explain with reference to nature; make plain and comprehensible; "He explained the laws of physics to his students."
> Naturalize: Adopt to another place; "The stories had become naturalized into an American setting."
> Naturalize: Adapt to the environment; "domesticate oats"; "tame the soil"

As Levy stresses, citizenship and immigration are valuable prisms through which to analyze conceptions of collective identification because they entail deeply ingrained cultural self-understandings of nationhood. The ideas of domestication and humanization ("Make more natural or lifelike") that the process of naturalization hid in its palimpsest were especially distressing. Jeffrey D. Schultz observes how discrimination against those who were nonwhite began to grow in the US of the late 1800s: "... as far back as the late eighteenth century, the Naturalization Act of 1790 [...] employed explicitly racist criteria, limiting citizenship to free white persons" (284).

A term coined by B. Venkat Mani: "identitarian discomfiture" captures my own reaction to a 1923 US Supreme Court decision to dismiss a South-Asian's application for naturalization, a discomfiture which Mani describes as follows:

> The staging of the history as origin, the "experience-in-identity," the coding, recoding, transcoding, and decoding of cultural difference through a superficially beneficial economy of intercultural translation, all collapse into a moment of identitarian discomfiture. (84)

In its decision in the case of US v. Bhagat Singh Thind (1923), the Supreme Court ruled that Asian Indians were ineligible for citizenship because US law allowed only "free whites" to become naturalized citizens.

> The court conceded that Indians were "Caucasians" and that anthropologists considered them to be of the same race as white Americans, but argued that "the average man knows perfectly well that *there are unmistakable and profound differences*." The Thind decision also led to successful efforts to *denaturalize some who had previously become citizens*. ("Not All Caucasians Are White"; emphasis added)

It was only in 1946, after India had gained independence from the British, that Congress, recognizing India's potential as a major world power, passed a new law allowing Indians to become citizens ("Not All Caucasians Are White").

Further probing produced another illuminating precursor to current definitions of US citizenship: in a 1915 text titled *Corpus juris. Being a complete and systematic statement of the whole body of the law as embodied in and developed by all reported decisions*, editors William Mack and William Benjamin Hale provide the following definition and clarification of the term "naturalization":

> Naturalization: A Definition. Naturalization is the act or proceeding by which an alien becomes a citizen, the act of adopting a foreigner and *clothing him* with the privileges of a native citizen; [...]
>
> D. Who May Be Naturalized – 1. In General. The naturalization laws of the United States apply only to aliens, within the limits and under the jurisdiction of the United States, who contemplate the continuance of a residence already established therein. The right is limited to "aliens [being free white persons, and to aliens] of African nativity and to persons of African descent." Hence the right to become a naturalized citizen of the United States *depends upon parentage and blood*, and not upon nationality or status. [...] As commonly understood the expression [white person] includes all European races and those Caucasians belonging to the races around the Mediterranean sea, whether they are considered as "fair whites" or "dark whites," and notwithstanding that certain of the southern and eastern European races are technically classified as of Mongolian or Tartar origin, and, as construed, has been held to include Syrians, Armenians, *high caste Hindus*, and Parsees. [...] (Kiser; emphasis added)

For forty years, I had unreflectively enjoyed my status as a citizen of India, a privilege authorized by my membership in the powerful lobby of "high caste Hindus." Economic independence (I came from an affluent middle-class family) had also granted me free movement in public spaces without being asked: "Where are you from?" It had meant wearing a sari or a Punjabi, and applying a bottu on my forehead without people equating this apparel or adornment with the exotic (in this context to be read as "third worldliness," i.e., implying illiteracy or backwardness.) I was a "natural" citizen. But

it had also meant looking with curiosity, disdain, or outright hostility at those citizens who did not look Indian. In hindsight and most unbearably, it had meant discriminating against Indian-born non-Hindus, especially Muslims and Christians. A conversation with a relative comes to mind.

On one of my frequent visits to India, a relative was driving me to her home in Chennai. We stopped at a busy intersection, and I remarked on how immaculately dressed the men and women on the streets were. In particular, an elegant sari-clad young woman caught my eye. My relative retorted with obvious disdain: "She is a Christian." When I asked her how she knew this, she impatiently replied: "Look at her gait! She walks like a Christian. Pretending to be a Hindu! Bah! They even wear a bottu to masquerade as Hindus." Mary Douglas' view helped me understand the layers of racist thinking that were buried in my relative's remark:

> The human body is always treated as an image of society and [...] there can be no natural way of considering the body that does not involve at the same time a social dimension. Interest in its apertures depends on the preoccupation with social exits and entrances, escape routes and invasions. If there is no concern to preserve social boundaries, I would not expect to find concern with bodily boundaries. (Gilman 170)

My relative's contemptuous reference to the Christian gait was analogous to anti-Semitic derogatory references to the Jewish body. Like racial anti-Semitism, which is prejudice against Jews as a racial/ethnic group, rather than Judaism as a religion, a feature of racial casteism in India is that conversion to Christianity or another religion does not erase the initial inferior status to which the converts had been subjected. Descendants of a convert who may not even be aware of their heritage continue to be stigmatized for their "inferior" bloodline. The Hindu epic *Mahabharata* contains the following illuminating text about the Hindu caste system:

> Brigu said, "... (The Creator created) human beings with their four divisions, viz., Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras. The complexion the Brahmanas obtained was white; that which the Kshatriyas obtained was red; that which the Vaisyas got was yellow; and that which was given to the Sudras was black."
>
> (The commentator explains that the words expressive of hue or colour really mean attributes. What is intended to be said is that the Brahmanas had the attribute of Goodness (Sattwa); the second order had the attribute of Passion (Rajas); the third

> got a mixture of the two, i.e., both goodness and passion (Sattwa and Rajas); while the lowest order got the remaining attribute, viz., Darkness (Tamas).) ("Santi Parva")

The commentator's explanation becomes even more transparently racist, since physical attributes are firmly paired with character traits: the binaries of white (positive) and black (negative) remain. European colonialism and imperialism, especially in the nineteenth century, had promoted a missionary zeal spawning mass conversions of caste oppressed Hindus to Christianity. Consequently, being "Christian" meant disavowing caste boundaries and jeopardizing an otherwise infallible system of graded inequality that was legal and penal: the racially defined hierarchy of Hinduism (Ambedkar).[3] Seen through my relative's prism, the Indian Christian body was clearly that of a lower-caste Hindu.

Borders and "identity" since 9/11

> Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants.
>
> — GLORIA ANZALDUA (3)

The euphoria with which I had so triumphantly carried home the tiny US flag that day in 1989 was slowly giving way to the sobering realization that however hard I worked to be accepted into the elite body of those who considered themselves authentic citizens, ultimately the perception that I was not really a member of that exclusive club would never change. It was

3 The Indian jurist, politician, and philosopher Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956), who had himself been born into the so-called untouchable caste, spent his whole life fighting against social discrimination and the Hindu caste system.

at this point that I began to interrogate not only my own intense desire to "belong," but also the myriad implicit and explicit ways in which privilege is conferred or withheld.

Predictably, Gloria Anzaldua's border preceded me wherever I went. The inclusion of "high caste Hindus" in Mack and Hale's listing of naturalizable persons mercilessly reminded me of my own xenophobic privileging. I remembered with startling clarity and a sense of déjà vu a comment made some years before by an African-American colleague. We had gone to the Bahamas for a conference. When we entered the city of Nassau, my colleague breathed a sigh of relief and said: "No one is staring at me! Gosh! That feels so good!"

Predictable, yet shocking, was also the hate backlash in the wake of 9/11. Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh, was gunned down on 15 September 2001 in Mesa, Arizona. Waqar Hasan, a Muslim, was also murdered on September 15, 2001 in Dallas, Texas. Vasudev Patel, a Hindu, was killed days later in nearby Mesquite, Texas. Three different faiths had been reduced to the demonized terrorist "other." Fear sees only difference, albeit a difference that has to be erased. When this anxiety is compounded by willful ignorance about non-Christian faiths, it becomes toxic. A comment made by culture critic Homi Bhabha in the context of the Algerian revolt against French colonialism – in his reading of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks* – applies equally well to the current anxiety about otherness:

> The Black presence ruins the representative narrative of Western personhood: its past tethered to treacherous stereotypes of primitivism and degeneracy will not produce of civil progress, a space for the *Socius*; its present, dismembered and dislocated, will not contain the image of identity that is questioned in the dialectic of mind/body and resolved in the epistemology of "appearance and reality." The White man's eyes break up the Black man's body and in that act of epistemic violence its own frame of reference is transgressed, its field of vision disturbed. (xxv)

And now, more than a decade after 9/11, William Dalrymple's words about an ever-increasing Islamophobia have come back to haunt us:

> Most of us are perfectly capable of making distinctions within the Christian world. The fact that someone is a Boston Roman Catholic doesn't mean he's in league with

> Irish Republican Army bomb makers, just as not all Orthodox Christians have ties to Serbian war criminals or Southern Baptists to the murderers of abortion doctors. [...] many of our leaders have a tendency to see the Islamic world as a single, terrifying monolith.

Dalrymple observes that because of such an undifferentiated approach to Islam the George W. Bush administration blundered into a disastrous war instead of trying to rebuild post-Taliban Afghanistan and winning over the hearts and minds of the Afghans. These hearts and minds are closing with alarming speed. In fact, we are no longer capable of making distinctions within the Christian world, when evangelical groups are calling 2012 Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney's Mormon faith non-Christian. And in the wake of the tenth anniversary of the terrorist attack, there is an even greater need to abnegate the notion of difference, of "a concordance that might be derived from affiliation to any one experience, be it gendered, ethnic, or national, [that] quickly transforms into a disaffiliational discordance from all three markers of belonging," as B. Venkat Mani tells us (89).

Mani cautions that difference has become the only condition for negotiating identity:

> The danger of pursuing a fixated, limited politics of identity lies in the perception that the terrain of intercultural translation occurs almost automatically through the assertion of cultural difference by the cultural Other through self-representation. (88)

He quotes the culture critic Gayatri Spivak who stresses the dangers inhering in the illusion that translation possesses an unquestionable objectivity:

> Spivak admonishes that this illusion of a harmless and easy translation carries the potential of becoming absolute, cemented, and that this very "absolute interculturalism" quickly results in the cooptation of the artist by "imperialist malevolence." (88)

Mani's "identitarian discomfiture" (89) is precisely the kind of deterritorialization of "self" and "other" that I need to maintain in order to distance myself from comforting myths of origin and stability.

Why this book?

> Moral outrage has some therapeutic value, but as a political strategy it is useless.
>
> — TARIQ ALI (3)

There is no end in sight for the Sisyphean labor of earning my rights as a citizen. That horrific event in September should have been a wake-up call to US-Americans that we are not invulnerable to world events. I look back at twelve years of irretrievably lost opportunities to vigorously question and make transparent what led to 9/11. Yes, moral outrage does have some therapeutic value, but I realize with increasing frustration that it is quite useless as a political strategy, as Tariq Ali observes. The sense of urgency with which we conduct debates about terrorism and Islamophobia has remained captive in the ivory tower of academic discussions. Instead of questioning the way we facilely equate terrorism with Islam, and attempting to change these reprehensible modes of behavior, we have allowed them to fester, thus obviating any need for dialogue and understanding. Does globalization mean introducing new "terrorism alert systems"? From color-coded systems to sending one alert system through text message, Facebook and Twitter – is this the kind of progress of which we can be proud? According to *National Public Radio*, Kevin McCarthy, a private security analyst and former airline pilot said that no matter the alert system, the result was going to be an increase in anxiety. He is quoted as saying: "Efforts might be better focused on campaigns to help people identify and report threats. ... The single best resource we have in this country is the people. And we're not using it" (Neuman). The best resource to what purpose, I asked myself? Was it to create an Orwellian world, or perhaps a version of Foucault's panopticon?

The countless incidents of both rationally calculated and irrational fear that thwart genuine efforts at reconciliation and cultural understanding have been questioned in the past. However, the same questions are being endlessly recycled in the second decade of the twenty-first century; our

potential to critically undo, realign and open up nationalism's conditional boundaries has been seriously undermined. The sense of urgency that has driven me to write this book is rapidly escalating with each horrific event of racism, with each comment born of hatred. Alabama's recent return to Jim Crow laws makes me wonder what has empowered this rapid regression. The only helpful response to an increase in xenophobic responses to a deliberately constructed, reductionist "cultural difference" *has* to include an unrelenting refusal to separate the economic, the political, and the social, since privileging any of one of these aspects over the other two obfuscates the issue. I echo here the concerns expressed by B. Venkat Mani about the dangers, during discussions of literary works by women writers from the geo-cultural non-West, of collapsing the verb *writing* into being:

> ... critical deliberations turn into reductive readings, and the literary works are made to fit one (or more) of the following bills: [...] 3) hyphenated (hybrid) literature, articulations of biculturality, being in-between cultures, negotiation of one or more ethnic/national/sexual identities by the author or the narrator. (96)

Tariq Ali's cautionary words that moral outrage as a political strategy is useless once again flash before my eyes and push me to move beyond bemoaning the inadequacies of theoretical frameworks that veer away from a practice that calls for civic action. As Trinh T. Minh-Ha shows, the framer *can* be framed. In her discussion of war photography, especially the photos of Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib, Judith Butler comments on Minh-Ha's subversion of the framed space that serves as a comfort zone:

> If one is "framed," then a "frame" is constructed around one's deed such that one's guilty status becomes the viewer's inevitable conclusion. Some way of organizing and presenting the deed leads to an interpretive conclusion about the deed itself. [...] To frame the frame [...] does not have to result in rarified forms of reflexivity. On the contrary to call the frame into question is to show that the frame never quite contained the scene it was meant to limn, that something was already outside, which made the very sense of the inside possible, recognizable. (9)

Everything else that cannot be contained by the frame troubles us, as Butler explains, because we cannot comprehend it (9). What happens when those very frames, like the ones enclosing veiled women, break and release voices

that have long been silenced by a US/Eurocentric hegemony that refuses to give up a monopoly on interpretive authority? The silenced, invisible women, whose images are circulated *ad nauseum* as incontrovertible proof of the West's preeminence, have precarious and grievable lives, to borrow these emotive adjectives from Butler: "To say that a life is precarious requires not only that a life be apprehended as a life, but also that precariousness be an aspect of what is apprehended in what is living" (13). Who has the right to decide whose life is recognizable and whose is not? The following questions that have haunted me this last decade will perhaps help re-invigorate the sense of urgency with which one needs to examine our attitudes towards the cultures of an imagined "Orient," "foreign" ethnicities, and minorities at home and abroad, past and present:

1 Why has anxiety about efforts to question identity formations exponentially increased since 9/11?
2 Butler poses a question that has become the second in my own interrogation and which is fundamental to this global staging of difference: "There is the question of the 'who' who decides and of the standards according to which a decision is made; but there is also the 'decision' about the appropriate scope of decision-making itself" (21).
3 Why has the *hijab* (the Muslim veil) been singled out as a metaphor for debates about identity formation, to the exclusion of veiling prevalent in other religious and cultural contexts? (The *New Yorker* of July 30, 2007 destabilizes this second question effectively by showing three women on its front cover: a white Catholic nun, a bikini-clad white woman, and a Muslim woman in a burka.)

If Butler's "who" comprises the white, Christian, Western world, then those living outside this frame possess "ungrievable" lives. Butler reminds us that such frames are used not only to imprison and torture, but also in the politics of immigration

> according to which certain lives are perceived as lives while others, though apparently living, fail to assume perceptual form as such. Forms of racism instituted and active at the level of perception tend to produce iconic versions of populations who are eminently grievable, and others whose loss is no loss, and who remain ungrievable. (24)

A vigilant and sustained re-examination of the terms of our discourse has become imperative, especially in the face of acrimonious debates like those around the hijab that frame xenophobia and Islamophobia. Butler's cautionary words that place framing squarely within the context of war resonate:

> [E]ven as the war is framed in certain ways to control and heighten affect in relation to the differential grievability of lives, so war has come to frame ways of thinking multiculturalism and debates on sexual freedom issues largely considered separate from "foreign affairs." Sexually progressive conceptions of feminist rights or sexual freedoms have been mobilized not only to rationalize wars against predominantly Muslim populations, but also to argue for limits to immigration to Europe from predominantly Muslim countries. (26)

This war "against Islam" now occupies center-stage in any discussion about immigration in the name of national security ("the terrorist other"). Difference here is increasingly made visible and demonized. The many images of veiled Muslim women and bearded Muslim men are seamlessly linked to a perceived pre-civilizatory condition of oppression and violence. Arjun Appadurai's "mediascape" helps explain the role of the media in participating in such interventions. Appadurai's "mediascape" includes all varieties of venues for disseminating information, from paper to electronic:

> What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide [...] large and complex repertoires of images, narratives and "ethnoscapes" to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of "news" and politics are profoundly mixed. What this means is that audiences throughout the world experience the media themselves as a complicated and interconnected repertoire of print, celluloid, electronic screens and billboards.

Appadurai points out how this leads to a blurring of the lines between reality and fiction, enabling the construction of imagined worlds "which are chimerical, aesthetic, even fantastic objects, particularly if assessed by the criteria of some other perspective, some other 'imagined world.'"

Matthias Konzett notes that perceived differences between Western and non-Western cultures attribute "a democratic deficit to countries outside the West (thereby concealing the West's own inability to meet these standards), ..." (49). In the prologue to the English translation of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, Ziauddin Sardar talks about how the

underlying structures of oppression and injustice have not changed since Fanon's time. According to him, the old European imperialism has been replaced by a new kind of power that creates clones:

> Its "war on terror" has become a license to flout every international law and notion of human rights. Racism, both in its most blatant and incipient forms, is the foundation of Fortress Europe – as is so evident in the re-emergence of the extreme right in Germany and Holland, France and Belgium, as well as Scandinavia, and the discourse of refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers and the Muslim population of Europe. Direct colonial rule may have disappeared; but colonialism, in its many disguises as cultural, economic, political and knowledge-based oppression, lives on. (xix)

The following clips that have emerged with increasing vigor from Western European media since 9/11 exemplify how such "imagined worlds" can be quickly created and resuscitated at will.

The Belgian online *L'Anglophone* (March 17, 2010) reports on the decision by the Interior Committee of Belgium's House (Chambre) to debate banning the burqa in public.

Britain's BBC Mobile NEWS (February 5, 2011) quotes David Cameron as declaring that state multiculturalism has failed. "At a security conference in Munich, he argued the UK needed a stronger national identity to prevent people turning to all kinds of extremism" ("BBC News").

France's *Telegraph* (September 15, 2011) passes a law banning praying in the streets of Paris. In April, a ban on wearing the full Islamic veil comes into force (Samuel).

Germany's *Welt Online* (October 16, 2010) cites Chancellor Merkel as declaring multiculturalism to be a failure. "Die Kanzlerin fordert eine härtere Gangart bei der Integration, Schwimmunterricht für muslimische Mädchen inklusive." [The chancellor demands a tougher approach to integration, including swimming instruction for Muslim girls.] In contrast to France's argument of secularism in banning the burqa, Merkel adds that most German traditions have been influenced by a Judeo-Christian heritage ("Integration: Kanzlerin Merkel Erklärt Multikulti Für Gescheitert").[4]

4 Excerpt from the report: "Chancellor Merkel declares Multikulti to be a failure. The chancellor demands a tougher approach to integration, including swimming instruction for Muslim girls. Merkel said that immigrants must not only respect German

Norway's *TNS – The Nationalist Student* (July 28, 2011) points out how easy it has been for Norwegians to scapegoat Islam for every terrorist attack. "We now know Anders Behring Breivik, a Christian, white nationalist fundamentalist carried out the coordinated double attacks against 'multiculturalist traitors in Western Europe'" (Hanson).

From Zurich, Switzerland (*Reuters*, April 18, 2012) comes a report about Switzerland's efforts to limit immigration from eastern Europe: "The right-wing Swiss People's Party has blamed immigration for pushing up rents, overcrowding public transport and eroding cultural values and is seeking to amend the constitution to set annual quotas on permits granted to foreigners" (Thomasson). In November 2009, Nick Cumming-Bruce and Steven Erlanger of the *New York Times* report from Geneva about a referendum about a national ban on the construction of minarets that the Swiss passed with a clear majority, thus adding it to their constitution, a vote

> that displayed a widespread anxiety about Islam and undermined the country's reputation for religious tolerance. [...] The referendum, which passed with a clear majority of 57.5 percent of the voters and in 22 of Switzerland's 26 cantons, was a victory for the right.

Europe does not have a monopoly in the western hemisphere on Islamophobia. In the US, the *Washington Post* (June 28, 2011) reports on a 20-year old Muslim woman who was fired from Abercrombie & Fitch for refusing to remove her hijab. "When Khan was fired in February, she told KTVU that the human resources representative 'told me that my

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laws, but also have a command of the German language. "Absolute emphasis must be placed on this," she said. "Muslim girls had to take part in school outings as well as swimming lessons."

The majority of German traditions, Merkel said, are informed by the Judeo-Christian heritage. She added that Federal President Christian Wolff was correct in stating that Islam belongs to Germany today. "Whoever ignores the fact that 2500 imams are holding services in mosques here is lying to himself," she called out to the delegates of the *Junge Union*. CSU leader Horst Seehofer had already said on Friday evening in a speech to junior party members: "We as a Union stand for German basic culture and against Multikulti. Multikulti is dead."

hijab was not in compliance with the "look policy" and that they don't wear any scarves or hats while working'" (Hughes). *CNN's* story (May 7, 2011) about the removal of two imams from an Atlantic Southeast Airlines flight, "ostensibly because passengers felt uncomfortable with their presence of the pair – both clad in Islamic attire," is especially poignant given that the two were on their way to attend a conference on prejudice against Muslims, or Islamophobia ("Muslim Group: Two Imams Pulled from Plane Bound for North Carolina").

Voices from the eastern hemisphere have not been less strident in post 9/11 debates surrounding Islam and its facile equation with terrorism. However, when the West views 9/11 as affecting the globe, and perceives itself as this "globe," other voices are selectively marginalized by the Western press in the name of Enlightenment terms such as "democracy" and "freedom." However, Appadurai cautions us not to fall into the easy trap of unquestioningly accepting these terms, and uses the term "ideoscapes" to show how strings of images are used to capture power:

> These ideoscapes are composed of elements of the Enlightenment world-view, which consists of a concatenation of ideas, terms and images, including *"freedom", "welfare", "rights", "sovereignty", "representation" and the master-term "democracy".*

He recognizes how the European Enlightenment, once a master-narrative that helped create a certain coherence and cohesion between reading, representation, and the public sphere, is no longer able to continue to provide such a structure to its diaspora. It has

> provided instead a loosely structured synopticon of politics, in which different nation-states, as part of their evolution, have organized their political cultures around different "keywords".

However, the persistence of these "keywords," these master-terms, as absolutes serves the basic purpose of allowing the West to claim unconditional moral authority to adjudicate between good and evil. 9/11 has become the beginning of a new millennium in more ways than one, replacing the euphemistic "Common Era" as yet another rewording for "Anno Domini," and once again inscribed within a Judeo-Christian frame of reference. My

question: what kind of absolution does the West's own moral compass provide it for invading countries over which it has no jurisdiction?

> If a form of power is imposed upon a people who do not choose that form of power, then that is, by definition, an undemocratic process. If the form of power imposed is called "democracy," then we have an even larger problem: can "democracy" be the name of a form of political power that is undemocratically imposed? (Butler 36)

Butler is talking here about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but her words have a much wider application. The so-called first world's assumption of "global" responsibility for the "developing" or "emerging" countries, as they are now patronizingly called, is dubious at best. Obviously, not all cases of intervention are damaging. However, with Butler I caution against what she calls arrogant politics

> in which forms of government are forcibly implemented that are in the political and economic interests of the military power responsible for that very implementation. In such cases [...] this form of global responsibility is irresponsible, if not openly contradictory. (37)

CHAPTER I

France, Germany, and Islamophobia

A tale of two nations

France has the largest Muslim population in Western Europe, with Germany a close second ("Muslims in Europe").[1] Out of a total population of 62.3 million, the official French statistics place the number of Muslims at between five to six million. Out of Germany's population of almost 82 million, approximately five million are Muslims. Accordingly, I use these two countries paradigmatically to discuss the increasing tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization in the West. Appadurai shows how globalization, although perceived as different from homogenization, adapts the latter's tools, ultimately erasing any difference between the two. According to him, these tools, like armaments, advertising techniques, language hegemonies, and clothing styles

> are absorbed into local political and cultural economies, only to be repatriated as heterogeneous dialogues of national sovereignty, free enterprise, fundamentalism, etc. in which the state plays an increasingly delicate role: too much openness to global flows and the nation-state is threatened by revolt – the China syndrome; too little, and the state exits the international stage, as Burma, Albania and North Korea, in various ways have done. In general, the state has become the arbiter of this repatriation of difference. [...]

1 The agency does not provide any data about the religious orientation of the population in Germany. Only data on the basis of citizenship is available and can serve as a basis for estimations.

> But this repatriation or export of the designs and commodities of difference continuously exacerbates the "internal" politics of majoritarianism and homogenization, which is most frequently played out in debates over heritage.

Instead of encouraging a productive dialog between majority and minority cultures, such "repatriation of difference" exacerbates debates about origin and heritage, as Appadurai perceptively concludes. His analysis of how homogenization is an intrinsic part of globalization, hiding under the latter's mantel of false diversity, begins to clarify the first of the three questions posed earlier:

Why has anxiety about efforts to question identity formations exponentially increased since 9/11? Nicolas Sarkozy's remarks about the failure of multiculturalism ("Multiculturalism Failed") signals the end of the country's much-celebrated "age of reason." Was this label ever fully justified? A historical framing of France's citizenship laws may provide some answers.

France's citizenship laws, *laïcité*, and Renan's civic nationalism

> De nos jours, on commet une erreur plus grave: on confond la race avec la nation, et l'on attribue à des groupes ethnographiques ou plutôt linguistiques, une souveraineté analogue a celle des peuples réellement existants.
> — ERNEST RENAN, *Qu'est-ce Qu'une Nation?*[2]

France has the reputation of being a country with a famous reluctance to recognize differences in its citizens. It is true that France's nationality law is historically based on the principle of *jus soli*, and can be traced back to

2 "In our day one commits a more serious error: one confuses nation and race, and one attributes to ethnographical or rather linguistic groups a sovereignty analogous to that of real peoples."

Ernest Renan's definition of what constituted a French citizen. But the Romanian sociologist Dan Dungaciu observes:

> Ernest Renan, civic nationalist par excellence, was not so "civic" because, for example, in 1882 he remarked that the nation is "un plébiscite de tous les jours," but yet not a plebiscite for the Algerians.

In his 1882 essay titled "*Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?*" Renan acknowledges the racial determinist Arthur de Gobineau's claim that "the memory of origins, particularly of the contribution of Aryan or white blood to the mix" is essential to his racial theories (Gobineau 37).[3] Michelle Chilcoat describes how Gobineau contrasts tribes with societies, seeing in the former an inability to become civilized because of their congenital impotence. In this narrative, the "social order" recognizes whites as superior, overcoming the "natural order" by conquering all other races. Because of the homogeneity that exists amongst whites, they are capable of social bonding, unlike other races, especially the black race, which leads ultimately to the latter's fragmentation.

> "Social bonding," then, is contingent upon the erasure of race that is entailed in the recognition of the superiority of those who have overcome (or taken over) race. As in arguments made over half a century earlier, social bonding and race are rendered incompatible. (137)

3 The following quotation from Gobineau's work shows him to be one of the earliest precursors of today's racist ideologies: "In fact, the more heterogeneous the elements of which a people is composed, the more complacently does it assert that the most different powers are, or can be, possessed in the same measure by every fraction of the human race, without exception. [...] They end one day by summing up their views in the words which, like the bag of Aeolus, contain so many storms – 'All men are brothers.' This is the political axiom. Would you like to hear it in its scientific form? 'All men,' say the defenders of human equality, 'are furnished with similar intellectual powers, of the same nature, of the same value, of the same compass.' These are not perhaps their exact words, but they certainly give the right meaning. So the brain of the Huron Indian contains in an undeveloped form an intellect which is absolutely the same as that of the Englishman or the Frenchman! Why then, in the course of the ages, has he not invented printing or steam power?" (37)

Renan insists, however, that this mixing be forgotten. Chilcoat elaborates Renan's thinking, focusing on how essential it is for Renan to erase difference, avoid mixing of any kind, since difference is detrimental to the task of nation building. Therefore, he advocates brutality as a justifiable means to achieve cohesion in a nation:

> Nevertheless, those against whom this brutality was directed (one might think, for example, of black women slaves raped by their white masters) must forget the wrongs done, demonstrating instead "the clearly expressed desire to continue a common life." (138)

Gobineau and Renan both use "mixing" in the sense of rape, of brutality, i.e., as the kinds of rapacious alliances that need to be erased in the project of European nation-building: "At the same time, they have been able to forget the 'countless unknown alliances [i.e., rapes] which are able to disrupt any genealogical system'" (Chilcoat 139). This is especially appropriate in the context of colonialism and postcolonialism and the ways in which citizenship in Europe's former colonial powers continues to be circumscribed, like Renan's words about nation-building always being a brutal process (Chilcoat 138).

This answers questions about how French citizenship has been and continues to be circumscribed in a so-called postcolonial world. The historian Patrick Weil argues:

> The complete opposition between the mechanism used to attribute nationality to a person and the one used to constitute the nation recalls what had already happened under the French Revolution. Between 1790 and 1795 nationality was attributed automatically to all foreigners residing in France, even against their will. At the same time, the attribution of the quality of active citizen to a Frenchman presupposed the swearing of an oath on his part. (185)

An antithesis was thus created between the possibility of a foreigner possessing the quality of "being French" and a French person having the quality of "being a citizen." Both entities, as Weil contends, were thus constructed on this conceptual distinction between the nation and the laws governing nationality. In 1986, the Chirac government proposed a new immigration

bill that further exacerbated this distinction. The *New York Times* reported on the new law that, if passed, would redefine who was French:

> The Government's move appeared to be a response to a powerful wave of anti-foreign sentiment in this country. The anti-foreign feelings have been fueled in part by the rise of an extreme right-wing political party, the National Front, which has become a major force in the country by exploiting the resentment against foreigners. For the last 59 years, any person born in France to foreign parents became a French citizen after five years of residency. (Bernstein)

The bill thus insisted on French nationality for children born in France to a parent born in France (a doubly imposed *jus soli*). But, as Weil indicates, foreigners could not acquire nationality just by marriage. They had to first be naturalized. Most importantly, those children born in France to foreign parents had to declare their desire to become French between the ages of sixteen and twenty-three.

> For those who rejected the integration of some 400,000 children of Algerians into French nationality, what should have been abolished was article 23 of the Code; but the bill did not touch that article, offering only symbolic modifications. On the left, in contrast, the proposal was criticized for restricting access to nationality, for calling into question the *droit du sol*, and for tampering in this way with a republican tradition according to which, since 1889, a child born in France to foreign parents became French at the age of majority. (Weil 159)

The nationality debate was re-initiated when the administration suffered a major defeat over the so-called "Devaquet project," a university reform bill that Alain Devaquet, minister of research and higher education, had presented in June 1986. The goal of the project was to tighten admission criteria to the university. This led to massive student demonstrations on November 17 and December 4, 1986. The infamous killing of Malik Oussekine, a young student of Algerian origin, on December 5, by police officers stirred up violent emotions, and further exacerbated the divisions within Chirac's administration. Finally, the regime abandoned the Devaquet project in 1987 as too risky. Since 9/11, however, France's immigration policies, like those of Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Great Britain, to name a few West European countries, have become once again, and unabashedly,

restrictive. The country has also become more explicit in pointing the finger of blame at Islam in its discussion of immigration problems. Former French president Sarkozy, the son of immigrants, openly declared Islam to be at the center of the immigration problem, stating that immigrants need to "learn to respect the country" and "[accept] French laws, even if they don't understand them," because "it is up to them to adapt, not for France" (Sebian). On February 11, 2011, he asserted in an interview conducted by the Christian news channel CBN:

> We have been too concerned about the identity of the person who was arriving and not enough about the identity of the country that was receiving him. [...] Our Muslim compatriots must be able to practice their religion, as any citizen can. But we in France do not want people to pray in an ostentatious way in the street. ("Multiculturalism Failed")

On September 18, 2007, a bill was presented to Parliament with Sarkozy's backing that would authorize DNA testing for immigrants, and require applicants to pass language examinations and prove they could support themselves. He also said at a cabinet meeting on May 19, 2010:

> We are an old country anchored in a certain idea of how to live together. A full veil which completely hides the face is an attack on those values, which for us are so fundamental. Citizenship has to be lived with an uncovered face. There can therefore be absolutely no solution other than a ban in all public places. (Davies)

Images of veiling and unveiling remind one that freedom and democracy continue to be inscribed on the oppressed body. Butler's words about grievable and precarious lives have to be read against this backdrop. Consequently, ungrievable, destructible lives are seen as a threat to the fabric of the nation, and can be forfeited. Butler reveals the twisted logic that underlies these conviction: "... the loss of such populations is deemed necessary to protect the lives of 'the living.'" (31)

The problem with the French use of the nation-state as the exclusive frame of reference for this model of multiculturalism, and pluralism as the

only way to comprehend heterogeneity,[4] lies, as Butler points out, in the fact that not everyone counts as a subject:

> Multiculturalism tends to presuppose already constituted communities, already established subjects, when what is at stake are communities not quite recognized as such, subjects who are living, but not yet regarded as "lives." (31f.)

The notion of multiculturalism has become equally problematic in Germany. How is it playing itself out in the Federal Republic? What conditions lead there to the abandonment of certain lives?

Germany's citizenship laws, secularism, and Fichte's ethnic nationalism

> Germany has always been more ethnically diverse than the Nazi assertions about the purity of the "Aryan race" claimed. Located in the middle of Europe, it was at the crossing point for ethnic groups from the West and East, North and South.
>
> — DENIZ GÖKTÜRK, DAVID GRAMLING and ANTON KAES (5)

According to the *Daten des Statistischen Bundesamtes* [Data of the Federal Statistical Bureau], at the end of 2010 about 6.75 million foreign citizens were registered in Germany, and 19% of the country's residents were of foreign or partially foreign descent. Thirty per cent of Germans aged fifteen years and younger have at least one parent born outside the country. In the big cities, 60% of children aged five years and younger have at least one parent born abroad. The largest group (2.7 million) is descended from ethnic Turks.

4 Cf. Sarkozy's comment as quoted in the online Christian CBN News World <http://www.cbn.com/cbnnews/world/2011/February/Frances-Sarkozy-Multiculturalism-Has-Failed/> : "If you come to France, you accept to melt into a single community, which is the national community. And if you do not want to accept that, you cannot be welcome in France." (CBN's reporter translated the text from the original French)

Germany's constitution stipulates that religion be part of school curriculum. "The initiative was born out of the atrocities of the Nazi era, and aimed at giving young people an ethical foundation and a sense of identity. Roman Catholics and Protestants have conducted such classes (publicly funded) for decades, and Jews were given similar rights in 2003" (Pommereau). Since 2010, pilot courses in Islam are being offered as a "litmus test" for integration (Pommereau).

Unlike the US and its inclusive citizenship laws stemming from a recognition, albeit offered with increasing reluctance, that the country was built primarily by immigrants, or France with an academic tolerance of its history of immigration since the mid-nineteenth century, Germany changed its citizenship laws from *jus sanguinis* to *jus soli* only in January 2000, when the country was finally forced to recognize that it too had become a country of immigration. Even as the new citizenship bill was being passed into law, heated debates about what constitutes Germanness continued to rage.

Germany had been an incessantly embattled, fragmented ground throughout the nineteenth century. Where names like Paris, London, Moscow, and Rome at once evoked a stable notion of nationhood, Germany's philosophers and writers internalized their aspirations for similar permanence. The main contents of the present version of the German citizenship law can be traced back to the philosophical origins of German Idealism and Romanticism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for example, a romantic ideal that each nation has a distinctive identity based on a common language, history, ancestry, customs, and culture, and therefore has natural rights to political self-determination – hence ideal typically defined as ethno-culturally homogeneous – a thinking that is often erroneously attributed to the philosopher Herder. Anil Bhatti explains how a philosopher like Herder who was often wrongly accused of promoting the concept of "Volk" insisted on the importance of a cultural mix as a prerequisite for nationalization in Europe. Bhatti quotes Herder from the latter's work *Ideas about the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (1784):

> "In keinem Welttheil haben sich die Völker so vermischt, wie in Europa: in keinem haben sie so stark und oft ihre Wohnplätze, und mit denselben ihre Lebensart und

> Sitten verändert. [...] Durch hundert Ursachen hat sich im Verfolg der Jahrhunderte die alte Stammesbildung mehrerer Europäischen Nationen gemildert und verändert; ohne welche Verschmelzung der Allgemeingeist Europas schwerlich hätte erweckt werden mögen."[5] (Bhatti)
>
> ["In no part of the world have people intermingled so much as in Europe: nowhere have they so dramatically changed their places of residence, and with these their style of living and customs. [...] A hundred different causes have led to a mitigation and transformation of the old tribal groupings in several European nations, without such a merger the universal spirit of Europe would have been difficult to awaken."]

The acrimony accompanying any discussion about German nationalism can perhaps be best understood if one looks at the writings of German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814). Fichte influenced German nationalist thinking in profound ways. His *Reden an die deutsche Nation* [*Addresses to the German Nation*] (1807–1808) arguably constitutes one of the founding texts of nationalist political thought. Inspired by Napoleon's approach to French nationalism, Fichte stated that individuals were merely echoes of the nation and state. In his incisive discussion of Fichte's ethnic nationalism, Arash Abizadeh differentiates between an "unmediated ethnic nationalism" and a "mediated" or "crypto-ethnic nationalism" (336), comprehending Fichte's brand of nationalism as the latter "which initially conceives of the nation in other terms, but whose nationalist politics in the final instance draws upon an ethnic supplement."[6] Germany's exclusive citizenship laws prior to January 2000 mirror Fichte's passionate appeal to German citizenry to sacrifice everything to ensure maximum success of their nation. Fichte advocated state control over commerce and industry rather than free trade, believing in committed nationalistic action in international affairs. Citizens had to be "molded" by the state through such means as education and propaganda to heighten nationalistic "patriotism," the desired attitude of being in favor with the nation (484f.). This ardent

5 Quotation from Johann Gottfried Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, Frankfurt a. M. 1989, S. 287.

6 According to Abizadeh, "unmediated ethnic nationalism" champions a nation "defined in the first instance directly in genealogical terms."

German nationalism would contribute to many of the xenophobic excesses of Germany and other nations, not only during the Nazi period, but also in the continuing immigration debates of our times.

The German Empire upheld the priority of the ethnic/ancestral principle and refined it in the *Reichs- und Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz* of 1913, the apparition of which still haunts today's revised citizenship laws. Although the Nazis perverted and racialized the principle of *jus sanguinis* by enacting the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, the liberal founders of the German postwar constitution in 1948–1949 did not abolish the ancestral citizenship principle in favor of *jus soli*. As Levy explains, in the wake of the Second World War the German government's migration policy was further shaped by the Cold War and the claim – following division and the ensuing conflict with East Germany – to be the sole legal successor state of the German nation:

> In the Federal Republic [the dynamic of legitimizing its migration policy democratically] was largely determined in reference to the events of World War II. It justified restrictive descent-based citizenship conceptions by largely limiting the application of *jus sanguinis* to those considered to be victims of expulsion or other measures of persecution. Furthermore, to "make good" for past atrocities in its treatment of minorities, Germany instituted liberal asylum provisions. (Levy 3)

The resultant tension between ethnic and civic conceptions of citizenship, especially in the context of a commitment to European identity, is constitutive for Germany's self-understanding. As Levy demonstrates, this attempt to forge a European identity has emerged in competition with ethnic understandings of nationhood, further exacerbated by the ongoing antagonism between West and East Germans after unification. Because of this struggle between *Staatsnation* and *Kulturnation* (Levy 5), i.e., between particularistic self-understandings (*deutsches Volk*) and universalistic (i.e., democratic), there is a growing concern with the establishment and maintenance of collective identities.

Konzett points out that Germany's national model of social organization depends on migrants being encouraged to organize themselves in nationally or religiously specific migrant associations, thus developing a public voice. He persuasively argues that this collective intervention on the level of both corporate and state regulation

> is bought at the cost of achieving a form of individual acculturation which proceeds at one's own pace. It confines the immigrant to the position of a state-monitored minority. For the intellectual, who wishes to dissolve any inherited identity so as to choose his or her particular cultural affiliations freely, this type of collective framing poses a serious problem. (57)

However, no single-faceted explanation, focusing upon historical traditions, the economy or political factors, can fully explain the resurgent xenophobia in the country. "Veiling" metaphorically goes far beyond the narrow confines of one group or the prejudices of a moment. I would argue with Butler that "the politics of differential subject formation within contemporary maps of power" use the veil "to mobilize sexual progressives against new immigrants in the name of a spurious conception of freedom," and "to deploy gender and sexual minorities in the rationalization of recent and current wars" (Butler 32). If empire messes with identity, as Gayatri Spivak would have it, I ask myself how globalization with its increasingly problematic definitions of citizenship is messing with identity (Spivak 226).[7]

7 Spivak made this comment in the context of postcolonialism: "... not because empire, like capital, is abstract, but because empire messes with identity."

CHAPTER II

"Tolerance" and Germany's Ignoble Minorities?

The migrant as shape-shifter

Problematic definitions of citizenship that mess with identity have found distinct echoes in US popular culture. I am reminded of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, the third official *Star Trek* series, which revolves around complications associated with different "races" of peoples living together in a hostile environment. The shape-shifting ability of the migrant Odo skillfully captures his anxiety about identity:

> Found adrift and alone ... in his natural gelatinous state with no clue to his origin, this unique shapeshifter was returned to Cardassian-occupied Bajor in 2356 ... [Odo's] name stems from the Cardassian words for "nothing" – the literal translation of "Odo'ital." ... After he was known to be sentient, the native scientists as a joke "Bajorized" it into "Odo Ital," and later just "Odo." (*Star Trek*)

Odo (= "nothing") and his sentience remain unrecognized by the majority culture. Ironically, his shapeshifting abilities dislocate the myth of a stable, national identity. The mere fact that he is constantly forced to metamorphose into something that the majority culture perceives as more assimilable is witness to the unstable character of the latter. The migrant's "nothingness," or "ungrievability," his/her sense of displacement resonates in the following comment on disruption:

> This is what the triple disruption of reality teaches migrants: that reality is an artefact, that *it does not exist until it is made*, and that like any other artefact, it can be made well or badly, and that *it can also, of course, be unmade*. What [Y] learned on his journey across the frontiers of history was Doubt. Now he distrusts all those who claim to possess absolute forms of knowledge; he suspects all total explanations, all systems of thought which purport to be complete. Amongst [...] writers, he is quintessentially the artist of uncertainty. (Rushdie 280; emphasis added)

The author of the above quotation is the British Indian novelist Salman Rushdie and [Y], the "artist of uncertainty," is the German Kashubian writer Günter Grass. Noteworthy is Rushdie's use of the words "doubt" and "uncertainty" in the context of the migrant. Butler's use of "precarity" serves a similar purpose:

> Precarity cuts across identity categories as well as multicultural maps, thus forming the basis for an alliance focused on opposition to state violence and its capacity to produce, exploit, and distribute precarity for the purposes of profit and territorial defense. (32)

These are the elements of a radical democratic politics with which I wish to intervene in the increasingly acrimonious debates surrounding the issues that hide behind the expediency of the Muslim veil.

