

**Writing and Sounding the City: Turkish-German Representations of Berlin**

**by**

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Anneme ve Babama

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## Chapter I

### Introduction: Transnationalizing German Culture

In the immediate aftermath of German reunification Reinhard Mey, a German *Liedermacher* from Berlin, recuperated his experience of the German capital in “Mein Berlin” (1990). Summarizing sixty years of Berlin history, he concludes: “Resistance and contradictions, reality and utopia. That was my Berlin.”<sup>1</sup> In this song, Mey recalls the city’s abrupt political and social transformations and upheavals by identifying crucial points in the city’s history: the Berlin Blockade from 1948 to 1949, the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, student revolts and protests in 1967/1968, the fall of the Wall in 1989 and German reunification in 1990. As Mey’s use of the possessive pronoun “mein” indicates, his personal experience of key moments in the city’s past makes Berlin his own.

Questions concerning belonging, the location of home, and the constitution of one’s own place have been definitive for Turkish-German writing and song. Born in Ankara in 1961, raised in Istanbul, and having spent decades in Munich and Berlin, the essayist, novelist, and poet Zafer Şenocak conceives of a plural constitution of Berlin as his home: “The city in which I lived the longest and which has shaped me the most, was Munich. My Ankara, my Istanbul and my Munich are now in Berlin... Every person has her own personal geography whose borders run very differently from those on a map. I would not have stayed in Berlin, if I had not been able to make this city habitable for my

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<sup>1</sup> “Widerstand und Widersprüche, Wirklichkeit und Utopien. Das war mein Berlin.”

memories.”<sup>2</sup> Şenocak’s words recast the city as a personal space which carries with it memories of past places. This dissertation conducts a comparative analysis of Turkish-German literature and music, focusing on the representation of Berlin as a personal and plural space. Working at the intersection of literary criticism, cultural studies, and musicology, I examine how Berlin is imagined, experienced and remembered as a site of Turkish-German belonging in the literary works of Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Aras Ören, and Kemal Kurt, and in the music of Islamic Force, Tahsin Incirci, and Orientation. In their textual and musical mapping of Berlin, physical and ideological borders are shifted, transgressed, and blurred, allowing for the city to contain other places—of past and present—within it. This transformation of city space into a personal space provides the possibility for the organization and mapping of individual experiences and memories along spatial lines.

In his assessment of *Contemporary German Fiction*, Stuart Taberner suggests that “literary fiction is uniquely suited to probing and subverting a public-political discourse...literature can serve to deflate overblown rhetoric and to undermine official representations of reality.”<sup>3</sup> Extending this claim to music, I investigate Turkish-German literature and music as pivotal sites where the contestation and interrogation of public German discourses take place. Music provides performers and listeners the opportunity to encounter the city via another sensory register; for our analysis, it allows us to examine an additional textuality through which Berlin is experienced and constituted. In both

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<sup>2</sup> “Die Stadt, in der ich am längsten gelebt habe und die mich am nachhaltigsten geprägt hat, war München. Mein Ankara, mein Istanbul und mein München sind jetzt in Berlin...Jeder Mensch hat seine eigene persönliche Geographie, in der Grenzen anders verlaufen als auf der Landkarte. Ich wäre nicht in Berlin geblieben, wäre es mir nicht möglich gewesen, diese Stadt für meine Erinnerungen bewohnbar zu machen.” Zafer Şenocak, *Zungenentfernung: Bericht aus der Quarantänestation* (Munich: Babel, 2001). 22–23. Translations are all mine unless noted otherwise.

<sup>3</sup> Stuart Taberner, ed., *Contemporary German Fiction: Writing in the Berlin Republic* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). 2.

music and literature, the cultural effects of crucial moments in German history like the Holocaust, the labor movement, and reunification are explored, reflected and commented upon. By examining how Turkish-German literary texts and songs represent interactions of various cultural, national, ethnic, and political contexts—and how they alter the parameters of established discourses on key issues such as integration, German national identity, memory and remembrance in the process—this dissertation makes an important contribution to the study of musical and literary cultures’ significance for the historiography and politics of the Berlin Republic.