For those migrants who refuse to mutate, shapeshifting ironically becomes the perennial "other." This "otherness" fossilizes into what I have elsewhere termed Hegel's "negative consciousness" ("Germany's 'Orient'" 230). As I have argued in a postcolonial context, the Oriental is an already always-negative consciousness, one that can be used ad infinitum to help reinforce the hierarchically structured dichotomy of colonizer and colonized. This fits neatly into the structure of Hegelian dialectical thought, since linear progress requires an antithetical position. Fatefully, the Oriental can never free himself/herself from this position, leading to the "master–slave" dichotomy crucial to colonialism that is defined by such a positioning of the Orient. As Rajan remarks,

> In Hegel's case, the acknowledgment and emphatic disavowal of the other in himself on the site that is India is deeply revelatory and, once recognized, can be seen as the driving force behind the otherwise inexplicable vehemence of his rhetoric. The scene and its consequences become an almost exemplary display of self-and-other dependencies. [...] So also is the insistence on withholding the opennesses of dialectical thought from relationships between cultures and confining those opennesses to the chosen culture of the historical moment. (117)

How does this "... insistence on withholding the opennesses of dialectical thought from relationships between cultures and confining those opennesses to the chosen culture of the historical moment" affect the migrant's

status in places like France and Germany? Starting out from two different points of origin, these two countries have converged in their use of a certain kind of visible difference to justify exclusion. The literary critic Azade Seyhan notes:

> Although Gadamer maintains that the desire for understanding originates in the self's experience of its otherness [...] and understanding is always the interpretation of the other, the realization of historical understanding takes place in the fusion of familiarity and foreignness. And this fusion comes very close to consuming the foreign. (*Writing Outside the Nation* 6)

In consuming the foreign, the other, the dominant culture also spits out what it cannot digest. Whichever orifice it chooses, the self (r)ejects the other as excrement. Şenocak's words about culture are worth quoting here: "Schon hinter der Definition anderer Kulturen als Kultur steht eine bestimmte Vorstellung von Kultur, die auch für die anderen gültig sein soll" [Behind the definition of other cultures as culture there is already a certain perception of culture that is supposed to be valid for the others too] (*War Hitler Araber?* 62). He continues: "Sie war der Ausdruck für eine bestimmte Art und Weise zu leben" [It was the expression of a certain way of living] (*War Hitler Araber?* 63). Şenocak questions, therefore, the very singularity of the concept *Kultur*. James Jordan explains that Şenocak argues for two main options:

> One is to reject the relativization it implies and to adopt one's own culture as the qualitative yardstick for all others. Another, though, is to accept that the language we use to describe our own culture is inadequate to define any other, because it contains underlying presumptions particular to our own culture. ("Essays and Early Prose" 95)

Şenocak concludes: "Wir und die Anderen sind alle gleichermaßen sprachlos, wenn wir einander betrachten" [We and the others are all similarly speechless when we observe one another], a statement that prefigures his 2001 collection of essays *Zungenentfernung* [*Tongue Removal*] – a text that underscores language's impotence when it comes to talking about "culture" (*War Hitler Araber?* 62).

Migration to Germany post-1945

It is instructive to briefly trace research on migration since 1945. Rainer Münz succinctly narrates how the 1950s were dominated by research on ethnic German expellees, followed by a shifting focus to the "guest worker problem or question" – laborers who came from Italy, Turkey, the former Yugoslavia, Spain, and Greece in the 1960s and early 1970s (15f.). Here, people talked about migration-related political and social problems in Germany, and not about the difficulties and constraints of the migrants themselves. From the early 1980s until about 1988, Münz continues, there was hardly any political discussion about immigration, apart from studies focusing on the history of migration from and to Germany. Münz ends this account by pointing out that since 1988–1989, attention has shifted dramatically, mostly because of the equally dramatic changes in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the massive refugee flows caused by the wars and forced expulsion in Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia (including Kosovo). There was also increased debate about international migration, especially with regard to security.

On January 1, 2000, a new law came into effect, drafted by the Social Democrat/Green coalition government, making it somewhat easier for foreigners resident in Germany on a long-term basis, and especially for their German-born children to acquire German citizenship. On the face of it, the new law boded well for the German citizenry. It seemed on the surface to be more inclusive and equitable. And yet it has stoked the fires of nationalism, prejudice, and racism, unsettling beliefs about citizenship as a stable concept, placing a question mark behind the word "citizenship." "The perception of difference, after all, is deeply rooted into one's frame of reference," as Klusmeyer and Papademetriou suggest (76). Unlike other migrant groups, refugees and expellees understood Germany as a homeland for ethnic kin (Klusmeyer and Papademetriou 76). They argue that

> To assert and defend their particular interests in the integration process, the refugees and expellees benefited considerably from the advantage of having full and equal citizenship, which enabled them – together with their sheer numbers – to compete

> effectively in the new West German political system. This advantage ensured them the right to organize politically, to hold elective office, and to vote. (80)

They go on to point out that

> [t]he example of the BHE[1] vividly demonstrates the importance for immigrants to have the legal and institutional means to represent their own interests in the political process. (80)

Germany's *Sonderweg*[2]

The doctrine of not being an immigration country has had serious consequences for Germany. Debates keep moving back and forth between two extreme positions:

- Germany is *de facto* an immigration country
- Germany is a traditional immigration society like the US, Canada, or Australia.

If we scrutinize the first position that Germany is *de facto* an immigration country, forced to accept entities alien to its self-understanding as a sovereign state, the question arises as to when the idea that Germans comprise a racially and ethnically homogeneous group germinated.

By citing Tacitus, "All Germans believe themselves to be native to their soil"[3] (Cowan 9), Robert Cowan returns us to the beginning of this millennium in order to dramatically illustrate how the seed of an idea that all Europeans were ethnic "Germans" was planted in the German

1 *Gesamtdeutscher Block der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten* (German Fellowship Bloc of Expellees and Victims of Injustice).
2 Germany's special path.
3 Quotation from Tacitus, *Of the Origin and Situation of the Germans* (AD 98).

consciousness. He traces this idea back to 962 when the formation of the Holy Roman Empire convinced Germanic peoples of the possibility of a unified German kingdom. With their conversion to Christianity, they had not yet found anything to replace origin myths like Wotan and the Valkyries. The only way they could forge a connection to Christian forefathers like Noah was through Noah:

> when the descendants of Noah built Babel in defiance of God. [...] Hildegard von Bingen, in *Adam et Eva Teutonica lingua loquebantur, que in diverse non dividitur ut Romana* (1179; Adam and Eve Spoke the German Language, Which Is No Less Divine Than the Roman), claimed that Adam and Eve spoke German. (21)

Cowan discovers a "sense of superiority of German stock [that] would persist into the Enlightenment both in the Germanic states and in other European lands" (26). Modern German called the invasions by Germanic tribes *Völkerwanderungen* or "migrations of peoples," avoiding the epithet "barbarian" that Latin languages used to describe such incursions "because some, such as Eberlin, considered all Western Europeans to be descended from earlier, superior Germanic tribes" (Cowan 26).

Contemporary Germany's hostility toward ungrievable immigrants is further exacerbated by the myth of a superior ancestry stemming from the "Noble Goths" (Cowan 20). This notion of superiority was especially important in face of the power vacuum from which Germany suffered until the man of blood and iron – Otto von Bismarck – provided political stability free of French hegemony and conferred a renewed sense of Germanness on the people, albeit manipulating a re-assimilation "to the existing 'aristocratic' and 'authoritarian' value system" (Blackbourn and Eley 43). As Blackbourn and Eley explain, the notion of a German *Sonderweg* is not a post-1945 invention, though its negative connotation is:[4]

4 The following books and articles are useful for providing different perspectives on the German *Sonderweg*: Grebing, Helga, *Der "deutsche Sonderweg" in Europa 1806–1945: Eine Kritik*. Stuttgart (The German "Sonderweg" in Europe 1806–1945: A Critique): Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1986; Kocka, Jürgen. "German History before Hitler: The Debate about the German 'Sonderweg.'" *Journal of Contemporary History*, Jan 1988, Vol. 23#1, pp 3–16 in JSTOR; Smith, Helmut Walser, "When the Sonderweg Debate

> In the first half of the last century, for example, while the early German national movement was partly stimulated by aping France, it was also strongly informed by a sense of difference from, and superiority to, the ideas of the French Revolution. (3)

They provide a thought-provoking account of the German *Sonderweg*: "This deeply ingrained belief in the German *Sonderweg* hinges upon certain alleged deficiencies in the political behaviour of the bourgeoisie."

Blackbourn and Eley persuasively argue that the landowning aristocracy was able to dominate the German bourgeoisie because of the latter's lack of political will. Consequently, the bourgeoisie sought an outlet elsewhere, "either into commerce and economic enterprise [...], or into cultural contemplation [...]" (43).

"Cultural contemplation" encapsulates what lies behind the continued obsessive preoccupation with defining a homogeneous culture, a *Leitkultur* (dominant culture),[5] a belief in one's uniqueness that the Nazis maximally and ruthlessly nurtured with the resuscitation of the Aryan myth. Matthias Konzett quotes Andreas Huyssen as stating that Germany, by insisting on its exceptionalism, has displayed merely a guilt-ridden "ostnational arrogance" rather than a true cosmopolitan cultural climate (Konzett 48).

Left Us," *German Studies Review*, May 2008, Vol. 31 Issue 2, pp 225–240; Wehler, Hans-Ulrich. "Deutscher Sonderweg" oder allgemeine Probleme des westlichen Kapitalismus (The German "Sonderweg" or General Problems of Western Capitalism). *Merkur*, 1981, 5:478–487.

5 The term *Leitkultur* was introduced in 1998 by the German-Arab sociologist Bassam Tibi in his book *Europa ohne Identität? – Leitkultur oder Wertebeliebigkeit* ("Europe without identity? Dominant Culture or Arbitrariness") (Munich: Bertelsmann Verlag, 3rd edn 2002).

"Aryan" as palimpsest in Leitkultur's script

"Aryan" in Sanskrit and related Indic languages originally referred to a tiller of the soil. The word then took on the meaning of a person of high birth or caste, a definition that was adopted by the Nazis and reassigned to the blond and blue-eyed notion of Germanness as signifying a superior human being (H. Bailey). Herodotus uses this connotation of nobility to refer to emigrants from the Hindu Kush Mountains into northwest India (Cowan 9).

How has this continuing undercurrent of Aryanness influenced the debates surrounding immigration in Germany? Butler's terms "grievable" as the equivalent of noble, and "ungrievable" to connote ignoble, fittingly describe how the German majority culture categorizes immigrants. The rightwing Dutch politician Geert Wilders reflects mainstream German sentiments in the following assertion:

> In Holland, fortunately, we don't have many racists. The Dutch are a very tolerant people. We have no problem to be tolerant of the tolerant, but we should be intolerant of the intolerant. (Wilders)

He is also quoted as saying: "Islam and democracy are fully incompatible. They will never be compatible – not today, and not in a million years" (Richburg). Compatibility for him means burying one's values and convictions in favor of those of the majority culture. The evangelizing outbursts of white European missionaries in previous centuries come back to haunt us in Wilders' words. "Tolerance" and "a respectful understanding" are, it seems, still mutually exclusive.

Let us trace the now ubiquitous use of the word "tolerance" back to one of its foundational moments in eighteenth-century Germany. The German writer and dramatist Gottfried Ephraim Lessing's plea in 1779 for greater religious tolerance in his play *Nathan der Weise* has been celebrated in the Western world as one of the finest examples of tolerance. The centerpiece of Lessing's play, the parable of the three rings, has popularly been understood as a compelling argument for erasing differences among the three Abrahamic religions. On the occasion of the playwright's 275th birth anniversary, the liberal Jewish politician Emil Lehmann declared:

> Für die Juden aber war der Nathan der Ausgangspunkt einer neuen Zeit, die flammende Säule, die sie hinausführte aus dem Wüstenleben der Ghetti in das gelobte Land der Gleichberechtigung. (Robertson 105)
>
> (For the Jews, however, Nathan signaled the advent of a new era, the flaming pillar that would lead them out of a desert-like existence of the ghettos into the promised land of equal rights.)

German President Johannes Rau, however, did not share this euphoria. His comment cautioned against what he perceived to be an all too extreme form of cultural relativism that would tacitly destabilize Christianity's hegemony:

> Manchmal herrscht ja der Eindruck vor, Toleranz und Respekt anderen gegenüber bedeuteten auch, andere Glaubenswahrheiten und Überzeugungen nicht nur zu achten, sondern sie als genauso richtig anzusehen wie die eigenen. Das ist ein Irrtum. Toleranz ist nicht Beliebigkeit. Toleranz und Respekt bedeuten ja gerade, dass man die Existenzberechtigung anderer Überzeugungen und Glaubenswahrheiten akzeptiert, die man nicht für richtig hält. (Rau)
>
> (Sometimes the impression prevails that tolerance and respect towards others also implies not only paying attention to other truths of faith and convictions but believing them to be as true as one's own. That is a mistake. Tolerance is not arbitrariness. After all, tolerance and respect mean that one recognizes the right to exist of other convictions and belief systems that one doesn't accept as being true.)

The deeply problematic nature of the concept of tolerance becomes clear here. Interestingly, Rau equates "tolerance" with "respect." The subtext, however, is that "those extending toleration are more powerful than those receiving toleration, and that the former tolerate the beliefs of the latter only reluctantly and disapprovingly," as Robertson persuasively argues (108). He explains how *Nathan* illuminates problems arising from two varieties of toleration:

> The first is religious toleration: the relations among different communities of faith, or individual practitioners of different religions. The second is the acceptance of cultural diversity, an issue that has become prominent in present-day debates on multiculturalism. In eighteenth-century Germany it was both religious difference and cultural difference that hindered the emancipation of the Jews. (106)

As Robertson describes it, this kind of tolerance makes the implicit claim that its own values are universal and unchallengeable. It is indifference masquerading as tolerance: "Toleration presupposes disapproval; otherwise there would be nothing to tolerate" (108). Disapproval leads smoothly into proselytization and conversion to one's own 'superior' mores. The missionary zeal of saving the natives from themselves and their unacceptable way of life is precisely what this version of tolerance advocates.

Whereas Johannes Rau's tolerance conveys indifference, the anthropologist Lila Abu-Lugodh seeks in tolerance an inclusion of different histories in her efforts to understand different cultural practices. She states that when she talks about accepting difference, she is not endorsing a resigned acceptance of cultural relativism: "What I am advocating is the hard work involved in recognizing and respecting differences – precisely as products of different histories, as expressions of different circumstances, and as manifestations of differently structured desires." She rightly observes that there are different ideas about justice. Women, for example, "*might want, or choose, different futures from what we envision as best*. [...] We must consider that they might be called to personhood, so to speak, in a *different language*" ("Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?" 788; emphasis added).

What is this "different language" that Abu-Lugodh mentions? I have turned to texts, both fictional and autobiographical, written by immigrant men and women from Germany and France, in order to decode versions of this different language. All the writers show how racism, sexism, and religious bigotry come together to create structures of oppression. In the context of the environment that defines each of these writers, and within which they define themselves, Abu-Lugodh's remarks about culture as a measure to distract us from the real issues are helpful:

> The reason respect for difference should not be confused with cultural relativism is that it does not preclude asking how we, living in this privileged and powerful part of the world, might examine our own responsibilities for the situations in which others in distant places have found themselves. We do not stand outside the world, looking out over this sea of poor benighted people, living under the shadow – or veil – of oppressive cultures; we are part of that world. Islamic movements themselves have arisen in a world shaped by the intense engagements of Western powers in Middle Eastern lives. ("Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?" 789)

Her article "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?" alerts us to the dangers inherent in a reductive reading of veiling "as the quintessential sign of women's unfreedom," even with its state-imposed sanction as for example in Iran or Taliban-controlled Afghanistan (785). This includes reducing the diverse situations and opinions of Muslims the world over to a single item of clothing: "Perhaps it is time to give up the Western obsession with the veil and focus on some serious issues with which feminists and others should indeed be concerned," she admonishes (786).

CHAPTER III

The Ungrievable Writings of Özdamar and Şenocak

Who brands us as "ungrievable" or "ignoble"?

The second of the three questions posed in the introduction to this book becomes relevant here: who decides and sets the standards according to which a decision is made, and what is the appropriate scope of decision-making itself?

Migrant writers represent issues that create anxiety about citizenship in Germany: race (black is seen as the antithesis of Germanness) and religion (German Chancellor Merkel's remarks that her country's moral model was defined by its Judeo-Christian heritage).[1] In this context, Iranian anthropologist Ziba Mir-Hosseini's words warrant careful consideration:

> [...] the experiences of women in Iran, where a movement for democratic reform emerged after two decades of sharia as the source of law, have become directly relevant to women's quest for equality in the two neighboring countries. (631)

1 In November 2010, Merkel publicly acknowledged that Germany's Judeo-Christian heritage was the country's *Leitkultur*. The "National Secular Society" reported in an online article on a proposal from a group of liberal Free Democrat members of the coalition Government that Germany should embrace the secularism that is enshrined in its constitution, which brought a furious reaction from Christians in the country. The article goes on to say that this group published a paper "that rejects the Judaeo-Christian heritage as the "moral model" or "lead culture" [Leitbild] in modern Germany, arguing that the German constitution requires a *Leitbild* that is "independent of religion or of personal religious convictions. [...] The paper is clearly designed to take on Chancellor and Christian Democrat leader Angela Merkel, who said in November that Germany's Judaeo-Christian heritage was the country's 'lead culture'" ("National Secular Society", 21 Jan. 2011).

She sees one of the consequences of the re-imposition of Sharia law in these two countries, albeit unintended, in the emergence of a dialog between Islamic law and the voices of reformists and feminists that is gradually changing Islamic discourses. She worries about the second consequence, that "without the democratization and modernization of Islam's legal vision, Muslim women's quest for equal rights will be held hostage to the fortunes of various political tendencies, both internal and external" (631).

Mir-Hosseini's words reconfigure hitherto preprogrammed structures of thinking and speaking, allowing for new ways to discover the interrelation of thought and language, perhaps a new theory of consciousness. I evoke Vygotsky:

> Word meanings are dynamic rather than static formations. They change as the child develops; they change also with the various ways in which thought functions. If word meanings change in their inner nature, then the relation of thought to word also changes. (217)

The cornerstone of culture critic Nilüfer Göle's provocative monograph *The Forbidden Modern: Civilization and Veiling* can be captured in the following question: who defines what is "modern"? A closer look at the writings of the Turkish-German writer Emine Sevgi Özdamar may provide some elusive keys to the link between thought and language that Vygotsky observed, and Göle's re-conceptualization of modernity in the context of Islam.

Looking-glass house: Özdamar's *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*

YKCOWREBBAJ
sevot yhtils eht dna ,gillirb sawT
ebaw eht ni elbmig dna eryg diD
,sevogorob eht erew ysmim llA
.ebargtuo shtar emom eht dnA

> She puzzled over this for some time, but at last a bright thought struck her. "Why, it's a Looking-glass book, of course! And if I hold it up to a glass, the words will all go the right way again."
>
> — CARROLL[2]

Emine Sevgi Özdamar is perhaps one of the most read and misread Turkish-Kurdish-German woman writers within the US-West European academic and media world. She was born 1946 in Malatya, a city in the economically depressed eastern Anatolia region of Turkey from where many "guest workers" were recruited in 1961 to work in Germany. Malatya was also the scene of anti-Armenian violence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which led in part to the massacre of between 80,000 to 300,000 Armenians of 1894 and 1896. Anatolia has become increasingly visible since 1978 because of the strong presence of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) that has been fighting an armed struggle against the Turkish state for greater cultural and political rights in an autonomous Kurdistan.

Emine Sevgi Özdamar is an actress and director who for the last twenty years has been writing prize-winning prose and dramas not in her mother tongue but in German. She was a foreign worker in West Berlin, learned acting in Istanbul, went on stage in East Berlin and has since appeared in many productions, some of international standing, and in several German films. B. Venkat Mani rightly observes,

> [m]ost of the discussions on the writings of [Turkish-German women writers] have been centered either around the authenticity of their accounts of oppression *or* around their potential to purge the oppressor in his own language. (99)

He recommends springing the trap of binary opposites such as the affluent West and the economically backward non-West, and viewing the writings of these women in a much more differentiated manner, taking into account the convoluted baggage of "interculturality" that disavows any clear lines of separation. Such polarities, Mani continues, result "in a neglect of the

2 These titles are chapter headings provided by Literature.org, the Online Literature Library.

intricate contours of cultural conflicts based on class and social status that existed *within* the cultures these women supposedly represent" (99). According to Mani, the institutions and inscriptions in the country of residence are also neglected,

> once again disenfranchising the woman author/narrator of the right to intervene in the political discourse of the country of residence. In a bid to distance themselves from a larger Eurocentric agenda, scholars and artists [...] disregard, or at times dismiss, the presence of Western cultures and their appropriation and indigenization by non-Western cultures. (99)

The conception of "identity" as coherent and cohesive, clearly recognizable in its link to a place of origin, is an illusion that has endured in discussions about immigration, exile, and diaspora. I quote the first of Anil Bhatti's elaboration of two models concerning decolonization, albeit within the Indian context, because of its attention to the seductive power of originary thinking:

> Das erste Modell ... begreift Kolonialisierung als Deformation, als Störung eines eigenen, authentischen, historischen Wegs. [...] Literaturproduktion und Identitätskonstruktion zielen auf Rückgewinnung der reinen, authentischen, ursprünglichen Wurzeln (roots) der "eigenen" Tradition. [...] Nationale Identitätsgewinnung wird ausgehandelt zwischen dem postkolonialen [...] "Selbst" und dem internationalen "Anderen". Dieses "Andere" ist zwar auch eine komplexe Konstruktion, die historische Erinnerung und gegenwärtige Konfrontation auf eine komplexe Weise vernetzt, aber das theoretische Grundmuster dieses Paradigmas geht letztendlich auf ein "romantisches" Verständnis von Sprache, Nationalität, Staat und Nation zurück. Tendenziell führt dies zu einem "geschlossenen" Kulturverständnis.
>
> (The first model [...] comprehends colonization as deformation, as the disruption of a unique, authentic, historical path. [...] Literary production and identity construction aim at a retrieval of the pure, authentic, original roots of one's "own" tradition. [...] The attainment of a national identity is negotiated between the post-colonial [...] "self" and the international "other." Although this "other" is also a complex construction, historical remembrance and present-day confrontation are interwoven in a complex manner, but the basic theoretical model for this paradigm goes back to a "romantic" understanding of language, nationality, the state, and nation. This tends to result in a "closed" understanding of culture.)

Such a "closed" understanding of culture ailed much of scholarship in the last decades of the twentieth century. It led migrant writers to enter into an impasse of texts about their mother tongue, whether through coercion or because authenticity sold well.

Defining translation as the "rewriting of an original text," translation theorists Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere argue that rewriting is always driven by ideology:

> Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a society. Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices, and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another.

But rewritings can also repress innovation,

> and in an age of ever increasing *manipulation* of all kinds, the *study of manipulation processes of literature as exemplified by translation can help us towards a greater awareness of the world in which we live*. Viewed as such, translation becomes a manipulative tool through which one culture can thrust itself upon another. (emphasis added)

Exchanges in *Seltsame Sterne* between Özdamar's narrator, her German friend Dirk, and the Kurdish lover of an SPD member of the Bundestag reveal the manipulative role that translation plays here in the context of immigration, where the potential of "translation" is deconstructed and reinscribed as a strategy of circuitous aggression and resistance:

> Der Kurde sagte auf türkisch zu mir: "Ich freue mich, daß es in Deutschland so viele Homosexuelle gibt. Ich hoffe nur, es werden noch mehr, damit noch mehr deutsche Frauen für uns zum Bumsen übrigbleiben." "Vielleicht willst du mir verraten, was du ihr gerade auf türkisch gesagt hast," fragte Dirk. Der Kurde antwortete: "Ich berichtete ihr von Assimilationsproblemen der zweiten Generation Türken in Berlin." (41)[3]
>
> (The Kurd said to me in Turkish: "I am glad there so many homosexuals in Germany. I only hope their number increases so that more German women are left for us to

3 All further references to Özdamar's *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* will be parenthetically indicated by the abbreviation SS followed by the page number.

> bang." "Perhaps you'd be willing to tell me what you just said to her in Turkish," Dirk asked. The Kurd replied: "I am telling her about the assimilation problems of second generation Turks in Berlin.")

Yasemin Yildiz argues forcefully and convincingly that "Kulturalisierung" (acculturation), which "refers to the translation of political and social issues into cultural ones, with 'culture' conceived of in essentialist terms," continues to be responsible for influencing German discourses on Islam (252). "Kulturalisierung" describes a general tendency to see all aspects of Turkish migration only in terms of cultural difference. In pondering the emotion-laden issue of the mother tongue, Bhatti says:

> Wenn man einmal das ideologische Primat der Muttersprache fallen lässt, wird der Blick frei für ein literarisches Feld, das rein individuell gesehen unterschiedliche Biographien, unterschiedliche Zugänge zum Schreiben und unterschiedliche politische Programme versammelt.
>
> (When one lets go of the ideological primacy of the mother tongue, one is free to view a literary field which, when seen in a purely individual manner, collects different biographies, different approaches to writing, and different political programs.)

Why are we as critics still so unwilling to relinquish the ideological primacy of the mother tongue that Bhatti discusses? Why do debates still revolve around "self" and "other," although such dichotomous thinking, however critically employed, is obviously unproductive? Bhatti cautions:

> Die Übersetzbarkeit von Kulturen ist Verhandlungssache. Es geht dann um ihre Gleichberechtigung im internationalen Kräftespiel. Die dichotomisierende Hermeneutik vom "Eigenen" und "Fremden" ist ihr kognitiver Anker.
>
> (The translatability of cultures is a matter of negotiation. It has to do with its equal status in the international power play. The dichotomizing hermeneutics of "self" and "other" is its cognitive anchor.)

However, the twenty-first century is witnessing a growing and timely tendency to read texts by migrant writers in a more differentiated fashion. An examination of some recent analyses of Özdamar's triptych, *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei, hat zwei Türen, aus einer kam ich rein, aus der anderen*

ging ich raus (Life Is a Caravanserai: Has Two Doors, I Came in One, I Went Out the Other; 1992) *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* (The Bridge of the Golden Horn; 1998) and *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* (Strange Stars Gaze Toward Earth; 2003) reveals an appreciable distancing from reading the texts solely as attempts to subvert the process of othering, and a willingness to see them as a collage of diverse biographies, varying approaches to writing, and differing political programs, to paraphrase Bhatti.

Running through all three panels of Özdamar's triptych is the thread of repeated border crossings: between Turkey and Germany, and between the two Berlins. Another thread is language, initially as mother tongue and grandfather tongue, with the whisper of a grandmother tongue in the background that becomes increasingly audible as the stories unfold. The titles of the three panels temptingly and perhaps intentionally sabotage the reader's attempts to frame Özdamar's texts with all too readily available theories. As Leslie Adelson points out,

> By and large, analyses of the tongue stories have focused on identity, embodiment, language, and tradition as leitmotifs and cornerstones of narrative reflections or national histories or ethnic paradigms. (*The Turkish Turn* 150)

Some analyses of the final panel, *Seltsame Sterne*, remain largely within these matrices of interpretation. The first-person narrator sets out in a caravan in Turkey (*Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*), crosses a bridge into Germany (*Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*), and finally removes herself to another dimension (*Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*) where crossings acquire the logic of a fractured mirror. Like Alice in *Through the Looking Glass*, the narrator refracts her Berliner environment in the *Wohngemeinschaft* (flat share) through a mirror:

> Während sie sprachen, räumte ich den Tisch ab und spülte das Geschirr in dem großen Waschbecken mit den fünf Wasserhähnen. Jetzt sprachen sie über rechte Politiker, und ich sah ihre Gesichter im großen Spiegel über der Spüle. (SS 52)
>
> (While they spoke I cleared the table and washed up in the big sink with its five taps. Now they were talking about right-wing politicians, and I saw their faces in the big mirror above the sink.)

Laura Bradley's reading is an effort to present a balanced, differentiated account of Özdamar's writings, although she occasionally slips into an "Empire Writes Back"[4] manoeuver that perpetuates the notion of the Oriental "other":

> This fascination is that of the outsider: the narrator longs to tap into a past which she has not experienced directly. Here, Özdamar neatly turns the tables on at least some of her readers: rather than focusing on the exotic status of the Turkish woman in Berlin, she shows the exotic appeal of aspects of Berlin's past for the newcomer. (290)

The subtitle of *Seltsame Sterne*: "Wedding – Pankow 1976/77" – "Tagebuch" (diary), also leads Bradley to stress the implications of a text that appears to be just that: a daily record of news and events of a personal nature.[5] (285) However, her interpretation of the many literary quotations, newspaper headlines and sketches that fragment the text as constituting material for future writings is significant, because it introduces the notion of a text within a text within a text, providing uncertain contours to the fragmentation of Özdamar's writing – an idea that allows re-reading of the text outside the confines of time and space, with a different understanding of causality:

> Here, Özdamar opens up the already fragmented form of the diary so that the text becomes a repository for documentary material, graffiti, and dialogue set out as it would be in a play. The narrator's comment on Brecht seems to apply equally to her own text: "Vielleicht war alles Material für seine Stücke und Bücher." (Perhaps everything was material for his plays and books) (Bradley 285)

Özdamar's narrator in *Seltsame Sterne* says: "Ich bin nicht rückwärts gegangen, ich bin nach vorne geflüchtet, alles in Ordnung" (SS 104) (I didn't go backwards, I fled forwards, everything is fine).

Moray McGowan comments: "Reception of [Özdamar's] work now takes more account too of the elements of playful, even parodistic

4 "The Empire Writes Back" is the title chosen by editors Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin for their book on postcolonial literatures (London: Routledge, 2002).

5 The subtitle inside anchors the text in a specific geographical and historical context: *Wedding – Pankow 1976/77*.

performance of gender, ethnicity and national history" (205). McGowan explores "critically topographical and spatial metaphors for issues of national identity and cultural mobility" (205). He also demonstrates how Özdamar's representations of place resist binary models of European/Asian difference ("Turkish-German" 205).

In her insightful analysis of Özdamar's *Seltsame Sterne*, Margaret Littler adopts Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy that "minor literature aims not to reproduce existing identities, [...] but to imagine identities yet to come" (179). According to Littler, Özdamar's mode of reliving divided Germany in the 1970s at a moment of crisis in GDR politics is unexpected:

> It does not merely insert an exotic protagonist into a familiar image of 1970s Berlin. This protagonist's idiosyncratic experience gives rise to affect, which is not just rooted in the individual subject, and which points to a much longer timescale than the diegesis itself. Moreover, there is a collective dimension of recording this history in the post-unification present of 2003 when GDR memory is rapidly being erased. (183)

The words "exotic protagonist" seem at first to sound a rather tired note. However, Littler concludes that Özdamar counters the rapid erasure of GDR memory, thus providing a useful new dimension to the critical reception. She adds:

> The predominantly diary style and reference to real historical figures [...] suggest a new level of autobiographical authenticity in Özdamar's work, and lead us to expect the tracing of a known history. But it is a highly mediated and aesthetically stylised narrative, much of its emotional impact being experienced by the reader without being processed by the narrator herself. (183)

In my own reading of *Seltsame Sterne*, I will address two points that Littler makes: an assumption of autobiographical authenticity, and her comment about the narrator not processing the emotional impact of history.

As some of these critics have shown, it is counterproductive to "anchor" Özdamar in the narrow confines of any one genre, space, or time frame. Her narrator dreams of leaving an oppressive Turkey that has stifled her histrionic talents, and learning stagecraft under Benno Besson's tutelage. She says at the end of the first part of *Seltsame Sterne*:

> Auf dem Korridor sah ich Benno Besson. Er gab mir die Hand, in der anderen hielt er eine Schachtel Gauloises. Als er ging, sah ich ihm nach, als ob ich in einem *Traum* wäre, der *Traum*, den ich in der Türkei gehabt hatte. *Diesen Traum* wollte ich aufschreiben und begann in den Nächten, ein Tagebuch zu führen. (SS 84; emphasis added)
>
> (In the corridor I saw Benno Besson. He gave me his hand, and in the other he held a pack of Gauloises. I looked at him going away as if I were in a *dream*, the *dream* that I had had in Turkey. It was *this dream* that I wanted to write down, and so I began at night to write a diary.)

While I agree with Bradley and Littler that the narrator's text reads like a script for a documentary, I also detect a dreamlike texture in the narration, which destabilizes the documentary material's typical claim to objectivity. The narrator remarks: "Berlin ist wie ein Filmtitel. *Die Züge hielten nicht an der Französischen Straße*" (SS 243) (Berlin is like the title of a film. *The trains did not stop at the Französische Straße*). She also has an entry in her diary about a dream rehearsal in which she is in a long dark corridor.

> Traum: Probe an der Volksbühne. Welches Stück, weiß ich nicht. Ich bin auf einem langen Korridor, es ist halb dunkel. Plötzlich sehe ich in der Ecke eine grüne, große, Schlange, die sich aufrichtet. "Wer bist du?" Da verwandelt sie sich in einen Oktopus, so groß wie ein Mensch, und beobachtet mich. [...] Auf dem Korridor verwandelt er sich in Heiner Müller. (SS 156)
>
> (Dream: Rehearsal at the "People's Theater." I don't know which play. I am in a long corridor, it is semi-dark. Suddenly I see in the corner a big green snake that sits up straight. "Who are you?" At that it changes into an octopus as big as a human being, and observes me. [...] In the corridor it metamorphoses into Heiner Müller.)

The snake morphing into an octopus morphing into the dramatist Heiner Müller brings to mind Alice's changing body. She asks herself:

> I wonder if I've been changed in the night? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is, Who in the world am I? Ah, THAT'S the great puzzle! (Carroll, "The Pool of Tears")

The dream world appears to be the only dimension where one can sustain life:

> "He's dreaming now," said Tweedledee: "and what do you think he's dreaming about?"
>
> Alice said: "Nobody can guess that."
>
> "Why, about you!" Tweedledee exclaimed, clapping his hands triumphantly. "And if he left off dreaming about you, where do you suppose you'd be?"
>
> "Where I am now, of course," said Alice.
>
> "Not you!" Tweedledee retorted contemptuously. "You'd be nowhere. Why, you're only a sort of thing in his dream!" (Carroll, "Looking-Glass House")

Alice's existence depends on Tweedledum's ability to sustain his dreamlike state of being. The words: "Why, you're only a sort of thing in his dream!" remind me of the mirrored movement to the logic of the eighteenth-century German writer Heinrich von Kleist's "grüne Gläser" (green glasses). In his famous 1801 letter to Wilhelmine von Zenge, Kleist says:

> Wenn alle Menschen statt der Augen grüne Gläser hätten, so würden sie urteilen müssen, die Gegenstände, welche sie dadurch erblicken, sind grün – und nie würden sie entscheiden können, ob ihr Auge ihnen die Dinge zeigt, wie sie sind, oder ob es nicht etwas zu ihnen hinzutut, was nicht ihnen, sondern dem Auge gehört. So ist es mit dem Verstande. Wir können nicht entscheiden, ob das, was wir Wahrheit nennen, wahrhaft Wahrheit ist, oder ob es uns nur so scheint. Ist das letzte, so ist die Wahrheit, die wir hier sammeln, nach dem Tode nicht mehr – und alles Bestreben, ein Eigentum sich zu erwerben, das uns auch in das Grab folgt, ist vergeblich. (Kleist)
>
> (If all human beings had green glasses, they would gauge all the objects which they view through these to be green – and they would never be able to decide whether their eye shows them the objects as they are, or if something is not added to them that doesn't belong to them, but rather to the eye. So it is with reason. We cannot decide whether that which we call truth is really truth, or if it just appears that way to us. If it is the latter, then the truth that we collect here is no more after death – and all our efforts to acquire possessions that will also follow us into our grave are futile.)

What we deem to be truth is also illusory. Özdamar's narrator repeats a Turkish saying: "'Wenn du zum ersten Mal in einem Raum schläfst, träumst du die Wahrheit,' sagt man in der Türkei" (SS 156) (It is said in Turkey: "When you sleep in a room for the first time, you dream the truth").

The dialogs and events in the novel mimic the hazy contours of a dream. They seem to wander randomly in and out of the narration, driving the piece much like a dramatic film.[6] In accepting the Kleist-award in 2004, Özdamar said: "Berlin kam mir wie ein stark belichteter Schwarz-Weiß-Film vor, den ich mir anschaute, in dem aber ich nicht mitspielte" ("Kleist-Preis-Rede" 15) (Berlin appeared to me like an excessively exposed black and white film that I was viewing, but where I wasn't an actor).

Her participation on stage as presented in the novel also has a dream-like mute quality. She tries to perform sexual overtures in the silence that the theater demands of her, but emotion threatens to disrupt her act:

> Heute abend habe ich meine Rolle in der Vorstellung sehr gerne gespielt. Leise in den Wald eintreten, meinen Partner umarmen, geil werden, ein Geräusch hören, sich umdrehen, weiter in die Tiefe des Waldes schauen, dann sich zum Liebhaber drehen, weggehen, aber die Knie sind schwach vor Lust. (SS 139)
>
> (I was very happy tonight playing my role in the production. Softly entering the forest, embracing my partner, getting randy, hearing a noise, turning around, looking further into the depths of the forest, then turning to face my lover, leaving, but feeling weak at the knees with desire.)

Her role as observer, note-taker, and sketch-artist provides her, however, with the right to intervene in and re-shape the cultural discourse of her country of residence, to paraphrase B. Venkat Mani, changing and moving in ever-differing directions (99). This agency culminates in her conception of a play *Hamlet-Ahmet* (SS 194) and a doctoral thesis (SS 240–241), nullifying attempts on the part of well-meaning critics to disregard or dismiss "the presence of Western cultures and their appropriation and indigenization by non-Western cultures" (B. Venkat Mani 99).

In her thoughtful analysis of Özdamar's *Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* and Zafer Şenocak's *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft*, Monika Shafi offers a reconsideration of the valency of the term "migrant literature," and moves closer to springing the trap of binary opposites as B. Venkat Mani advocates:

6 Marino Colmano's comments on the nature of documentary screenwriting are illuminating in this context.

> Caught between the Scylla of marking migrant writing as different from "German" literature and thereby reinforcing categories of national descent, and the Charybdis of erasing crucial markers in order to avoid any essentialist stance, the literature under this rubric continues to be a problematic enterprise since it simultaneously evokes and challenges – both for the authors themselves and their critics – the binary modes on which identity formation, be it personal, national or literary, rests. (197)

Shafi's use of the term "textual zones" coined by Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan helps to better address issues of travel, displacement, exile, and homelessness:

> Interpreting these texts within this [framework] should allow for the kind of comparative literature project that examines cultural transfer processes and, while being mindful of the challenges bicultural authors face in German society and media industry, contests the necessity of upholding geography and minority as prime markers of comparison. (199)

B. Venkat Mani's discussion of *Seltsame Sterne* deserves special attention. His reading enables an understanding of "claims of minoritarian cosmopolitanism and memory when the story of migration is [...] less about origins and destinations than about somewhere in between" (B. Venkat Mani). He alerts readers to "the danger of pursuing a fixated, limited politics of identity [that] lies in the perception that the terrain of intercultural translation occurs almost automatically through the assertion of cultural difference by the cultural Other through self-representation" (88). As mentioned in the introduction to this book, Mani's notion of "identitarian discomfiture" (89) is precisely what migrant writers experience when they try to stage "history as origin, the 'experience-in-identity,' the coding, recoding, transcoding, and decoding of cultural difference through a superficially beneficial economy of intercultural translation" (89).

Özdamar questions the notion of a unified notion of history, and a unitary concept of "Man." She rarely historicizes the migrant experience. Mani talks about how "a strong desire to observe and a yearning to perform both on- and off-stage escort the narrator during her journeys between West Berlin and East Berlin" (103). What Bradley calls fragments of materials for potential writing, Mani sees as "uneasy insertions and co-optations" (104).

Leslie Adelson compellingly argues: "Prevailing analytical paradigms are inadequate to grasp the social dimensions that do inhere in the literature of migration" (*The Turkish Turn* 1). Consequently, she explores "alternative modes of contextualization" (1). In her discussion of Özdamar's *Großvaterzunge* (Grandfather Tongue), Adelson "aims to illuminate some facets of this tongue that have received virtually no critical attention to date" while acknowledging that her discussion of Özdamar makes no pretense of doing even partial justice to the work of scholars who have "focused on identity, embodiment, language, and tradition as leitmotifs and cornerstones of narrative reflections on national histories or ethnic paradigms" (150). Adelson concentrates on two aspects in this story: "an untagged invocation of Friedrich Hölderlin, ... and a colorful pun involving Islam, communism, and illogical remainders" (152), details that "reveal how the imaginative labor and cultural capital of *Großvaterzunge exceed national categories of identity and even transnational frames of reference* ..." (emphasis added). I follow Adelson's cue in my own reading of *Seltsame Sterne*, and adopt what Adelson terms a "counterintuitive focus" (152) by looking at some unexpected connections between mirroring, dreaming, and sleeping in Özdamar's novel.

Alice in Dönerland?

> Forget about bratwurst, Currywurst and other kinds of sausages – Döner kebab, or shawarma, has overtaken traditional German fast food as the country's favorite snack on the go.
>
> — GRIESHABER

It may seem capricious to juxtapose a nineteenth-century Anglican deacon with a twenty-first-century Turkish-German woman writer; however, Adelson has successfully risked this "counterintuitive" impulse in her discussion of Özdamar's *Der Hof im Spiegel* (The Courtyard in the Mirror), affording new insights into the latter's writerly behavior (15). Emine Sevgi Özdamar's reception of Lewis Carroll appears at once whimsical, joyous, and melancholic. Adelson comments:

> The copy of *Alice in Wonderland* that readers encounter in Özdamar's tale of a courtyard in Düsseldorf at one crucial point falls from the sky, an apparent victim of gravity only to take flight in a turn of phrase that reorients readerly imagination. (*The Turkish Turn* 30)

Özdamar appears to adapt Alice's travels to the ambiguity of cultural hybridization. Like Carroll, she stages alternate modes of consciousness. To use Adelson's words, Özdamar's narrator takes flight in a turn of phrase, as the elusive title of this third part of her trilogy implies: *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*. Adelson's referencing of *Alice in Wonderland* prompts me to resume her train of thought and reflect upon Alice's adventures as yet another interpretive prism through which to view the fissured graphics of migration, especially the continuing episodes in *Through the Looking Glass*. Such an approach illuminates the sense of immediacy, childlike wonder, and even an otherworldly nous that the narrator inserts into this third panel of the triptych, elements that were already present in *Karawanserei* and *Die goldene Brücke*, albeit hidden under the more insistent national politics of identity.

"Curiouser and curiouser" captures the narrator's frame of mind in Özdamar's text (Carroll, "The Pool of Tears"). When Alice cries out these words, Carroll adds parenthetically that "she was so much surprised, that for the moment she quite forgot how to speak good English." Horrocks and Kolinsky point out how some German critics have censured Özdamar for committing grammatical and stylistic errors in her German writing (24). Carroll's parenthetical comment about Alice's English resonates with the first two parts of Özdamar's trilogy, where the narrator commits "errors" with tongue-in-cheek deliberateness. Alice makes mistakes in the dominant language (prescriptive English) when confronted by the unusual. Özdamar's narrator also makes "mistakes" in the only language (prescriptive German) available to her as a migrant to Germany. In an interview with David Horrocks, Özdamar says:

> I was also very keen, on a secondary level, to retain some "mistakes" in the book's language. Readers must be able to experience for themselves the process the writer has gone through linguistically. They have to be made to stumble, as it were. (Horrocks and Kolinsky 49)

However, in *Seltsame Sterne*, the writer apparently sees no further need to mimic "Gastarbeiterdeutsch" (guestworker German) as a strategy.[7] Language is still a major focus for her (Adelson, "Against Between" 414), but she has shifted her attention from language as an originary rite and ritual in a nationally anchored language to uncertainty about language and speech in a volatile world that creates both unbearable violence and pleasure. Near the beginning of the text, she cries out: "Ich bin unglücklich in meiner Sprache" (SS 22) (I am unhappy in my language). If unhappiness becomes a corollary of speech, then we are indeed forced into one of two modes of existence: silence or primeval screams ("Die Sprache war ein Machtinstrument, deswegen zurück zum Urschrei"; SS 10 [Language was an instrument of power, therefore back to the primeval scream]). But the narrative does endure, in unhurried breaks and disruptions, and language is transmuted into other modes of expression, enabled through sleep, memory, and a looking glass. The narrator seems able to recover in these modes of existence an almost unmediated childlike state of comfort and wonder, whereby "childlike" connotes a heightened sensibility and awareness of one's milieu:

> Aber ich liebte sie, so wie ich als Kind meine Großmutter geliebt hatte, ohne begreifen zu können, daß auch sie einmal ein Kind gewesen war. Wenn sie sagte,
>
> "Komm, schlafen wir", dann folgte ich ihr. Und so schlief ich in dieser ersten Nacht in Ostberlin in einem Bett mit Albrecht Dürer, dessen Bett mich beruhigte wie die einfachen Gegenstände in den Ostberliner Schaufenstern. (SS 37)
>
> (But I loved her just as I had loved my grandmother when I was a child, without being able to understand that even she was once a child. When she said, "Come, let us sleep," I followed her. And that is how I slept this first night in East Berlin in a bed with Albrecht Dürer whose bed calmed me like the simple items in East Berlin's shop windows.)

The textual incarnation of Albrecht Dürer has not so far provoked discussion among scholars. Much like that "untagged invocation" of Hölderlin in "Mutterzunge" that Adelson uncovers (*The Turkish Turn* 152), the narrator in *Seltsame Sterne* summons Dürer almost at the beginning of her text (SS

7 Gastarbeiterdeutsch: Term applied to the simplified German used by so-called guest workers.

35). Littler does mention that references to real historical figures "suggest a new level of autobiographical authenticity" (183).[8] But what role does the artist Dürer play for the narrator? The young man Armin who has invited the narrator to share his bed personates Dürer in a text that stages mirroring and imaging. Dürer is said to have drawn the first of his self-portraits in the year 1484 when he was still a child by using a mirror (M. Bailey). Özdamar's narrator preserves an Alice-like state of curiosity, and portrays her various selves and the world that she perceives through a looking glass. When she meets the other residents of the *Wohngemeinschaft*, she remarks: "Ich fing an, von meiner Großmutter zu erzählen, als müßte ich nicht mich selbst, sondern meine Großmutter vorstellen, um hier zu wohnen, bis ich das DDR-Visum bekam" (SS 50) (I began to talk about my grandmother as if I had to introduce, not myself, but my grandmother in order to live here until I got a GDR visa).

Her grandmother accompanies her throughout the text as a constant sun to her strange starry stares in an otherwise disjointed past, present, and future: "Heute nacht habe ich geträumt. Eine große Sonne, meine Großmutter, stand genau in der Mitte und bewegte sich" (SS 244) (Last night I dreamt. A big sun, my grandmother, stood exactly in the middle and moved). The mirror refracts and emasculates the authority of the official document of "identity" ("DDR-Visum").

The "uncynical state of wondrous curiosity associated with childhood" that Duncan Fallowell mentions in discussing Alice is ubiquitous in Özdamar's text.[9] The narrator observes: "Mit den letzten Sätzen, die ich heute im Archiv gelesen hatte, schlief ich ein: Die Sachen werden immer viel unnaiver genommen, als sie sind. Brecht meint es wirklich alles sehr einfach und reell" (SS 42) (I fell asleep with the last sentences that I read today in the archives: Things are taken to be much less naïve than they are. Brecht actually means everything simply and squarely).

8 For example, the noted East German dissident Rudolf Bahro, Gregor Gysi who played an important role in ending communist rule in East Germany, and the East German writer Heiner Müller.

9 "She returns us to the uncynical state of wondrous curiosity associated with childhood and, like a genuine goddess, leads us into strange, eternal places without leading us astray" (106).

She remembers how her father exploited her naïveté in his search for hidden treasure:

> Ich war zehn Jahre alt, kam gerade aus der Schule. Mein Vater wollte mit der Hilfe dieses Mannes einen Schatz suchen. Ich sollte in einer Tasse Wasser sehen, wo dieser Schatz versteckt war. Vater stellte mich dem Mann vor: "Hier ist das naivste meiner Kinder." (133)
>
> (I was ten years old, had just come from school. My father wanted to look for treasure with the help of this man. I was to look into a cup of water where this treasure was hidden. Father introduced me to the man: "Here is the most naïve of my children.")

Instead of losing herself in recriminations about the exploitative nature of such naïveté, she re-discovers it in new modes of agency.

What are some of the ways in which Özdamar's narrator sustains an Alice-like mutability of wonder and curiosity? Adelson's introductory words to her study imply a Derridean deferral of meaning that might contain a response to this question:

> "Come on!" a professor once badgered. "If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and talks like a duck, don't you damn well think it had better be a duck?" "No!" rallied the student, who happened to be an experienced birdwatcher. "If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and talks like a duck, it could be a grebe." (*The Turkish Turn* 1)

If a simile is a comparison between two things that are generally not alike "such as a line of migrant workers and a wave, or onion skins and a swarm of butterflies," (Nordquist) the "like" in the Adelson quotation becomes increasingly indeterminate. Wittgenstein remarked when asked about the use of a simile or analogy and its helpfulness: "It's all excellent similes ... what I invent are new similes" (Labron 1). In *Through the Looking-Glass* Alice does not wish to invent new "similes." Rather, she seeks to free herself from such comparisons by impossibly pairing objects in the fashion of Alice and destroying the power to pre-cast identities:

> "Let's pretend that you're the Red Queen, Kitty! Do you know, I think if you sat up and folded your arms, you'd look exactly like her. Now do try, there's a dear!" And Alice got the Red Queen off the table, and set it up before the kitten as a model for it to imitate: however, the thing didn't succeed, principally, Alice said, because

> the kitten wouldn't fold its arms properly. So, to punish it, she held it up to the Looking-glass, that it might see how sulky it was – "and if you're not good directly," she added, "I'll put you through into Looking-glass House. How would you like *that*?" ("Looking-Glass House")

Özdamar's narrator says of Benno Besson: "Er zeigt die Realität hinter der Realität" (SS 118) (He shows the reality behind the reality). Besson asks the narrator how old she is. When she replies that she is thirty, he says: "Du bist jung. Du könntest in einer anderen Kultur zu einer anderen Erfahrung kommen. Man darf nicht zu lange in Deutschland bleiben. Rette dich vor Deutschland" (SS 236) (You are young. You could come to a different experience in another culture. One shouldn't stay too long in Germany. Save yourself from Germany). The "Looking-glass House" as a different cultural space would offer alternate experiences and save her from ossifying in her present world: "Auch die Barbiersalons in Istanbul sind die Orte, wo die Leute ihre Ideen über Politik, Moral und Ökonomie vor dem Spiegel einfach loswerden können, während sie rasiert werden. *Goethe in Istanbul*" (SS 171; emphasis added) (Even the barber shops in Istanbul are places where people can just get rid of their ideas about politics, morality, and the economy in front of the mirror, while they are being shaved. Goethe in Istanbul).

Instead of merely reflecting, the mirror refracts speech in such a way as to create alogical possibilities (Jabberwocky), transcend cultural boundaries ("Goethe in Istanbul"), and provide a place where history is robbed of its hegemonic, destructive force. It allows what Adelson finds in Şenocak's essays: "[the delineation of] a German future in which Turks have a proper place, in part, because of the commemorative work they perform", adding that "[Şenocak's reflections] call for a new form of memory work by Germany's immigrants" (*The Turkish Turn* 167). If mirrored history can lead to self-reflection, then – contrary to what Littler contends – it appears as if the narrator does process the emotional impact of history, inexorably as a fractured gaze (Littler 183).

Ann Laura Stoler's description of the offspring of Dutch colonizers and native women as "historical negatives whose reverse-images trace disturbances in the colonial order of things, whose shadows trace the lineaments of potential dissent and current distress" (108) applies equally well to the

context of the migrant Özdamar. Unlike the "high-gloss print of history writ-large to the space of its production," these children of mixed origin are what Stoler terms "the darkroom negative: from direct to refracted light, from 'figure' and 'field' – that which is more often in historical relief – to the inverse, grainy texture of 'surfaces' and their shifting 'grounds'" (108).

In her discussion of Şenocak's *Der Mann im Unterhemd* (The Man in the Undershirt), Adelson remarks, referring to the familial genealogies of grandfather and grandson: "Both genealogies concern elusive, at times forbidden, fantasies, rather than predictable linear histories or discrete cultural traditions" ("Against Between" 139). Carroll's Alice in her wonderland looks forward as a child, and backward as an adult. In her introduction to Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, Tan Lin comments:

> Alice's quest for knowledge, her desire to become something (a grown-up) she is not, is inverted. The books are not conventional quest romances in which Alice matures, overcomes obstacles, and eventually gains wisdom. For when Alice arrives in Wonderland, she is *already* the most reasonable creature there. [...] The Alice books manage to show both these quests – *that of the child to look forward, and of the adult to look back* – simultaneously, as mirror logics of each other [...]. (Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass* xi–xiv; emphasis added)

Özdamar's narration does not employ a diachronic time-line. Adelson's words in describing Şenocak could also apply to Özdamar: she "weaves a stylized web of abstract movements through historical time. Travelers proceed in opposite directions with different affects but along the same spectral route, always out of sync" (*The Turkish Turn* 167). It is indeed a dreamlike sequence (*The Turkish Turn* 167). As a child/adult she situates herself in a particular frozen point in time and uses the reverse sides of mirrors to show what went before, but also to seek traces of a seductively invisible after.

Özdamar's narrator in *Seltsame Sterne* also resorts to unconventional similes by creating odd pairings through the looking glass in order to dismantle the rigid structures of a phallogocentric world. "Doppelgängerinnen" perform dreams:

> Es gab eine Traumszene [in Andrzej Wajdas Film], in der Wajda Doppelgängerinnen zeigte. Die eine träumte, und die Doppelgängerin spielte ihren Traum und bewegte sich dabei ganz langsam, eine Szene, die ich mein Leben lang nicht vergessen werde. (SS 232)

> (There was a dream sequence in which Wajda shows female Doppelgänger. The one was dreaming and the Doppelgänger acted her dream, moving very slowly, a scene that I won't forget as long as I live.)

This is not Özdamar's attempt to dis-member Turkish or German or Arabic, in order to then re-member it as an "Ur"-version, but rather to find different modes of existence and languages that will give her the freedom to create new images. Besson recognizes this capacity in her: "Du mußt mich von den Bildern, die ich von Brechts Inszenierung habe, entführen. Du mußt hier mein Schatten werden und verhindern, daß ich zu den alten Bildern zurückkehre" (SS 247) ("You have to abduct me from the images that I have of Brecht's staging. You have to become my shadow here and prevent me from returning to the old images").

Adelson comments that the mirror serves as a "dialogic rejoinder that ties loving to reading" (*The Turkish Turn* 66). She connects acts of loving and reading as moments of shared communication between very disparate pairs (an old nun and a Turkish woman is the example Adelson discovers in Özdamar's "Der Hof im Spiegel"). Özdamar's narrator in *Seltsame Sterne* also finds these moments of odd mirroring, shared communication, driven by the sorrowful discovery that "während eines Militärputsches steht alles still. Auch die Liebe" (SS 27) (during a military putsch everything stands still. Even love), as for example between Josef and the narrator's old Turkish grandmother,

> "Bist du willig und bereit, Moslem zu werden?" "Ja," sagte er. Großmutter sagte: "Jetzt bist du Moslem. Setz dich auf den Teppich und wiederhole meine Gebete." Großmutter zitterte vor Glück. "Ich habe das Paradies gewonnen. Ich werde ins Paradies gehen." Vor Freude konnte sie nicht schlafen, wir lachten die ganze Nacht auf dem Balkon. (SS 22f.)

> (Are you willing and ready to become a Muslim?" "Yes," he said. Grandmother said: "Now you are a Muslim. Sit down on the carpet and repeat my prayers." Grandmother trembled with happiness. "I have obtained paradise. I'll go into paradise." She couldn't sleep because she was beside herself with happiness, we laughed the night away on the balcony.)

Other incongruous moments of mirroring take place between Armin ("Albrecht Dürer") and the narrator ("Du trägst große Sterne in deinen Augen. Du kannst bei mir übernachten, wenn du willst"; SS 36 [You bear big stars in your eyes. You can sleep over if you wish]); the narrator and the old whore with a limp who teaches her how to ride a bicycle (Die hinkende Hure sagte: "Ich zeig dir, wie man Rad fährt"; SS 59 [The whore with a limp said: "I'll show you how to ride a bike."]). Adelson talks about "post-national intimate moments" (*The Turkish Turn* 66). Özdamar's narrator creates such moments from the reverse side of the mirror in order to talk about global events, including the inhumaneness of politics and the media, using the lens of the "Alltag" (everyday life). Such intimacy allows her to intensely live and re-live moments of happiness and sadness, loneliness and companionship that define and constrain or defy the human condition:

> Barbara rief mich aus Westberlin an: "Ich stehe auf dem Dachgarten." "Blühen die Blumen?" "Ja, sehr schön. Ich rieche gerade an einer Nelke. Ich lese dir die Zeitung vor: 'Ulrike Meinhof nimmt sich im Gefängnis das Leben. [...] beging die 41jährige Terroristin Selbstmord durch Erhängen.'" Nach dem Telefongespräch mit Barbara schaute ich Katrin ins Gesicht. Sie ist vierzig Jahre alt. Auf italienisch fragte sie mich: "Che c'è?" (SS 107)

> (Barbara called me from West Berlin: "I'm standing in the terrace garden." "Are the flowers blooming?" "Yes, very beautiful. I am just smelling a carnation. I'll read the newspaper to you: 'Ulrike Meinhof takes her life in prison. [...] the 41-year-old terrorist committed suicide by hanging herself.'" After the telephone call with Barbara I looked Katrin in the face. She is forty years old. She asked me in Italian: "Che c'é?")

The common denominator for a forty-one year old Ulrike Meinhof and a forty-year old Katrin – the former's "suicide" and the latter's grief at her separation from her husband – poignantly and deliberately removes the constructed threshold between public and private suffering. The questions and comments about the mirrored division of Berlin that occur with the regularity of a leitmotif also belong in this Looking Glass world:

> Als ich in Westberlin aus der S-Bahn stieg, staunte ich. "Hier regnet es ja wie im Osten." (SS 40)

> (As I emerged from the S-Bahn in West Berlin I marveled. "It is raining here just like in the East.")

> Ich sagte zu Gabi: "Ich will sehen, ob drüben auch Vollmond ist." Die Straßen waren hier so leer wie dort. (SS 197)
>
> (I said to Gabi: "I'll see if it is full moon over there too." The streets here were as empty as over there.)
>
> "Guten Abend, hat es hier auch den ganzen Tag geregnet?" (SS 240)
>
> (Good evening, has it also rained here the whole day?)

Unusual alliances also take place between the narrator and Konstantin Kavafis (1863–1933), an early twentieth-century poet who writes in Greek and admits that he is not from Greece itself but from the Alexandria of Theocritus Bion (Woods 188). The narrator cannot find adequate words to express the pain of separation that every migration brings with it. Kavafis' poetry returns to her the language that eludes her:

> Sie fand ich nicht wieder, die ich ganz zufällig gewann
> Und so leichthin aufgab
> Und danach so angstvoll suchte.
> Die poetischen Augen, das blasse Gesicht,
> Jene Lippen, sie fand ich nicht wieder. (Konstantin Kavafis) (SS 42)
>
> (I did not find her again, she whom I had won by chance
> And given up so carelessly
> And then searched for so anxiously.
> The poetic eyes, the pale face,
> Those lips, I did not find them again.)

and between her and the German-Jewish woman poet, Else Lasker-Schüler (1869–1945) who also experiences "identitarian discomfiture" (SS 58–59).

Perhaps the most significant mirroring occurs in the title of a play the narrator intends to write: "Hamlet-Ahmet" (SS 194). The points of contact between this odd pairing, the "Occident" and the "Orient," invoke "a dual figure of intimacy, for to be touched is to exist in embodied form and also to be moved," as Adelson discovers in her reading of Şenocak (*The Turkish Turn* 107). In her discussion of Özdamar's "Karriere einer Putzfrau" (*Mutterzunge* 102–118), Stephanie Bird comments: "Özdamar's

satiric humour is at its best in her incorporation of *Hamlet* into her story about a Turkish cleaning woman. For what could be more German than Hamlet? 'Deutschland ist Hamlet!'" (Germany is Hamlet!) (174).

Bird adds that Goethe wanted to perform the role of Hamlet himself. Like Lasker-Schüler, whose double focus challenges Goethe's hegemony in her long suppressed play *IchundIch*,[10] Özdamar places that most complexly irresolute of European figures, Hamlet, in front of a mirror where an Ahmet looks back at him and disavows any attempt at a unitary identity, "undoing the mirror logic of guilt and innocence, perpetrators and victims, from an unprecedented perspective" (Adelson, *The Turkish Turn* 162).

The site of Özdamar's *Hamlet-Ahmet*, the Turkish version of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, is a village. Ahmet's dead father appears to the villagers as a ghost, whereupon they ask the village schoolmaster to explain the phenomenon. The schoolmaster asserts that the father has returned as a ghost to remind the villagers that they do not have any tractors. When Ahmet finds out from the ghost that his uncle was guilty of murdering him, he has to swear blood vengeance. He is confused and shows signs of derangement in his speech, whereupon the uncle sends him as a guest-worker to Germany. From there Ahmet brings back a tractor. At the end of the play Ahmet is the owner of an apple orchard and allows his uncle, his mother, and his wife Ophelia to work there. His father's ghost stands in the field as a scarecrow.

Not only does Ahmet deny Hamlet the convenience of a perpetrator/victim binary, but he also insists on his role as a "new subject of German remembrance" (*The Turkish Turn* 169). In her discussion of Şenocak, Adelson comments:

> [His essays] engage more pointedly with a highly mediated German past en route to a future that Germans and the Turks among them will certainly share, albeit not as ethnic blocs presumed to mirror each other as East and West Germany were once thought to do. (*The Turkish Turn* 169)

10 Lasker-Schüler wrote the play between the years 1940 and 1942, however it was posthumously published in 1970, twenty-five years after her death.

In all the above instances a fractured mirror has the potential for Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of the carnivalesque – the principle of reversal: East and West Berlin, the Orient and the Occident as mirror images. Duncan Fallowell similarly uses the term "mischievous characters" and explains it as follows within the context of the Alice books:

> They defy explication, because they travel with us from childhood, changing as we change, comforting, disturbing, each aspect acting as the foil for the other, and in that tension we are spellbound. [...] Like minor deities these characters move mischievously in a clatter of laughter between our world and their own, and the chief of them is Alice herself, sensitive and robust, one of literature's archetypal figures. (Fallowell 106)

These mischievous characters, "Doppelgängerinnen" and "Schatten" (shadows) do not rob the narrator of her agency, but rather offer her the possibility of a different gaze that Sigrid Weigel terms "schielenden Blick" (fractured gaze) (130). Weigel uses the term to describe the empowering process by which women can direct with one eye a narrower, more concentrated gaze on specifically female topics and at the same time use their other eye to sweep across the rich and expansive landscape of societal issues. This female double-existence has always positioned itself simultaneously from "inside" and "outside" and invariably signifies an inner break that leads to exclusion and absence from this culture.

"Mischievous people" from the marketplace embody Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque; they perform the function of alerting us to the danger of complacency and self-righteousness in our daily lives (Emerson 38).[11] There are several such "mischievous" characters in Özdamar's text – for example, the "hinkende Hure" (the limping whore), the "Baumwolltante" (the cotton-aunt), the "Bäcker vor dem großen Ofen mit mehligem Haar" (the baker in front of the big oven with floury hair), the "alte Nachbar, der

11 Caryl Emerson comments: "[Bakhtin's] concepts of dialogue and polyphony, like his concept of carnival, are free of all constraining (and defining) codes, hierarchies, one-way conversions, prohibitions, subversions that really subvert or compulsions that really compel – in fact, free of everything associated with the practice and distribution of power."

immer furzte, um die Kinder zum Lachen zu bringen" (the old neighbor who always farted to make the children laugh) – characters at the fringes of society who challenge restrictive norms (SS 123).

The mirror's links to dimensions of sleep, dreams, and memory become increasingly persistent as the text nears its end. The psychologists Jessica Payne and Lynn Nadel ponder the question of what happens to memories over time:

> When examining REM sleep dreams for memory content, one finds that episodic memories [...] typically emerge as disconnected fragments that are often difficult to relate to waking life events. [...] These fragmented REM dreams often have bizarre content. [...] For example, *the normal rules of space and time can be ignored or disobeyed*, so that in REM dreams it is possible to walk through walls, fly, interact with an entirely unknown person as if she was your mother, or stroll through Paris past the Empire State Building. (Payne and Nadel; emphasis added)

"The normal rules of space and time can be ignored or disobeyed" – this opens up intriguing possibilities for Özdamar's narrator. She asks herself: "Fängt eine Stadt, in der sich alle zum Schlafen legen, an zu denken?" (SS 87) (Does a city begin to think when everyone has gone to sleep?) In a state of sleep one can dissolve all rigid structures, all constraining boundaries. Özdamar writes the text in 2003, twenty-seven years after her arrival in Germany. Her narrator re-collects those distant happenings that unfold in slow motion

> Die Konzentration der Schauspieler erinnerte mich an die langsamen Bewegungen meiner Großmutter an den Istanbuler Morgen, wenn draußen die Möwen schrien und manchmal durch die offenen Fenster in die Wohnungen flogen und die Schiffe hupten. (SS 82)
>
> (The concentration of the actors reminded me of the slow movements of my grandmother on the Istanbul mornings when the gulls screamed outside and sometimes flew in through the open windows of the apartments, and the ships honked.)

And again: "Alles war wie in Zeitlupe, die Landschaft, die vorbeifahrenden Lichter, die Bewegungen der Passagiere" (SS 31) (Everything was in slow motion, the landscape, the passing lights, the movements of the passengers).

"Zeitlupe" (slow motion) belongs in the vocabulary of film, or even in that of sacred time – an a-temporal configuration that will be discussed in the context of Sufism. Sleep removes her to a different dimension:

> Bevor ich einschlief, hatte ich ein paar Zeilen auswendig gelernt.
> Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde,
> Eisenfarbene mit Sehnsuchtsschweifen,
> Mit brennenden Armen die Liebe suchen. (SS 9)
>
> (Before I fell asleep I had memorized a few lines.
> Strange stars gaze toward the earth,
> Iron-colored with yearning tails,
> With burning arms searching for love.)

The narrator commits to memory what otherwise remains ineffable, and then tries to recover it in sleep, echoing the Turkish saying that one dreams the truth when one sleeps in a room for the first time (SS 156). Such truth can perhaps be better endured in a dream-like state. When the narrator wonders about her "mother tongue" and whether it is possible to lose it in one's country of origin, her friend Josef accuses her of not telling the entire truth:

> "Ich glaube, du sagst nicht die ganze Wahrheit. Deinen allergrößten Kummer versteckst du vor mir. Du leidest unter der Trennung von deinem Mann. Sprich zu mir, sag die Wahrheit."
>
> Dieses "Sag die Wahrheit" verursachte bei mir schmerzende Nadelstiche, als ob ein Teil meines Körpers seit langem eingeschlafen war und nun wieder durchblutet wurde." (SS 23–24)
>
> ("I don't think you are telling the whole truth. You hide your greatest sorrow from me. You suffer from separation from your husband. Talk to me, tell me the truth."
>
> This "Tell me the truth" causes painful pinpricks in me, as if a part of my body had fallen asleep a long time ago and was now being supplied with blood again.)

These painful pinpricks are perhaps a re-cognition of different layers of grief. Perhaps a dream that introduces her to new linguistic possibilities can help her. When Josef asks her about her dream of studying Brechtian Theater, she comments without an explicit geographical or national reference: "Nur

dieser Traum kann mir helfen. Wenn die Zeit in einem Land in die Nacht eintritt, suchen sogar die Steine eine neue Sprache" (SS 28) (Only this dream can help me. When time enters night in a country, even the stones search for a new language).

The origin of the word "Traum" (dream) offers up yet another interpretative layer, derived from the Greek word "trauma" meaning "wound." In Turkey, "die Wörter sind krank. Meine Wörter brauchen ein Sanatorium, wie kranke Muscheln" (SS 22) (the words are sick. My words need a sanatorium, like sick mussels). The alternate meaning of "trauma" allows Özdamar to weave the otherwise disparate terms "dream," "wound," "war," and "murder" into a single fabric, stressing the power of language to destroy. Divided Germany's language also experiences this violence that leads to a loss of referentiality: "Ganz Westberlin war im Wörterkrieg. Aus allen Löchern kamen Wörter heraus und hatten keine Wirkung" (SS 65) (The whole of West Berlin was in a war of words. Words came out of all the holes and had no effect).

"Damals bedeutete in der Türkei Wort gleich Mord" (At that time word was a synonym for murder in Turkey), Özdamar remarks in her acceptance speech of the Kleist-award ("Kleist-Preis-Rede" 16). If the language of an entire country can be reduced to a single word – murder – then perhaps one way to emasculate the potency of this violence is to refract the hegemonic gaze through a mirror.

Once again I ponder the complex web of sleep, dream, and mirror imaging in *Seltsame Sterne*. Aside from mirroring as an abstract gesture, the narrator mentions one particular physical mirror that combines and memorializes past, present, and future in a single reflection:

> Der große Spiegel aus Petersburg, der im Flur steht, zeigt, wie er [Gabi's new boy friend] seine Haare hinters Ohr streicht. Wie viele Menschen sind in Petersburg und während des Krieges in Berlin an diesem Spiegel vorbeigegangen? (SS 206)
>
> (The big mirror from Petersburg that stood in the corridor shows how he sweeps his hair back behind his ear. How many people have gone past this mirror in Petersburg and during the war in Berlin?)

> Gegen Abend kam Gabis Vater aus Italien. Wieder trug er seine Koffer wie sein eigener Diener die Treppen hoch, küßte uns vor dem großen Spiegel im Flur und holte die Geschenke aus den Koffern. (SS 216)
>
> (In the evening Gabi's father came from Italy. He once again carried his suitcases up the stairs as if he were his own servant, kissed us in front of the big mirror in the corridor, and took gifts out of the suitcases.)
>
> In der Nacht rief ich Gabi an. Das Telefon klingelte, ich ließ es klingeln und stellte mir die Wohnung vor. Ich sah den Petersburger Spiegel im Flur, das Telefon klingelt weiter, und aus der Tiefe des Spiegels kommt Gabis Onkel Gottfried Lessing als junger Mann heraus. (SS 243f.)
>
> (At night I called Gabi. The telephone rang, I let it ring and imagined the apartment. I saw the Petersburg mirror in the corridor, the phone keeps ringing, and Gabi's uncle Gottfried Lessing emerges as a young man from the depths of the mirror.)

In kissing his daughter and the narrator in front of this mirror, Gabi's father signals the importance of freezing a "celebratory" event, evoking memories of the 1950s and 1960s when guest-workers from countries like Italy, Portugal, and Turkey came to West Germany carrying their worldly belongings in small cardboard suitcases (= "Pappkoffer", the stereotypical symbol of the Turkish guest worker), then returned to the homeland with the very same suitcases filled with gifts for their families.

> On 10 September 1964, ... the one-millionth guest worker arrived in the Federal Republic of Germany. His name was Armando Rodrigues, and he came from the village of Vale de Madeiros in central Portugal. [...] Once the train carrying twelve hundred Spanish and Portuguese workers pulled into the station on the outskirts of Cologne, Rodrigues was whisked away from his countrymen by German officials, led across the platform, and positioned in front of flags and laurel trees for a photo opportunity. These "strange men," according to press reports, "presented him with a bouquet of carnations and steered him to the seat of a motorcycle. 'This belongs to you,' they said. 'You are the one-millionth guest worker in the Federal Republic.'" (Chin)

The camera lens freezes this image, only to revive it and make it available in new ways to the migrant's imagination, as Gabi's uncle demonstrates by stepping out of the mirror as a young man, perhaps with newly found agency. Adelson's words in the context of Şenocak's writing bear repeating

here: "This is a person of migration as historical formation, not of ethnicity as anthropological ascription" (*The Turkish Turn* 169). B. Venkat Mani properly insists on the importance of returning to migrant writers their "right to argue and intervene equally and effectively in cultures of origin and residence in the contemporary contexts of transnational connections" (29). As German subjects, they reside within a German time and place. The strikingly unframed mirror images that Özdamar's narrator evokes dismantle the disabling frame of migration.

Kathrin Maurer's "Panoramablick" offers yet another gaze for the mirror that is useful in reading Özdamar's text. She refers to the panoramic paintings of Edinburgh by the eighteenth-century Irish painter Robert Barker:

> Das charakteristische Paradox des Panoramas, das Nebeneinander von Erhabenheit und Schwindel, versinnbildlicht, dass sich die Prozesse von Identitätsbildung und Geschichtskonstruktion nicht immer eindeutig am Antagonismus zwischen dem Eigenen und dem Anderen orientieren, sondern dass sich die Grenzlinien dieser Dichotomien immer wieder verschieben. (153)
>
> (The characteristic paradox of the panorama, the coexistence of transcendence and vertigo, illustrates how the processes of identity formation and the construction of history do not always clearly get their bearings from the antagonism between the self and the other; on the contrary the boundaries of these dichotomies consistently get displaced.)

"... The boundaries of these dichotomies consistently get displaced", Özdamar's narrator goes a step further, robbing all dichotomies of their destructive power by softening the violent lines of difference drawn between them:

> Es hat ein weiches Herz, Berlin, die Kinder frieren nicht, die Kälte ist für sie ein Wintermärchen.
> [...]
> Jetzt ist es Zeit, durch Wissen weicher zu werden, reicher zu werden. In der Türkei konnte ich meine Hand und meinen Arm nicht bewegen. (SS 104)
>
> (It has a soft heart, Berlin, the children don't freeze, the cold is a winter's tale for them.
> [...]

> Now it is time to become softer through knowledge, to become richer. In Turkey I couldn't move my hand and my arm.)

When Maurer's "Panoramablick" is combined with Weigel's "schielenden Blick," the reader can better navigate the endless corridors of Özdamar's narrative, whether these are border crossings, or corridors in houses, or dreams:

> Er wartete vor dem Grenzübergang. Ich gab ihm mein brennendes Zigarillo und ging durch den Grenzübergang. (SS 36)
>
> (He waited in front of the border crossing. I gave him my burning Cigarillo and went through the border crossing.)
>
> Auf der Westseite des Grenzübergangs kam plötzlich ein westdeutscher Polizist aus dem Wachhäuschen heraus und fragte mich nach meinem Paß. (SS 240)
>
> (On the western side of the border crossing suddenly a West German policeman came out of the guard house and asked me for my passport.)
>
> Ich ging durch den langen Korridor und den großen Raum zur Küche. Dieser Weg war so lang, daß Inga an den kalten Tagen mit dem Fahrrad zur Toilette fuhr, ihr Atem fuhr mit. (SS 12)
>
> (I went through the long corridor and the big room to the kitchen. This path was so long that on cold days Inga rode on her bike to the toilet, her breath rode along.)
>
> Der Gang kam mir plötzlich viel zu lang vor, aber als ich durch eine halb offenstehende Tür Benno Besson sah, war ich wieder ruhig. (SS 39)
>
> (The corridor appeared to me to be much too long, but when I saw Benno Besson through a half-open door I was calm again.)
>
> Da verwandelt sie sich in einen Oktopus, so groß wie ein Mensch, und beobachtet mich. Ich renne, er läuft mir nach. (SS 156)
>
> (It morphs into an octopus, as big as a human being, and observes me. I run, it chases me.)

Lasker-Schüler's poem "Liebessterne" (love stars) from which Özdamar borrows the line "Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde" begins with the following verse and takes on new shapes:

> Deine Augen harren vor meinem Leben
> Wie Nächte, die sich nach Tagen sehnen,
> Und der schwüle Traum liegt auf ihnen unergründet. (Lasker-Schüler)
>
> (Your eyes await my life
> Like nights that pine for the days,
> And the sultry dream lies on them unfathomably)

Özdamar's narrator is like that female traveller from the nineteenth century, Ida von Hahn-Hahn, appropriating the male traveller's panoramic, all-encompassing "monarch-of-all-I-survey" gaze, and her own subversive fractured gaze, as Maurer perceptively observes. (Murti, *Germany's India*) Mani's reference to Adelson's comment also accentuates the destabilizing nature of this gaze that is simultaneously panoramic and fractured:

> ... Turkish-German women authors have established themselves as "doubly-othered," invoking not compassion but pity. Adelson imputed this to a tendency to see Turkish-German literature "through a lens that reflects a double othering: [where] the otherness of Turkish experience is "added" to that of female gender. (B. Venkat Mani 99)

I return to the lines from *Jabberwocky* that prefaced my discussion of Özdamar. When Alice views the mirror image of *Jabberwocky* in order to make the unreadable readable – a sleight-of-hand that does not imply comprehension in normative terms – she comments:

> "It seems very pretty," she said when she had finished it, "but it's rather hard to understand!" (You see she didn't like to confess, even to herself, that she couldn't make it out at all.) "Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas – only I don't exactly know what they are! However, somebody killed something: that's clear, at any rate – " (Carroll, "Looking-Glass House")

Similarly, the narrator of *Seltsame Sterne* says:

> Wenn Müller, Maron und Gabi sprechen, fühle ich mich wie in einem Fremdsprachenkursus. An einem anderen Abend sprach Gabi mit Heiner Müller und dem Chef der ständigen Vertretung der BRD, Günter Gaus. "Worüber habt ihr geredet?" fragte ich Gabi dann später. (SS 202)
>
> (When Müller, Maron and Gabi speak, I feel as if I were on a foreign language course. On another evening Gabi spoke with Heiner Müller and the Head of the permanent representation of the FRG, Günter Gaus. "What were you talking about?" I asked Gabi later.)

She feels compelled to re-read words, images, and gestures through mirroring tools: a looking glass, ceaseless border crossings, a sketchpad. When she finally leaves Berlin for Paris, she thoroughly cleans the mirror in the flat-share. Perhaps such cleansing opens up possibilities for new images, new stories.

Translingual puns are another strategy to which Özdamar resorts in opening up venues for new images. The narrator in *Mutterzunge* plays with the German word "Ruhe" (peace) and the Arabic "Ruh" (soul). Cheesman calls such puns weak, and comments:

> Her performance of personal, rooted cosmopolitanism, acquired through a career in theater and film in Turkey, East and West Germany, and France, tends to highlight the relative cultural poverty that is conventionally ascribed to the mass of migrants. It flatters Western readers and their assumed cultural superiority, even as it challenges them with cultural references they struggle to understand. (*Novels of Turkish German Settlement* 73f.)

Cheesman thus accuses Özdamar of perpetuating Orientalism under the guise of subverting it. However, by combining the concepts of peace and soul in this unusual way, Özdamar transcends the dichotomous relationship between Occident and Orient, and enters the spiritual realm of the Sufi. The Qur'an uses two terms "Ruh-Allah" and "Ar-Ruh-Al-Qudus" for the spirit of the divine. The mirror's multiple reflections offer up yet another narrative: the union of physical and spiritual beauty and love. Snow White's mirrored power is re-enacted by Özdamar's narrator: "Katrin öffnete die Tür und sagte: 'Sei la più bella della citta. Du bist die Schönste der Stadt'" (SS 123) ("Katrin opened the door and said: 'Sei la più bella della citta. You are the most beautiful in the city.'")

Physical love has made her beautiful and desirable ("Gabi ist glücklich. 'Du bist wunderschön, er hat dich schön gemacht, sieh dich im Spiegel an'" (SS 225) (Gabi is happy. "You look wonderful, he has made you beautiful, look at yourself in the mirror"). She achieves a validation, albeit mediated, of her own beauty: "Im Spiegel in seiner Wohnung finde ich mich sehr schön" (SS 222) (In the mirror at his apartment I find myself to be very beautiful.) However, I invoke Dürer once again and his self-representation as Christ. The verses from Lasker-Schüler and Kavafis with which Özdamar's narrator punctuates her text are almost like the Islamic *Salah* or ritual prayers, but without the latter's proscriptive nature. They return the word "Salah" to its original meaning: "connection." Özdamar's narrator in *Großvaterzunge* ends with the following words: "*Ruh* – '*Ruh* heißt Seele', sagte ich zu dem Mädchen. 'Seele heißt Ruh', sagte sie" (Özdamar, *Mutterzunge* 46) ("Ruh – 'Ruh means soul,' I said to the girl. 'Soul means Ruh,' she said").

In *Seltsame Sterne*, Özdamar's narrator does not find "Ruhe" – peace or a soul – in the flat-share:

> Weil die Ruhe fehlt, kommt man ständig in die Küche, geht zur Kaffeekanne, steckt einen Toast in den Toaster, schneidet an der Brotmaschine eine Scheibe Brot und schmiert Mettwurst darauf. Dann fangen Gespräche an und man hat Schuldgefühle. Mit Schuldgefühlen geht man ins Bett und steht mit Schuldgefühlen auf. (SS 62)
>
> (Because peace is lacking, one constantly goes into the kitchen, goes to the coffee pot, sticks a piece of toast into the toaster, cuts a slice of bread in the bread machine and spreads mettwurst on it. Then conversations begin and one has feelings of guilt. One goes to bed with feelings of guilt and gets up with feelings of guilt.)

It is tempting to speculate about the connection between "Ruhe," and the concept of "Ruh" and the mirror in Sufism, since this is part of Özdamar's conceptual world. The words of Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rumi, the thirteenth-century founder of Sufism, are not inconsequential to a reading of *Seltsame Sterne*. One quotation from Rum is especially significant in this context:

> Come, come, whoever you are.
> Wanderer, worshipper, lover of leaving – it doesn't matter,
> Ours is not a caravan of despair.
> Come, even if you have broken your vow a hundred times,
> Come, come again, come. (Safransky 67)

Hazrat Inayat Khan, a nineteenth-century Indian poet, sees the central concept of Sufism to be love. A predominantly nineteenth- and twentieth-century European gaze has captured Sufism as male homoerotic. However, the homoeroticism of Sufi love has never recognized gender as a binary, as Afsaneh Najmabadi persuasively argues. Sufi love is also not transcendental and allegorical, but rather desire that seeks union on several levels, from the erotic to the ascetic. According to Sufism, the divine desires to recognize beauty, and just as one looks at a mirror to see oneself, the divine "looks" at itself within the dynamics of nature ("Sufism").

Beauty is seen as belonging to a young male or a female, unlike in European gender heterosociality,

> with the public visibility of European women as the key signifier of cultural difference. This narrative [...] was an already-heteronormalized narrative of the heteronormalization of love and the feminization of beauty. (Najmabadi 2)

The mind-world of Sufism is called "Aina Khana," palace of mirrors. For the mystic the mind as mirror exists in all beings. "Suf" is the Arabic word for "wool", as in "cloak," and refers to what the original Sufis wore. The Sufis also use the composing letters of words to express hidden meanings, and so the word can also be understood to signify "enlightenment," one that instills spirituality into the secular European version. This might perhaps be the quest that Özdamar's narrator repeats with Lasker-Schüler at the end:

> Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde,
> Eisenfarbene mit Sehnsuchtsschweifen,
> Mit brennenden Armen die Liebe suchen. (SS 243)
>
> (Strange stars gaze toward earth,
> Iron-colored with yearning tails,
> With burning arms searching for love.)

echoing the words of the Sufi Rumi:

> "Love calls – everywhere and always.
> We're sky bound.
> Are you coming?"
> There is no salvation for the soul
> But to fall in love ...

Only lovers can escape
From these two worlds.
This was written in creation.
Only from the heart
Can you reach the sky
The rose of Glory
Can only be grown in the heart. (Hanut 30)

The thirteenth-century Persian poet Rumi's belief in the transcendental power of love to overcome polarities is difficult to recapture in modern times. Both Lasker-Schüler and Özdamar must content themselves with sharing a less mystical sensibility in expressing their nostalgia for a healing, fulfilling love.

Thinking outside the census box: Şenocak's "erottomaniacal" works

> Wenn man meine Texte verstehen will, muss man [den Koran] wahrscheinlich lesen oder sich wenigstens ein bisschen in der Lebensgeschichte von Mohammed oder in den Überlieferungen auskennen, in der anatolischen Mystik. Ich mache das [...], weil es meine Geschichte ist. Ich kann ja nur über meine Geschichte schreiben. (Şenocak in Cheesman and Yeşilada x)
>
> (If one wishes to understand my texts one ought to probably read [the Qur'an] or at least familiarize oneself a little with the life story of Mohammed, or with the historical traditions, with Anatolian mysticism. I do this [...] because it is my history. After all I can only write about my own history.)

Leslie Adelson's vigilance towards "untagged" invocations in texts emboldens me to be similarly observant in my own reading of Şenocak's texts (*The Turkish Turn* 152). Zafer Şenocak was born in Ankara in 1961, and moved

with his parents to Germany at the age of nine. Not surprisingly, given his many provocative interventions in debates on inclusion and exclusion, he is more widely acclaimed among German Studies scholars in the US than in Germany.

A review of recent scholarly opinions on Şenocak's work has helped me find a few cracks in the otherwise subtly smoothed over road of research, cracks that might widen just enough to create unforeseen and uncomfortable bumps. A recent book justly claims to be "the first book in any language devoted to [Şenocak's] work."[12] The contributors to this volume cover a whole range of issues that preoccupy Şenocak.

For Tom Cheesman, Şenocak

> reacts against those who seek to understand a writer's work by relating it directly to his or her biography. Instead, he argues, they should explore the writer's "mythische Grundlage" which has given rise to an individual "Schreibmythos".[13] By this he means the range of experiences and influences which underpin the writer's conceptual world. ("Gespräch mit Zafer Senoçak" 23) (Conversation with Zafer Şenocak)

"Mythische Grundlage" (mythical foundation) reveals the first crack that needs more insistent probing. A significant influence underpinning Şenocak's conceptual world is the Qur'an, as the writer himself states in the above quotation. Matthias Konzett compellingly argues that Şenocak's writing

> [c]ounters the facile liberal rhetoric of multiculturalism with a consciously irreverent and satirical perspective, thereby avoiding the often cliché-ridden treatment and discussion of German-Turkish identity. [...] Şenocak challenges the liberal camp as well with its complacent and politically correct management of migrant cultures and identities in Germany. (44f.)

Konzett sees in Şenocak's refusal to live under the "illusion of total residence and acculturation" a central theme of Şenocak's work (54f.). He argues that this refusal permits Şenocak to subject assigned social and cultural

12 Tom Cheesman and Karen E. Yeşilada, eds. *Zafer Şenocak*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003. Print.

13 Writerly myth.

identities "to a process of aesthetic play and variation" (56). Aesthetic play is an element in Şenocak's work upon which I elaborate in my own reading. Konzett rightly bemoans the fact that Şenocak's unique stance has not yet been fully recognized as the point of view, not just of a minority, but of the new multicultural Germany:

> For multiculturalism is more than a paradigm for accommodating the increasing range of migrant cultures across the European continent; it seeks also to disrupt the myths of indigenous, native or anterior cultures. (58f.)

Moray McGowan's attention to exploratory masculinities in Şenocak's prose texts introduces yet another significant dimension into the discussion:

> Şenocak's texts offer an experientially liberating journey through fluid ethnicities and sexual orientations, more reminiscent of the games of gender performance in Thomas Meinecke's *Tomboy*, with its explicit quotation from Lacan and Judith Butler. ("Odysseus" 64)

Such fluid ethnicities and sexual orientations inevitably imply dissolution of boundaries, destabilizing and ultimately deconstructing mainstream German understanding of a coherent and cohesive identity. McGowan reads Şenocak's tendency to fully develop only the male figures in his novels not as a predictable and hence uninteresting male chauvinism, but rather as yet another subversion of gender stereotypes:

> Şenocak is an intellectual at home in a Western metropolis, but also one who knows that "the Turk", the man in skirts, is charged with erotic ambiguity in the Western imagination. Though sometimes with mixed feelings, his male figures enjoy the fruits of the exotic allure this ambiguity nurtures. ("Odysseus" 65)

McGowan also quotes Şenocak as saying in an interview that he tends to challenge "the greatest of all taboos, sexuality, where the metaphysical experience of religion encounters the body. In its origins Islam united the two, religion and body, later they were separated. I try to reunite them in my own way by writing" ("Odysseus" 73). This link between sexuality and metaphysical experience deserves further exploration, especially when it suspends rigidly structured, oppressive gender categories.

James Jordan focuses on Şenocak's struggle with the concept of "culture." He suggests that if "culture" is no longer valid, as Şenocak avows, "then neither can be concepts requiring combinations of discrete 'Kulturen', such as symbiosis" ("Essays and Early Prose" 95). I am once again reminded of Şenocak's cautionary words that it is human beings, not cultures, who encounter one another (*Zungenentfernung* 62). His words bear repetition here: "Schon hinter der Definition anderer Kulturen als Kultur steht eine bestimmte Vorstellung von Kultur, die auch für die anderen gültig sein soll" (Even behind the definition of other cultures there is a certain perception of culture that is also supposed to be valid for the others) (*War Hitler Araber?* 62). Şenocak questions the very singularity of the concept "Kultur".

Karin Yeşilada's reading of Şenocak brings me closer to what still remains Şenocak's unmarked invocation of Sufism and the poetry that nourishes its emotional knowledge. She says of Şenocak's love poetry (here "Oft sitzt man Rücken an Rücken" (Often one sits back to back)): "Dieses Gedicht könnte auch eine philosophische Beschreibung von Freundschaft sein: Ist dies hier ein Liebender oder ein Derwisch, der da spricht?" (115) ("This poem could also be a philosophical description of friendship: is it a lover or a dervish who speaks here?")

It is difficult to make a distinction between lover and dervish, as my own reading attempts to show. The erotic and the ascetic wed one another in capricious gestures.

Leslie Adelson calls for "Orte des Umdenkens" (places for re-thinking), not "Orte des Denkens" (places for thinking), the latter implying geographical or political borders that insistently and unproductively search for more evidence of differences in cultures in an effort to keep the migrant writer outside German culture. Adelson resists reducing Şenocak's transgressive interventions to sociological, ethnic or national levels:

> Şenocak's configuration of transnationalism is [...] about the textures and architectures of changing historical experience, which is no less *imagined* than it is *lived*. This work breaks the spell that an obsession with multicultural identity "between two worlds" continues to cast on cultural studies of the Other. ("Against Between" 141)

while Graeme Dunphy's reading tempers this obsession with multicultural identity "between two worlds" by considering an in-between space in Şenocak's writing:

> As a well-balanced bicultural, Şenocak experiences his cultures as two intersecting circles, the area between the culturally distinct elements being not a gap, but rather the common ground. This optimistic attitude to the richness of biculturality is useful in challenging inadequate notions of cultural boundaries. But here again, recognition of the diversity of migrant experience could have provided a necessary counterpoint.

However, the image of intersecting circles does not allow for a total release from the enclosed space that circles imply. Şenocak might refute Dunphy's comment about a "well-balanced bicultural" with the following words from *Der Erottomane*: "Ich fühle mich auch als halber Asiate, als ganzer Europäer" (16) (I also feel like half an Asian, like a whole European). The mathematics does not permit a conveniently whole and wholesome identity.

A similar mathematical fallacy might be discovered in Monika Shafi's criticism that Şenocak does not go beyond binaries. She comments that it is, "of course, philosophically impossible not to have an identity ...", contending that Şenocak

> remains entrenched in the German-Turkish divide he so ardently wishes to overcome, because his search for origin leads to an unproductive, nostalgically inspired flight from the present. (209)

She comments that although Şenocak's protagonist in his 1998 novel *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft* has no family opposition to contend with, yet "the absence of old traditions and strict values does not have a liberating effect on him" (200), a valid criticism that requires revisiting, however, when applied to Şenocak's later works, especially *Zungenentfernung*.

Tom Cheesman finds in the "punning title of Şenocak's most recent collection of essays and essayistic fictions, *Zungenentfernung*" a reference to "the cruelty of being violently deprived of a voice and to the gulf of silence that lies between two languages" ("S/ß" 146). He chooses two texts from this collection for a more detailed analysis. "Der Griff hat einen

Sprung" (the handle has a crack) reveals, according to Cheesman, "crises of nationhood" that "are always also crises of gender and sexuality, as well as crises of family relations and family histories. And vice versa" ("S/ß" 152). Cheesman argues that Şenocak's fantasy essay-fiction "Der Bart" (the beard) deliberately highlights this outward sign of Islamic masculinity because it has been underexplored, in contrast to the hijab or headscarf of Muslim women. Cheesman concludes:

> Whether the father represents the broken continuity of Islamic mysticism or the vanquished pride and optimism of Turkish migrant pioneers in Germany, he partakes in the full, resonant gravity of patriarchal symbolism shared by all Europe's religious cultures, and he has become a sign of the evacuation of meaning from all such cultures. ("S/ß" 156f.)

The extent to which Şenocak "has become a sign of the evacuation of meaning" from symbols of patriarchal supremacy in Europe's religious cultures is particularly clear in his work *Der Erottomane – Ein Findelbuch* (The Erottomane: A Foundling's Book), where female power assumes phallic proportions in unusually disruptive ways.

Masquerade: Ethnic signifier and/or aesthetic play?

> Meine Eltern spielten in und mit der deutschen Kultur. Ich glaube, daß ihnen dieses Spiel auch sehr viel Freude bereitete. Das war einfach nur gelebtes Theater. Wenn man eine fremde Sprache lernt, verkleidet man seine Zunge. Warum also nicht gleich sich ganz verkleiden. *Es ist erwiesen, daß man schneller Deutsch lernt, wenn man Lederhosen trägt*. (Şenocak, *Zungenentfernung* 9; emphasis added)[14]
>
> (My parents played in and with German culture. I think they enjoyed this game a lot. It was just simply living theater. When one learns a foreign

14 All further references to Şenocak's *Zungenentfernung* will be parenthetically indicated by the abbreviation ZE followed by the page number. *Transit*, an online journal published by the Department of German, University of California, Berkeley, published an English translation of the first section of *Zungenentfernung* in Volume 8, June 2012.

> language, one disguises one's tongue. Why not then just disguise oneself completely. *It has been proven that one learns German more quickly if one wears lederhosen [sic].*)

At the beginning of this book I offered the notion of clothing as an ethnic signifier that can be playfully and strategically employed. The last sentence in this quotation from *Zungenentfernung* triggers the memory of another episode in my daily struggles with *Leitkultur* both in Germany and the US, this time from the 1990s. Şenocak is describing here, albeit with a touch of whimsy, how clothing becomes a permeable membrane for facilitating the acquisition of a language by osmosis. It also functions as a palimpsestic wax to cover up or reveal the parchment that records language.

As a female member of the German faculty at the University of Arizona in Tucson, my duties included supporting a local German club the members of which preserved memories of a Germany seemingly untainted by world wars and Hitler. Most of them did not speak German, which made their nostalgic insistence on the promotion of a mythically monolithic German culture all the more distressing. Nevertheless, I was willing to support them because their fund-raising activities included donating some of the money to support national charities. The club also awarded modest stipends to our students for study in Germany, – a gesture that I acknowledged with mixed feelings. One of the events the club celebrated was the German beer festival Oktoberfest, and I promised to help run their booth that sold wiener, sauerkraut, and beer. The club overcame its initial doubts about my ability to preserve their German heritage after my department thoroughly vetted my "Germanness." However, I was more than startled to receive this request from one of the club members: "Would you consider wearing a Dirndl when you work in our booth?"

The picture of a stereotypically swarthy, mustachioed Turk dressed in Lederhosen with a turban on his head that I had seen some years before came to mind. I could not suppress a grin when I imagined the looks of surprise and derision that might greet me at the fair. I removed the moth-balls from the Dirndl that I had bought in 1960s Munich, Germany, for a costume-dress ball. However, I had been unhesitatingly ingested along with the other travesties of Germanness: the wiener and sauerkraut that I served

up. It transported me back to pre-independence India, to Lord Macaulay's dream of "brown sahibs" during the British Raj in India.[15] I remembered Şenocak's tongue-in-cheek comment about dressing-up:

> Hätten alle Gastarbeiter ihre Kinder am ersten Abend in Deutschland mit Milch und Schokolade gefüttert und sie am nächsten Morgen in Lederhosen gesteckt, hätten wir heute keine Probleme mit der Integration. Aber meine Eltern waren keine Gastarbeiter. Das erklärt vielleicht ihre Affinität zur kalten Milch, zur Milkaschokolade und zu Lederhosen. (ZE 9)
>
> (If all guestworkers had fed their children on their first evening in Germany with milk and chocolate, and had put them in lederhosen the following day, we would have no problems with integration today. But my parents weren't guestworkers. That explains perhaps their affinity for cold milk, for chocolate, and for lederhosen.)

Older dissonances, especially those in Frantz Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks*,[16] resonated. Fanon reveals the epistemic violence done by the white man's eyes to the black man's body:

> The white man's eyes break up the black man's body and in that act of epistemic violence its own frame of reference is transgressed, its field of vision disturbed. (xxv)

Fanon famously states that "not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man" [...] "The black man has no ontological resistance in the eyes of the white man" (82f.). In the foreword to a recent edition of *Black Skins, White Masks*, Sardar comments on the anger that such oppression can produce:

> Fanon's [...] is the anger of all whose cultures, knowledge systems and ways of being that are ridiculed, demonized, declared inferior and irrational, and, in some cases, eliminated. [...] *Dignity* [in Fanon's work] *is not located in seeking equality with the*

15 According to Lord Macaulay, who went to India as a member of the Governor-General's council in 1834 and wrote a minute on introducing English education in India, he deemed the creation of a class of brown Englishmen to be expeditious to the cause of British colonialism: "A class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect." (Prasad)

16 First published in French as *Peau noire, masques blanc*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1952.

> *white man and his civilization* [...] It is about being oneself with all the multiplicities, systems and contradictions of one's own ways of being, doing and knowing. (vi; emphasis added)

Şenocak's assumption of dignity or recognition is not dissimilar to Fanon's: "Der Andere fordert Anerkennung. Parallel dazu schwindet die Lust an der Assimilation" (ZE 38) ("The Other demands recognition. The desire for assimilation correspondingly diminishes").

And again:

> Ein Versuch, mich und mein Dasein in seiner vielschichtigen, in sich widersprüchlichen Gesamtheit zu empfinden und sprachlich zu erfassen. Für Augenblicke den ganzen Menschen wieder herstellen, der sich weder in der Phantasie und im Empfinden, noch in der Rationalität empirischer Wahrnehmung und abstrakter Denkmuster erschöpft. (*Atlas of a Tropical Germany* 99)

> (An attempt to capture me and my existence in its multilayered, self-contradictory totality in emotional and linguistic terms. For brief moments to restore the whole human being who amounts to neither fantasy and emotion, nor the rationality of empirical perception and abstract thought patterns.)

Fanon coins the term "epidermalization" to describe the process by which the black man is forced to internalize his inferiority. Skin color continues to be a means to create racist categories, as Şenocak details fifty years later:

> Neugierig will man wissen, woher ich komme. Welchen Weg ich zurückgelegt habe, interessiert kaum. [...] Ist man ein harmloser Reisender mit sicherem Ziel, oder Wegelagerer, hat man einen Paß, ein Visum, *die richtige Hautfarbe*, das passende Gesicht? Umwege sind um jeden Preis zu meiden, wo sie nicht gemieden werden können, sind sie zu verkürzen. Nur ein bestimmter Punkt am Ende des Weges schafft Sicherheit. Man ist dort nicht *geborgen*, aber *sicher*. Man kann sich an einem solchen Punkt festorten, orientieren. (ZE 14; emphasis added)

> (Inquisitively, people want to know where I am from. It hardly interests them which path I have trodden. [...] Is one a harmless traveler with a definite destination, or a highwayman; does one have a passport, a visa, *the right skin color*, the appropriate face? Detours are to be avoided at all costs, wherever they cannot be avoided, they must be shortened. Only a categorical point at the end of the path creates a sense of safety. One is not *secure* there, but *safe*. One can fix one's position, get one's bearings at such a point.)

Şenocak's contrasting use of "geborgen" (to feel safe, snug, secure – as in one's home) and "sicher" (to feel certain, to be safe from something) underscores how Western nations are increasingly keeping their own "authentic" citizenry safe (= *sicher*) from the perceived unreliability of their ungrievable minorities (the potential terrorist others) in the name of national security.

In his foreword to the 1986 edition of the English translation of *Black Skins, White Masks*, Homi Bhabha observes of Fanon that

> he speaks most effectively from the uncertain interstices of historical change: from the area of ambivalence between race and sexuality; out of an unresolved contradiction between culture and class; from deep within the struggle of psychic representation and social reality. (xxii)

I do not intend to misappropriate the Turkish migrant as a stand-in for the Algerian colonized subject of Fanon's writing. However, Bhabha's comment about Fanon is helpful in understanding Şenocak. According to Bhabha, Fanon disturbs the kind of narcissism that is promoted by racially grounded myths like Negritude or White supremacy.

> It is this palpable pressure of division and displacement that pushes Fanon's writing to the edge of things; the cutting edge that reveals no ultimate radiance but, in his words, "exposes an utterly naked declivity where an authentic upheaval can be born." (xxiii)

The nausea that Fanon experiences in encounters with the other, a nausea that has to be overcome – nausea created by the splitting moment of desire – is not present in Şenocak (Bhabha xxx).[17] He does not wish for an "objectifying confrontation with otherness" (Bhabha xxx).

> Es hat den Anschein, als könnten wir uns nur über den Anderen definieren. [...] Das Gespräch des Zivilisierten mit den Wilden, des Okzidents mit dem Orient war und

17 "When it encounters resistance from the other, self-consciousness undergoes the experience of desire ... As soon as I desire I ask to be considered. I am not merely here and now, sealed into thingness. I am for somewhere else and for something else. I demand that notice be taken of my negating activity – in so far as I pursue something other than life ... I occupied space. I moved towards the other ... and the evanescent other, hostile but not opaque, transparent, not there, disappeared. Nausea."

> ist kein Gespräch, sondern eine Form der Identitätsschaffung und -wahrung durch Stigmatisierung eines Anderen. (ZE, 35f.)
>
> (It appears as if we can define ourselves only in terms of the other. ... The conversation of the civilized person with the savage, of the Occident with the Orient is not a conversation, but rather a form of the creation and guarantee of an identity through the stigmatization of the other.)

How, then, does he avoid such confrontation with the otherness against which Bhabha warns us?

SUFI PLAY

The spiritual playfulness of Sufism provides perhaps a possibility for Şenocak to achieve a dialogue without stigmatizing the "other":

> Meine Texte stehen auf drei Beinen:
> Erinnern
> Erfinden
> Spielen
> Bekanntlich ist das Stehen auf drei Beinen nicht immer eine stabile Angelegenheit.
> Für mich aber ist mehr das Verrücken und Fortschreiten von Bedeutung als das Stehen.
> Das Fortschreiten auf drei Beinen ist eine Bewegungsform zwischen Gehen und Sich im Kreis Drehen, Tanzen und Stolpern.
> Oft genug sieht es lustig aus.
> Auf das Gleichgewicht achten und dennoch manchmal auch den Sturz wagen, das ist Erfinden, Erinnern und Spielen. (ZE 93)[18]

18 Jale Erzen explains: "In the Sufi Way, the experience of the world and its perception is aesthetic in an ecstatic fashion. The awareness of the overpowering beauty of the world fills the heart with love and opens the mind to cosmic relations. The integration of reason, form-making, and imagining, along with yielding the body and mind to the powers of the earth, is a total aesthetic in Sufism. / In the Islamic world, humans' movement, the way they understand the process of time and space, depends on nature and parallels the cosmic order and the basic underlying forms that are found in nature. They are not only circular, which means they revolve and repeat, but rather spiral. [...] The Dervish Dance is in complete harmony with this understanding and with the cosmic movement."

> (My texts stand on three legs:
> Remembering
> Inventing
> Playing
> It is well known that standing on three legs is not always a stable matter.
> But for me displacement and progressive motion are more significant than standing.
> Progressive motion on three legs is a form of movement between walking and going round in circles, dancing and stumbling.
> Often enough it appears comic.
> Pay heed to one's balance and yet at times
> risk the fall, that is invention, remembrance and play.)

To return to B. Venkat Mani's coinage, "Erinnern / Erfinden / Spielen" (Remembering / Inventing / Playing), this three-legged stance provokes "identitarian discomfiture". Şenocak replaces the linearity that characterizes Hegelian progressive history with a dizzyingly spiraling upward movement replete with going, turning around in circles, dancing, and stumbling. He searches for that precise moment between maintaining one's balance and daring to trip and fall that defines that triad of remembering, inventing, and playing. The Sufi mystics and "Tasawwuf," the Jewish mystics and Kabbalah – it is here that Şenocak seeks to revitalize what threatens to become a mere trace in his ear:

> Die Mystiker im Hintergrund sprechen an. Kabbala und Tasavvuf, die Nachbarschaft einer Region, die gestrige Stimme unterschiedlicher Sprachen. Etwas bleibt immer im Ohr. *Ein Hörrest*. (ZE 96; emphasis added)

> (The mystics appeal in the background. Kabbala and Tasawwuf, the neighborhood of a region, yesterday's voice of diverging languages. Something remains in one's ear. *A residual hearing.*)

Sufi whirling is a form of Samâ or physically active meditation. Through the dance, dervishes aim to reach the source of all perfection, or *kemal*. This is achieved by relinquishing one's ego, focusing on God, and spinning one's body in repetitive circles, a movement that has been seen as a symbolic imitation of planets in the solar system orbiting the sun. Şenocak's triadic

"Remembering / Inventing / Playing" finds its equivalent in the integration of reason, form making, and imagining as a total aesthetic in Sufism.

The German playwright Friedrich Schiller and the Dutch philosopher Johannes Huizinga share an understanding of the ludic principle as an essential element of the human mind and the human psyche. In his famous definition of the *Spieltrieb* (ludic drive) Schiller sees the ludic principle as a combination of *der sinnliche Trieb* (material drive) and *Formtrieb* (form drive) that grants freedom to the human being:

> Der Spieltrieb also [...] wird das Gemüt zugleich moralisch und physisch nötigen; er wird also, weil er alle Zufälligkeit aufhebt, auch alle Nötigung aufheben und den Menschen sowohl physisch als moralisch in Freiheit setzen. (Schiller)

> ([T]he instinct of play, which unites the double action of the two other instincts, will content the mind at once morally and physically. Hence, as it suppresses all that is contingent, it will also suppress all coercion, and will set man free physically and morally.) ("Letters Upon the Aesthetic Education of Man.")

Such a dialectical interplay between the formal and material impulses that creates a synthesis in the instinct for play suggests a freedom that is, however, circumscribed by moral imperatives. According to Huizinga, "culture arises in the form of play. ... In the twin union of play and culture, play is primary" (46). For him, play's purpose is both religious and artistic, once again compelled by societal norms. This kind of play is driven by moral categories and forbids all randomness. Arguably, both Özdamar and Şenocak's writerly behaviors refract this rigidity, creating a playful symbiosis of the erotic and the ascetic that goes to the core of Sufi beliefs. Rumi's words delicately express this symbiosis:

> Come, come, whoever you are,
> Wanderer, idolater, worshiper of fire,
> Come even though you have broken your vows a thousand times,
> Come, and come yet again.
> Ours is not a caravan of despair. (Malak 151)

It is in this sense, reminiscent of a kind of Jungian synchronicity,[19] that I read Şenocak's work, especially *Zungenentfernung*.[20]

The four segments into which *Zungenentfernung* is divided – *Gedächtnisfragmente* (memory fragments), *Brennpunkte der Entfremdung* (= focal points of alienation), *Hybride Engel* (hybrid angels), and *Jenseits der Landessprache* (beyond the national language) – bring the issues preoccupying Şenocak into instant focus in an apparently unrehearsed sequence. I submit that the arrangement of the four segments adopts the playful imagining and imaging of various forms of the cosmos. It is this seemingly random and capricious refracting of an absolute consciousness inherent in most mystical thinking that Şenocak captures in both poetry and fictional prose.

I – GEDÄCHTNISFRAGMENTE (MEMORY FRAGMENTS)

The fragmentation of memory in the first section of *Zungenentfernung* recreates the migrant's recognition of the masquerade that s/he is forced to play in trying to become assimilated into mainstream culture. In her insightful engagement with ethnic drag, Katrin Sieg comments that even the masquerading non-Westerner is considered to be too simple-minded to return the seemingly objective gaze of the Western spectator. However, when the Easterner does appropriate the masquerade, the Western spectator-scientist at once interprets it as a punishable act of sinister sedition:

19 In such experiences, "one event becomes linked with another in a way that we do not expect and couldn't predict rationally based on evidence. The moment of insight may seem like a release into an imaginative and visionary state that transcends the normal rules of space and time. It is sometimes felt as numinous, ecstatic, or filled with the greatest meaning for life. Often such experiences are connected with highly emotional concerns like death, birth, or marriage, but sometimes as well, an unexplained coincidence simply happens and one doesn't know why or what it means and it remains a puzzle". (Lorenz)

20 The Czech psychiatrist Stanislav Grof describes this cosmic creative principle as follows: "Our psyche can enter into playful interaction with what appears to be the world of matter. The fact that this can happen blurs the boundaries between subjective and objective reality." (95)

> But what if a non-German subject addresses itself to that imagination, taking hold of its personnel and machinery to investigate the Platonic taxonomy of true and false representations and its ideological function in the (Federal) Republic? Does the entrance of the referent and her appropriation of the visual apparatus trap her in the ethnic coordinates of the body, even as she contests its devaluation [...]? (222)

Özdamar, for her part, escapes such entrapment by writing *Karagöz in Alamania* (1981) and *Keloğlan in Alamania* (1991), plays that borrow from Turkish folklore and, as Sieg suggests,

> Özdamar, playing with that orientalist myth [that Orientals are always already assumed to be lying], shifts attention from the pathologically mendacious body to the theatrical and social apparatuses that dictate its forms of appearance. (244)

Şenocak's own skepticism about the migrant writers' attempt to gain agency by rewriting Germans' ethnic fantasies for their own purpose manifests itself in "Der Sprung im Griff," the first text in "Gedächtnisfragmente" where the narrator's parents are unable to masquerade anymore as a way of constructing and performing either the Oriental "other" or the essentialized German citizen – both of which prevent them from perceiving themselves in their multilayered, in itself contradictory, wholeness (Şenocak, *Atlas of a Tropical Germany* 99). Hence Şenocak's satirical response to Özdamar's *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*, where he accuses her of perpetuating the myth of the lying, languid, tale-telling Oriental "other":

> nur wenn wir ein Märchen erzählen sind wir glaubwürdig
> nicht wenn ein Märchen uns erzählt und dabei bitter und bitterböse wird (*War Hitler Araber?* 56)
>
> (only when we narrate a fairytale are we credible, not when a fairytale narrates us and in the process becomes bitter and very angry)

However, Sieg convincingly argues:

> *Keloğlan in Alamania*, rather than appealing to the "truth" of oppressed identities, performs a politics of disidentification when it parodically embodies colonialist fantasy or the assimilationist nightmare of *Zwangsgermanisierung*.[21] (252)

21 Enforced Germanization.

Şenocak disavows Özdamar's use of masquerade, although he resorts to similar strategies in an earlier work *Der Erottomane* (1999). In this work the protagonist plays the double role of Teyfun (Tom)/Robert, where the change from the Turkish name "Teyfun" (typhoon) to "Tom" (a diminutive form of "Thomas") seemingly trivializes the onerous project of name giving: "Ich habe zwei Namen. Tom und Robert. Kaum jemand weiß, daß sich hinter diesen Namen ein und dieselbe Person verbirgt" (*Der Erottomane* 71) (I have two names. Tom and Robert. Hardly anyone knows that one and the same person hides behind these names).

In "Der Griff hat einen Sprung" the narrator's father complains: "Made in Germany ist auch nicht mehr das was es einmal war" (Made in Germany is not anymore what it once was) unconsciously mimicking white Germans' dissatisfaction with the increasing plurality in the country and resultant perceived lowering of "German" standards (ZE 11). The narrator bemoans the fact that

> Aus dem Spiel, das meine Eltern einst so gerne spielten, ist heute bitterer Ernst geworden. [...] Längst geht es nicht mehr um eine Maskerade, sondern um eine Art Vaterlandsverteidung, wenn von eigener und fremder Kultur die Rede ist. (ZE 11)
>
> (The game that my parents once liked to play so much has now become deadly serious. [...] It doesn't have to do with masquerade anymore, but with a kind of defense of the fatherland, whenever the topic of one's own versus a foreign culture is raised.)

In the next essay, "Territorien" (territories), the narrator continues to wonder about the phenomenon of alienation from one's language, from one's pre-migrant existence:

> Seit ich ein Fremder bin, glaube ich wieder. [...] Fragt mich nicht wie man das wird, ein Fremder. [...] Man wird auf der Straße angesprochen und weiß es. [...] Zuhause wird der Glaube irgendwann überflüssig. Man kennt jeden Winkel und kann sich etwas Verborgenes gar nicht mehr vorstellen. An die zwielichtige Stelle des Glaubens tritt grelle Gewißheit. Es gibt kaum noch einen Grund, seinen Glauben zu leben. Man liest die Buchstaben, die man lesen kann, setzt sie zu Worten zusammen, die man kennt, glaubt mit ihnen alle Weltsprachen zu verstehen. Als Fremder versteht man seine eigene Sprache nicht mehr. *Man hat nur noch seinen Glauben*. (ZE 15; emphasis added)

> (Ever since I've been a foreigner, I have begun to believe again. [...] Don't ask me how one becomes a foreigner. [...] One is accosted on the street and knows it. [...] At home belief becomes superfluous at some point. One knows every nook and cranny and cannot imagine anything hidden anymore. Harsh certitude takes the place of the dubious site of belief. There is hardly any reason anymore to live one's belief. One reads the letters that one can read, puts them together into the words that one is familiar with, believes that with these one can understand the languages of the world. As a foreigner one can't understand one's own language anymore. *One has only one's belief.*)

If one is left only with one's own belief, albeit a belief system that has not yet been institutionalized, then "Auf Reittieren" (on mounts) is an attempt to escape into a mythical past, where "Der lange Schlaf verjüngt. Wenn man aufwacht, kommt man wieder auf die Welt" (ZE 17) (Long sleep rejuvenates. When one wakes up one is reborn). This sense of rebirth, of nostalgia for a place of origin, is mockingly transferred from the East to the West in "Mein Europa" (My Europe) a Europe of the narrator's making that is still anchored in the East:

> Ich habe bis heute nicht begriffen, ob wir nach Europa oder nach Deutschland gezogen sind. Deutschland ist das Land in dem ich lebe, meine konkrete Umgebung. Europa dagegen war nur ein Traum, der einst ein paar hundert Meter von unserem Haus gestanden hatte und den es plötzlich nicht mehr gab. Träume sind langlebig, weil sie nicht wirklich sind. (ZE 18)

> (I have not understood to this day whether we moved to Europe or to Germany. Germany is the land in which I live, my concrete environment. In contrast, Europe was only a dream that had once stood a couple of hundred meters away from our house and which suddenly was no more. Dreams are persistent because they are not real.)

In "Die Heimat trägt der Mensch in sich" (One carries the homeland within oneself) Şenocak continues his struggles with divided selves, seeing the only release from fragmentation not merely in a dream-like state of being, but also in mysticism:

> Vielleicht ist die Fähigkeit einen Ort, vor allem eine Metropole verlassen zu können, die eigentliche Voraussetzung, um dort zuhause zu sein. Wer Heimat als Eindeutigkeit erfahren will, wird in den Großstädten heimatlos.

> *In der islamischen Mystik* wird der Mensch als Gast auf der Welt beschrieben. Der Mensch leidet daran, ein aus dem Paradies Vertriebener zu sein. Ein Exilant eben. (ZE 23; emphasis added)
>
> (Perhaps it is the ability to leave a place, especially a metropolis, that is the actual precondition for feeling at home there. Whoever wants to experience the homeland as uniqueness becomes homeless in the metropolises. *In Islamic mysticism* the human being is described as a guest in the world. The human being suffers at being expelled from paradise. Just an exile.)

The text "Gedanken zum 8. Mai 1995" (Thoughts on 8 May 1995) poses the following question on the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II:

> Hat der brutale Versuch der Nazis Deutschland ethnisch zu homogenisieren, nichts mit dem gegenwärtigen Widerstand zu tun, die durch die Migration entstandene ethnische Vielfalt in Deutschland des Jahres 1995 anzuerkennen? (ZE 27)
>
> (Does the brutal attempt by the Nazis to ethnically homogenize Germany have nothing to do with the current resistance to recognizing the ethnic diversity created by migration to Germany in the year 1995?)

A barely suppressed xenophobia, the legacy of the Nazis, runs in subterranean trails under the now permeable surface of Germany's Autobahnen.

"Hände weg von meiner Biographie"[22] (Hands off my biography) concludes with an insight that segues into the next section, "Brennpunkte der Entfremdung" (Focal points of alienation):

> Integration in unserer Zeit aber ist ein höchst widerspruchsvoller, komplizierter Prozeß. Sie schafft Menschen mit multiplen Identitäten, Menschen mit Brüchen in den Biographien, die durch eine Fixierung auf irgendeine Eindeutigkeit nicht mehr erfaßt werden können. (ZE 31)

22 Şenocak defines Biografie (biography) in the following way: "Herkunft, die nicht ein konstruiertes, kollektives Gedächtnis bedient, sondern ein persönliches, ist Biographie" (ZE 29) (Origin, which serves not a constructed, collective memory, but rather a personal one, is biography).

> (Integration in our times is however a highly contradictory, complicated process. It creates people with multiple identities, people with cracks in their biographies that cannot be captured anymore by fixating on some kind of uniqueness.)

The migrant narrator critiques the seductive rhetoric of an identity-obliterating fatherland ("Der Griff hat einen Sprung") and the powerfully divisive nature of territorial desires ("Territorien"). The only way to craft his own biography is to shatter the migrant's belief in a unitary conception of identity, gather the shards and refashion them into multiple biographies, multilayered existences. In the next section, "Brennpunkte der Entfremdung" (Focal points of alienation), fragments constantly shift and come together in kaleidoscopic shapes and patterns.

II – BRENNPUNKTE DER ENTFREMDUNG

Paul Celan's despair asks: "Ist die Sprache dem Menschen zumutbar?" (ZE 95) (Can human beings handle language?) Ingeborg Bachmann seems to equate language with truth: "Ist die Wahrheit dem Menschen zumutbar?" (ZE 95) (Can human beings handle the truth?) Celan and Bachmann both question the ability of human beings to rise to the level of humanity that language deserves. Şenocak adopts these questions, but seeks redemptive alternatives. He refuses to accept fragmentation as the hopelessly irredeemable consequence of globalization.

In the essay "Orte zum Kennenlernen und Genießen. Über den interkulturellen Dialog" (Places to get to know and enjoy: About intercultural dialog) Şenocak addresses this very question. He conceives an intercultural dialog in utopian terms:

> ... der Auslöser einer interkulturellen Situation ist immer ein Moment des Befremdens. Man spurt die Grenzen des eigenen Wissens, ist ganz Ohr und Leib, um diesen Moment zu überwinden, ihn für sich verständlich aufzulösen. Das ist der Idealfall. (ZE 35)

> (... the catalyst for an intercultural situation is always a moment of alienation. One senses the limitations of one's own knowledge, attends with body and soul in order overcome this moment, to resolve it coherently for oneself. That is the ideal case.)

However, reality turns out to be very different:

> Man steht vor einem unauflösbaren, nicht integrierbaren Fremden. Oder man geht ihm aus dem Weg. Man läßt es gar nicht erst zu einer Konfrontation kommen. (ZE 35)
>
> (One is confronted by an irresolvable, not integrable other. Or one avoids it. One doesn't allow it to come to a confrontation at all.)

The question and counter-question that Şenocak now poses goes to the heart of the debates surrounding migration and integration:

> Die Frage, die sich stellt, lautet, wie können wir offen sein, ohne an Boden zu verlieren. Die Gegenfrage lautet, wie sehr können wir dicht machen, ohne an unserer Enge zu ersticken. (ZE 39)
>
> (The question now is how open we can be without losing ground. The counter question is how we can pull down the shutters without suffocating in our narrowness.)

Remarkably, it is not in an intercultural context in which Şenocak frames his question about the delicate balancing act between opening up without losing one's ground, and pulling down one's shutters without stifling in one's narrowness. Rather – and this is significant in understanding Şenocak's writing – he places the conflict squarely *within* a culture:

> Doch der Kulturkonflikt findet nicht zwischen den Kulturen, sondern *in der Kultur selbst* statt. [...] Nicht zwischen den Kulturen befinden wir uns also, sondern auf einem Steinbruch. Wir müssen lernen Versatzstücke zu lesen, unser Verlangen nach Ganzheit aufzugeben. In unsere zersplitterte Welt hat jeder Zugang. [...] (ZE 42; emphasis added)
>
> (However, cultural conflict does not take place between cultures, but rather *in the culture itself*. [...] We don't find ourselves between cultures, but in a stone quarry. We have to learn to read the props, relinquish our desire for wholeness. Everyone has access to our fragmented world.)

Şenocak urges rethinking society not in terms of identity and belonging that only feed xenophobia, but rather with greater pragmatism and ideas that can be realized in day-to-day life (ZE 50). In doing so, he unequivocally attacks the concept of *Leitkultur*:

> Mit autoritären Begriffen wie "Leitkultur" verraten sich Konservative in Deutschland selbst als unreif für die Herausforderungen einer vernetzten Welt mit vielen Unsicherheiten, fragilen, komplexen und oft auch widersprüchlichen Identitäten. [...] Eine solche Sprechweise sucht nach keinem Du. Sie macht den Anderen überflüssig und verliert ihn dadurch. (ZE 56)
>
> (By using authoritarian terms such as "guiding culture," conservatives in Germany betray themselves as immature in meeting the challenges of a networked world with many uncertainties, with fragile, complex, and often contradictory identities. [...] This kind of speech does not seek a "you." It makes the other superfluous and thus loses it.)

He pleads for an autonomous German-Turkish identity, arguing that such an identity would produce a politically mature citizen, whatever his or her ethnicity, since such a citizen is the most important cornerstone of a constitutional democracy and the archenemy of an authoritarian conception of statehood (ZE 61).

Şenocak resorts to satire in "Perspektiven der Mitte: Oder wo steht Deutschland auf der Welt?" (Perspectives from the center: Or what is Germany's place in the world?) He employs the clichéd language of exclusionary citizenship to criticize Germany's unwillingness to counter increasing racist tension in the country: "Wir sind bodenständige, struktursüchtige, soziale Wesen, denen die flexible Individualisierung im Internet höchst suspekt ist" (ZE 65) (We are down-to-earth social beings who are addicted to structure and to whom flexible individualization in the Internet is highly suspect). He ends with the comment: "Bei so vielen unvermeidlichen Kontakten mit Grenzgängern braucht unser Land dringend eine neue Schutzhaut" (ZE 66) (In face of so many unavoidable contacts with border crossers our country urgently needs a new protective skin). Borders have become porous, and the migrant poses a constant danger of carrying identity-threatening diseases. However, xenophobia can regenerate its reptilian skin to shield itself against such contacts.

III – HYBRIDE ENGEL

With this oxymoronic title Şenocak calls into question the unitary nature of angels by investing them with the quality of hybridity, and rocks the foundations of hegemonic belief systems. Such hegemony creates fragmentation and alienation of minorities, resulting in abject loneliness. But Şenocak introduces a space where loneliness is transformed into solitude:

> In der eigenen Sprache wird [Solitude] von zu vielen Stimmen geteilt. Er ist unbrauchbar, um einen Zustand der Isolierung auszudrücken. [...] Der diasporische Intellektuelle ist eine Hauptfigur der "solitude". Er ist Deserteur, Seismograph des Scheiterns der Kommunikation. Er kann sich nicht mehr mit einer Gruppe identifizieren. Der Verlust von Identifikation ist der erste Schritt in Richtung der "solitude". (ZE 73)
>
> (In one's own language [solitude] is shared by many voices. It is not effective in expressing a condition of isolation. [...] The diasporic intellectual is the protagonist of "solitude." He is a deserter, a seismograph of the collapse of communication. He cannot identify anymore with one group. The loss of identification is the first step toward "solitude.")

Unquestioning group identification erases identity. Şenocak suggests that solitude invests the diasporic individual with the ability to reflect upon his identity, and to communicate with others in an authentic manner – not unlike an earlier quest that a Nietzschian Zarathustra undertook.

IV – JENSEITS DER LANDESSPRACHE

Once again, Şenocak breaks out of the constraints of dichotomous categories, going "beyond the national language" to remove the ubiquitous shroud of otherness that covers the migrant. His core insight here is expressed in terms of an analogy with love.

> Nur durch die entrückende Kraft der Liebe kann man das Leben einer anderen Person leben, die auf diese Weise ihre Fremdheit ablegt und zu einer Vertrauten wird. So lebe und erlebe ich die andere Sprache. Von dieser Warte aus gesehen bin

> ich immer ratlos, wenn ich aufgrund meiner Herkunft Stellung beziehen muß, zu einer wie auch immer vermuteten Fremdheit. Ich glaube nicht, daß ich und mein Deutsch fremdeln und uns auseinanderleben werden. Aber wie sicher kann man sich in einer Ehe schon sein. (ZE 83)
>
> (Only through the entrancing power of love can one live the life of another person, who sets aside his/her foreignness and becomes an intimate. Thus do I live and experience the other language. Looking at it from this perspective I am always at a loss when I have to take a stand on foreignness because of my origin, however it is presumed. I don't believe that I and my German are shy of each other and will drift apart. But how secure can one be in a marriage.)

Şenocak's description of his intimate relationship with German calls into question the perceived union that exists between language and identity. Much like Else Lasker-Schüler's defiant gesture with *IchundIch* against the obliterating influence of Goethe's Faustian "Two souls dwell, alas, in my breast," Şenocak audaciously transplants Goethe into the twenty-first century with his text "betrifft: http://www.goethe.de" and irreverently rebukes him for not paying greater attention to the purity of language, an accusation that is typically leveled against migrant writers: "Sollte nicht gerade eine Persönlichkeit wie Sie mehr auf sprachliche Reinheit achten?" (ZE 85) (Shouldn't a personality like you pay more attention to the purity of language?)

All the fragments that constitute this work finally cohere in a sense of healing, a recognition that we live in metaphysical times where "dichte Worte zu Nahrungsmitteln [werden]" (ZE, 92) (dense words [become] food). We come back to the quotation with which this reading of Şenocak began:

> Meine Texte stehen auf drei Beinen:
> Erinnern
> Erfinden
> Spielen
> Bekanntlich ist das Stehen auf drei Beinen nicht immer eine stabile Angelegenheit. Für mich aber ist mehr das Verrücken und Fortschreiten von Bedeutung als das Stehen. Das Fortschreiten auf drei Beinen ist eine Bewegungsform zwischen Gehen und Sich im Kreis Drehen, Tanzen und Stolpern.

> Oft genug sieht es lustig aus.
> Auf das Gleichgewicht achten und dennoch manchmal auch den Sturz wagen, das ist Erfinden, Erinnern und Spielen. (ZE 93)[23]

Sufism and Celan accompany Şenocak throughout this writing:

> Celan ist ein Meister des Verschwindens, welches irrtümlicherweise als Verstummen bezeichnet wird. Der Verstummende ist nicht mehr hörbar. Das Verschwundene, Unsagbare aber existiert. Sogar intensive, in komprimierter Form. Diese Intensität gehört zum unverwechselbaren Ton Celanscher Poesie. (ZE 94)
>
> (Celan is a master of disappearance, which is erroneously characterized as falling silent. The silent one is not audible anymore. The disappeared, the unsaid exists however. Even intensely, in compacted form. This intensity belongs to the distinctive tone of Celan's poetry.)

Both Dervish and Celan disappear in the intensity of their dance and poetry. In doing so, they "verwischen die Linien auf den schwarzen Tafeln im Gedächtnis" (ZE 96) (smudge the lines on the blackboards of one's memory).

The final question remains: "Welcher Mythos schreibt mich?" (Which mythology is writing me?) Şenocak has learned to differentiate between "cold" and "warm" language. Although his father has provided him with mystical texts, it is his mother, a representative of logocentric thinking because of her mathematical background, who speaks a "warm" language:

> … wieder zerbrach eine sicher geglaubte Polarität, eine dichotomische Struktur. Schrieb ich den Eros eher der Mystik zu, wie man es erwartete, verschwand er in der erkalteten Sprache alter Texte, vertraute ich ihn der weiblichen Wärme an, wurde seine Sprache unverständlich. (ZE 101)

23 My texts stand on three legs: / Remembering / Inventing / Playing / It is well known that standing on three legs is not always a stable matter. / But for me displacement and progressive motion are more significant / than standing. / Progressive motion on three legs is a form of movement between walking and going around in circles, dancing and stumbling. / Often enough it appears comic. / Pay heed to one's balance and yet at times / to risk the fall, that is invention, remembrance and play.

> (... once again a polarity one had believed secure was shattered, a dichotomous structure. If I attributed Eros more to mysticism, as people expected, it disappeared in the cold language of older texts, if I entrusted it to the female warmth, its language became incomprehensible.)

The disruption of such dichotomies permits the birth of a unique "Schreibmythos" (writing myth), at the point of rupture between rationality and mysticism. Mystical texts had to be separated from a facile connection with the erotic, rejuvenated in such a way that they regained their creative warmth that merged the erotic and the ascetic into the sublime:

> Mein Schreibmythos war geboren. Er entstand an der Bruchstelle zwischen Ratio und Mystik, am Hauptbahnhof des Eros, wo Kommen und Gehen das Lebenselixier aller ist, die schon lange nicht mehr auf die Ankunft der Engel warten. (ZE 100f.)

> (My writing myth had been born. It emerged at the point of rupture between reason and mysticism, at the central railway station of Eros, where coming and going is the elixir of life for all those who have long ceased to wait for the arrival of angels.)

Şenocak ends *Zungenentfernung* with this insight:

> Nicht eine Kluft geht durch unsere Welt, sondern viele sichtbare und unsichtbare Risse, die uns trennen und zugleich verbinden. (ZE 103)

> (Not just one chasm goes through our world, but many visible and invisible cracks that simultaneously separate and join us.)

In order to see more clearly some of these visible and invisible cracks that at once join and separate us, we may now shift our gaze slightly from Germany to France.

CHAPTER IV

France and its *banlieues défavorisées*

> Overall, the sons and daughters of North African immigrants believed that the Left had not followed through on its promises. By the time the Pasqua Law of 1993 effectively reduced immigration to zero and the Méhaignerie Act made voluntarism a necessary condition for the attribution of French citizenship (for any child born in France who did not have at least one citizen parent), it would be fair to say that the bubble of associative energy of the 1980s in the *banlieues défavorisées* that had given rise to the March for Equality and Against Racism had burst. In fact, there was the growing sense that these areas were no-go zones in which living conditions were noticeably deteriorating and those who could get out did. An ethos of community had given way to survivalism
>
> — LAURA REECK (7)

When my father returned in 1932 by sea from England to an India still ruled by the British Raj, he fashioned at least two personae for himself: the "brown sahib" working under British colonial officers in charge of the British Railways in India; and the "Brahmin son" whose body had been polluted by those foreign ("British") waters and consequently had to be cleansed by the holy waters of the River Ganges. Reflecting on this schism in his life, I marveled at the apparent ease with which he crossed the borders of these two worlds and combined them so seamlessly. However, when I made a similar sea voyage thirty-seven years later from Germany to a now independent India, I began reflecting on crossings in new, more differentiated ways. It was perhaps at that time that I fully comprehended the constant state of fragmentation my father had experienced in spanning those waters.

Crossings always call into question categories used to analyze society, as is clear from reading writers like Özdamar and Şenocak. This is particularly true in relation to spatial categories such as city, town, suburb, periphery, outskirts, and satellite towns. In which space does membership of a society occur? If membership entitles one to choose one's living space, then into which spaces are those who are denied membership – the disenfranchised, the vulnerable, the ungrievable – driven? In the European Middle Ages, members of so-called defiled trades like prostitutes, executioners, and skinners were kept outside the walls of the city (Stuart 85). At least ten centuries of ghettoization kept Jews outside the protection of citizenship. In India, "untouchables" were not only kept on the outskirts of "civic space", but had to be careful not to let even their shadow fall on the bodies of members of the upper castes. Similarly, women were – and in many villages still are – prohibited from participating in normal life while menstruating. Where this tradition still persists, they have to live outside the main house, then become "purified" before they are allowed to return to their families. Even in so-called modern families, menstruating women are still not allowed on hallowed ground. Has ghettoization reinvented itself in the twenty-first century, and if so, what forms has it now adopted?

Theo Sommer's comments in the context of ghettoization underscore Germans' unwillingness to accept that theirs is *de facto* a country of immigration. He describes the three stages that lead to "inclusion": 1) "... the newcomers at first stick to their old identity; 2) they then "develop multiple identities"; 3) they "*get enveloped by the cultural tissue of the host society* they have embraced" (Sommer; emphasis added).

> This happened to tens of thousands of Huguenots – Protestant refugees from France who at one time made up one-third of all Berliners. It happened to half a million Poles who, a hundred years ago, were sent to work in the coal mines of the Ruhr area. It was also the same with the 500,000 German Jews who had long ago left their ghettos before the Nazis drove them out of the country or, worse, into the gas chambers. It was likewise the lot of 10,000 Turks taken prisoner after the Sultan's army was defeated in 1683 and shipped to Bavaria. Today, not a trace is left of them. Only the Türkenstrasse – the Street of the Turks – reminds the Munich natives of these earlier immigrants.

> This is how inclusion works in the course of (a few) generations. But in the process, not only the newcomers change – they also transform the host society. Thus Germany will change its Turkish millions – and the Turkish Germans will change Germany. (Sommer)

Sommer's earlier comment about the newcomers getting "enveloped by the cultural tissue of the host society" gives the lie to the final sentence ("and the Turkish Germans will change Germany"). The passage often resonates with the familiar rhetoric in the US of the "melting-pot", hiding the underlying aggression with which many Germans are resisting change to their illusion of a homogenous *Leitkultur*, a monocultural vision of German society. As Hartwig Pautz convincingly argues, the *Leitkulturdebatte* (mainstream culture debate)

> not only replaced racial belonging with cultural belonging, transforming the *ius sanguinis* into an equally essentialist *ius cultus*, it also formed part of a conservative attempt to re-establish a "normal" German national consciousness, cleared of the memory of the Holocaust. (39)

Given such resistance to diversity, it should not come as a surprise that an emerging fourth generation of residents of Turkish origin, fluent in German but even less integrated than before, is manifestly unwilling to become part of the *Leitkultur*. Zafer Şenocak has an explanation for this conundrum:

> What conditions do we need to make the migrants identify themselves with the host society and to see themselves as part of this society? Even those who attend beginner classes in psychology know that the first step cannot be to convince the migrant of the inferiority of his culture [...] A successful host society needs, as a first step, to show the willingness and readiness to receive. ("On Integration" 170)

As the readings of Özdamar and Şenocak have shown, there are numerous ways in which the dominant culture in Germany continues to ghettoize its "ungrievable" minorities.

In comparing Germany with France, a re-examination of terms such as suburb or a project (US), or *Vorort* (Germany),[1] or *banlieues défavorisées*,

1 Suburb.

quartiers sensibles, *quartiers difficiles* (France) will prove instructive.[2] The associations evoked by each of these terms vary a great deal. "Suburb" in the US may conjure up the image of white middle- or upper-class families and their quiet, wealthy houses. The other side of the coin is the "project," or the "ghettoization" of public housing, and the fear of criminality. In France and Germany, ungrievable minorities occupy very different spaces. Whereas Germany's *Vorort* is much like US-American suburbia, France's *banlieues défavorisées* are peripheral to the city. Harald Bodenschatz discusses the concept of "Vorort" (suburb) in Germany:

> Until now, we set neat borders to our suburbia, borders that *cannot be crossed* or, more precisely, borders that will only be crossed if planners create the possibility to do so. Thus, suburbia cannot occupy as much space as in the US. German suburbia comprises neat borders and a certain architectural density. Hence, Germany is used to a nicely planned suburbia that grows rhythmically step by step and plan by plan, a suburbia that does not spread out like an oil puddle. (Bodenschatz; emphasis added)

"... Cannot be crossed" suggests the wall that encircles and protects the myth of an ethnically pure German populace with its neat borders, rigidly protected from the unruly, uncivilized incursion of "ungrievable" migrant hordes.

When one turns to France, the trajectory of migration is different from that in Germany primarily because of the former's colonial past. The term *banlieues* is often used as a euphemism to designate populations defined by ethnic background, thereby obscuring race as a factor. The common myth is that whereas race drives US American discourse, the French are primarily interested in class. As I observed in Chapter I, French public policies and legislation were never really devoid of racial categories. However, the discourse on *banlieues* that emerged in the late 1980s removed this artifice of color-blindness. I repeat the words of the Romanian sociologist Dan Dungaciu here:

2 Vulnerable neighborhoods; sensitive neighborhoods; neighborhoods with problems.

> Ernest Renan, civic nationalist par excellence, was not so "civic" because, for example, in 1882 he remarked that the nation is "un plébiscite de tous les jours," but yet not a plebiscite for the Algerians. (21)

In other words, from the standpoint of the ungrievable minority of Algerians this kind of nationalism is not tolerant. It even suggests that ethnic community and individuality is the price to pay for receiving citizenship and its benefits, as Dungaciu explains (21).

Also known as *zone périphérique*, the *banlieue* designates a territory without the protective walls, but within the legal limits, of a town or city. It conjures up for average French citizen the image of drug-infested housing projects and abject poverty, with embittered unemployed youth increasingly unable to contain their rage, and vigilantes policing the streets to ensure that Islamic Sharia law is enforced, with special attention to modesty in women's attire. Valérie Orlando describes how the Beur and immigrant communities are becoming progressively ghettoized:

> By ghettoizing the Other, the West succeeds in maintaining stereotypes of Alterity associated with Maghrebian cultures. Ghettoization is convenient for French culture because it easily continues the perceived orderliness of the colonial world (which means the maintenance of strict racial barriers), rather than confronting the uncertainty surrounding equality and acceptance of difference as a positive feature of multicultural cosmopolitanism. (169)

In the 1980s, the children of North African immigrants began to call themselves "Beur" as a collective identity. Although these children are not immigrants in the traditional sense of the word, their thinking and writing reflect the tensions stemming from shorter "migratory" movements, like the daily commute between the *banlieues* and the French metropolis. However, as the media and political parties increasingly co-opted this self-designation and mainstreamed it, the term lost its original significance.

The Algerian writer Malika Mokeddem approaches the problem of cultural homelessness that Beurs experience in dramatically differentiated ways. In my reading of her work, I distance myself from pigeon-holing her writing as *écriture beure*, since such terms are reductive and unproductive. In the context of minority literature in Germany, Heidrun Suhr refutes

terms like *Ausländerliteratur* (foreigner literature) because they reduce "the literary works of these authors to little emblems of cultural pluralism" (B. Venkat Mani 202). In Mokeddem's *Of Dreams and Assassins* the protagonist Slim says when asked if he is a "beur": "I have a horror of this word. Beur like butter, and I don't like butter either. It's sticky, it stains, and it becomes rancid" (106). Mokeddem's writing resonates with this horror of becoming putrid.

"Alice in Merguezland": Mokeddem's novels *L'Interdite* and *Mes Hommes*[3]

> My sister, Samia, says that we Algerian girls, we're all "Alice in Merguezland"; since we never have any wonders, we put spices everywhere, everywhere. Dreams are my spices.
>
> — MOKEDDEM, *The Forbidden Woman* (121)

An indefatigable Alice makes her appearance again, this time in Mokeddem's tale about forbidden women (*L'Interdite*, 1994). Once again, I marvel at the power of Lewis Carroll, that curmudgeonly imaginative nineteenth-century Anglican deacon, to insert himself into the writings of one of the most marginalized groups on the planet, "third world" women. The Algeria described in most of Mokeddem's work is that of a land eviscerated first by patriarchy and colonialism, then by a growing Islamist fundamentalism that seduces disaffected young Algerian men into using violence against women as a panacea for their socio-economic and political impotence. Mokeddem's France becomes darker with each work, depicting how young

3 All references are to the English editions of these works entitled *The Forbidden Woman* and *My Men.* All further references to *The Forbidden Woman* and *My men* will be parenthetically indicated by the abbreviations TFW and MM followed by the page number.

Algerian men who have migrated to France are disenfranchised and banished to the *banlieues*, as the civil unrest of 2005 against urban marginalization has clearly proven. It seems as if the only way Mokeddem can keep putrefaction at bay is by inhaling the wondrous spices of Merguezland,[4] in the "uncynical state of wondrous curiosity associated with childhood" that Fallowell mentions in discussing Lewis Carroll's Alice:

> She returns us to the uncynical state of wondrous curiosity associated with childhood and, like a genuine goddess, leads us into strange, eternal places without leading us astray. (106)

Born in 1949 in Kenadsa in the Algerian desert, Malika Mokeddem was raised by a father who considered women to be chattels, and a mother who believed in maintaining the "tradition" of servitude for women. Nevertheless, she managed to study medicine in Algeria and France. In 1977, she established herself in Montpellier in order to practice nephrology. In 1985 Mokeddem stopped working as a doctor in order to concentrate on her writing.

It is not my intention to venture on well-trodden paths of research and analysis. I offer only a brief summary of readerly approaches to Mokeddem that will help me frame new questions about her thinking and writing. Most critics emphasize the poetics of nomadism and exile in the writings of Arab Francophone women writers (Bacholle 2002; Mehta 2003; Carlson 2004; Hamil 2004; Evans 2005).

Mehta best describes this nomadic consciousness or *conscience originelle* of the desert tribes as a

> flexibility to move and think freely, on one's feet so to speak, as a defense mechanism to deal with the inconsistencies of nature and human existence. Horizontality can be compared to a form of transformative knowledge that is nevertheless rooted in a collective saharian sensibility of universal movement reflected in the following statement, "The nomads disappeared further into the depths of the land. We were their descendants, the men who walk. They walked. We walked." (7)

4 Merguez is a spicy sausage common in North African cuisine. It has become popular in Europe (particularly France) and beyond in recent decades.

Scholars also thematize fractured identities in Mokeddem's writings (Hamil 2004; Carlson 2005; Jones 2008), with special attention to the intersections between language, identity, and self-expression. In her discussion of Mokeddem's *N'zid* (2001), Carlson comments:

> Nora's lingering amnesia and solitary maritime navigation on the Mediterranean situate her in a spatio-temporal interval that resists classification while it cultivates a fertile space for creation. Her nomadism and negotiation of certain linguistic, literary, and artistic realms allow Nora to recover from a traumatic experience, reconstruct her past memories, and reclaim her multifaceted identity. (343f.)

Carlson also observes the homonymic similarity of the French terms for "sea" (mer / mère) in her analysis of *N'zid*:

> Nora's repeated acts of diving into the sea suggest a psychological desire to return to the womb: an impulse underscored by multiple connotations of the French term "eaux" that refers to waters as well as to amniotic fluid. For Nora, swimming in the sea represents a development regression or second pre-Oedipal phase, prior to a child's linguistic acquisition, where the mother's voice serves as a primal point of contact. (350)

She sounds a different tone to previous analyses by underscoring Mokeddem's use of "blanchir" (whitening):

> Her selection of the term "blanchir" is provocative, since Nora's visual acts of self-expression are also inextricably tied to her skin. Nevertheless, her acts of filling blank pages with drawings and paintings are cathartic, for they allow her to recover from past traumas and to fill in the gaps of her lost memory. (357)[5]

Mokeddem's central concern in her writings is with the waters that migrants have to cross and re-cross, and how these waters, like amniotic fluid, involve renewed, identity-obliterating "baptisms". These crossings are certainly

5 This mention of whiteness brings to mind another Algerian writer, Assia Djebar, who places the non-color white squarely in the title of her text *Algerian White: A Narrative*. Djebar uses the entire spectrum of whiteness, from its deathlike absence to the transformative "unalterable white" of her friends' presence (53) and the white [Berber] voice of an Algerian poet's mother (101).

not the kind of travel male and female European travelers undertook in nineteenth-century Europe, where they were typically securely grounded in a history of their own making. Travel from colonizing countries like Britain, Germany, and France was predominantly defined by the desire to interpret the East in order to dominate it, as Edward Said suggests. (Said) Women travelers who traveled alone differed, however, in one crucial aspect from their male counterparts. Travel for them was often both an escape from societal constraints and a means to acquire an agency that they did not possess at home.[6]

In Mokeddem's works, as Carlson persuasively argues, travel appears to be another Odyssey, albeit with gender reversal. However, in assuming the role of Odysseus, she also questions the notion of a stable homeland, of connubially faithful Penelopes waiting in the wings. Iain Chambers' observations on travel succinctly describe the difference between travel and migrancy:

> [T]o travel implies movement between fixed positions, a site of departure, a point of arrival, the knowledge of an itinerary. It also intimates an eventual return, a potential homecoming. Migrancy, on the contrary, involves a movement in which neither the points of a departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are *constantly subject to mutation*. Always in transit, the promise of a homecoming – completing the story, domesticating the detour – becomes an impossibility. (Kaplan 139; emphasis added)

The mutative, "shape-shifting" quality of the migrant is what Mokeddem captures. Carlson injects an intriguing corollary to the discussion about travel in *N'zid*: "... [Nora's] solitary moments of maritime navigation and acts of artistic creation lead directly to the recovery of her lost memory" (345). The amnesia that colonial trauma causes finds a healing element in sea voyages – not the eternal wandering of a cursed Ahasverus, but a "nomadic movement between different lands, cultures and languages" which Erickson interprets as an agent for positive change leading to "linguistic, cultural,

6 For example, the single-mindedness of the nineteenth-century German traveler Ida von Hahn-Hahn's search for origins, for an identity distinct from that which patriarchy had pre-ordained for her, is most certainly in line with this struggle for control.

and political pluralism" (97). Carlson adds that in Nora's situation "this geographical, cultural, and linguistic plurality offers her a fundamental mobility for the creation of identity" (346).

Mokeddem's men and women

In 1993 Mokeddem publishes *L'Interdite* (The Forbidden Woman) and twelve years later – in 2005 – she writes *Mes Hommes* (My Men). The titles and the anti-structural thrust of these texts reveal the trajectory of Mokeddem's growth as a writer. Her earlier works pulsate with the bitter distress of someone who was forced out of the role of active participant in the Algerian war of independence into that of a passive, abused victim in the postcolonial state. France seems to offer a way out of this shackled existence in Algeria. But does this promise hold? What kind of a "safe haven" is France the former colonizer?

I pay special attention to two aspects of Mokeddem's writing that have received relatively little notice: the quotations that preface her works, and, in the case of *The Forbidden Woman*, the literary device of employing heteronyms in her texts, as her reference to Fernando Pessoa suggests (Zenith).[7]

7 Richard Zenith describes Pessoa's heteronym as referring "to one or more imaginary character(s) created by a writer to write in different styles. Heteronyms differ from noms de plume (or pseudonyms, from the Greek 'False Name') in that the latter are just false names, while the former are characters having their own supposed physiques, biographies and writing styles."

L'Interdite (The Forbidden Woman)

> ... like a diverse but compact multitude, this whole world of mine, composed as it is of different people, projects but a single shadow, that of this calm figure who writes ...
> — FERNANDO PESSOA, *The Book of Disquiet*, (Mokeddem, TFW 2)

Fernando Pessoa (1888–1935), one of Portugal's most significant poets, witnessed between 1910 and his death in 1935 a series of important events in Portuguese social and political history. His writing was strongly affected by a wave of revolutionary nationalism, and displays opposing impulses that are held in a creative tension, not unlike that which Mokeddem herself underwent both in a colonized and an independent Algeria. As Sadlier argues, it is this "Janus-faced quality" of Pessoa's thinking that might have contributed to the development of the literary technique of multiple voices or heteronyms that he invented. (109) I suggest that the anti-structural appeal of heteronyms may have proven irresistible to Mokeddem. Pessoa's heteronym goes beyond the Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia that involved playing with "the mingling of different language groups, cultures, and classes" (29).[8] Pessoa's heteronyms extend their scope to become characters that have "their own [...] physiques, biographies, and writing styles" (Zenith). Mokeddem arguably employs a similar strategy.

Sultana and Vincent are two of the many heteronyms in *The Forbidden Woman*, mimicking Pessoa's "world of friends inside me, with their own real, individual, imperfect lives" (van der Aa). The multiplicity of styles evident in Mokeddem's writing reflects Pessoa's own reluctance to believe in linear progress. Like him, Mokeddem also seems to seek to make "lost history" reemerge in new forms, thus constructing selves that refuse to be reduced to a unitary identity. Although Pessoa was seen as conservative,

8 The Russian philosopher, literary critic and semiotician Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin explains "heteroglossia" as "the base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance." To make an utterance means to "appropriate the words of others and populate them with one's own intention." See also Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (22).

critics agree that he was also highly unconventional, especially in his rejection of Catholicism and all other forms of organized religion, which must have appealed to Mokeddem as well.

Pessoa's concept of the heteronym provided a powerful tool to defy the reductive, restrictive categorization that genres provided.[9] Mokeddem's works illustrate her likely use of this literary device: *Of Dreams and Assassins*, for example, is a mix of first- and third-person narratives that are neither novels nor treatises; *Century of Locusts* follows the Arabic literary tradition of lack of closure; Leila provides a third-person narrative in the autobiographical *The Men Who Walk*; and *The Forbidden Woman* presents "an altered version of typical nomad wandering in the form of mental flights and sea travel" (Evans).

The existences in *The Forbidden Woman* are not excessively fragmented. Rather, they project states of "in-between"-ness. She refuses to submit to an either/or state of being, seeking possibilities beyond a mere Hegelian synthesis, forging connections between cultures:

> Between modesty and disdain that erodes my rebellions. Between the tension resulting from refusal and the dispersion resulting from liberties. (TFW 36)

The Forbidden Woman contains several characters that match Pessoa's notion of heteronyms:

1. Sultana, a doctor who goes to France to study and work, but returns to Algeria when she hears of the death of her former lover and fellow physician, Yacine.
2. Vincent, a Frenchman who is the recipient of a perfectly matched kidney from a young Algerian woman, and travels to Algeria to explore the culture of this unknown person whose death has brought him back to life.

9 See Jane E. Evans for a thought-provoking discussion of Mokeddem's refusal to commit to any genre.

3. The child Dalila whom Yacine had befriended and who precociously and relentlessly questions society's contradictions mirrored in Yacine's unanticipated death.
4. Salah, Yacine's best friend.
5. The collective voice of the women of Aïn Nekhla.

Michel van der Aa, whose music theater work is based on Pessoa's *The Book of Disquiet*, mimics the latter's voice:

> What I basically do is convert other people into my dreams. I take their opinions, which I develop through my reason and intuition in order to make them my own, turning their personalities into things that have an affinity with my dreams.
>
> My life inhabits the shells of their personalities. I reproduce their footsteps in my spirit's clay, absorbing them so thoroughly into my consciousness that I, in the end, have taken their steps and walked in their paths even more than they.

When asked whether he was attracted to Pessoa's technique of writing through a series of alter-egos, van der Aa replies:

> Yes, Pessoa often casts himself in a series of distinct characters, "heteronyms" as he calls them, both male and female. I was intrigued by the idea that the sum of these doubles could provide a total representation of the poet.

How do the heteronyms in *The Forbidden Woman* provide a "total representation" of its narrator? The narrator shape-shifts in and out of the various characters she creates.

In the representation of Sultana's body, the narrator comes closest to what scholars definitively comprehend as the migrant's state of being: "All I have done is incorporate the desert and the inconsolable into my displaced body. They have split me in two" (TFW 3). One part of her is full of emotions, "exaggerated sensuality" (TFW 6). The other Sultana possesses a "demoniacal will" (TFW 6), oscillating between pain and pleasure, insanity and reason (TFW 6). Contrary to Western expectations, however, she finds both Algeria and France to be equally hypocritical. Algeria's lie of modernity is no less indefensible than France's lie of humanity (TFW 66). Ultimately, responsibility lies with the individual to kill the worm of

violence and hypocrisy in him- or herself (TFW 66). Practicing medicine in her home-town again allows Sultana to be more differentiated in her judgments, ignoring the kinds of hatred that fester in the mind (TFW 132). She thinks back to what that other heteronym, Dalila, is experiencing. As a child, she had merely looked at people without seeing them. She quickly realized, however, that the very damnation that her village predicted for her would be her protection. "I cultivated my curses as shields, but also as eccentricities, and in order to provoke" (TFW 132). Sultana feels with all her other heteronyms an unrelenting desire to escape the anguish of her situation. Her final hope lies in the prospect of being one with the women of the village, women who unite as a heteronym (TFW 154).

The narrator's use of Vincent's persona takes the ambiguity represented in Sultana radically further. He is French, he is male, and he lives because of a kidney transplant from an Algerian woman, endowing the narrator with the power to observe, to empathize, and to revisit Algeria in an emotionally less vulnerable manner. Vincent interprets the "donation" of a kidney by the unknown Algerian woman differently from his French doctors as they congratulate him on his tissue that is an exact match of the donor's kidney. The doctors' attitude of talking about the donor as just a number "for the profit of France Transplant" shocks and disgusts him (TFW 20). The same power, however, that permits such obliteration of the individual also gives him the ability to walk down the streets of the narrator's home-town without the fear of violence that haunts the narrator. Children trail after him. "A little further, their curiosity worn out, they pass me on to others as if I were a toy. [...] The adults greet me, smile at me. I'm an attraction" (TFW 48). Although Vincent does not understand the language or the gestures of the children, he is sensitive to the mockery behind presumed innocence that escapes the colonizing voyeuristic gaze of uncritical Western tourists.

In contrast, Sultana's encounter with the streets of her former home is a nightmare of "masculine plurality" and "feminine apartheid" (TFW 7). Vincent voices what the narrator has been unable to express without fear of reprisals. Whereas the doctors use the word "tolerance" to describe the success of the transplant and tell him: "It was your own kidney we transplanted," thus erasing the donor, Vincent understands his acceptance of the dead Algerian woman's kidney as a "mutual assimilation and truce"

(TFW 21). He realizes that two seeds of strangeness (sex and race) had been implanted in him, urging him to meet this other culture with humility (TFW 21). Race, class, and gender are problematized at one stroke. The alien Other has entered the colonizer's body, not as a parasitic worm, but as a life-giving force. The narrator's conflicted, ruptured body has the opportunity to partially heal. Vincent also attempts to cure the heteronym Sultana of her anguish when he tries to persuade her to cross sand and water with him (TFW 134).

Mokeddem portrays the heteronym Dalila as a parallel to that of the eternal three-year-old drummer Oskar Matzerath whom she borrows from Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum*. When Dalila attempts to contain her fits of anger and weeping by asking the Drum to break the sky, Oskar cries in frustration that the sky is too big for him (TFW 59).

Like Oskar, Dalila is disgusted at the hypocrisy and malevolence of state-sanctioned violence. She criticizes the Qur'anic hadiths that dictate the behavior of wives and daughters, wondering which "Muhammad" allowed the kind of injustice that forced her to stay inside the house and carry out menial tasks with her mother, while her brothers were allowed to play outside (TFW 75).

Oskar's tin drum and Dalila's fits of anger resemble Kenza's yelling in *Of Dreams and Assassins*:

> Very early I learned the power of my yelling. Girls and women who raise their voices terrorize him. Make him beat a retreat.
>
> I yelled so that he would not consider me as the "maid of his," his sons' scapegoat. I yelled when I perceived his greedy eyes fixed on my legs, my hips. I yelled from disgust. *Yelling kept hideous reality at bay*. (*Of Dreams and Assassins* 8)

Dalila dreams the "beautiful nightmare" of becoming a girl Tin Drum (TFW 122). With the pounding of her drum she can shatter all the male eyes that have always managed to demean her:

> Their faces were funny looking, with red holes instead of eyes. And me, I was laughing. And my voice blew out more and more eyes. Pop! Pop! Pop! (TFW 122)

She escapes to Merguezland, not unlike that other child Alice, although she experiences wonder differently: "... we're all 'Alice in Merguezland' since we never have any wonders, we put spices everywhere, everywhere. Dreams are my spices" (TFW 121).

It is also easier to dream on the dunes of the desert. Like the spices, the sand transforms itself and others. This has affinities with of Zafer Şenocak's desire to attain Sufi awareness through the poetic dance of the dervishes. Mokeddem's desert dune moves equally ecstatically. When Vincent asks Dalila whether she dreams on the dunes, Dalila pictures the shape-shifting quality of the dunes: "In the wind, it travels, it cries out, it cries, it dances, it sings like Bliss" (TFW 57). The heteronym Sultana senses this shape-shifting quality of the dune that helps resurrect Dalila: "The little girl that I was is still there among the shadows of other children who had a similar fate" (TFW 17).

A quality that connects all the heteronyms in the text is what Dalila calls "space sickness" (TFW 56). "People who always stay alone, they all catch space sickness, like Yacine, like my sister, Samia, like Salah, Yacine's friend, who told me about his death, like the woman who came with him, yesterday" (TFW 56). This shared perception of the world allows Salah to protect Dalila, this girl who is "always alone, a bit wild," from the world (TFW 63).

Alilou, a little boy who has lost his mother might not be a heteronym in the Pessoan sense of the word. However, I see in him the potential to subvert the violence of Islamist misogyny. He is the one who tells Salah that Sultana is in danger of being assaulted. People consider him to be retarded because of his wanderings in the dunes. The one boy who has the courage to resist violence is written off as "dimwitted." Salah sees in the boy a potential artist or poet, and realizes that the boy's wanderings are driven by a wish for solitude (TFW 127). The word solitude resonates with Şenocak's search for this state of mind. His need for solitude prefigures that of the heteronym Mokeddem in *My Men*.

In the discussion of Özdamar, we considered the verses from Lasker-Schüler and Kavafis with which the narrator punctuates her text as resembling the Islamic *Salah* or ritual prayers, but without the latter's proscriptive nature. They return the word "Salah" to its original meaning: "connection."

The heteronym Salah in *The Forbidden Woman* is indeed this connection. He forges symbiotic relationships with all the other alter-egos. It is Salah who takes Sultana to Yacine's funeral against the specific order of the town mayor by insisting that Allah had told her to come (TFW 15). He also connects with the women of the village. He reminds Sultana that the women in the village had all been in the resistance. Robbed of their agency in an independent Algeria, they resort to different strategies to acquire knowledge and financial independence: "They pretend to hide, not just to avoid being crushed, but to continue advancing" (TFW 111). Sultana has managed to parry all emotional attachments to men: "We kissed each other and each of us kept our lips!" (TFW 112). But Salah's love for her proves to be irresistible because he is part of her and can thus pull her "into the yellow of his eyes" (TFW 112). Salah and Vincent hold the promise of a love from which she has pulled away until now because of her disbelief in a "true return" (TFW 113).

The collective voice of the women of Aïn Nekhla constitutes the last of the heteronyms in this text. They are the forbidden women left behind, absent in their own country. Vincent dreads this absence because it seems to reinforce the absence of that dead woman whose gender is now part of him: "Here, at certain moments, it's as if I were no more than a shred of her left living after her death. A disastrous feeling" (TFW 22). He carries a femaleness that cannot be revealed in this climate fraught with misogyny. His despair at not being able to help these women, "since the deprivations and the barbarisms strangled only the women" (TFW 39) is a contrast to Salah's optimism about the alternate strategies to which these women resort.

Sultana grieves over what she perceives to be the voiceless misery of the women: "The persecutions and the humiliations endured by them reach me and reopen my wounds" (TFW 133). However, the collective voice of the women is surprisingly strident, belying Sultana's perception of their passive suffering. One of the oldest women in the village argues that their present condition of subservience to their men is preferable to the "ruthless yoke" that fundamentalists would impose on them: "Their words and their very existence are insults to the memory of our forefathers, our religion, and our history" (TFW 141). The voice of the child heteronym Dalila has prematurely aged in its prediction of the fate of women in Algeria, echoing

the frustration of the older woman. She says that even the government is afraid of women: "So love is just shame, which is nationally elected" (TFW 120). She is also worn out by the effort it takes to speak. She echoes the cry of one of the oldest women: "How can we perpetuate a way of living that doesn't accord to us any more consideration, at any moment of our life?" (TFW 143). These women are like that delightful and terrible Sultana, vigilant and rigid (TFW 6). Both join Dalila and the women in seeking a Sufi-like trance that removes them from their daily suffering: "'Being in a trance was an effective antidote for me,' affirms an ancient woman, her hair red with henna" (TFW 144). Sultana's comment at the end of the narrative does not yet concretely help change the lot of the women. However, her work *Mes Hommes* (My Men) has a very different thrust, prefigured in the words: "Tell the women that even from afar, I am with them" (TFW 154).

Mes Hommes (My Men)

The prefatory quotation from the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke's *Orchards* suggests this different momentum from that of Mokeddem's previous works (Mokeddem, *My Men*).[10]

> I have no need
> to see you appear;
> being born was enough for me
> to lose you a little less – *Rainer Maria Rilke* (*My Men*)

Mokeddem says of *My Men* that it has "some insolence, some rebelliousness, but also some love" (Algeria Daily's Interview with Mokeddem, 2009). The titles *The Forbidden Woman* and *My Men*, in particular the use of the possessive in the second title, are significant in tracing the trajectory of Mokeddem's evolution from the forms of address that her father uses to refer to her: from "Your daughters" via "Your daughter" to "My daughter!"

10 All further references to Mokeddem's *My Men* will be parenthetically indicated by the abbreviation MM followed by the page number.

Mokeddem rejoices at having escaped the generic feminine and attaining singular recognition (MM 4f.). At the precise moment when her father grants her agency, she recognizes his presence as well, and acknowledges that he is longer just her grandmother's son (MM 5).

What role does a German poet play in the narrator's interior dialogues with fathers, brothers, and lovers? The full text of the poem "Interior Portrait" from Rilke's *Orchard* provides more clues:[11]

> You don't survive in me
> because of memories;
> nor are you mine because
> of a lovely longing's strength.
>
> What does make you present
> is the ardent detour
> that a slow tenderness
> traces in my blood.
>
> I do not need
> to see you appear;
> being born sufficed for me
> to lose you a little less.

Like Rilke, Mokeddem looks for survival not in a love that feeds off the object's vulnerability, but rather in a gradual tenderness that unconditionally enriches both self and other. An interesting fact about Rilke's life is that his mother tried to compensate for the loss of a baby daughter by calling Rilke Sophia and forcing him into girl's clothes until he was five years old (Liukkonen). This form of grief over the loss of a daughter is in stark contrast to what Mokeddem experiences in Algeria, as she recounts in the section entitled "The first absence" how when a woman is asked how many children she has, she will count only the sons. She might add: "Just

11 The original French "Portrait intérieur" was published in the volume *Vergers suivi des Quatrains Valaisans* by Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Francaise (Paris), 1926. The English translation by Alfred Poulin, Jr., was published as *Orchards* by Graywolf Press (Port Townsend, Wash.), 1982.

three children and six girls. May Allah spare you from evil!" (MM 1). The female is absent by definition. In these texts, however, Mokeddem breaks the silence towards her father that had haunted her for so long. She had left him in order to find freedom, even the freedom to love men: "Everything I write is written against this silence, Father" (MM 6). However, even this "freedom" was not unbounded, as *Forbidden Woman* demonstrates. She has to make a Nietzschian-like leap beyond the false dichotomies of good and evil, men and women, colonizer and colonized, and white and black to a space where she can sing and dance with abandon, in a manner reminiscent of the Sufis: "... what I want to share with men is insolence – that sidestepping that suddenly makes life dance!" (MM 117).

Both Rilke and Pessoa voice a desire to share in this kind of exuberance. In Rilke's case, his need to apprehend the very essence of things, animate and inanimate, leads him to a unique form of mysticism, as the opening words of the first of his Duino Elegies reveal: "Wer, wenn ich schriee, hörte mich denn aus der Engel Ordnungen?" (Who, if I were to cry out, would hear me among the angelic orders?) Mokeddem has already distanced herself from Pessoa's definition of freedom that had led him only to greater introspection, alienation, solitude, and estrangement:

> You are free if you can withdraw from people, not having to seek them out for the sake of money, company, love, glory or curiosity, none of which can thrive in silence and solitude. [...] To be born free is the greatest splendor of man, making the humble hermit superior to kings, even to the gods, who are self-sufficient by their power but not by their contempt of it. ("Disquiet and Solitude")

She expresses her freedom in a solitude that restores fullness to her (MM 159). Rilke's words: "What does make you present / is the ardent detour / that a slow tenderness / traces in my blood" resonate in every section of *My Men*. Her "successive loves, including the 'blasphemous' ones ... underscore [her] freedom of being in this world" (MM 7). She realizes that the only way to defeat the Islamist fundamentalists who deny women a fulfilling life is to constantly harass them by insisting on women's sexuality (MM 8). Mokeddem shares Şenocak's belief that solitude is not loneliness. Identification as a way to blindly conform to the dominant culture leads to loss of identity. Şenocak encourages the writer to lose this urge for

identification in order to find the solitude that leads to true communication. Similarly, Mokeddem follows the path of fragmentation, alienation, and now solitude. These successive loves are what sustain her, from those earliest memories of her father to a future love that has yet to take shape. Each encounter with men whose gaze only possesses her brings with it an equally positive recognition of a man who wins her trust and her love.

The school bus driver Ami Bashir, her adopted father, brightens her childhood. Her first mentor, Dr Shalles, surprises, captivates, excites her. Such admiration is for her a sublimated form of love (MM 21). She turns to medicine, to the opportunity to touch and heal others' suffering bodies because the common denominator of suffering frees people from prejudice and the desire to dominate. Suffering encourages generosity and gives people a reason for being (MM 26).

Her newly-found ability to stare back at abusive men empowers her. When she returns their insolent stares, "they close up their pants, their hands holding tight to their organs" (MM 10). Such confrontation is the only way to silence the men. The ability to return the gaze not only has the power to emasculate, it also creates new possibilities for intimacy. When a shy young man gazes at her, it suddenly feels like a caress. Such a gaze does not denigrate her (MM 35). Future love promises even greater joy. The gaze of love speaks a different language: "Nestled in your gaze, rocked by the train as it flowed into the final glow of dusk. I savored the rapture of this suspended moment" (MM 162).

It is this form of delight in knowing the other, a synthesis of the erotic and the ascetic, that comes closest to the Sufi sacred ritual of love, the dance of the dervishes. It also enables her to free herself from the "multi-jointed marionette of segregation and to the long string of tyrannies that had been encoded as divine law" (MM 44). She now understands her flight to France not as a desire for the exotic, but as a need to escape the "oppression of the familiar," the violent oppression that was pervasive in her country. She takes refuge in the foreign in order to distance herself from this normalized cruelty (MM 44).[12]

12 Predominantly rural guerrilla bands of the French Resistance.

She also casts off the seductive mantel of nostalgia, knowing the "perversions that tarnish this impulse" (MM 86). She gives up any pretensions of wanting to change the world around her. Having the ability to define her life is empowering enough (MM 94). Her initial anxieties about identity are not relevant anymore. Her love of passports – at first glance at odds with her own unstructured existence – actually enables her to resist being forced into a fixed identity. Her two passports – French and Algerian – allow her to cross borders with relative ease: "Switch passports to escape the assassins" (MM 156).

Finally, *My Men* connects Özdamar and Mokeddem through the figure of the grandmother. When Özdamar skips her mother's generation and calls on her grandmother for spiritual sustenance, she underscores the migrant woman's need to call on a lost tradition that survived through a less oppressive patriarchy, one that felt secure enough in its power structure that it did not need to reduce women to childbearing and motherhood. The increasing tendency to conceive nation as a brotherhood and homeland as female, as Najmabadi discusses in the context of Iran, has to be more vigorously contested, its gender-driven framework challenged (Najmabadi 1). The brief period of agency for women during the Algerian war of independence, when they fought side-by-side with men at the front, was quickly taken away with the creation of the nation. Consequently, the grandmother, who belongs to that lost generation, acquires archetypal significance. One of the oldest women in Aïn Nekhla reminds Sultana in *The Forbidden Woman* of this past where widows and wives who were cast off by their husbands were fed and protected. She also reflects on the power that older women had over families, especially when they had borne sons – a sign of her wealth. Such a woman "enjoyed all joys, all of the honors earned and saved up during the difficult years of her youth" (TFW 142).

Mokeddem's grandmother Zohra appears at times of crisis:

> A photo taken thanks to his efforts, a picture of Grandmother, would help me to survive one of the major sorrows of my childhood. (MM 69)

Her childhood self reminds her in a dream of the grandmother's potential to protect:

> "You don't sleep with men anymore. As for me, at least I have grandmother." (MM 168)

She wants to retain this final transgenerational umbilical cord, however, on her own terms, insisting that it is her story that needs to be told: "In reality, not just in your books!" (MM 168). The narrator tries to resist this demand: "What do you take me for? I'm not your grandmother. For decades I've lived caught between her mythomania and yours, so enough!" (MM 168).

My Men enables Mokeddem to not only refract the consuming dominance of the male gaze, but to transcend gender categories. The unusual syntax of her final question "Where will you come from?" (MM 169) bodes well for the possibility of reconfiguring her origin and her identity. She has the ultimate say in determining points of departure and destination.

CHAPTER V

The Hijab as Metaphor for Linguistic Terrorism

> As if for centuries
> She sat there
> Instinctively veiling her face as the men came in
> Unveiling it as soon as they left.
>
> — MACDONALD 207

> Being truthful: being in the in-between of all definitions of truth
>
> — MINH-HA 13

Mokeddem's question framed in the grammatical future: "Where will you come from?" (MM 169) wills woman to choose her own past, present, and future. Yet, the twenty-first century has led to an intensification of debates about the female body, as the abortion ultrasound debate in the US shows.[1] Some have likened the vaginal ultrasound to state-sponsored rape. Studies purporting to establish causal links between abortion and women's health, along with repeated attempts to reverse Roe v. Wade[2] (arguments about "personhood" and "heartbeat") all harbor the intense anxiety right-wing anti-choice politicians are experiencing about relinquishing control over women's bodies. The conservative talk-show host Rush Limbaugh's "slut" remarks are particularly distressing because they reveal the mounting ease with which such malicious and wanton statements are surfacing.[3]

1 Under this legislation, women who want an abortion will have to undergo a "vaginal probe" for no medical reason.

2 A landmark decision (1973) by the United States Supreme Court to legalize abortion under most conditions.

3 On February 29, 2012, Limbaugh called Georgetown University Law Center student Sandra Fluke a "slut" and a "prostitute" when talking about Fluke's speech supporting insurance coverage for contraceptives.

I return now to the second of the three questions posed in the introduction to this book: Why has the hijab been singled out as a metaphor for debates about identity formation, to the exclusion of veiling prevalent in other religious and cultural contexts? Since 9/11, the hijab has increasingly been equated with the most radical and fundamentalist political views of Islam today. I would argue, however, that it has also acquired global implications for woman's ability to make decisions about her body, as the abortion debate shows. Both are attempts to discipline the woman's body. Islam cannot justifiably be used as a scapegoat anymore for a worldwide backlash against women's rights. The hijab is a visible reminder of Muslim presence in Europe, but the phrase "white man's burden" with its claim of protecting woman against all manner of oppression, including the non-Caucasian male, has not disappeared in this so-called postcolonial era.[4] The protean ability of old power relations to re-surface, albeit obfuscated by the all-encompassing term "globalization," has not diminished. Given the vast scope of this debate, however, I will limit my own analysis to an investigation of the ways in which the hijab in its various forms has been instrumentalized to delineate European modernity, with special reference to Germany and France.

Najmabadi uses the example of Iran persuasively to demonstrate how employing gender as an analytic category can provide insight into structures of hierarchy and power. Her analysis can be paradigmatically used to understand the fundamental organization of politics and social life in our world. She explains that for the past two centuries, Iranian (and Islamicate)[5] modernity and its historiography

4 The phrase "white man's burden" was originally the title of a Rudyard Kipling poem, "The White Man's Burden" (1899). Throughout the period of European colonization, the expression functioned to justify colonialism as a noble enterprise, meant only to benefit less civilized people. It illustrates both Eurocentric racism and Western hegemony over the so-called developing world. (For further context see my book on India, especially pp. 18 and 25. Murti, *India: The Seductive and Seduced "Other" of German Orientalism*.)

5 Associated with regions in which Muslims are culturally dominant, but not specifically with the religion of Islam.

> have regarded the veil as the gender marker of cultural difference between Iran (Islam) and Europe. This dominant view has ignored the veil's other cultural effect, namely, its work as a marker of homosocial homoerotic affectionate bonds among both women and men. (3f.)

The veil now functions to deepen a divide seen as cultural, and to consolidate borders. In the introduction Anzaldua's cautionary words about borders being set up to define the places that are "safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*" (58) were cited. She describes what happens to a minority whose proficiency in the majority culture's language is seen as inferior or lacking. Integration defined through language seems innocuous enough on the surface. However, the artist Ray Gwyn Smith reminds us: "Who is to say that robbing a people of its language is less violent than war?" (Anzaldua 53). When clothing is added to "linguistic terrorism," the result is arguably cultural genocide.

One needs to uncover the palimpsest of discourses that underlies the veil as symbol in order to understand what uncertainties and anxieties surround the progressively visible Muslim presence in Europe in general, and in Germany in particular. To quote Jennifer Heath, the veil

> can be illusion, vanity, artifice, deception, liberation, imprisonment, euphemism, divination, concealment, hallucination, depression, eloquent silence, holiness, the ethers beyond consciousness, the hidden hundredth name of God, the final passage into death, even the biblical apocalypse, the lifting of God's veil, signaling so-called end times. (3)

With such a wide spectrum of definitions and possibilities, the hijab has proven to be easy prey to the delineation and consolidation of Eurocentric modernity, functioning as the backdrop of backwardness against which the enlightened nature of modernity can be further accentuated. Najmabadi comments:

> [The veil's] association with backwardness, as we will see, stood for the backwardness of homosociality and homoerotic affectivity. How would we rethink the veil (and unveil) of woman if we relocated it within these other cultural contestations? (133)

In disengaging the hijab from other locations of cultural contest, its value has been reduced to the one-dimensionality of cultural difference. Najmabadi rightly remarks that dressing up for modernity has been fashioned through undressing women (133). Simplistically constructed dichotomies between the West and Islam allow for only two positions: veiling (regressive) or unveiling (progressive). This type of polarization disregards the possibility of third positions or spaces where the so-called regressive culture wishes to define its modernity outside of a Judeo-Christian gendered frame of reference. In the case of Turkey, a third position might strive for an Islamo-Turkish modern.

As I suggested earlier with the emblematic "white man's burden," there have not been any meaningful changes in the perception of the "Oriental woman" since Ottoman princess Seniha Sultan wrote in a letter to her French friend Madame Simone de la Cherté:

> My dear! We, Turkish women, are not known in Europe at all. [...] They make up really unimaginable stories about us. Not important! They anticipate us to be slaves, to be imprisoned in rooms, to live only behind lattice windows, to be chained up and watched over by ferocious black and other slaves who are armed from head to foot and who are also thought to put us into sacks and then throw us into the Bosphorus from time to time. We are assumed to live in a group of numerous rivaling wives, and they expect every Turkish man to have a harem of his own, that is, to have at least eight or ten wives. (Göle 27)

When the Judeo-Christian West questions the modernization attempts and experiences of Muslim countries, it forces the latter into a posture of defiance and defense. Sociologist Nilüfer Göle explains how the Islamic revolution utilized the veiled bodies of women as a political symbol to show its difference from the Western world:

> Western culture locates the human body under the aesthetic and hygienic command of human willpower and the increasing submission of the human body to the spheres of sciences and secularization. The Muslim body, on the other hand, becomes a site for symbolic politics to the extent that Islamism attempts to politicize the distinctiveness of a religious conception of self and body. Thus, the image of veiled women serves to translate faith and religiosity into politics as a civilizational issue – that is, a distinct conception of self and body. (83f.)

Najmabadi goes a crucial step further in showing how dress provides a visual marker of difference between US-Europe and the Muslim world. Men's public appearance also becomes important in identifying them as belonging to the European modern. The narrative of emancipation sees the veiled woman as belonging to a pre-modern period where she was silenced and absent. European modernity insisted on removing this veil in order to give the woman a voice and presence. Consequently, the previous homosociality that woman had owned and experienced was now forced into a new heterosocial space that changed her language and body. Najmabadi explains, albeit within the Iranian context, that the homosocial world that had shaped a woman's language and body had now been replaced by modernity's heterosociality, allowing women's voices to enter the public realm: "In the process of acquiring a public, male and female audience, the language itself was significantly transformed in a number of ways" (152). She details how a language that had been unfettered, had had the ability to be explicitly sexual, now underwent a process of "sanitizing" whereby its sexual markers were removed. A veil had been drawn over language. As woman moved from a homosocial female world into a heterosocial public space, the physical veil was replaced by an invisible metaphoric veil, or hijab (*hijab-i 'iffat* = veil of chastity). This internal veil re-casts the female mind, admonishing it to educate itself in order to contain its "unruly" sexuality. Moreover, such education trains the woman to discipline herself and keep "her place." Najmabadi concludes:

> This newly conceived woman, with a veiled language, a disciplined body, and scientific sensibilities, could claim a place in the public space; she could be imagined as a citizen. (152)

My own interest in the issue of the hijab was sparked by the case of a German Muslim woman of Afghani origin, Fereshta Ludin, who was forbidden to wear her scarf when she entered a German public school in 1998 to take up her teaching duties (Murti, "Marker of Alterity"). On September 24, 2003, Germany's highest court ruled that Ludin could not be banned from wearing a headscarf in a public school. In ruling five to three in favor of Ludin, the justices basically maintained that there was no law prohibiting her from wearing a scarf, leaving it, however, to the discretion of the states

to decide whether to pass such a law. By January 15, 2007, eight German states including Berlin had introduced legislation banning headscarves for teachers, seeing it as clashing with gender equality and as an affront to Christian values. Only Berlin followed a more secular course and decided to ban religious symbols in schools in its attempt to treat all religions on an equal basis.

In her pathbreaking 1992 study, Leila Ahmed discusses data collected from university women in the Middle East. One of Ahmed's central arguments focuses on the fact that debates about "women" and social reform always take place in a European culture. The problem with advocates of "improvement in the status of women," she cautions, is that they had "from early on couched their advocacy in terms of the need to abandon the (implicitly) 'innately' and 'irreparably' misogynist practices of the native culture in favor of the customs and beliefs of another culture – the European" (129).

My own interviews attempt to complement the above studies by making audible the voices of those covered and uncovered women who negotiate identity from within European cultures. In their 2000 study of Muslim women in Austin, Texas, Jen'nan Ghazal Read and John Bartkowski argue compellingly, "that while veiled women evince somewhat conservative gender attitudes, the vast majority of them support women's rights in public life and a substantial proportion subscribe to marital equality" (396). The significance of their study for my own stems from their attention to a trend in the US that I also perceive in Europe: the influx of Muslims in recent decades. Moreover, the data I have collected in personal interviews, like those conducted by Ghazal Read and Bartkowski, "are more able to capture the negotiation of cultural meanings by veiled and unveiled respondents, as well as the nuances of these women's gender identities" than the single study in Arabic based largely on data collected from university women living in the Middle East (396).

In researching the topic of the headscarf, I came across a comment made by a Turkish teacher, Emine Öztürk, which made me pay even closer attention to this issue. She said: "So many things are projected onto the headscarf without anyone ever asking the women who wear them" (Tzortzis). Consequently, this chapter is devoted to listening to Muslim women, both covered and uncovered.

Interviews with young Turkish-German women, veiled and unveiled

> Social practices that imbue the veil with cultural significance include the rhetoric of religious elites who equate veiling with religious devotion, as well as the actual ostracism of unveiled Muslim women from some Islamic institutions. Second, theories of discourse call attention to the contested character of cultural forms. [...] Divergent interpretations of the same cultural practice may be advanced by groups who share a common religious heritage.
>
> — GHAZAL READ and BARTKOWSKI (397)

Muslim religious elites use the *Hadith*, the collection of sayings by or about the prophet Muhammad, to enforce discipline and maintain authority, and by extension to regulate the behavior of women. The Moroccan sociologist Fatima Mernissi explains the word *Hadith* as follows:

> The person who took on the task of transcribing the Hadith necessarily had to master the technique that we call "interview technique," for the word *Hadith* itself comes from the verb *haddatha*, meaning *recount*, or simply *tell*. Each generation of experts had to personally collect the testimony of those who had heard the Hadith directly spoken by the Prophet. (35)

It is thus particularly appropriate to use the format of the interview for listening to those whose voices have been increasingly silenced, not only by the religious establishment, but by so-called secular regimes as well. Mernissi's comments about the science of establishing the Hadith collection are illuminating:

> The believing reader has the right to have all the pertinent information about the source of the Hadith and the chain of its transmitters, so that he or she can continually judge whether they are worthy of credence or not. Islam was, at least during its first centuries, the religion of reasoning, responsible individuals capable of telling what was true from what was false as long as they were well equipped to do so, as long as they possessed the tools of knowledge – specifically, the collections of Hadith.

> The fact that, over the course of centuries, we have seen believers who criticize and judge replaced by muzzled, censored, obedient, and grateful Muslims in no way detracts from this fundamental dimension of Islam. (35f.)

She bemoans the reduction of the Muslim woman into a creature of submission and marginality, mutilated by the veil (194). She links this mutilation to oppressive patriarchal hierarchies. Some of the women in my interviews echo this lament.

My main objective in interviewing veiled and unveiled Muslim women was to inject these absent voices into the debate surrounding the hijab. An unstructured, nonstandardized interview seemed best suited for this purpose. As Norman Denzin points out,

> [T]he questionnaire or interview must serve two broad purposes: it must translate research objectives into specific questions, the answers to which will provide data necessary for hypothesis testing, and it must assist the interviewer in motivating the respondent so that the necessary information is given. (128)

Consequently, I formulated a few very general questions for each situation. I did not attempt to present each respondent with the same set of stimuli, nor did I ask questions in any specific order. Most of my interviews came about through happenstance, since it was difficult to a) find women who had lived in Germany and were now back in Turkey, and b) to persuade those whom I found to agree to an interview.

I had to change my questions depending on variables like the respondent's educational background, the men and other figures of authority present during the interview, and – most importantly – the confidence and trust the respondent placed in me as the interviewer. My analyses of the interviews have been informed by the many theoretical insights afforded by an increasingly visible number of contemporary feminist theorists and gender scholars.[6]

6 To name a few: Ahmed 1992 and 2011; Esposito 2005; Fernea 1993; Göle 1996; Grace 2004; Heath 2008; Kandiyoti 1988; Mernissi 1975, 1987, and 1994; Moghissi 2002; Najmabadi 2005; Oestreich 2004; Orlando 1999; Wierschke 1996, Wadud 1999 and 2006.

Questions for interviews in Turkey:

- What were the respondent's experiences in Germany?
- What were the reasons for her return to Turkey?

Questions for interviews in Germany:

- How does the respondent feel about her non-German heritage?
- How is her clothing perceived in public?
- Do her choices in religious beliefs, in clothing have repercussions on her professional life?

In the following I provide transcripts from three groups of interviewees; each transcript is followed by my comments:

I. Interviews of Turkish and Turkish-German women, veiled and unveiled, that I conducted in Germany and Turkey. In Turkey, six women were covered, three uncovered. In Germany, fourteen women were covered, four uncovered.
II. Interviews with young Muslim men and women conducted by the "Medienprojekt Wuppertal" for a DVD documentation series entitled "Jung und Moslem" (Young and Muslim).[7]

7 The producers of the video project, "Medienprojekt Wuppertal" (a media project in the city of Wuppertal, Germany) have been creating successful media projects about active youth-video work since 1992 under the motto "the best possible video for the widest possible public." The project regularly publishes the youth magazine "borderline," holds video workshops and video action-weeks on various topics, produces docusoaps, produces thematic documentations, and organizes international video projects. ("Medienprojekt Wuppertal")

I – Veiled and unveiled: Turkey and Germany

These interviews were conducted during the Spring semesters of 2006 and 2007 in Turkey and Germany respectively. In the wake of the horrific events of 9/11, the Turkish population in Germany had come under intense, at times hostile scrutiny, which continues to this day. Hence my investigation of the head-scarf debates was extremely timely. Many of the women who had gone to Germany in the 1960s as unskilled labor were from Anatolia, as I had observed in my discussion of Özdamar's work. I conducted my project in two stages: 1) interview Turkish and Kurdish women who had returned from Germany to Turkey; 2) interview Turkish and Kurdish women who had decided to remain in Germany.

I adopted the following format for discussing the interviews I examine here: date, location, transcript of interview, and my comments. I have kept the location general, and have given each respondent a randomly selected letter of the alphabet to preserve her anonymity.[8]

TURKEY

Interview with H

Date: April 15, 2006
Place: Üsküdar, Istanbul

Background information on respondent/s: H is a 50-year-old woman (middle class, according to my Turkish interpreter Idil Kemer)[9] who had accompanied her father to Germany in 1973 when she was seventeen years of age. Her father sent her back two years later to Turkey for an arranged

8 Although the grant included a video camera and an audio tape recorder, it became very clear to me during the first interview that I would not be able to gain the trust of the interviewee if I used either of these recording devices. Consequently, I used an unobtrusive pad to note down as much of the dialogue as I could.

9 Idil Kemer acted as interpreter for those interviews where the respondents' German vocabulary was not extensive enough to express more abstract ideas.

marriage. She had recently re-married after the death of her first husband. Her second husband was a "hacı", i.e., one who had completed the "hac" (pilgrimage) to Mecca and Medina. Traditionally, the wife of a hacı was obliged to wear a "çarşaf," a head-to-toe black covering with only eyes and nose exposed, outside the house. (Çarkoğlu)[10] At home she wore a caftan with just a head-scarf because, as Idil explained, all the males present were close family members (father, husband, and brother, i.e., apart from her husband, such members as would meet the incest-taboo). Our visit coincided with her brother's wedding day. The family was busy with preparations, but warmly invited Idil and me to join them.

Transcript of interview:

KPM: What were your experiences in Germany?

H: I was very happy there. I could wear exactly what I wanted. [Points to her legs] You could see way up there! My skirts were so short!

KPM: Why did you return to Turkey?

H: Ask my father! (She disappears into the kitchen)

H'S FATHER: Girls have to get married. I didn't want her to get corrupted! She is a good girl. Look at my son! He stayed in Germany and had schooling in Mannheim. Now he is getting married. I worked until 1988 in Germany. They laid me off due to ill health. I still have a work- and stay-permit for Germany – go back and forth.

KPM [TO H'S HUSBAND]: Were you also in Germany?

H'S HUSBAND: Yes, but since 1990 work conditions are very bad in Germany – lots of unemployment. So I came back.

10 For a detailed discussion of the polarized debate surrounding the veil in Turkey, see Ali Çarkoğlu, "Public attitudes towards the *türban* ban in Turkey."

H'S FATHER: I changed career from mechanic to linoleum and tile layer in a mosque. I also did some translation work.

H [returns with tea and snacks]: Please eat and drink our tea! This is a happy day!

[My interpreter and I leave after about ten minutes. At the front door I ask H]

KPM: Have your expectations of a return been met? You wear a "çarşaf" now when you go out. Isn't the headscarf enough?

H: It is my will. Now I'm working for Allah. It is now my idea, my belief. Come again! I welcome all religions. Everyone is free to choose ... Allah is great that way.

H'S STEPMOTHER: Why are you asking all these questions?

IDIL: She is interested in the position of women.

H: We are strong women! I dress and live as I wish.

My comments:

Nilüfer Göle says of the act of veiling that it "cannot easily be explained either by its enforcement by male members of the family, the impact of rural traditionalism, or the effects of religious education" (90). The complexity of this act is captured in H's comments about her mode of dressing in Germany and Turkey: "I could wear exactly what I wanted. You could see way up there! My skirts were so short" and "It is my will [to wear a çarşaf]. Now I'm working for Allah. ... I dress and live as I wish" represent two of the many perspectives on un-/covering. The short skirts that she wore in Germany conformed to Western fashion dictates that were framed by the male gaze. Had she worn a çarşaf in German streets, however, she would have been subjected to the hostility of a gaze the voyeuristic power of which had been thwarted. Laura Mulvey explains in a different context (in her discussion of Hollywood films):

> In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness.* (33)

M's marriage to a hacı does not necessarily reverse the above gaze. It merely reserves the passive *"to-be-looked-at-ness"* to a single gaze that is nevertheless equally objectifying. The çarşaf ensures this exclusive possession. Both modes of dressing – mini-skirt or çarşaf – await the objectifying male gaze. Göle quotes Muslim women who have told her:

> The veil is not just a concrete thing, a piece of cloth. It is indeed the attempt to reduce the attractions of any woman to the lowest possible degree in her behavior, conversation, and in ways of sitting and standing. [...] It is necessary to veil so as not to become the object of men's gaze. [...] Beauty must be kept hidden in order not to cause disorder and intrigue. (93)

Woman needs to be disciplined, her sexuality contained not for her protection, but to prevent disorder and intrigue from entering the life of the man. Göle claims that the veiling of women "maintains the boundaries between the sexes as well as preserving order in the community. Islamist women in covering themselves hide their sexuality by their own will" (93). However, male-dominated societies prescribe both modes of dressing. And in both cases, the female is held responsible for the moral integrity of the male. Although these women regard the veil as protection, the question that needs to be asked is: What kind of society is it where one half of the population needs protection from the other half?

Interview with S

Date: Thursday, March 30, 2006
Place: Avanos, Cappadocia (central Anatolia)

Background information on respondent/s: S is a 57-year-old housewife who wears a headscarf only when praying. She lives with her husband, their older son, daughter-in-law, and two grandsons. Her daughter is visiting from

Ankara. Only the women and children are present during my visit. The younger women are also uncovered, except when at prayer. The daughter is fluent in English and acts as interpreter, although the mother frequently speaks in German with me. During my visit, the father returns from his gardening work in time for afternoon "namaz" (prayers). The older son is at work. The youngest son, 20 years old, is away at school in Cyprus.

Transcript of interview:

KPM: When did you go to Germany? What were your experiences there?

S: My father went illegally in 1964 to Germany. He had to return in 1971 because of his illegal status. In 1972 my husband went legally to Germany (near Dortmund) within four months of our marriage. He is a High School graduate, worked as a mechanic in a mining company, as equipment repair technician. He's very proud of his schooling and was mortified about his blue-collar job. He found work in Germany demeaning, didn't want to socialize. He made me do all the outside work (banking, grocery shopping, etc.). Because of Germans' prejudice about "Turks smelling of garlic," he stopped taking garlic. Even when he had to take it for medicinal purposes (as an antibiotic), he swallowed the pods so that his breath would not be tainted! He learned to speak very good German.

KPM: When did you join him?

S: 1974, with my children. I had only attended primary school. I come from a very poor family, so further education was not possible. As a child I had to help my mother weave carpets.

KPM: Your daughter mentioned returning to Turkey – when did this happen?

S: In 1981 we sent our daughter and son back to Turkey to my parents. My mother took care of them.

KPM: Why?

S: We didn't want our children to end up as workers/laborers, but to get a decent education in Turkey like their cousins. I took up work in Germany as a seamstress in a factory. Missed my two older children terribly – I cried and cried – , but the work in the factory makes time go by fast. I would have liked more German friends, but I was surrounded by other Turks all the time. I had only one German friend, Ingrid, who looked after my youngest son while I was away at work. My German is very poor. After returning to Turkey, I've lost touch with Ingrid, don't even have her telephone number!

KPM: When and why did you return to Turkey?

S: 1984. The German government was offering Turks substantial sums to return to Turkey voluntarily because of tightening labor situation.

S'S DAUGHTER: End of the Cold War, the Wall comes down, East German problem ...

S: But my husband didn't come back with me. He returned only in 1989 after saving a lot of money. Bought a gas station in Avanos. We built a two-storied house. Our son and wife, and their two kids live with us. My husband has now retired from the business, and my older son runs it.

KPM: [to the daughter] When do the men come home?

S'S DAUGHTER: Our men are never home before eleven at night, unless they want food!

KPM: What is your educational background?

S'S DAUGHTER: I graduated from METÜ. That is the Middle Eastern Technical University – a very prestigious public university, in Ankara, but now I have a two-month old baby boy. My husband is a Professor of English in Ankara. We are very proud of Avanos' modernity. No one wears a headscarf here. My mother wears it only during prayer times. I remember a time when we were on vacation in Spain. A German tourist approached me and said: "Don't Turkish women have to wear a headscarf and a long coat?" when he saw me dressed in shorts and a sleeveless tank top! Of course I also hear the comment: "Do you use camels for transportation?" I always tell them: "I've seen camels in the zoo."

During my stay in Germany, I knew of seven different mosques in the town where we lived, and seven different beliefs. On principle my father never joined any group ("religion is between the individual and God"). Once – I was 11 years old – I was in Germany and wore a sleeveless shirt. On the street, a Turkish man scolded me and asked me whether my parents approve of the way I dress. I told him that my father approved and that my mother had bought me the shirt.

KPM: What did you think of such criticism?

S'S DAUGHTER: When such criticisms are leveled about a perceived lack of decorum or adherence to Islamic beliefs, women and men are forced to join one of these groups in order to "belong" and not be ostracized. Otherwise, acceptance of any kind is difficult, with Germans or with fellow Turks! Of my two female cousins living in Germany, one doesn't wear a headscarf; the other one has begun wearing one now!

KPM: Why do you think this is?

S'S DAUGHTER: There are various reasons: assimilate into the Turkish population in Germany; belong to a group; as a form of political statement. Many Turkish women lead double lives in Germany. On the way to work/school, they step out of their houses in headscarf and long coat, then quickly remove the coat under which they wear trousers or short skirt, etc., remove headscarf. Veiling is now a purely political statement. Different types of headscarves are worn (the "türban" is one of them)

S'S DAUGHTER: Turks in Germany – those reverting to the headscarf and "traditional values untouched by Germany" – are similar to other diasporic populations who sense a loss of their identity. It leads to a stagnation of their own "original" culture. But the Turks in Turkey are much more progressive, their culture remains dynamic.

My comments:

S's daughter's pride in the fact that no one wears a headscarf in her town ("we are modern women") made me better understand Deniz Kandiyoti's observation that "images of the 'modern woman' carried their own ambiguities and tensions" (282). Kandiyoti remarks that Turkish men had long fantasized about "romantic love" as it was understood in Western cultures because of tight social controls over access to women and over the choice of marriage partners. She quotes the writer Ömer Seyfettin who complains: "Turkish women. They are the most fearsome enemies of love and beauty" (282). Kandiyoti observes that such a charge is really unjust, especially in a society where women's sexual purity is still related to family honor and where arranged marriages and the creation of a space forbidden to men do afford women a certain degree of protection from capricious treatment by their husbands. S's daughter's perception of herself as a modern woman strengthens the belief held by many in Europe and the United States that civilization is the "expression of Western consciousness" (Norbert Elias quoted in Göle 58). However, wherever she is, whether in Turkey, Germany,

or other places like Spain, her rejection of traditional Islamic clothing does not protect her from the kind of exoticization of the Oriental woman that Edward Said discusses in *Orientalism*. (187) Göle's comment about the significance of clothing in the process of Westernization (= "modernization") is instructive in this context:

> [S]o long as women's rights are related to the exercise of secularism in a Muslim country, they are loaded with political meaning, and, thus, "there exists a *dialectical relationship between struggles for women's rights and struggles directed toward the eradication of the effectiveness of religion*." (63f.; emphasis added)

In the 1920s, the visibility of women clad in European attire was an integral part of proving that Turkey had cast off its "primitive" and "reactionary" customs and that both Turkish men and women were ready to adjust their behavior, as Göle adds, "in accordance with the image of an idealized European person" (65). This, however, was during a period when Kemal Atatürk was launching his "secularizing" mission. Almost a century later the process of "adjustment" is still ongoing, as exemplified by S's daughter's encounter with the German tourist and his preconceived notions about *the* Turkish woman and her clothing.

S presents a different case study. She belongs to the stock figure of the Turkish "cleaning woman," "the figure of ethnic labor associated with Turks in Germany" suspended between two worlds, as Adelson persuasively argues (*The Turkish Turn* 127). Not surprisingly, the only work S can find is as a seamstress in a factory, surrounded by other Turks. The male icon of Turkish migration, the trash man, strengthens the perception of the Turk as worthless, that is, marginalized into a state of nothingness. Both male and female engage in cleaning up after others, and S's remark about her husband's loss of dignity ("My husband was very proud of his schooling in Turkey and was mortified about his blue-collar job") exemplifies what Adelson says about the relationship between the dominant and the migrant culture:

> If icons of migrant labor mediate cultural values and social capital, the value mediated by images denying social capital to Turkish men and women is a cultural sense of German superiority. (*The Turkish Turn* 128)

It is this sense of cultural superiority that has compelled many Turks, both men and women, to return to Turkey or go to other countries that have a more inclusive understanding of citizenship, as the next interview exemplifies.

Interview with A

Date: April 5, 2006
Location: Izmir (western Anatolia), Turkey

Background information on respondent/s: A is in her forties. She is not covered. She went in 1986 with her husband to Germany at the age of sixteen. An automobile manufacturer had employed her husband. A returned to Turkey in 2003. Her husband was to return to Turkey on the very day I visited her.

Transcript of interview:

KPM: What were your experiences in Germany? And why did you return to Turkey?

A: For various reasons. I had to work illegally as a companion to an older German woman, mainly to look after the woman's dog. My daughter (14) and son (8) don't know what they are: German or Turkish? They don't know where they belong.

KPM: What kind of contacts did you have in Germany? Did you make any friends among the Germans?

A: No. When I first went to Germany, I attended an elementary school – I was placed in a class designed for Turkish women. But the other women were only interested in talking to one another in Turkish in order to establish some kind of contact ("Where are you from? Antalya? And so on.") They had less interest in learning German. So I just gave up after two years!

KPM: Why had these women come to Germany?

A: Many of them had been brought over from Turkey because of "Reinheit" (purity). Turkish men in Germany didn't want German women or Turkish women born in Germany as wives because these were considered morally unfit. The men usually brought poor, uneducated women from Turkey, especially because these women would adjust much better to a joint family, which would save the men money.

KPM: Now that you have returned to Turkey, are you glad you did?

A: Yes. We were third and fourth class citizens in Germany. But the main reason for my return was that I was caught in the middle. There were two groups, the scarf-wearers, as I called them, and the totally westernized "jet set". I just wanted to lead a normal life, but wasn't allowed to. I was forced to take sides.

My comments:

A's reasons for wishing to return to Turkey are shared by other Turkish women who belong to a generation of women literally and figuratively stranded in an in-betweenness of cultural spaces (the Turkish husband as laborer worked long hours, but was able to find relief in meeting other Turkish men in certain public spaces. The woman was virtually a prisoner at home.) As Ruth Mandel observes, Turks in Germany are subjected to "processes of ethnicization" and perceived as an ethnic minority regardless of citizenship (Adelson, *The Turkish Turn* 127). There is one notable difference, how-ever, in A's narrative, something that other respondents could not or would not articulate – the state of being "caught in the middle." Such a limbo-like existence, suspended between two worlds, is in fact what characterized the lives of many Turkish women who had migrated in the 1960s to Germany as adults. A's attempt to lead "a normal life" became an impossible undertaking, given the only two options available: total assimilation or internal exile.

A's "scarf-wearers" have exponentially increased in Europe, as the transcript of the next interview shows. S's daughter's comment in the previous interview about her two female cousins living in Germany ("one doesn't

wear a headscarf; the other one has begun wearing one now!") illustrates the increasing polarization dominating the politics of immigration. An appreciable number has begun to wear a scarf even in families where the older women are uncovered.[11] According to Adelson, this changes

> [T]he symbolic stakes of the headscarf, for the civilizing effect of personhood is now claimed by avowedly secular states and demonstratively religious minorities in Europe alike. (*The Turkish Turn* 129; emphasis added)

One definition of secularism explains it as indifference to or rejection or exclusion of religion and religious considerations, and both Turkey and Germany describe themselves as secular states. I agree with Adelson that minorities, especially those who are marginalized, do demonstrate their religiosity in order to acquire some measure of self-esteem. However, I suggest that when confronted by the Islamic headscarf as a visible marker of the definitive "other," even the majorities in European states whose frame of reference is Christianity experience anxiety that is ultimately fuelled by power relations as defined by institutionalized religion.

Interview with M, her family, and a younger female friend

Date: April 15, 2005
Location: suburb of Istanbul

Information on respondent/s: M, a woman in her sixties; her three daughters N, O, and P; the daughters' friend G. In public, all five women wear headscarves and long coats reaching down to their ankles; O and P did not participate in our conversation. They greeted my interpreter and me, and silently served us tea and snacks.

11 Some readings of the *Hadith* prescribe that women begin to cover themselves only after attaining puberty, claiming that their source of authority was the Prophet himself. However, during my stay in Kreuzberg I noticed pre-pubescent girls wearing headscarves. The mother of one of the covered girls confessed to me that she had expressly forbidden her daughter to wear a headscarf. But the daughter who attends Qur'an classes after school refused to do so "because all the other girls in class wear one – I don't want to be different."

KPM (TO THE GROUP): What were your experiences in Germany? Did you adopt Western clothing?

N: According to Islam, women have to wear a headscarf. When I was in Germany, I didn't wear one because one couldn't even rent an apartment in Germany if you wore a scarf! As a child, I was uncovered. But on returning to Turkey, I decided to wear the scarf. I respect my religion. When I came to ___, I wore a short skirt. People would stop me on the road and ask me to wear a longer skirt. One night during Ramadan I decided to wear a scarf as well. I won't take it off now.

KPM (TO M): What about you? What experiences did you have in Germany?

M: My German is very good. I didn't want the Germans to know I was Turkish. My husband went to Germany in 1969, and I joined him a year later. We returned in 1979. I wanted to go back to Turkey because of my children. My mother had died. My husband's brother had also died in an accident in Turkey. Now I'm sorry I returned. I have thought of going back. My husband has gone back because the German textile firm where he had previously worked wanted him back in their alterations department. In any case, he couldn't get used to the Turkish way of life. In 1979 when I went to the Turkish consulate in Germany, the consular officer said: "Are you sure? If you return, you won't be allowed to come back to Germany."

KPM (TO G): How old were you when you went to Germany?

G: I went to Germany when I was 5 or 6 years old. In 1997 I was married. Our marriage was registered in Germany. Then we had a religious ceremony in Turkey. I began to wear a scarf two years into my marriage.

KPM: Did you want to return to Turkey?

G: Yes, for religious reasons. My husband is religious and showed me many books. I wanted to know for myself – with a clear conscience. I didn't want to be coerced into anything. It has to come from one's innermost soul. It is written thus in the Qur'an. The Qur'an says: A woman has to cover herself, from the face and head, arms down to the ankles, heels. A man also has to cover himself down to his knees. There is no difference between a man and a woman, only between good and bad women. How can one differentiate between these? The scarf protects respectable women. When pretty women are around, men are not dependable. It is a biological fact.

My comments:

G's words: "When pretty women are around, men are not dependable" refers to the thirty-first verse of the *Surah an Nur* in one particular translation of the Qur'an that explains how feminine attributes when revealed would lead men into temptation; hence women are obliged to protect themselves from the male gaze.[12] Ghazal Read and Bartkowski show how experts on Sharia force women to shoulder the responsibility for the management of men's sexuality. They quote Muhammad Iqbal Siddiqi as an example of such an expert:

12 "Likewise tell Momin [= believing] women to not let their gazes go wayward; they should also fully guard their chastity. It is also imperative for them not display their adornments, except what becomes apparent by itself when moving around normally (as intentional display would mean that they have an inner desire to express). And let them cover their bosoms (so that mischief-mongers can-not say that they were unaware that these ladies were noble; for otherwise they would not have pestered them – 33:59). While walking they should not strike down their feet, in order not to draw attention to their hidden ornaments." ("Qur'an – Surah An Nur")

> The Islamic system of Hijab is a wide-ranging system which protects the family and closes those avenues that lead toward illicit sex relations or even indiscriminate contact between the sexes in society. [...] To protect her virtue and to safeguard her chastity from lustful eyes and covetous hands, Islam has provided for purdah which sets norms of dress, social get-together [...] and going out of the four walls of one's house in hours of need. (399)

Women's sexuality and beauty are thus seen as threats to the social order. This reading of the Qur'an continues to be validated as stable and immutable. However, one has to take into account hegemonic interpretations of such texts that are held to be sacred. The concept of hegemony recognizes that ideologies which are passed off as commonsensical are not rigid and forever stable, despite attempts on the part of the dominant culture or gender to make it appear that way.[13] Ideologies possess their own internal contradictions, and hegemony as a process of social control by dominant groups through a practice of "naturalization" always encounters resistance and defiance. It is in this sense that the "protection" of women has to be questioned and re-assessed.

Whereas in Turkey seclusion of women meant a relatively separate, homosocial women's world, as Lila Abu-Lughod argues very convincingly, Turkish women living in Germany who belong to the first and second generations of migrant Turks have had no similar recourse to either their kin or to other women from other classes and have usually been under the control of the husband. I suggest that N's willing return to Turkey makes transparent this lack of community. The return also included a re-entry into what was increasingly becoming the symbol of Islamisation: veiling. Nilüfer Göle explains:

> The Islamic revolution has utilized the veiled bodies of women as a political symbol to show its difference from the Western world. [...] The Iranian Revolution was depicted by the Western media as the "collective hysteria of the fanatic masses." [...] the female body, with its "convulsions" and "hysteria," was equated with the chaotic order of the revolution. The Islamic Revolution advanced the female body by giving it a new semantic language against Western civilization. (83)

13 My understanding of hegemony is based on Antonio Gramsci's work (506–508).

Göle presents a more differentiated meaning behind the act of veiling – the emphasis is on the word "act." According to Göle women (like N) demonstrate agency. N's declaration: "One night during Ramadan I decided to wear a scarf as well. I won't take it off now" resonated with me in a new way. Göle adds:

> Western culture locates the human body under the aesthetic and hygienic command of human willpower and the increasing submission of the human body to the spheres of science and secularization. The Muslim body, on the other hand, becomes a site for symbolic politics to the extent that Islamism attempts to politicize the distinctiveness of a religious conception of self and body. Thus, the image of veiled women serves to translate faith and religiosity into politics as a civilizational issue – that is, a distinct conception of self and body. (83f.)

I quote Göle at length because she articulates a key issue in the so-called headscarf problem, namely Muslims' struggle for the formation of a distinct and separate identity in Judeo-Christian environments where they are looked upon as undesirable, as third-class citizens.

I re-visited *The New Yorker*'s cover page with three women dressed in three different types of clothing: a burqa, a bikini, and a Catholic nun's habit. If the bikini can be comprehended as the decision of a woman who publicly portrays a certain model of modernity and civilization, the headscarf is no less that of an active, demanding, and even militant Muslim woman who leaves the confines of the house and participates in defining an opposing understanding of civilization. Both bodies, however, are politicized and sexualized, as Göle explains above.

GERMANY

Interview with A and B

Date: March 17, 2007
Location: public park in Kreuzberg, Berlin.

Information on respondent/s: This was a chance encounter. Two young women (A and B), 16 and 17 years old respectively and wearing headscarves,

were sitting on a bench. I asked if I could join them and ask a few questions. They immediately agreed. Both are high school students.

Transcript of interview:

KPM: I am from India and would like to know how you experience life here in Germany, given your Turkish heritage.

A: You're from India? I have watched dozens of Hindi movies. We love Shahrukh Khan and Aishwarya Rai.[14] I was born in Berlin and have lived here all my life. I'd love to travel. But it is so difficult being a covered woman in Berlin.

KPM: How is your headscarf perceived in public?

A: Whenever I enter a fashionable store on Kudamm,[15] the security guard and the sales persons are always watching me – as if I might steal something! After all, what would a scarf-wearing Turkish woman want in a clothing store with Western clothes? [Laughs] The people in the stores didn't know I was interested in fashion design, especially for headscarves.

B: Living here in Kreuzberg is good because of its large Turkish population. We were both born here in Germany. I have an Afro-German friend – I don't understand any difference based on skin color.

A: Last year, during the summer holidays, I got a temporary job as a salesperson at KaDeWe.[16] I remember one time this customer came to the store. He said he was a diplomat from India. Told me I should make something of myself, not get stuck in this kind of a job!

14 Bollywood movie stars.
15 Kurfürstendamm, one of the most famous avenues in Berlin.
16 One of Germany's largest department stores.

B: Germans keep saying to me: "Even in Turkey you are not obliged to wear a headscarf to school. Why do you want to wear one here?"

KPM: How will your religious belief and your clothing affect your professional life?

A: When we graduate from High School, there is really nothing out there for us in terms of employment. We can study as much as we want! At the most, we might be able to work in a store owned by Turks or as a medical-technical assistant, for example, in a clinic.

My comments:

The notion of parallel societies in present-day Germany permeated the students' narratives. For covered Turkish women living in Germany, whether by reason of birth, choice, or coercion, the daily discrimination they encounter is unacceptable but inescapable. The 17-year old woman in the above interview clearly resented the incessant ethnic and racial profiling that she experienced. In the earlier years of Turkish immigration to Germany the stereotype of Western man liberating the Turkish woman[17] solidified the grossly undifferentiated narrative about German civilization combating cultural barbarism, as Leslie Adelson points out (*The Turkish Turn* 129). It could be subsumed under the larger colonial narrative of the civilized white man rescuing the colonized woman from the barbaric native man.[18] Women's rights groups and conservative politicians argue that many Moslem women have no choice but to wear a headscarf because their families demand it. Alice Schwarzer, one of the most forceful voices in German feminism in recent years, has dangerously popularized and trivialized this debate, as Leslie Adelson shows:

17 The German filmmaker Hark Bohm's 1988 film *Yasemin* exemplifies this kind of "rescue."

18 See also Lata Mani's excellent discussion of widow burning (*sati*) in India that helps clarify how violence against women can be normalized. The debate around *sati* supported the misconception that it was a voluntary act of wifely devotion (L. Mani).

> ... Schwarzer responded with outrage to the murders of Turkish women and girls in Solingen in an essay targeting patriarchy as the root cause of such violence. Turkish men are made to bear the burden of German history in an odd twist of rhetoric in 1993. Although it was German men who killed Turkish women in Solingen, Schwarzer uses the occasion to equate Islamic fundamentalism and German fascism. "Both are men's domain" [...] It is hardly a coincidence that this issue of Emma features an article decrying German tolerance for Muslim headscarves with the words, "A Turkish Woman: I am a Human Being Like You," or that it includes a vivid photograph of dark-haired men slaughtering sheep whose blood runs red from one page onto another. (*The Turkish Turn* 129)

Statements such as "A Turkish Woman: I am a Human Being Like You," lay claim to humanitarian and balanced reporting. However, it merely hides a lack of understanding of the issue. Adelson rightly concludes that Turkish women who discard their headscarf (= Islamic hegemony) are seen as symbols of female emancipation thanks to German superiority.

Simultaneously with Turkish women re-appropriating the headscarf with an almost militant aggressiveness, Adelson reminds us that

> [t]he cultural capital accruing to the newly configured icon of the headscarf in Germany is no longer a sense of German superiority, the self-confident largesse of a civilized nation with rights it is eager to bestow on migrant women, but a heightened sense of German insecurity. (*The Turkish Turn* 130)

Adelson's conclusion that German cultural capital manifests itself as a form of insecurity sounds odd, as she herself admits. Yet it is precisely this ever escalating feeling of insecurity – at variance, I would add, with a continuing sense of superiority – that acts as a frame of reference for all discourses about Turkish migration and the future of a Germany whose fantasy of homogeneity is threatened.

In the last decade of the twentieth century, the stereotype of the wretchedly oppressed Muslim woman in need of liberation was rapidly replaced by another no less insidious stereotype: that of women reclaiming the Islamic headscarf based on arguments of cultural particularism and universal personhood, "arguments that exclude marginalized people, as individuals or as groups, from accessing rights," as feminist and human rights scholars explain (Missari and Zozula). The less visible hand behind

this reversal could be located in the Islamist movement that defined for the women their newly-found agency in more than one way. The first attitude admonished women about their role as mothers. Consequently, education was to be seen as a means to raising children in a better way. The other approach cautioned women about their religious obligations. The women were not permitted to define for themselves the connection between education and personhood outside of patriarchal constraints.[19]

Göle's research into the reasons behind the apparent paradox of a veiled and educated woman – is also edifying. She questions the definition of "educated" as "intellectual," "enlightened," and calls attention to the

> prevalent dualities between progressivist/reactionary and educated/ignorant [that] also play a part in the conflict between intellectuals and Muslims. Islamist female students who, on the one hand, acquire the label "educated," and who, on the other hand, are committed to Islam, subvert these preestablished categories. [...] The profile of educated veiled Muslims not only challenges the shift of civilization but also the power domain of Westernist elites. (97)

Group interview with ten women

Date: March 30, 2007
Location: local elementary school in Kreuzberg, Berlin

Information on respondent/s: This group of ten women was attending a German language course on the school grounds while their children attended the school. A Turkish woman was the instructor. Six women wore headscarves and ankle-length coats; four were uncovered. The instructor was also uncovered. One of the women taught religion at a local mosque.

19 See Göle (116).

Transcript of interview:

KPM: This is a question for the group: How is your headscarf perceived in public?

FIRST COVERED WOMAN (teaches religion at a local mosque): It is written in the Qur'an, in the "Nur Surah:" Cover your shoulders and breasts. When you go out, suitable clothing is to be worn. Clothing is prescribed.

SECOND COVERED WOMAN: Tradition and religion. According to Islam, as a woman one has a feeling of greater freedom and comfort. No heavy physical labor is required. Men can help women at home.

FIRST UNCOVERED WOMAN: Turkish culture, not Islam, makes women abject. Young men are sent to better schools.

SECOND UNCOVERED WOMAN: I don't want to wear a headscarf. I do *namaz* as often as I can, I observe Ramadan. I don't like the scarf. People stare at me. When we married I said to my husband: "I won't wear a headscarf."

THIRD UNCOVERED WOMAN (she is unmarried): Married women wear headscarves.

FIRST UNCOVERED WOMAN: I don't want to wear a scarf just because of a stupid thing like marriage! If I cover myself, then I do it for religious reasons!

KPM: How do you feel about your non-German heritage?

THIRD COVERED WOMAN: In the Turkish village the male children inherit everything. Here, it is no different for us.

FOURTH UNCOVERED WOMAN: Women are oppressed.

THIRD UNCOVERED WOMAN: Only the husband should be allowed to see the wife. I am very pious. I don't want people to stare at me, which is why I don't wear a headscarf. The woman's duty is to look after her husband and children. She doesn't have to do the household work.

FIRST COVERED WOMAN: Parents, nephews, nieces, and children are permitted to see a woman without a headscarf. One is not allowed to see the female figure. One must be covered from top to toe. Germans say: there is a law against the headscarf. One has to show one's face and hair for a passport-photo. The Central Committee for Muslims claims that wearing a headscarf is not compulsory. Clothing code for men: not to show the body from the navel to the knees; not to wear any tight clothes; no silk blouses, no gold jewelry. But in reality only some men observe this.

KPM: Is the headscarf political as well? Does your wearing it affect your professional life?

SOME MEMBERS OF THE GROUP RESPOND: Some women do it [remove their scarf] deliberately in order to denigrate Islam. They are wrong.

FOURTH UNCOVERED WOMAN: We can't get jobs easily.

My comments:

The above interview revealed most powerfully the complexity of the headscarf issue. The women used every question that I asked to air their personal convictions and grievances. These random thoughts were nevertheless useful. It was the first time that I was conducting a series of group interviews, but it was the only time I was confronted by a mixed group: covered and uncovered women. Consequently, I expected a clear split based on the headscarf. However, it was the teacher of religion who dictated the group's dynamics. She clearly intimidated even the uncovered women. The entire discussion was fraught with a nervousness that plainly conveyed tensions emanating from loyalty to Islam, an implicit critique of a Western definition of modernism, and a wish to assimilate with the dominant German culture.

An attentive reading of the above discussion hinted at the palimpsestic nature of the debate around the veil. The teacher of religion immediately framed the discussion in Qur'anic terms, underscoring the conflict and putting everyone on the defensive. The second covered woman picked up

this thread and added what she believed would reveal the emancipated nature of this religion, especially with regard to women's rights. A sense of "equal but different" resonated in her comments ("No heavy physical labor is required. Men can help women at home.") Interestingly, the first uncovered woman held Turkish culture, not Islam, responsible for the oppression of Turkish women. The second uncovered woman resented any implication that she was less religious because she was uncovered. In the very next sentence, however, she explained that she did not want to be conspicuous in a society where the headscarf was an object of distaste. Reacting to the third uncovered woman's matter-of-fact statement: "Married women wear headscarves," the first uncovered woman asserted her agency in deciding whether to wear a scarf or not. Her own religious convictions would dictate this action, not "a stupid thing like marriage." Göle's comment on how educated Islamist female students find various ways to subvert pre-established categories applied to this uncovered woman as well. At this point, the sway of the religious teacher seemed to weaken when the third covered woman also complained about gender inequality, a complaint that was immediately taken up by the fourth uncovered woman. The third uncovered woman clearly revealed that the act of uncovering in German society was tantamount to being invisible ("I don't want people to stare at me, which is why I don't wear a headscarf"). Understandably, she wished to avoid all the stereotypes evoked by a covered woman on the streets of Germany – backward, exotic, possessing excessive sexuality, oppressed. Other men did not "see" her as a sex object. The teacher of religion intervened at this moment in order to pull the discussion back to where she had initiated it, before it became dangerously transgressive in her opinion. Her defense of the headscarf stemmed from nonsexual grounds, i.e., the veil, according to her, served to do the following:

1) demonstrate the Muslim woman's unwavering obedience to the tenets of Islam;
2) clearly indicate the essential differences distinguishing men from women;
3) remind women that their proper place is in the home rather than engaging in public-sphere activities;

4) show the devout Muslim woman's disdain for the profane, immodest, and consumerist cultural customs of the West. (Ghazal Read and Bartkowski 399)

However, the teacher's remark: "But in reality only some men observe this" with reference to modest clothing for men suggested to me that she was quite aware of gender inequalities in Islamic society. Ghazal Read and Bartkowski quote critics of the hijab who point to a passage in the Qur'an that refers to the "vast reward" Allah has prepared for both "men who guard their modesty and women who guard their modesty" (401). To my question as to whether the headscarf was political as well, there was an ostensibly unanimous response criticizing women who attempted to politicize it.

The above interviews revealed once again – depressingly – that no matter how hard ungrievable minorities tried to assimilate, however actively they pursued the goal of acceptance by the majority, their status would not change.

From my own experience as an immigrant, as I have argued throughout this book, I felt that Turks in Germany – those reverting to the headscarf and "tradition untouched by Germany" – are similar to other diasporic populations who sense a loss of their identity. Most Asian Indians in the United States try to return to a pre-colonial "original" culture that does not really exist anymore in present-day India. Similarly, cultures in Turkey are much more dynamic and heterogeneous. This may be one of the reasons why many Turks who see no possibility in Europe of creating cultural "hybrids" because of rigid dichotomies prefer to return to Turkey.

Group interview with three women

Date: Tuesday, 17. April 2007
Place: A psychological and health counseling center for female immigrants, Berlin. The center also provides vocational training.

Information on respondent/s: E is 19 years old, married, wears a headscarf; Y is an older woman, married, wears a headscarf; MO is an older woman, works as a janitor.

Transcript of interview:

KPM: How is your headscarf perceived in public?

E: Allah has decreed this through his Prophet. I wear it for religious reasons. My husband and I both pray together. The world is different now, not like it was at the time of the Prophet. It is now corrupt. If one wears a headscarf one doesn't get any employment! Some women tie their scarves in a knot at the back so that they are allowed to work, but that is not the correct way. I wear only a pullover/blouse and a long skirt, and naturally a long coat when I am on the street. I don't have any children yet.

KPM: Does your religious belief affect your professional, your work life?

Y: I have been living in Germany since 1972. After a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina (Haj) I wear a headscarf. I can hardly speak any German – don't really have any use for it. I have worked eleven years here. Now I am preparing myself for my death, which is why I am wearing the headscarf.

MO: I wear a headscarf in preparation for my death [while talking, she takes off her headscarf because of the heat] We are just women here!

My comments:

The veil is not only a gender marker; it is increasingly becoming synonymous with "the state of modernity," as Najmabadi so powerfully argues. (242) Marriage here is neither a purely sexual nor a romantic bond. Najmabadi describes how marriage as a sexual contract for procreation left Iranian women free to pursue homosocial bonds. Marriage as a romantic contract, however, demanded that women place love and loyalty to husband above their homosocial bonds, with mother, sister, female kin and neighbors, and even female servants. (Najmabadi 174) E's marriage seems to be an odd mix of the two forms of marriage. The fact that she and her husband pray

together, preserving a pure space of worship uncontaminated by the corruption of the outside world, speaks to the loyalty and love she expresses for her husband. Her comment: "I don't have any children yet," speaks to the procreative terms of a sexual contract. Her allegiance to her husband and his moral compass outweigh considerations of employment. Her comment about the world being corrupt, unlike during the time of the Prophet, echoes the clichéd attitude that during the Golden Age of Islam women had already assumed a high status.[20] Consequently, they never have to struggle for equal rights: "Returning to the sources of Islam, [the women] idealized the Golden Age of Islam and tried to prove that their new lives did not contradict the essence of Islam" (Göle 103).

Y and MO are both uneducated. Y has spent thirty-five years in Germany, yet on her own admission she "can hardly speak any German." Even more tellingly, she adds: "I don't really have any use for it." The anxiety about parallel societies in present-day Germany that characterized the high-school students' texts in an earlier interview is palpable here as well. When I asked them about family life, both Y and MO did not want to respond. Both shared a need for the headscarf as a preparatory stage for death. Yet when MO casually removed her headscarf "because of the heat," – a gesture enabled by the liberating environment of the homosocial ("There are just women here"), – this belief in redemption through the scarf was casually lost in the practical need to cool down.

Group interview with four women

Date: Tuesday, 17. April 2007
Place: Vocational training center, Berlin

Information on respondent/s: Meeting with a group of three women. All of them had begun to wear a headscarf at the onset of puberty. S wants to become a fashion-designer for headscarves.

20 The Islamic Golden Age is conventionally understood to be the period from c. 750 CE to c. 1257 CE.

Transcript of interview:

KPM: How is your headscarf perceived in public?

S: The headscarf is a belief, it is religion, tradition. I wear it of my own volition.

B: I work wherever I want to. No one can forbid me from working. It is the culture that does it. Our men don't say anything when the Germans call us backward! It is all crap.

KPM: Is that how they perceive the headscarf? As something backward?

O: When I had a job interview with Edeka,[21] I talked so much and so aggressively that the interviewer had to hire me. One needs a lot of self-esteem; otherwise one can't achieve anything, especially when one wears a headscarf.

S: The headscarf ban is only the beginning. Then mosques will be closed down.

KPM: Does your religious belief negatively affect your potential to get work? Do Germans see the headscarf as anti-modern?

O: Modern means for me "democratic" – equal rights. I have been wearing the headscarf since puberty. It doesn't prevent me from getting work. The headscarf is not just because of religion, because one is a believer. One must wear it from the seventh grade on. Women with a headscarf are not recognized.

B: Everything comes from culture.

21 A grocery store in Berlin.

My comments:

All three women showed an unusually high level of aggression stemming from frustration at the inability of "our men" to defend them against comments of backwardness, and grave concerns that Islam would be erased from the German cultural landscape. B's comment: "Everything comes from culture" captured the Muslim woman's dilemma. Judeo-Christian German culture, Islamic Turkish culture – neither recognized the full potential of these women. All three women defiantly wore the headscarf – a demonstrative act that demanded recognition, deconstructing the cultural stereotype of the submissive Oriental woman. I gauged the women to be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, which placed them in the third generation of Turkish immigrants to Germany. They sought to simplify the ambiguity of the world into which they had been born by clinging to their parents' world as their sole site of cultural identity, symbolized by the mosque. O's comment "Modern means for me 'democratic' – equal rights" signaled tensions between Western notions of democracy and equal rights and other concepts of modernity. O's was perhaps an attempt, albeit unconscious, to formulate third positions or spaces where her perceived regressive culture wished to define its modernity outside of a Judeo-Christian gendered frame of reference, i.e., within an Islamo-Turkish modern one.

II – Young and Muslim: The media project Wuppertal

The "Medienprojekt Wuppertal" (media project Wuppertal) has produced thought-provoking videos about minority youth in Germany since 1992. These model project videos function under the motto: "Das bestmögliche Video für das größtmögliche Publikum" (The best possible video for the largest possible audience). The project supports videos that are produced by the youth members themselves, and are shown in open forums such as film theaters, schools, and youth centers. All projects serve the cause of active media participation and the creative expression of the aesthetics, opinions, and life goals of their young members. Projects typically use the genres of reportage, feature films, animated cartoons, computer animations, experimental films, and music clips in the form of short films.

Beginning in 2005, the video project "Jung und Moslem" (Young and Muslim) launched a series of films about young Muslims living in Germany. Each film chose a specific item from a list of issues that preoccupied young people of diverse religious persuasions, national and cultural backgrounds, and different sexual orientations, and recorded their opinions. I have chosen to discuss two of the eleven segments that record interviews with young women: Section 1: "Mein Kopftuch gehört dazu" (My headscarf is a part of me) and section 5: "Ich bin gezwungen, zwei Gesichter zu tragen" (I am forced to wear two faces) in order to bring the *wearer* of the veil, namely the woman, into the foreground of the debate, and consequently to more fully comprehend the complexity that surrounds the veil. Elizabeth Fernea's comment underscores the multilayeredness of this symbol: "[the veil] means different things to different people within [Muslim] society, and it means different things to Westerners than it does to Middle Easterners" (154). My own interviews have shown how the meanings of the veil among Muslim women of all ages within the same cultural space are equally conflicted. The interviews in "Jung und Moslem" add two important dimensions to this perception. A new generation born in Germany provides the first. The second dimension stems from the fact that the interviews ensure a safe environment leading to greater candor. The respondents from my own interviews were reluctant to sustain such openness for a variety of reasons, the main one conceivably being their fear of reprisals from the many types of authority such as parents, teachers, and clergy that constrained their ability to speak uninhibitedly. In "Jung und Moslem," respondents were among themselves, interviewing one another in a space that allowed for a lowering of their affective filter.[22] Ghazal Read and Bartkowski discuss the scope of the religious authority that weighs down on many Muslims:

22 "Affective Filter" is the fifth of five hypotheses that the linguist Stephen Krashen offers in formulating a theory of language acquisition and development. Ricardo Schütz elaborates on Krashen as follows: "His fifth hypothesis, the Affective Filter hypothesis, embodies Krashen's view that a number of 'affective variables' play a facilitative, but non-causal, role in second language acquisition. These variables include: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety are

> Within Islam, the all-male Islamic clergy (variously called *Faghihs, imams, muftis, mullahs*, or *ulumas*) often act as interpretive authorities who are formally charged with distilling insights from the Qur'an or hadiths and with disseminating these scriptural interpretations to the Muslim laity. [...] Given that such positions of structural privilege are set aside for Muslim men, Islam is a patriarchal religious institution. Yet, patriarchal institutions do not necessarily produce homogeneous gender ideologies, a fact underscored by the discursive fissures that divide Muslim religious authorities and elite commentators concerning the veil. (398)

Most significant here is the comment about patriarchal institutions producing different gender ideologies. It is precisely this difference that engages young Muslim women in Germany, a difference that is shared by their white German counterparts. Helga Kraft bemoans the fact that the struggle for women's emancipation in Germany is not yet over, as the enduring majority understanding of the "traditional" role of the mother in German society reveals:

> In einer noch weitgehend konservativen Gesellschaft, deren Politiker oft mit "traditionellen Familienwerten" an das Sicherheitsbedürfnis appellieren, scheint auch diese [emanzipierte] Mutter nicht für alle nachahmenswertes Rollenmodell zu sein: meist ist sie doppelt belastet ... (5)
>
> (In a still predominantly conservative society whose politicians often appeal to "traditional family values," even this [emancipated] mother does not seem to be a role model worth emulating: for the most part she is doubly burdened. ...)

"Traditional family values" are open to a whole range of interpretations, especially because "traditional" claims a moral authority that seldom reveals who introduced a particular tradition, and why it was sustained. The German sociologist Ute Frevert's 1989 conclusion about German

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better equipped for success in second language acquisition. Low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety can combine to 'raise' the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. In other words, when the filter is 'up' it impedes language acquisition. On the other hand, positive affect is necessary, but not sufficient on its own, for acquisition to take place" (Schütz).

women's struggle for emancipation has not lost any of its relevance two decades later:

> Almost without exception, women continue to be responsible for housework and childcare, while from childhood onwards the male of the species prepares for its future out at work and in public life. Female participation in the labour force thus rarely acquires the classic dimensions of a vocation or profession. Consequently, the mechanisms of structural sexual inequality rooted in employment, politics, culture and the public sphere are constantly being reinforced. (327)

The Muslim respondents in the following interviews find themselves being distressingly pulled in what are seen as different directions by Islam and Judeo-Christianity, but ones that are progressively becoming more and more similar in their patriarchal agendas. Using women as handmaidens of spirituality and religion has a long tradition.

"MEIN KOPFTUCH GEHÖRT DAZU": MEDUSA'S EYES TURN INWARDS

The following quotation from the four female respondents in this first section of "Jung und Moslem" summarize the sometimes curious, yet always thoughtful reasons each of them provides for wearing or wishing to wear a headscarf:

RABIA: "It has to do with covering one's charms. However, it is also clear, I believe, that the woman is by nature the more beautiful sex."

RABIA: "If at all, then it is precisely through this psychic strength so-to-speak that I cover myself, but which also allows me to talk with a young man and such; were I to feel something for a young man, this strength also enables me to show restraint if I want to."

NURHAN: "I would never take off my headscarf for an apprenticeship or something similar."

NURHAN: "Friends have – like – worn the headscarf. So I also wanted to wear a headscarf."

HACER: "Because pressure comes from outside about – like – a divine headscarf, I have never thought of taking it off."

HACER: "One recognizes religiosity more in women than in men. However, I think it is clear that men and women ought to be equal."

KEVSER: "Since my childhood I have believed in Allah and continue to believe in Allah."

KEVSER: "Men also show off their bodies, how muscular they are and such. Well, they are not supposed to do this – Muslim men."

My comments:

I repeat Judith Butler's words about grievable and precarious lives in the context of Rabia's remark about "psychic strength":

> The shared condition of precariousness leads not to reciprocal recognition, but to a specific exploitation of targeted populations, of lives that are not quite lives, cast as "destructible" and "ungrievable." (31)

It is this lack of reciprocal recognition that leads women like Rabia, the young woman who posits self-consciousness as a reason for wearing the headscarf, to create a persona outside of the Judeo-Christian framework that Germany implicitly imposes, despite its protestations of secularism, when she says: "The scarf belongs to me. Here in Germany, being a Muslim simply denotes self-consciousness," and "I am just me and my religion belongs to me. I am just Rabi with a head covering." She traces the veil's divine significance back to her belief in the Qur'an as the actual word of God, and reads the text from Surah 24, Verse 31 that concerns the comportment of Muslim women.[23]

23 See Footnote # 63 for another version of the text. The German version from which Rabia reads is as follows: "And say to the believing women that they ought to lower their gaze to the floor and protect their chastity and not display their treasures,

The socio-historical context of words like "servants" (the English translation that I use here has "servants," other translations choose "slaves") does not lead her to question the appropriateness of such injunctions of blatant and less overt oppression in the twenty-first century. In the absence of an explicitly sustained appreciation of her religion by the state, she eagerly relies on the words of the Qur'an to strengthen her conviction that Islam indeed provides her with a valid moral compass. Unlike older Muslim feminists such as Fatima Mernissi, Rabia does not yet have the maturity to reassess critically scriptural texts and question their ideology. Consequently, she shares a widespread belief instilled into Muslim women that they are responsible for preventing "chaos" ("fitna" in Arabic) in society by controlling their own sexual urges and hiding their sexual "ornaments." She comments about the importance of the headscarf: "She ought to cover herself, so that not every being, every man thinks she is an invitation for him." Many Muslim sociologists and feminists point out how Islamic tradition and religion use space as an instrument to control sex. Orlando states: "Masculine Muslim ideology concerning sexualized space is constructed upon the notion of women as active monsters who must be contained" (80). She quotes Mernissi: "In societies in which seclusion and surveillance of women prevail, the implicit concept of female sexuality is active" (80).

Leila Ahmed details how recent translations of the Qur'an by prominent Muslim feminists such as Amina Wadud (*Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam*) and Laleh Bakhtiar (*The Sublime Qur'an*) carefully remain

> within the accepted bounds of orthodox belief – as indeed Bakhtiar does in her translation: that is, they challenge interpretations of the Qur'an but never so much as gesture toward questioning the divine origins of the word or words themselves.

> except for that which may be shown, and that they should cover with scarves all that is exposed by their clothes and not reveal their treasures to anyone (others) other than their husband or fathers or the fathers of their husband or their sons or the sons of their husband or the brothers or the sons of their brothers or sons of their sisters or their maids or those whom they legally possess, or those of their male servants who do not have a sexual drive anymore, and children who do not pay attention to the nakedness of women" (Source unknown; English translation is mine: KPM).

> This is the one inviolable stricture, the one inviolable line that cannot be crossed by anyone who wishes to be viewed as a Muslim by orthodox Muslims. (270)

For example, Bakhtiar traces the term "daraba" to its Arabic root within the context of Surah 4, Verse 34–35 that concerns the issue of marital relations. Most English translations of the Qur'an tend to translate "daraba" as "to beat," thus providing, sometimes unwittingly, a license for domestic abuse. However, feminists like Bakhtiar see in the root of this Arabic word other possibilities that seem to them to be more apposite to the spirit of the Qur'an. Bakhtiar points out that "daraba" also means: "to leave." Although the underlying assumption that only men have the authority to discipline women is still very dubious, these new interpretations promise a re-reading of the Qur'an in ways that will hopefully lead to greater equality and humanity.

Bakhtiar and Wadud's translations are part of an important recasting of orthodox patriarchal readings that have not yet reached young Muslim women such as Rabia. Claire Martin, class of '95, Middlebury College, published in the Spring 2012 issue of the college magazine *Middlebury* an article titled: "Unveiled: The story of a young woman determined to discover the wide-open world around her." The magazine covered a wide range of topics: global warming, injuries resulting in unbearable nightmares, reality television, live music culture, and a professor of political science. However, the front cover chose to highlight Martin's "Unveiled," with the image of a Muslim woman in a red headscarf stepping out of a burka shaped like an egg that had broken into two halves. Martin was describing the life of an Afghani junior at the college, Mahnaz Rezaie. One comment is especially pertinent. Martin quotes Rezaie as saying: "We have lots of really good scholars of Islam [...] But I don't see any translation of the Holy Qur'an from women."(44)

There is a surprising degree of objectivity and self-reflection, however, in some of Rabia's comments:

> ... if society or the individual human being would only understand that one cannot generalize about religion and ought not to believe everything that one hears. And one ought to find out for oneself.

Rabia's insistence that one familiarize oneself with all scriptural texts as a kind of encyclopedic source of knowledge might be a first tentative move towards questioning the dominant, conservative interpretations of Islam, as Ahmed hopes (272). It also suggests a response, albeit indirect, to the undifferentiated vilification of Islam. Additionally, it indicates what Nilüfer Göle posits as an Islamic counter-cultural gesture:

> [T]he Islamic movement stands not far from Western social movements that flourished within the countercultural traditions, such as with the slogan of Black Is Beautiful, in itself a critique of "assimilation" (i.e., into white culture) and which spoke of repressed identity. Similarly, Islamic identity functions as a lever in the social process. Behind the political movements lie the dynamics of social participation. Thus, Islam does not stand against modernity; rather, it acts as a compass of life and as a means of management with modern society. (138)

Thus the veil becomes one way to manage the contradictory propensities of modern German society. It provides a point of orientation for codes of behavior that ensures survival. Unfortunately, as Göle points out, contemporary Islamic practices ignore how power relations between the sexes intersect with politics because, as she comments, the veiling of women

> symbolizes the Islamic organizations and constitutes a base for the politicization of Islam and for the perpetuation of the segregation between the sexes, meaning the confinement of women to the *mahrem*, the domestic sphere. (139)

However, the greater the number of Islamic women entering the public sphere via political movements, questioning their seclusion in the private sphere, the more influence they can wield in changing the perceived irreversible process within the Islamic movement (139).

The young women in "Jung und Moslem" do not have the same access to the public sphere as their counterparts in Turkey, as Nurhan's experience with applications for an apprenticeship suggests. Many pharmacies turn down her application for an apprenticeship. She protests:

> They said "yes" at first, but then they saw me, then "no," or – if I phoned them, they said "yes," but when they saw me, then it was "no", or they also said: Not with the headscarf.

The need to be recognized as a member of a respected community underlies her comment: "Friends have – like – worn the headscarf. So I also wanted to wear a headscarf." It also indicates a teenager's need to conform. However, a mainstream German schooling system that frames conformity differently forces these "others" to band together. Nurhan confirms this tendency on the part of the dominant culture to misinterpret minorities and marginalize them for looking different:

> I was in the fifth class, and there was this old grandpa type, I thought he wanted to pass me by – it was such a narrow street. I stepped aside ... I thought it was a nice gesture on my part! But he just waited. So I assumed he wanted to rest or something, so I continued walking. But then he said: "It is not that cold either!" This was the first week of my wearing a headscarf. So I thought about this, like, for two days.

"It is not that cold either!" underscores the aggression that even chance encounters with the "other" on the street trigger – a belligerence that stems from the fear of an uncomfortably new German "other" whose every gesture becomes suspect, even if it be within the codes of behavior of German culture (Nurhan's was a gesture of courtesy and consideration towards an older person that would have been appreciated in another context). Anxiety increases at the realization that this "other" cannot be lightly dismissed anymore as a foreigner.

Hacer best portrays the daily struggle to vindicate the scarf that many scarf-wearers experience in Germany:

> One notices the looks one gets when one goes down the street, or in school. Even from some teachers. I try to ignore this by telling myself that one's appearance is not important. [...] When someone asks me: "Why do you wear a headscarf?" At this age I couldn't, like, justify it properly. I said: It is because of my religion, I thought.

The insistence with which people pose these questions leads Hacer to not only defiantly wear her scarf, but to redouble her efforts to justify its importance:

> But when the questions kept coming because those who posed these questions were dissatisfied, then I asked myself: "Why *do* you wear the headscarf?" So the whole issue began to sit deep within me, because I started to grapple with it.

Kevser is one of two respondents in this group who openly express their sense of unease about sexism:

> Men also show off their bodies, how, like, muscular they are. Well, they are not supposed to do this – Muslim men.

Hacer adds:

> One recognizes religiosity more in women than in men. However, I think it is clear that men and women ought to be equal.

Her comment reminds one of two of the arguments of pro-veiling Muslim experts as set out by Ghazal Read and Bartkowski in a list of the four most frequent arguments usedd to justify veiling:

> [The veil] serves as (1) a demonstration of the Muslim woman's unwavering obedience to the tenets of Islam; (2) a clear indication of the essential differences distinguishing men from women; (3) a reminder to women that their proper place is in the home rather than in pursuit of public-sphere activities; and (4) a sign of the devout Muslim woman's disdain for the profane, immodest, and consumerist cultural customs of the West ... (399)

In the video images, all four respondents fashion their veil (*baş örtüsü*) into a *türban*. The word *türban* has been used since the 1970s in the new veiling movement, part of the broader rise in religious commitment among Muslims known as the "Islamic revival," in contrast to the *baş örtüsü* or the traditional headscarf, as Jean-Paul Carvalho explains in his article "Veiling." Göle suggests that the term is polysemic. Originally used in the Muslim tradition, it was coopted by the colonizing French to denote a fashionable style of headdress. Islamists strategically re-appropriated it to foreground women's religious politicization and empowerment, albeit with a view to making Western competing notions of feminism less palatable. Paradoxically, however, as Göle explains,

> the veiled students, who owe their newly acquired class status and social recognition to their access to secular education, also empower themselves through their claim on Islamic knowledge and politics. [...] Their recently acquired visibility, both on

> university campuses and within Islamist movements, indicates women's appropriation of this new symbolic capital and the emergence of a new figure, the female Islamist intellectual. (5)

Although Nurhan and her group of respondents are bound together by their self-identification as devout Muslims, their concerns are not less replete with uncertainties than those who remain uncovered. The following group of young women tugs at the other end of this rope war of societal injunctions.

"ICH BIN GEZWUNGEN, ZWEI GESICHTER ZU TRAGEN":[24] THE TWO FACES OF EVE?

> How did the tradition succeed in transforming the Muslim woman into that submissive, marginal creature who buries herself and only goes out into the world timidly and huddled her veils? Why does the Muslim man need such a mutilated companion?
>
> — MERNISSI 194

The following group of six respondents is preoccupied with questions of sexuality. At the beginning of the section, we hear a voice asking: "What is the problem?" Another voice begins: "Nothing! I have ..." The interviewee laughingly interrupts: "Sex!" a remark that is greeted with laughter in the room. With each interview, common themes emerge: pre-marital sex, paternal authority, virginity, and masturbation. All the respondents are uncovered. Three women identify by name, and three remain nameless. One of the former, Ayse, elects to remain faceless – the camera captures only her shadowy reflection in the glass-topped table at which she sits. All six women are either on or have just crossed the threshold between adolescence and adulthood, and are especially susceptible to pressures from school and home to conform. For these young women, however, there is no correspondence between values at home and those at school. Adolescence under normal circumstances is always a point of great structural vulnerability. When other psychological strains are added to the mix, the many choices between "acceptable" and "unacceptable" become emotional time bombs.

24 "I am forced to wear two faces."

The following quotation from the six respondents in this fifth section of "Jung und Moslem" condense the trajectory of their inner conflicts with the veil as emblematic of their life where religious dogma becomes a way of life. In contrast to the images in the first section, "Mein Kopftuch gehört mir" (My headscarf belongs to me), where the women are seen with covered bodies and head, the women in "Ich bin gezwungen, zwei Gesichter zu tragen" (I am forced to wear two faces) dress in accordance with German and European fashion dictates. I have given the three unnamed women the following initials: MR, MwK, and MwM.

MR: I am sometimes forced, as honest as I am, to wear two faces. One face for home that says: "I haven't slept with a man, Father," in order not to dishonor him. And there is this other face for my lust to live life to its fullest, and I think that if I had had sex I would have led two lives before marriage: one kind at home, somewhat stricter, where sex is taboo. And my other life outside.

MWK: One lives only once. And one ought to be able to live according to one's wishes and the way one feels good about it. Why should a religion or a God prescribe to me how I should live?

MWM: My parents never talked about masturbation, because it was taboo, like talking about sex or marriage. [...] But I see this differently. I am still a virgin and have not yet had any sex. But I think there are other methods through which one can or could get an orgasm.

SINARKAI: I am Kurdish, Kurdish-Alevite. Personally, for example, I don't fast. I don't also pray regularly, actually not at all because ... my parents also don't. We are a very modern Alevite family.

SINARKAI: I am still a virgin because it is really a part of religion, partly because of my parents' honor and to prevent any rumors

from spreading and such. Consequently, I really make sure that nothing is said. It is very important what other people think of me.

MERAL: Yes, I was brought up very strictly. That it was wrong, a little of that feeling was also there – that they were too strict with my freedom, that they didn't allow me to go out that often.

MERAL: [My parents] always thought that if people saw us outside, they would talk behind our backs or spread rumors. And that is not good for the family or the family name.

AYSE: As far as I am concerned, it is quite normal that a man would want a virgin. And because it is so normal it doesn't disturb me anymore.

AYSE: Although I don't, like, wear a head scarf, I don't know ... one has to believe in it inwardly. My parents have also never forced me to wear it. Okay, my father would be happy if I were to wear a head scarf, only ... I don't know ... it hasn't come – yet from inside.

Unlike in the previous section, where the headscarf is unquestioningly accepted as a marker of religious doctrine, here it acquires distinct undertones of unease that at times develop into full-fledged bouts of insubordination, about the absolute truth value of post-prophetic authoritarian Qur'anic tenets, and the biased severity with which they circumscribe women's sexuality.

MR's comment about two faces powerfully expresses this sense of injustice. Significantly, she thinks of her *father's* honor rather than that of Allah or the prophet when talking about sex. Ayse also mentions her father as the figure of authority "who would be happy if I were to wear a head scarf." A more old-testamentary version of a wrathful father appears in MwK's account: "I had my first boyfriend when I was sixteen. I had to hide it from my father." Although MR does not explicitly mention her

father, her sentence, "There is partly the fear as well, let us say, that one can be beaten because of pride and honor that naturally play a huge role in our society" underscores the "honor beatings," like "honor killings," that parents, especially fathers, are known to inflict on recalcitrant daughters in Muslim society. MwK's account of her father repeatedly telling her that a woman had to be a virgin and not enter into any sexual relationship or have a sexual experience before marriage leads to her decision to leave home and into the arms of her boyfriend: "I did grow up with this father and he whispered the whole time into my ear that it is a sin, and that I am an immoral woman and I am a bad girl if I do it, and of course I felt bad about it." She also resists wearing a headscarf:

> I had this huge fight with my father, because I was to be covered, and go around with a headscarf. I didn't do it anymore in the university. It was so embarrassing for me. Well, why did I have to cover my hair? Yes, the hair of a woman is beautiful, and our loving God created us like this.

In contrasting a loving God with the oppressive father figure, MwK questions the power structures of institutionalized religion. She also criticizes the hypocrisy and egoism of many Muslim men who have pre-marital sex, then insist on marrying virgins.

For some of these women, masturbation seems a valid outlet in response to the prohibition of pre-marital sex, as MwM's above remark about "other methods through which one can or could get an orgasm" shows. MwK concurs, calling it a form of "self-love," a kind of discovery between a person and her body, and consequently not evil. Meral insists that she has never masturbated. And for Ayse the very thought of any form of pre-marital sex is anathema. However, with what ought to be normal emotional reactions to hormonal changes, these young women never shake off a overwhelming sense of shame that runs as a common thread through all these narratives.

Such unease about masturbation is not exclusive to Islam. Judeo-Christian thought, especially as shaped by Aquinas, traces a history of biblical myth about "unnatural vices." Michael Carden's excellent history of sodomy contains this passage about Aquinas:

> Aquinas [...] notes a gloss on 2 Cor. 12.21, listing the sexual sins of uncleanness, fornication and lasciviousness, which equates uncleanness with "unnatural lust" (*luxuria contra naturam*). He argues from this point that sins of lust show an "especial ugliness making sex activity indecent", being "in conflict with the natural pattern of sexuality for the benefit of the species". Such acts are forms of "unnatural vice" (*vitium contra naturam*) and therefore can be considered sins of lust. Aquinas then identifies four categories of such "unnatural vice". Three categories are masturbation, intercourse with animals, and non-vaginal intercourse between a woman and man. This latter category qualifies as unnatural as it is intercourse not using the proper organs. The fourth category of unnatural sexuality is sodomitic vice (*sodomiticum vitium*) which Aquinas defines as sexual relations "with a person of the same sex, male with male and female with female." (184)

Measures to prevent masturbation such as male and female circumcision are also not exclusive to any particular religious or cultural tradition. There are signs of clitoral excision from the sixteenth century BCE. Although many consider it an Islamic tradition, circumcision predates Islam, is practiced by several religious groups, and is not performed in most Moslem countries.[25] The practice of female circumcision is not unknown in the West. According to Elizabeth Sheehan, clitoridectomy was performed as recently as the 1940s to treat masturbation, insanity, epilepsy, and hysteria (9–15). Planned Parenthood's recent posting on masturbation as part of its Feronia Project quotes one of its anonymous contributors:

> Things became so extreme that be [sic] the turn of the 20th century parents were encouraged to have their sons circumcised so as not to be aroused when cleaning their foreskins and daughters to have clitoridectomies (removal of the clitoris). Parents were encouraged to place their children in straightjackets [sic], or wrap the child in cold wet sheets and apply leeches to remove blood and congestion, or burn genital tissue with hot irons to make sure their child had no access to their genitals at night where the evil deed was likely to happen.
>
> [...] On a regular basis, health educators today still hear very negative responses about masturbation. (Female masturbation, in particular, is often greeted with something like, "Eww, that's nasty!"). (Fosgood)

25 For a thorough discussion about female genital mutilation, see Sami A. Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh, "Male and Female Circumcision: The Myth of the Difference."

Even that master narrator of sexuality, Sigmund Freud, treats masturbation as a psychic disorder: In his "Letter 79 (1)" he ruminates:

> ... It has dawned on me that masturbation is the one major habit, the "primal addiction" and that it is only as a substitute and replacement for it that the other addictions – for alcohol, morphine, tobacco, etc. – come into existence. The part played by this addiction in hysteria is quite enormous; and it is perhaps there that my great, still outstanding, obstacle is to be found, wholly or in part. And here, of course, the doubt arises of whether an addiction of this kind is curable, or whether analysis and therapy are brought to a stop at this point and must content themselves with transforming a case of hysteria into one of neurasthenia. (272)

Any form of sexual release outside of a religiously sanctioned heterosexual union is condemned by the society in which these young women have to function. Guilt and shame become unfortunate and unnecessary companions in these women's discovery of their sexuality. Consequently, two or more faces become a question of survival in their environment. MR's final comment reiterates her concern about having to wear two faces: One face "for my lust to live life to its fullest." And the other face for home that says: "I haven't slept with a man, Father," in order not to dishonor him. The direct address to "Father" reveals a conflict, not with religious doctrine, but rather with oppressive structures at home that interpret this doctrine in expedient ways and stifle her attempts at honesty: "I am sometimes forced, as honest as I am, to wear two faces."

Leila Ahmed recounts an increase in hijab-wearing young women on a number of college campuses in the US since 9/11, and quotes one of them as follows:

> I wanted to show pride in being a Muslim. It gives me an identity and lets people know, here is this regular girl who does everything everyone else does and is also a Muslim. I also feel a sense of closeness to other Muslim sisters. And since I studied the religion before I made my choice, I also feel like I can explain Islam to other non-Muslims." (208)

The covered and uncovered women in "Jung und Moslem" articulate a struggle with the issue of pride as well. When Rabia insists that she is just Rabia with a head covering, within the German context she is no longer a "regular

girl who does everything everyone else does." Non-Muslim Germans perceive her Muslim-ness not as enrichment, but rather as depriving her of the privileges available to non-Muslim German women. This struggle to convince themselves and others that the headscarf is "normal" plagues these young German Muslim women. The young woman's conviction that her study of the religion is extensive and thorough enough to qualify her as knowledgeable echoes Rabia's comment about informing oneself thoroughly about a religion before passing judgment on it: "Even if one doesn't belong to that religion, one should educate oneself about it." An April 2012 New York Times article brought the headline: "Koran Giveaway in Germany Has Some Officials Worried" (Eddy and Kulish). Apparently, a fundamentalist Muslim group led by Ibrahim Abou-Nagie, a Palestinian who preaches a conservative form of Islam known as Salafism, had been distributing copies of the Qur'an since October 2011 in order "to bring Allah's word to every household." In the midst of the uproar and clear condemnation of the distribution, the comment by one bystander resonated with Rabia's attempts at a more objective viewpoint. "Islam plays such a major role in the general political discussion right now," he said. "I figured that as a democratic human being I need to find out more about it and make up my own mind."

Wadud's "Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective" questions not just what the Qur'an says, or how it says it, or who is doing the saying, but also – equally importantly – what is left unsaid.

> I have been developing certain linguistic measures for constructing categories of thought that although not actually articulated in the Qur'an can be deduced from existing structural forms. By noting how and where the Qur'an uses certain grammatical constructs, some light might be shed on a more subtle encoding for the construction of its trajectories. (xiii)

She takes into account historical contradictions within Hadith literature, sayings attributed to the prophet Muhammad that Islamic scholars collected from the eighth century and which are accepted as traditional and incontrovertible: "... I would never concede that the equality between women and men demonstrated in the Qur'an could be removed by the prophet. If such a contradiction did exist, I would choose in favor of the Qur'an"

(Wadud xviii). MwK asks why men are allowed to have pre-marital sex and a relationship before marriage, and women not. Ultimately, however, she is forced to concede: "But the Islamic religion forbids it." Wadud points out that the concept of disobedience (*Nushuz*) is used for both the male and the female, although the relevant verse in the Qur'an pertaining to disruption of marital harmony typically talks about the husband punishing the wife as a means for resolving such disharmony: "... since the Qur'an uses *nushuz* for both the male and the female, it cannot mean 'disobedience to the husband'" (75).

Language is imbedded in complex systems, a fact that is often ignored, distorted, or suppressed by "traditional" notions of learning and knowledge, as Wadud has shown. The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's concept of praxis – informed action – reflects precisely on the symbiosis of language and thought. Freire begins his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* with the following words:

> While the problem of humanization has always, from an axiological point of view, been humankind's central problem, it now takes on the character of an inescapable concern. [...] But while both humanization and dehumanization are real alternatives, only the first is the people's vocation. This vocation is constantly negated, yet it is affirmed by that very negation. It is thwarted by injustice, exploitation, oppression, and the violence of the oppressors; it is affirmed by the yearning of the oppressed for freedom and justice, and by their struggle to recover their lost humanity.

According to Freire, it is not enough for the oppressed to liberate themselves, but – seemingly paradoxically – to liberate their oppressors as well. In Freire's opinion the strength that oppressed acquire suffices to free even the oppressor: "Any attempt to 'soften' the power of the oppressor in deference to the weakness of the oppressed almost always manifests itself in the form of false generosity." His use of the phrase "false generosity" is how I understand "tolerance," a word on which I reflected earlier in this book as a term that often implies an asymmetrical relationship between dominant and minority cultures.

Freire's philosophy leads me to ask myself the following questions: "How can one fight to destroy the causes which nourish false charity? How can one bring together a diverse group of people representing the broad

spectrum between oppressor and oppressed, in an environment free of prescriptive behavior?" Freire's language captures this dilemma:

> The conflict lies in the choice between being wholly themselves or being divided; [...] between following prescriptions or having choices; between being spectators or actors; [...] between speaking out or being silent, castrated in their power to create and re-create, in their power to transform world.

The pedagogy of "Deliberative Dialogue" that I began to employ in 2005 for teaching contentious issues in the undergraduate classroom permits an infusion of some of Freire's wisdom, as I describe in the afterword to this book.

A PEDAGOGICAL AFTERWORD

Deliberative Dialogue and Social Justice

> Deliberative dialogue differs from other forms of public discourse – such as debate, negotiation, brainstorming, consensus-building – because the objective is not so much to talk together as to think together, not so much to reach a conclusion as to discover where a conclusion might lie. Thinking together involves listening deeply to other points of view, exploring new ideas and perspectives, searching for points of agreement, and bringing unexamined assumptions into the open. [...] a question cannot be solved, but it can be experienced and, out of that experience, a common understanding can emerge that opens an acceptable path to action.
>
> — LONDON

In Episode 25 ("The Midterms") of the NBC television serial drama "The West Wing" that originally aired on October 18, 2000, the character of President Bartlet rebukes fictional radio host Dr Jenna Jacobs for her bigoted views about homosexuality. He turns Jacobs' use of chapter and verse from the Bible around in order to stress the importance of unceasing vigilance in re-examining texts that are held to be "sacred," hence indisputable, against the backdrop of new social realities. Consequently, groups like the Christian Research Institute who criticize the veracity of the biblical references that Bartlet uses miss the point of this exercise (Hanegraaff). The battle over women's votes being waged in the current presidential campaigns in the US remind me yet again of the insidious ways in which the agency that women and other underrepresented populations have fought for centuries to win can be seriously eroded within a decade because of attempts to return to more "traditional" exegeses of religious texts.

The media once again help me emphasize Bartlet's point. In a recent "Diane Rehm Show" aired by American University Radio (WAMU 88.5)

on April 18, 2012, participants discussed Kate Chopin's 1899 *The Awakening* that many in the US regard as a landmark feminist novel. Rehm comments: "It was written in 1899 yet it seems to reflect so many challenges that women face even now, being torn between dedication to family and yet creativity on their own on the outside" (Rehm). Chopin's novel is about a woman trapped in the confines of an oppressive society. One hundred and thirteen years later, Diane Rehm's comments suggest that things have not improved appreciably.

The fictional and non-fictional texts that I have analyzed in the foregoing chapters reflect this ongoing struggle that women and other underrepresented groups face in the twenty-first century. How can educators foster greater awareness of the myriad ways in which ungrievable groups can choose empowerment from behind "veils" of silence?

I now reexamine the questions posed at the beginning of this book:

1. Why has anxiety about efforts to question identity formations exponentially increased since 9/11?
2. Why has the hijab been singled out as a metaphor for debates about identity formation, to the exclusion of veiling prevalent in other religious and cultural contexts?
3. Who decides and according to what standards are such decisions made, and what is the appropriate scope of decision-making itself? (Butler 21)

As a teacher I was convinced that the best way to get a variety of responses and perspectives was to pose these very same contentious questions to my students in the classroom. The result was an undergraduate course entitled "To Veil or not to Veil: Germany and Islam" that I first offered at Middlebury College in the fall semester of 2005. I decided to use as the primary pedagogical tool for this course what the New England Center for Civic Life (NECCL) terms "Deliberative Dialogue" – a process of careful deliberation that ultimately leads to civic action. Given the emotionally fraught issue of Muslim immigration in a Western European Judeo-Christian space that defines itself as secular, I felt that the less adversarial nature of such a tool would encourage a more informed and thoughtful

dialogue. "Deliberative Dialogue" would provide a space where all students could come to voice, risk expressing their concerns and interests, and observe how these intersected and overlapped with those of others, thus creating common ground that had the potential to lead to civic action. Moreover, the format of a "Deliberative Dialogue" would allow me to avoid the role of omnipotent teacher coercing students into regurgitating what I imparted to them, and to adopt the more unsettling, albeit consequential role of a mediator/facilitator who acknowledges the importance of forging multiple paths to knowledge. "Deliberative Dialogue" would facilitate such communication. The students and I would jointly produce a knowledge base for our course.

The NECCL defines "Deliberative Dialogue" as part of its project for strengthening democracy through public deliberation and dialogue: "These practices enable people to talk about difficult issues not only on the basis of knowledge, facts, and professional expertise, but also from the perspective of their deeper concerns, values and personal experience" ("New England Center for Civic Life"). Given the tensions underlying the debate about the "veil," I wanted to ensure that students across all kinds of divides (such as race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, to name a few) felt equally obliged to voice their opinions, making transparent underlying anxieties and fears. My goal with "Deliberative Dialogue" was to help my students to discover new perspectives or to explain honestly the ones they had, to consider different options, and even to formulate civic action to change public policy. I was determined to share with my students Freire's challenge:

> The oppressor is in solidarity with the oppressed only when he stops regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and sees them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice, cheated in the sale of their labor. (Freire)

In the following, I describe the course as I taught it in the fall semester of 2008. The six women and ten men who enrolled were extremely diverse. Of the men, six were from Afghanistan, India, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Palestine – all of them non-US citizens. The remaining four were white US citizens. Of the women, four were US citizens. One of these women

was Jewish, another a Korean-American. The remaining two women were from Uganda and Afghanistan. There was similar diversity in their academic standing: there were seven seniors (four women, three men), five juniors (all men), and four sophomores (two men and two women). The only common denominator was their age, which ranged from nineteen to twenty-one years of age.

On the first day of class, I distributed copies of an issue book published by the National Issues Forum Institute (NIFI) entitled "Racial and Ethnic Tensions" as an example of how people can use "Deliberative Dialogue" to talk about social justice.[1] I assured the students that I would not employ this tool if there were even one dissenting voice in the group. Students read the material in class, talked about it in groups and with me, then unanimously voted for the opportunity to try out this new method of learning and exchanging knowledge. We concurred that the goal for the course would be to develop diverse approaches to talking about Islam and its role in Western and non-Western societies, especially in the aftermath of 9/11. I also made sure that students understood their role in the classroom as equal contributors to the learning process, and mapped out the following pattern for each seventy-five minute long class unit:

- Short informational presentation, initially by me, then increasingly by students.
- Responses to questions raised about assigned texts (as a rule, participants would prepare for class by reading the assigned text and formulating at least one question about it. At the beginning of the following class, we would jointly respond to the questions).
- Group work (students formed their own groups) to deliberate further. As the facilitator my role was to listen and take notes.
- Wrap-up with each group sharing its findings with the rest of the class.[2]

1 National Issues Forums (NIF), located in Dayton, Ohio, is a nonpartisan, nationwide network of locally sponsored public forums for considering public policy issues.

2 This was in accordance with the recommendations that NECCL makes for conducting "Deliberative Dialogue": a) Participants conduct dialogues in their respective groups; b) Participants come together and share their group's findings with the

Students spent the entire semester going through the process of framing an issue for public deliberation: from collecting factual information about an issue, reviewing the text books I had prescribed,[3] to talking to people from the college and the community about individual concerns, and finally to creating various approaches to the issue, ensuring that each approach captures what that particular group values most. ("Deliberative Dialogue") Participants used the final weeks of the semester to put together clusters of concerns, i.e., to synthesize the various conversations and analyses in which they had previously engaged, and condense them to four potential approaches to the issue of the headscarf.

The experience of being confronted by opinions different from or even diametrically opposed to their own within what they perceived to be an otherwise stable and shared framework (Middlebury College) resulted in greater sensitivity to "otherness." "Deliberative Dialogue" facilitated the bridging of gaps that would have otherwise remained or widened.

In order to optimize a free and open dialog with peers, staff, faculty, and community members of the town, the participants in the course and I jointly formulated fifteen questions inspired by Adelson's introduction to Şenocak's *Atlas of a Tropical Germany* ("Coordinates of Orientation"). The choice of the lead-in question was left to the discretion of the participant:

1. What role does your family heritage/culture play in your daily life? How do you respond when someone asks you about your culture, religion, and heritage?
2. How do you define secularism? Do you consider the United States to be a secular society?
3. What is your opinion about people who use clothing as a visual symbol of their beliefs (religious, political, etc.)? How effective is this way of communicating one's views? When does clothing become liberating or oppressive?

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others (What measures does this group recommend? What are the political, social consequences of these measures?); c) Participants make concrete recommendations about possible action, discuss trade-offs, drawbacks.

3 See Appendix II: Syllabus "To Veil or not to Veil: Germany and Islam"

4. What are the different reasons for wearing a hijab? Is it a religious obligation? Why is it so controversial?
5. What do you think is really at stake when a woman decides to wear a headscarf or not to wear one?
6. Do you think that children should be treated differently in school because of their religious beliefs? Why or why not?
7. When you hear the word "Islam" or "Muslim," how do you react?
8. To whom do we refer when speaking about Muslims in Europe? Is it a homogenous community? What are their social, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds?
9. Why do Muslims of the second and third generation, immigrants, most of them European citizens, often choose to identify themselves first as "Muslim" instead of "European"?
10. Many Muslims are born in Europe. What makes many Europeans think of them as "foreigners?" What aspects initiate intolerance toward Muslims?
11. What efforts should be made (by Muslims and non-Muslims) to address socioeconomic problems, discrimination, and racism against Muslim communities?
12. How should Europe respond to continuing, often Muslim, immigration?
13. People constantly talk about how Islam needs to be reconciled with a "secular" society. To what extent is religion also implicated in the West's own perception of secularism?
14. How can the radical aspects of any religion be abated while at the same time respecting the rights of moderates to live by the beliefs of their religion?
15. Why is "backwardness" incontrovertibly linked with Islam in the West's definition of "modernity"?

I observed a perceptible change when I compared the participants' opinions during the first weeks of class with those that they articulated in the analyses of their interviews, as the above excerpts indicate. They were able to lay to rest many of the tensions and fears that the topic had initially evoked in them, and their willingness to talk about them was palpable.

It was exciting to see how they in turn heard and recognized similar fears and anxieties in the people they interviewed.

During the final week of the twelve week semester, students considered further unifying aspects in their approaches and enunciated three that optimally framed the issue, and rethought more precisely their recommendations for public action. As a result, the 4/4/4/4 grouping that had characterized the class through much of the semester cohered to three distinct groups of 6/5/5. This cohesion did not imply compromise or consensus, as NIHI emphasizes:

> Deliberative dialogue is that form of talking that helps us to address differences of conviction. If we differ in conviction, we can't have consensus and we are very unlikely to compromise. What we do is find over-lapping self-interests that enable us to take action together. That behavior is common ground for action. ("Deliberative Dialogue")

Each of the three approaches for the final "Deliberative Dialogue" had "contact zones" that enabled interconnectedness – the "common ground" mentioned above. (Pratt 6) Participants put together the following approaches. Accompanying each was an array of options that reflected carefully crafted collaborative efforts within the group:

Approach 1: Discuss underlying oppressive structures in other patriarchal religions in order to stop the systematic, undifferentiated vilification of Islam.

All patriarchal cultures systematically value men more than women at all levels of society. Women are primarily seen as vehicles for procreation or as sex objects. Women's sexuality is acknowledged in all these cultures, but aggressively suppressed/contained in various ways. Media representations of men as strong and powerful and women as passive or sexually threatening/alluring perpetuate these attitudes. These stereotypes undervalue women, tolerate rape and domestic violence, and psychologically damage everyone, especially women who often struggle throughout their lives to find their own voice and to be recognized for their contributions.

Approach 2: Try to understand the differences between Islam and Judeo-Christian societies, even if we consider certain cultural practices as oppressive to women.

Islamic legal doctrines are based on female/male differences. We cannot interfere with the strict segregation and proscribed forbidden spaces for women that Islamic religion requires, even if we consider such segregation to be discriminatory towards women. We have to ask what Western liberal values we may be unreflectively validating in wanting "freedom" and "agency" for Muslim women. As long as we are writing for the West about "the other," we are implicated in projects that establish Western authority and cultural difference. We have to look more closely at terms like modernity, secularism, civilization and their political significance in different cultures. Interference by organizations like the United Nations would be justified only in cases of extreme violations of human rights that lead to torture and death.

Approach 3: Modernity is a universal concept and is the only guarantee of enlightened progress. Consequently, we cannot condone the oppression of women in Islamic societies.

One must make sure that violence and oppression are not condoned under the mantel of cultural relativism. Islam condemns homosexual relations as dangerous to the stability of the *umma*, i.e., the Islamic community. Although more and more Muslim women are in the workplace, their work is seen as not as desirable or worth as much in the marketplace as work typically done by men. We have to guarantee that these women can be in public spaces without fear of harassment and discrimination. Our own secular societies have made major strides in providing equal opportunities for everyone. It is our duty, as citizens of the most powerful nation in the world, to warn recalcitrant societies that further disenfranchisement of women will not be tolerated.

Students had transformed what had begun as an acrimonious debate with a multitude of warring opinions and prejudices into common ground,

> where parties agree to disagree and split the difference, and less than consensus where the objective is to arrive at like-mindedness on an issue. Common ground, on the other hand, is that place (or those places) where participants can see how their goals are shareable, their values overlap and their interests intersect with those of others. It is the basis for win/win solutions to problems, where all parties in the dialogue have had their concerns and interests heard and accommodated to some degree in the decisions made. ("Deliberative Dialogue")

This process of accommodation crystallized during the final dialogue in the last week of the semester. Participants became more introspective. Group #3 began to revisit its insistence on an unconditional condemnation of the oppression of women in Islamic societies when it heard Group #1 advocating an investigation of non-Islamic societies for similar oppressive practices. Group #2 consisted of students who had maintained all semester long what they perceived as a politically correct attitude. Keenly aware of Western ethnocentrism, these participants advised against interfering in the cultural practices of other societies, even if they considered these to be morally reprehensible and oppressive to women. They now realized that the line separating cultural relativism from human rights violations was sometimes indefensibly thin, and that oppression by any other name would smell as foul.

In addition to the narrative description of their approach, two groups diagrammatically presented their recommendations for civic action. Group #1 drew a triangle and wrote "New Thought" at the apex, and "Patriarchal societies," "Religious beliefs" at the two base points. In the middle of the triangle were the words "Our goal: less oppression."

Group #3 drew a triangle with the following recommendations at each point: "Political, economic incentives to initiate tax breaks for educational courses," "More education for women through mosques by men and women," and "Tax breaks for men and women (but mostly men) who attend dialogues led by Muslims; U.N. and similar organizations to offer educational opportunities through local embassies, etc., on women's rights." They drew arrows between the points to show their interconnectedness,

and wrote "The triangle approach" in the center. Members of Group #2 rethought their position of cultural relativism, and proposed looking once again at the following questions that we had been debating over the semester:

- To what extent can or should one respect the cultural practices of others?
- What can one do to resist the gendering of public and private spaces?
- What is the source/intellectual history of terms like "freedom," "agency," "democracy," and "secularism"?

Some concluding remarks

By taking ownership of the issue, participants were willing and able to question and transcend the binary categories of traditional/modern, Islam/West, reactionary/ progressive, ignorant/educated that continue to inform our discourse in the West. They listened to each other, and went beyond debating and other adversarial ways of communicating, thus developing a public voice. Most importantly, "Deliberative Dialogue" had become an integral part of the participants' approach to issues, allowing each exchange of ideas to be invigorating, productive, and potentially transformative. I believe that "Deliberative Dialogue" offered both students and educators a means to begin destabilizing a unitary perception of "culture" as the "collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from another," to use Geert Hofstede's wonderfully creative definition (Hofstede).

In November 2011 Egyptian police beat Mona Eltahawy, an Egyptian-American columnist, breaking her left arm and right hand, and sexually assaulted her. The Interior Ministry and military intelligence detained and interrogated her for twelve hours. In its May/June 2012 issue the Foreign Policy Magazine published an article by Eltahawy entitled "Why do they hate us? The real war on women is in the Middle East." US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton commented: "Why extremists always focus on women

remains a mystery to me," adding, "But they all seem to. It doesn't matter what country they're in or what religion they claim. They want to control women." My response would be: "Wherever they are, change their behavior in the classroom! The classroom, as always, is the most powerful setting for social change." Pedagogies like Deliberative Dialogue may yet help heal this fractured world of ours.

APPENDIX I

Deliberative Dialogue and Excerpts from Student Papers[1]

Deliberative Dialogue: Four approaches

The class of sixteen formed four groups in the first few weeks of the semester. In week ten of the twelve-week semester, each group developed an approach to the issue and articulated it as follows:

Approach 1: Integration of immigrants in a foreign country

Main issue: The community in which one lives embodies one's social interactions, views, and success in integrating with a foreign culture. Direct interaction enhanced with positive education is the goal … to improve cultural exchange and reduce tensions in the community. This can be achieved when immigrant populations move beyond the comfort of their own ethnic communities.

1 The final project that we submitted to the Women's and Gender Studies program at Middlebury College has been archived by the program as part of its annual Alison G. Fraker Essay Prize. The award was established in 1990 by Drue Cortell Gensler (Middlebury Class of 1957) in memory of a much-beloved, vocally feminist student who was killed in a car accident a few weeks before her graduation. Although the prize is usually awarded to a single recipient, notwithstanding the group nature of our project, my students received the equally coveted honorable mention.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Government subsidized housing in historically non-immigrant communities to foster integration:

- Council to establish community events for cultural exchange
- Celebrating different holidays, foods, and other cultural nuances.
- Involve clerics who are leaders in the immigrant community.

POSITIVE EDUCATION INITIATIVES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- Speakers, presentations, and cultural exchange events to educate students – about different cultures.
- Immigrant students should be given the opportunity to talk about their respective cultures.
- This could take the form of a multicultural dinner, or "World Fair."
- Important to not want to trivialize cultures but instead show them as complex entities
- Through positive education initiatives, the relating of Islam/the veil to the terrorism, extremism, and oppression will be avoided. There will a reduction of ignorance and fear associated with the "unknown".

Town Hall meetings to integrate all members of the community (of different religions, races, genders, etc) as a whole in an effort to discuss issues in a non-judgmental, open forum setting.

DRAWBACKS TO OUR RECOMMENDATIONS (WITH POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS)

- Possible resentment towards the immigrants who are being integrated into the new communities. This makes it paramount for the initial integration to be highly organized and gradual, such as staggering the number of immigrants moving into the community over a certain

number of years. The idea would be to never feel as if one group of people is dominating any other. The aim is for the integration to be as natural as possible.
- This type of program has the possibility of not being accessible to all immigrant economic classes.
- There is potential for a lack of interest on both the parts of the immigrant members new to the community and the existing members to not want to participate in community sponsored activities of cultural education. Activities will need to be well advertised and well planned to evoke enthusiasm and excitement.

CONCLUSION

Providing immigrants with a way of becoming part of a community that is historically non-traditional for them will allow for a two-way transference of knowledge and ideas. This integration will be possible with government subsidies, town hall meetings, and councils for cultural exchange that coordinate cultural activities. By learning from one another, the tendency to make assumptions and fall back on stereotypes will be erased. The fear and uncertainty that comes along with ignorance of other cultures will instead be replaced with a willingness to learn and accept new ideas and practices. A base foundation of acceptance and understanding of other cultures will be established, creating a truer, less trivialized understanding in the future. In doing so, the tendencies to vilify other cultures and associate them with extremism, violence, oppression, and terrorism will not be problematic.

Approach 2: Public discourse and education

Main issue: The veil is politicized through the discursive practice of multiculturalism, diversity, security, pluralism, coexistence, and nationalism. This politicization can lead to essentializing, generalizing, and compartmentalizing of the veil. For example, the veil may be defined only in terms of its connection to Islam, to feminine identity, or to tradition, or solely as

a piece of clothing. However, defining the veil in these terms can be very problematic. In this politicized model, the veil symbolizes deeper social issues, including immigration, gender roles and religious prejudice, and becomes a distraction.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal of our approach is to directly address these pressing social issues through public discourse and education. What remains to be decided, in localized contexts is to what extent the veil should be explicitly discussed, and to what extent "left alone," in a public, politicized context.

This approach may be implemented in at least two different ways:

- One way involves public interviews and dialogues that interrogate the process of attaching cultural value to the veil.
- Another way involves developing school curricula that more explicitly address the deeper social issues mentioned above, such as Islamic history or immigration policy.

Approach 3: Grassroots initiatives > Government > Policy Outcome

Main issue: Grassroots can work to inform citizens about issues that they feel strongly about, and in the long term through lobbies and other activities they can effectively influence the political process and legislation.

OBJECTIVES

- Media Diversification
- Education
- Immigration reforms
- Economic reforms
- Diplomatic Reforms
- Multicultural Initiatives

Media diversification

- Reduce consolidation of media companies
- TV Shows that celebrate diversity/ entertainment diversity
- Employment diversity
- Objectivity as goal. E.g. Public support for objective media like NPR, NPTV

Education

- Equal access to education
- Teach intro to various religions at an early age, comparative religion studies (Counterargument: BAN religious education)
- Educate women about their rights
- Diversity in faculty and student body

Immigration reforms

- Non-discriminating immigration policies
- Housing policies
- Inter-culture orientation
- Support system for immigrants
- Language education (free or minimal fee)

Economic reforms

- Reduce income inequality
- Welfare system
- Reduce poverty

Approach 4: Education

Main issue: Education is about creating a broad mentality that allows us to see issues from multiple perspectives, even if we do not agree with them. Today, many people demonize the veil and view it as a symbol of backwardness and oppression. Through education, people can learn to overcome this myopia, and to recognize physical and ideological diversity as enrichment to society, rather than as a dividing force.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS
(WITH DRAWBACKS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS)

What should be done?

Educational institutions

- Education should begin with children – as early as possible. The focus should be on factual knowledge of the major aspects of different world cultures, as well as social interaction in and outside the classroom.
- A thorough study of the history of Islam and the evolution of its ethics, laws and practices should be incorporated into higher educational practice.

Cultural education

- Education should also occur on the community level through cultural events, spreading the message of cultural relativism through music, visual art, and other types of entertainment.
- Classes, workshops, and seminars in community settings focusing on furthering understanding of different people should also be incorporated.
- The development of racially and religiously diverse neighborhoods should also be encouraged, and physical segregation of religious minorities should be avoided.

Media

- The main problem with the media is with its generalized and often inaccurate portrayal of Islam. This should be curbed, as many people in Western nations obtain much of their exposure to Islam from television news programs, newspapers, magazines, and movies. There should be a movement against discrimination and inaccurate portrayals of Islam in movies, as well as biased journalism.
- It is the responsibility of the media to front the effort to educate the public about Islam. There should be more exposure to Muslim culture in all areas of the media, with a focus on accurate information. Muslim media should also try to depict a more accurate picture of Western culture to draw a distinction between Western government policy and public opinion.

Empowering women

- In many Muslim societies men have complete intellectual and religious authority with regards to the interpretation of Islam.
- Educating Muslim women will empower them to judge for themselves the true place of women in Islam and stand up against misinterpretation that leads to misogyny and sexism.
- Encouraging already-aware women to raise their voices in domestic and Western media will help to combat the commonly held misperception that all veiled women are oppressed.
- Islamic scholars need to initiate a movement to reinterpret Islam for the modern world and to critically analyze current practices by tying them back to the life of the Prophet while recognizing the difficulty of authenticating the Hadith.

CRITICS SAY

- Encouraging social interactions or providing cultural exposures may be difficult to happen in homogenous communities, especially where there is no Muslim population. It may also possibly bring opposition among the people.
- This is not a one-sided problem. Educating Muslims, especially immigrants about language or Western cultures is also important.
- Not everyone wants to be exposed to other cultures; is this education to be forced?

TRADE-OFF

As this multicultural education is encouraged and put into place, community members will have to actually put what they learn into practice. There is a clear dividing wall between supporting something in theory and actually doing something about it, and community members will need to actively work to break down this dividing wall. If an ideological and physical understanding is to be achieved from all sides, members of all communities will have to step outside of their established realms and make efforts to actually embrace and learn from one another. "Separate but equal" is not the same as coexistence.

Excerpts from Students' Final Position Papers

The home department for this course was German, but since it was cross-listed with the Women's and Gender Studies program, I used English as the language of instruction, and offered a separate section for German majors who read German texts, shared the content of these texts with the non-German-speaking participants, and wrote all their papers in German. The excerpts are numbered 1–16:

1. "Every time I board an international flight from Dammam, Saudi Arabia, I see the very same spectacle that bothers me just about as much as it intrigues me. Saudi women, clad in the abaya and hitherto taken as models of piety and chastity, immediately take off their abaya to reveal Western style tight jeans and t-shirts. This display of hypocrisy with God is a familiar and bemusing sight for anyone traveling abroad from the heartland of Islam. It begs much larger questions such as the role the state should play in enforcing and dictating religious law and whether the secularism espoused and championed by the West is really the best way to move forward in the modern world. However, for a question so exhaustive, restrictions in countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran offer extreme examples at one end of the spectrum and certainly do not constitute a fitting yardstick to determine the role played by the veil in the lives of Muslim women. Rather, we must set about our task, just as Mernissi does, by traveling back into time and situating ourselves in Arabia of the 7th century before setting about to read the Qur'an and Sunnah."

2. "It was thought that the women needed a visual way to distinguish themselves from prostitutes, and so the hijab came about. I find it highly ironic that the exact thing that was supposed to be in response to aggression, the hijab, was the same thing that actually ended up only further solidifying aggression. To me, the hijab did not really deal with the root of the problem, men's disapproval and maltreatment of women, but instead simply put a Band-Aid over it. Instead of changing the attitudes of those who clashed with the Prophet's vision, the Islamic state put up barriers to hide and seclude women. Because of this, the hijab came to represent the aggression, violence and horde mentality that the Prophet despised. This disconnect between intention of the religion and actual practice even in the beginning foreshadows and sheds more light on outsiders' misconceptions and reservations towards the religion as a whole."

3. "A concept that I find most fascinating when I consider religion in relation to nations is that of private versus public. This notion can manifest itself in many different forms, but regardless of the form, it almost always seems to find itself at the forefront of the discussions of Islam in the private and public sectors. An early example of Islam in these respective areas is that of Muhammad in Medina. According to Fatima Mernissi, the Prophet 'refused to separate his private life and public life. He could only conceive of the sexual and the political as being intimately linked' (Mernissi 162). Muhammad brought his wives into all of his

domains, from the battlefield to the mosque; his sexual life was not kept hidden, but rather, it was made part of his quotidian life as a politician. His opponents were well-aware of this, and they used this knowledge as fuel to sexualize political attacks against him (Mernissi 163). Therefore, when men in power accused the Prophet's wife A'isha of being unfaithful to him, his confidence suffered, and thus he had no desire to bring it even further down by challenging his advisors in defense of women when they suggested 'confining women' with the hijab (Mernissi 164). When I read about this example, I was struck by Mernissi's choice of words; she equated the Prophet's private life with his sexual life, and his public life with his political life. Indeed, it seemed to me that Muhammad's sexual life was anything but private. In my opinion, Mernissi's purpose in grouping these words together was to highlight that in keeping his sexual life publicly and permanently connected with his political life, the Prophet was more vulnerable to political opponents' attacks on his person, and in this particular instance, the result was the sacrifice of women's liberty within themselves."

4. "[Mernissi] openly questions the legitimacy and the truth behind quotes that met the political and misogynistic ends of men. She cautiously raises the prospects of different interpretation – perhaps one that is original to the idea of Islam. [...] [However] Mernissi assesses the veil through a western scholastic perspective. Her assessment of the veil has a condemning overtone. The West perceives the veil as a symbol of oppression and patriarchal culture. Mernissi seems to feed on the Western reaction to the veil and connotes the veil as a symbol of inequality towards women. Writing about the Hejab, Mernissi bases most of her arguments on the incident relating to the three men who stayed behind after the wedding feast had ended, causing Prophet Mohammad to get irritated and lower a veil between himself and the last person present. She argues that the veil would otherwise not have come into existence. Although her inference is logical, excessive stress on such interpretations diminishes the importance of Mohammad and questions his judgment. The Prophet's judgment and response to the incident is softly downplayed (Mernissi, p. 100). Putting his response in its historical context is appropriate, but by indirectly condemning the Prophet's decision as badly chosen (p. 89), she is further weakening the subtle chances of her thesis being approved by a Muslim audience – especially the stern and misogynistic men whom she needs to persuade."

5. "There are a couple of assumptions from my first response paper that were not fully scrutinized and that I regret. To begin with, many of my arguments were extended clumsily into broad cultural generalizations that reinforced the simplistic idea of clearly divided and defined 'Western' and 'Eastern' (or 'Oriental') worldviews. Secondly, many of my arguments dealt in 'fundamental' tenets of 'Western' or 'Eastern' culture. In retrospect this makes culture sound immutable and unvarying, some kind of perfected set of values that is etched equally into the minds of all who share that culture. In reality, a culture and even a religion is a patchwork of ideas, and each individual occupies his or her own unique perspective that cannot be tied to a particular 'commonly held' opinion. Both of these assumptions also tended to create the impression that Islam and this illusory 'Eastern' worldview were one and the same. [...] Many of my classmates also bridge this supposed divide between cultures – perhaps the deliberative dialogue we have used is an answer to the question of how one should approach dealing with conflicts between societies that are prone to draw these sharp cultural divisions. [...] Thus, while it is valuable to understand my difference in perspective from someone in the Middle East or elsewhere, it is also important to see the spectrum of differences that occur within and between assumed cultural groups rather than 'East' and 'West,' 'Black' and 'White,' 'Red State' and 'Blue State,' 'Gay' and 'Straight' or any other constructed dichotomy."

6. "'Who knew that we were living on such a needle?' Jonathan Safran Foer, *Everything is Illuminated*. It was in ninth grade, I think, that I had the thought for the first time. I would walk down the hallways of my high school in that rush between classes, passing a few hundred students. Most of us left our minds in our heads, rarely acknowledged other students, and simply continued onto the next obstacle that stood in the way of the end-of-school bell. We were unaware of each other, of everything and everyone else that wasn't immediately us. We stand on such needles. We are each one-centimeter tall, and we pace back and forth, from point to eye, on our individual needles. Most of them are too far apart for us to jump onto another one, to span the gap between our worlds. And now I am here, and I have done a fair amount of thinking – because that is what one does at Middlebury College – and a whole lot of observing, and I have realized just how little I know about the world. Coming into this course, I was aware of the religion Islam, of course; I was aware that it existed, and where, and that it is, like other religions, different from my own. But that is really all I knew. How is it different from Judaism, really? And, if I know so little about the religion itself, what can I really know about the people of Islam? I believe

very intensely in the idea that people are made up of individuals. As someone who knows so little about the world, how could I possibly be able to speak for anyone but myself? So, who am I to tell a group of women what they should or should not wear? In fact, who is anyone to make that decision?"

7. "Islam wird von vielen Deutschen nicht gut verstanden. Sie sehen Islam als eine Religion von Extremisten, die suchen, westliche Werte und Kultur zu untergraben. Viele Deutsche fühlen sich bedroht von Muslimen und der islamischen Ikonographie, weil sie Deutschland nicht als Einwanderungsland sehen. Die Angstverbreitung von den Medien bewirkt eine Panik unter den Leuten, sowohl in der Öffentlichkeit als auch im privaten Bereich. Wegen dieser Angst müssen muslimische Frauen allzu oft zwischen ihren religiösen Glauben und ihren Karrieren wählen. Die Frauen, die den Schleier tragen wollen, finden sich von einem Ultimatum konfrontiert: den Schleier abnehmen oder den Job verlieren. Für diese Frauen ist es nicht fair. In Deutschland werden viele christliche Symbole geduldet, zum Beispiel in den Schulen, aber nicht muslimische Symbole. Weiterhin ist der Schleier kein offenkundiges Symbol. Er ist ein Teil von islamischer Kultur bzw. er zeigt die Beziehung zwischen einer Frau und Gott. Viele Frauen von allen Religionen verschleiern sich ab und zu, nicht nur die Muslimen. [...] Es gibt ein großes Problem mit der Gleichstellung für Frauen in den muslimischen Gemeinschaften. Wie Jutta Szostak und Suleman Taufiq schrieben, ist 'Der wahre Schleier [...] das Schweigen.'"

   (Many Germans don't understand Islam well. They see Islam as a religion of extremists who seek to undermine Western values and culture. Many Germans feel threatened by Muslims and the Islamic iconography, because they don't see Germany as an immigration country. The spreading of anxiety by the media causes panic among the people, not only in the public but also in the private domain. Because of this anxiety Muslim women have to choose much too often between their religious beliefs and their careers. The women who want to wear a veil find themselves confronted by an ultimatum: take off the veil or lose the job. For these women it is not fair. In Germany many Christian symbols are tolerated, for example in schools, but not Muslim symbols. Furthermore, the veil is not a blatant symbol. It is part of Islamic culture, i.e., it shows the relationship between a woman and God. Many women from all religions veil themselves from time to time, not only the Muslim women. [...] There is a big problem with the equal ranking of women in Muslim societies. As Jutta Szostak and Suleman Taufiq write, "the true veil [...] is silence.")

8. "Many people, especially Westerners (such as western Europeans and Americans), view the Muslim veil as an object of suppression, and therefore see veiled women as if they were trapped in a religion and smothered by 'ancient sexist traditions.' On the opposite end of the spectrum, a Muslim woman without a veil is seen as a progressive feminist trying to combat these supposed sexist traditions. I see evidence of these predispositions everywhere I go, especially here in Middlebury where students of so many different backgrounds live together. [...] If Muhammad believed in the equality of all believers, and if these beliefs were accurately represented in the Koran, then the oldest of the so-called 'ancient sexist traditions' was not sexist at all. Furthermore, women who pursue a higher place in society (socially, politically, domestically, etc.) are not resisting the basic fundamental tenets of Islam, but upholding them. Yet, despite these logical conclusions, the real/actual place for a woman in a traditional Muslim community is under a veil and secondary to the men. This observation led me to ask two questions: how did Islam become a sexist religion, and what role does the veil have in defining a woman's place?"

9. "It would be erroneous to assume that the origin of oppression in Islam is only centered on gender boundaries, because within those gender limitations the Muslim community is composed of people of different economic classes and ethnicities. It is a challenge to contain all Muslim women's historical experiences under the same umbrella because they are all situated differently in what Patricia Hill Collins and Margaret L. Andersen define as the 'matrix of domination'. Within the early Muslim community, the 'matrix of domination' described multiple and interlocking levels of oppression that the Prophet attempted to eradicate. For instance, some women were aristocrats while others were slaves, so the levels of oppression that they experienced from the male varied. [...] On the other hand, the prophet's wives were closer to the Prophet than other women and this gave them a different status that even enabled Umma Salama to boldly inquire from the Prophet 'why men made war and women did not' (Mernissi, 132). Consequently, when the revelations to address women's subordination were announced by the Prophet, the solutions dictated did not satisfy every Muslim woman in the community since their place in the 'matrix of domination' differed. [...] The predicaments of the early Muslim world were not solved by the prophet and hence they persist until today because there were hegemonic influences that protected male supremacy even after the Prophet's death. For contemporary women to break the seemingly ageless gender constructions and the discrimination that accompanies them, we need to unravel the interrelations between

discrimination and the various systematic methods that male led institutions have used to propagate the current disparities as the norm. [...] The restrictions within which women operate in a home lay the foundation for all other forms of public discrimination against women; therefore, the private family structure has to be changed before communities are changed."

10. "Viele Leute sehen die Leute, die den Schleier tragen, als konservativ, traditionell und gegen Modernität. Aber das ist nicht immer der Fall. Der Schleier könnte ein Symbol der Fortschrittlichkeit sein. Viele Frauen tragen den Schleier aus politischen Gründen. Dieser Grund ist bekannt in Städten und Ländern, wo MuslimInnen eine Minderheit sind oder in Ländern, wo Islam nicht freundlich empfangen wird. Wenn diese Frauen konservativ und altmodisch wären, würden sie nicht für ihre Rechte kämpfen. Darüberhinaus ist man nicht traditionell und altmodisch, wenn man keine westlichen Kleidungen trägt. Es hat auch nichts mit Integration zu tun. Der Lebensstil und in der Tat der Kleidungsstil einer Person ist direkt beeinflussbar durch Kultur. Wenn wir den Kleidungsstil (er schließt den Schleier mit ein) einer Person kritisieren, greifen wir auch die Kultur der Person an. Natürlich wird durch das Tragen des Schleiers eine religiöse Aussage gemacht. Wir müssen unsere Religionsfreiheit bezweifeln, wenn bestimmte Religionsgemeinschaften nicht machen können, was sie machen wollen. Viele Leute bringen Aufkleber an ihre Autos, Fenster und Türen, um ihre Stütze für eine bestimmte Sache anzuzeigen. In ähnlicher Weise tragen Musliminnen den Schleier, um ihren Glauben zu zeigen."

(Many people see those who wear the veil as conservative, traditional, and against modernity. But that is not always the case. The veil could be a symbol of progress. Many women wear the veil for political reasons. This reason is known in cities and countries where Muslim women are a minority, or in countries where Islam is not welcome. When these women were conservative and old fashioned, they would not have to fight for their rights. Over and above that, one is not traditional and old-fashioned when one does not wear Western clothes. It also has nothing to do with integration. The life style and in fact the clothing style of a person can be directly influenced by culture. When we criticize the clothing style (including the veil) of a person, we also attack the culture of that person. Naturally a religious statement is made through the wearing of the veil. We have to doubt our religious freedom when certain religious communities cannot do what they want. Many people place stickers on their cars, windows and doors

to proclaim their support of a certain issue. Similarly, Muslim women wear the veil to proclaim their belief.)

11. "The faculty of reasoning often breaks down when someone tells you that everything you were told as a child, and everything practiced by your ancestors was wrong. How does one make sense of a world which declares faulty the very lens that one used to view it? What if altering your vision means letting go of many of your privileges, privileges you considered your birth right? This was the dilemma facing the Prophet Mohammed, who in the 7th century was organizing an ethical revolution so profound and significant in magnitude that the common intellect often failed to keep pace. The importance of having an egalitarian society was completely recognized by the global community only in the 1920s when slavery was abolished. It should therefore come as no surprise under the idea of moral relativism that thousands of year before that, even the Prophet's closest companions failed to fully accept the Islamic concept of the equality between the sexes despite numerous clarifying Koran verses. The short-term social and political implications of this new movement of equality between the sexes would deprive the Arabs of what they considered their most fundamental privilege; control of women. It was amidst this struggle and tension of the early Islamic world that the concept of the Hijab was developed."

12. "Prophet Muhammad himself was a pragmatic man and strongly believed in equality between men and women. [...] It is recorded in historical sources that Prophet Muhammad would seek consultation from his wives on matters of vital concern and importance to the Muslim community, and likewise he would advise his companions to treat their wives with dignity and respect. His mission, in addition to conveying the revelations he had received from God, was to end the ruthless practices that had turned women into victims and mere objects of male dictatorship and voyeuristic desires. The task of shielding women from misogynistic behaviors had left the prophet in great frustration and depression, as he had to confront his male believers in every step he took to evolve the private and public lives of Muslims in conformity to Islamic jurisprudence. After Prophet Muhammad's death, the duty of compiling and recording his tradition, which is called Hadith was exclusively dominated by men that was translated into Islamic law later. Some of the Hadith that were transmitted by male companions of the Prophet lacked authenticity and contained misogynistic elements."

13. "Why would Islam give more status to one gender over the other? Why do women have to abide by a certain dress code to be good Muslims, and men do not? Why can men not learn how to control their sexual desires, rather than women having to cover up to protect themselves from men's fantasies? [...] As a Muslim man from the Middle East, which puts me in a privileged position, I might find it hard to understand the implications of being doomed to a certain role and status. However, thinking about Mernissi's book as a whole, I can relate to it very well, actually, in the sense that having to hide my identity as a gay man 'because religion forbids it' is very similar to women having to hide behind veils and burqas 'because religion says so.' It is not humane or fair for me to have to hide or suppress myself and my feelings because of something into which I am born, just as it is unjust for Muslim women to have certain stigmas and expectations associated with the gender into which they are born. Again, it seems that the issue is one of two diametrically opposed interpretations, one of them biased in favor of the mainstream culture and traditions that existed before Islam. For instance, homosexuality is not directly or literally condemned in the Qur'an, but the Qur'anic verse on the punishment of the people of Lot who were known for their lewdness was attributed to their engaging in homosexual acts; and was supposedly the reason for their condemnation and destruction by Allah."

14. "... Mernissi's mission of clearing some misconceptions about the status of women in Islam is a vital project. She provides much needed explanations and clarifications about misconceptions in both the Muslim world and the West. However, she is susceptible to arriving at some rash conclusions, such as accusing Abu Hurayra and Bukhari of misogyny. Nevertheless, all credit goes to her for stirring up this debate, and for calling for thoughtful analysis of religious texts. [...] In my view, Mernissi both misinterpreted and translated the hadith which led her to draw conclusions about it. This interpretation and the ones earlier indicate that Mernissi's explanations and accounts should be read with some caution. I do not think Mernissi made these mistakes deliberately. They are largely due to the fact that studying Tafseer and hadith is a rather daunting task, as she alluded earlier in the book."

15. "Fundamentalism, as understood by some social theorists such as Roland Robertson can be understood within, rather than outside of, the totalizing theories of modernism and globalization. To project a fundamentalist stance, and to identify as fundamentalist, do not imply a direction backwards, just as

progressivism can be thought of as an ideology rather than a forward movement. Instead, fundamentalism can be contextualized in terms of global social dynamics. There are clearly many problems with repackaging Islamic fundamentalism, for example, solely in terms of modernism or globalization, terms that have been critiqued as projecting universalism while eschewing cultural biases and relativities. And yet it is unmistakable the ways in which supposedly regressive and backward modes of thought, as Islamic fundamentalism may be portrayed in the United States, among other places, explicitly respond to and in turn shape global discourses. These discourses are rooted in the nation-state, as exemplified by the existence of Islamic fundamentalist governments – the Islamist nation-state is not a political relic but rather an extremely 'modern' response to changing geopolitical trends of the past two centuries. [...] The issues and concerns regarding the veil serve as a convenient lens, as it were, for contextualizing contemporary society. [...] [I]n reaching explicitly for Islam's fundamentals, [some Muslim] women propose a more open dialogue with broad processes of globalization and modernism. In thinking of fundamentalism as directionless, and as tied to broad processes, patriarchy perhaps becomes less sustainable in an Islamic tradition revisited rather than uncritically resumed."

16. "Ich fand es auch interessant, dass der Schleier, der ein so wichtiges politisches, religiöses, kulturelles, sexuelles, und/oder gesellschaftliches Symbol der modernen Welt ist, nur in einem Moment kreiert worden sind – einem Moment, der so weit zurück in der Vergangenheit passiert ist. Aber auch ist das Wort 'Hijab' ein Konzept, das drei Dimensionen hat: 'to hide,' 'to establish a threshold' und 'the realm of the forbidden' (S. 93). Aus einem Moment hat sich dieses drei-dimensionelle Konzept durch die Zeit entwickelt, und jetzt erleben Menschen, die in islamischen Kulturen leben, die Folgen dieser drei Dimensionen. Zum Beispiel, in den Interviews von Jutta Szostak und Suleman Taufiq konfrontiert Nawal el-Saadawi die kulturellen Probleme für Frauen, die viel mit diesen drei Dimensionen zu tun haben, wie 'das traumatische Erlebnis der Klitorisbeschneidung, die Vorbereitung auf die künftige Rolle als gehorsame Ehefrau, das Verbot sexueller Wünsche, die Heirat mit einem ungeliebten Mann, [und] die Unterdrückung in der Ehe mit ihrer unerfüllten Sexualität' (S. 76). Der Schleier versteckt Frauen, aber er versteckt auch Sexualität – das lange kulturelle Tabu. Nawal el-Saadawi schreibt über die Tabus, die Frauen verschleiert haben, und deswegen kreiert sie 'eine Bombe' (S. 70). Das ist die Folge des komplizierten Symbols – der Schleier."

(I also found it interesting that the veil, such an important political, religious, cultural, sexual and/or societal symbol of the modern world, was created in just one moment – a moment that happened way back in the past. But even the word "Hijab" is a concept that has three dimensions: "to hide," "to establish a threshold" and "the realm of the forbidden" (p. 93). Out of a single moment this three-dimensional concept developed through time, and now people who live in Islamic cultures experience the consequences of these three dimensions. For example, in the interviews with Jutta Szostak and Suleman Taufiz, Nawal el-Saadawi confronts the cultural problems for women who have to do with these three dimensions like "the traumatic experience of Clitoridectomy, the preparation for the future role as an obedient wife [and] the oppression in marriage with its unfulfilled sexuality" (p. 76). The veil hides women, but it also hides sexuality – the longtime cultural taboo. Nawal el-Saadawi writes about the taboos that have veiled women, and that is why she creates "a bomb" (p. 70). That is the result of the complicated symbol – the veil.)

APPENDIX II

Syllabus "To Veil or not to Veil: Germany and Islam"

GERM/WAGS 226	To Veil or not to Veil: Germany and Islam
Instructor:	Professor Kamakshi P. Murti
Mondays & Wednesdays:	FIC, Cook Seminar #1, 2:45pm–4:05 pm
Email:	kmurti@middlebury.edu
Office hours:	Mondays & Wednesdays, 4:05–5:05 pm & by appointment
Office:	FIC, Cook #13

Course description

The traditions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have always been the sites of contentious debates over the centuries, revolving around issues of race and ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class. The events of 9/11 have, however, been projected – mostly by the media – as uniquely violent and aberrant behavior. This perception has created a kind of mass hysteria where an Islamic "other" has been invented, uncritically equated with terrorism, and consistently demonized. We will attempt, in this course, to rethink these debates by placing them within a historical context. Beginning with the crusades, we will map the discursive paths that Christianity and Islam took in establishing themselves in the consciousness of their followers.

A crucial aspect of the "othering" process is gender. Women's status in Islam is one of the most controversial and serious issues of our time. For those Muslim women who reside in a Judeo-Christian environment, their status is further obfuscated by tensions between contested constructions of gender. We will adopt a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective on gender construction in Germany as relating to Islam. Texts will interrogate

some of the assumptions made about the formation and representation of "femininity." Although Germany and Turkey will constitute the focal points of our dialogues, we will include other cultures as appropriate and relevant to our studies.

Primary texts (in bookstore)

Deniz Göktürk, David Gramling, Anton Kaes, eds. *Germany in Transit. Nation and Migration, 1955–2005* (paperback: 978-0-520-24894-6)

Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, transl. Mary Jo Lakeland (paperback: 0-201-63221-7)

The final grade will be computed as follows:

1	oral report	15%
2	Position Papers (17.5% each)	35%
1	Final Project	35%
Regular Attendance, i.e., with active participation in class		15%

Oral Report

There will be a sign up sheet for oral reports – each presentation will be shared by two of you. The texts are from the book *Germany in Transit* (unless otherwise indicated). You will divide the text in half and summarize your half for the class. Additionally, you and your partner will lead a

discussion in class, for which each of you will prepare 2–3 questions that *you* have about the *your half* of the text. (5 minutes for each summary; 5 minutes each for questions and discussion = a total of 20 minutes for both presenters)

Position Paper

The position paper (at least three double-spaced typewritten pages) should reflect *your* subjective response to a particular text, based on *your own experience and knowledge*.

(It is NOT the following: a plot summary or other descriptive writing, or a research paper.)

Final Project

The final project consists of two parts:

Part 1: INTERVIEWS: You will interview 6 people based on a questionnaire that we will jointly put together (you can begin the interviews *at any time during the semester – the sooner, the better*) and write up short summaries of your interviews (half a page per interview):

- Community: Middlebury or Vermont: 2 (one male and one female)
- College: 1 faculty, 1 staff, 2 students (2 females and 2 males)

Part 2: DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE:

- Nov. 19 and 24: prepare approaches to final Deliberative Dialogue (product: "issue book")
- Dec. 1: conduct Deliberative Dialogue (in group)
- Dec. 3: write up in class your group's recommendations for public action and share these with the rest of the participants

Semester Plan

Sept. 8:	Introduction; "Deliberative Dialogue"
Sept. 10:	What is the hijab?
	Sign-up list for oral reports!
	Read introduction to *Germany in Transit*
Sept. 15:	*Lecture*: The Middle Ages: From Theological Rivalry to the Creation of "the Other"
	Discuss introduction to *Germany in Transit*
Sept. 17:	*Lecture*: From the Middle Ages through the Modern Period: The European Discovery of Islam as a World Culture
Sept. 22:	*Lecture*: The 19th Century Perceptions of Islam: From the Pilgrim to the Orientalist
	Read: Mernissi, pp. vii–11
Sept. 24:	Discuss Mernissi
	Read: Mernissi, pp. 15–48
	Prepare: Oral Report (*Germany in Transit*, "Working Guests: *Gastarbeiter* and Green Card Holders")
Sept. 29:	Oral Report
	Discuss Mernissi
	Read: Mernissi, pp. 49–61

Oct. 1:	Discuss Mernissi
	Read: Mernissi, pp. 62–81
	Prepare: Oral Report (*Germany in Transit*, "Our Socialist Friends: Foreigners in East Germany")
	Write: Position Paper #1 (on Mernissi, pp. vii–61: incorporate information from other texts discussed in class)
Oct. 6:	Oral Report; hand in Position Paper #1
	Discuss Mernissi
	Read: Mernissi, pp. 85–101
Oct. 8:	Discuss Mernissi
	Read: Mernissi, pp. 102–140
	Prepare: Oral Report (*Germany in Transit*, "Is the Boat Full? Xenophobia, Racism, and Violence")
	(Midterm recess Monday and Tuesday, Oct. 13 and 14)
Oct. 15:	Oral report
	Discuss Mernissi
	Read: Mernissi, pp. 141–160
Oct. 20:	Discuss Mernissi; discuss Fatih Akin, "Head-on"
	Read: Mernissi, pp. 161–179
	Prepare: Oral Report (*Germany in Transit*, "What is a German? Legislating National Identity")
Oct. 22:	Oral Report
	Discuss Mernissi
	Read: Mernissi, pp. 180–195
	Prepare: Oral report (*Germany in Transit*, "Religion and Diaspora: Muslims, Jews, and Christians")
Oct. 27:	Oral report
	Discuss Mernissi
	Read: Özdamar, "Mother Tongue" (handout)

Oct. 29:	Oral report (*Remaking Women*)
	Read: Read transcripts of interviews in Turkey and Germany
	Write: Position Paper #2 (Mernissi, pp. 62–195: incorporate information from other texts discussed in class)
Nov. 3:	Hand in Position Paper #2; Discuss Özdamar
	Discuss transcripts of interviews
	Prepare: Oral report (*Germany in Transit*, "Promoting Diversity: Institutions of Multiculturalism")
	Read: transcript of video clip "Young and Muslim in Germany"
Nov. 5:	Oral report; View video clips from "Young and Muslim in Germany"
	Read: short stories by Turkish women writers in Germany
Nov. 10:	Oral report (*Remaking Women*);
	Discuss Short stories by Turkish women writers in Germany
	Read: *Germany in Transit*, "An Immigration Country? The Limits of Culture"
	Read: Zehra Çirak's poetry (handout)
Nov. 12:	Discuss short stories + Zehra Çirak's poetry
	Read: *Germany in Transit*, "Writing Back: Literature and Multilingualism"
Nov. 17:	Discuss short stories + Zehra Çirak's poetry
	Read: *Germany in Transit*, "A Turkish Germany: Film, Music and Everyday Life"
	Review: all materials discussed in the course as preparation for "Deliberative Dialogue"
Nov. 19:	Discuss *Germany in Transit*, "A Turkish Germany: Film, Music and Everyday Life"
	Preparation for "Deliberative Dialogue" on the Muslim hijab
	Read: *Germany in Transit*, "Epilogue"

Nov. 24:	Preparation for "Deliberative Dialogue" on the Muslim hijab (write approaches)
	(Thanksgiving recess: Nov. 25 [4:15pm])
Dec. 1:	"Deliberative Dialogue" in groups
Dec. 3:	"Deliberative Dialogue" – recommendations for civic action and wrap-up

Due date for Part 1 of final project (summaries of interviews): Fri, 12 Dec. 2008.

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