For the Turkish-German writers and musicians I study, Berlin becomes what Phil C. Langer terms “an experiential space and a space of action, which determines the matrix of the texts.”<sup>4</sup> While Langer’s argument pertains to literary texts, I expand his claim to music in order to broaden the archive of Berlin texts. The question, then, is twofold: how is this “Berliner Raum” experienced and remembered, and then sounded and written by these writers and musicians? My analysis shows that these texts not only voice alternative perspectives on Berlin’s present, but also develop unique ways of accessing and reconstructing its past. I argue that in their participation and contribution to German memory discourse, Turkish-German writers and musicians “reconceptualiz[e] remembrance en route to a shared future.”<sup>5</sup> By incorporating Turkish literary and musical tradition into their works, they open up the possibility for a future which encompasses all traditions and defies hegemonic discourses. Nina Berman’s recent study, *German*

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<sup>4</sup> “ein Wahrnehmungs- und Handlungsraum, der die Matrix der Texte bestimmt.” Phil C. Langer, *Kein Ort. Überall: Die Einschreibung von "Berlin" in die deutsche Literatur der neunziger Jahre* (Berlin: Weidler, 2002). 59.

<sup>5</sup> Leslie Adelson, “Back to the Future: Turkish Remembrances of the GDR and Other Phantom Pasts,” *The Cultural After-Life of East Germany: New Transnational Perspectives*, ed. Leslie Adelson (Washington D.C.: AICGS, 2002). 101.

*Literature on the Middle East*, “highlights a history of exchange” instead of a “history of division.”<sup>6</sup> In a similar vein, I explore interrelations between Turkish and German history and cultural traditions by investigating space/time constellations as they emerge in representations of Berlin.

Specifically, I argue that the works I analyze represent Berlin as a chronotope, what Mikhail Bakhtin defines as “a time-space,” where “spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully throughout, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history.”<sup>7</sup> At the heart of Bakhtin’s notion of the chronotope is the “aesthetic visualizing of a human being in relation to their temporal and spatial world” which provides “a way of comprehending human life as materially and simultaneously present within a physical-geographical space and a specific point of historical time.”<sup>8</sup> In the musical and literary representation of Berlin as a chronotope, various layers of history and socio-cultural contexts become visible.

Berlin has long been a hub of musical and literary activity. Since the fall of the Wall and Berlin’s reinstatement as the German capital, the city has led efforts to shape a new national identity and culture. Ongoing discussions about Germany’s *Leitkultur*—its so-called hegemonic culture—emanate in large measure from the metropolitan center. And yet, Berlin is also home to the country’s largest migrant population, and remains what it has long been: a city of varied cultural influences. With 150,000 people of

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<sup>6</sup> Nina Berman, *German Literature on the Middle East: Discourses and Practices, 1000-1989* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011). 13.

<sup>7</sup> M. M. Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel,” *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). 84.

<sup>8</sup> Pam Morris, ed., *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov* (London: E. Arnold, 1994). 180.

Turkish descent living in Berlin today, the city is home to the largest Turkish population outside of Turkey. As a result, Berlin has become a center of cultural production for Turkish-German artists, and often serves as a setting and reference point for their works. However, scholarship on Berlin as a literary topos often neglects to include writers of non-German descent and considerations of specifically Turkish-German representations of the city remain sparse. In his recent monograph on literary representations of Berlin, for instance, Langer argues that the works of minority writers offer an outsider perspective on Berlin.<sup>9</sup> It is this relegation of minority culture to a marginal position with which I take issue, when I argue that representations of Berlin by Turkish-German artists offer views from within German culture. Turkish-German cultural producers intervene in debates on immigration, social integration, bilingual education, and religious fundamentalism. At the same time, Turkish-German culture enlivens debates on German division and reunification and, as Adelson argues, on Germany's relationship to its difficult past.<sup>10</sup> Beyond examining the chronotopological aspect of Turkish-German Berlin's musical and literary culture, my analysis thus also reveals how the interests of Turkish-German musicians and writers are both commensurate with—and at the same time divergent from—a broader set of historical, cultural, social, and political traditions.

### **Transnational Berlin**

In my engagement with Turkish-German literature and music, a crucial question poses itself: how can political debates on immigration diverge so sharply from their artistic counterparts? While politicians still cast about for methods of integrating

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<sup>9</sup> Langer, *Kein Ort. Überall: Die Einschreibung von "Berlin" in die deutsche Literatur der neunziger Jahre.*

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Leslie A. Adelson, *The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature: Toward a New Critical Grammar of Migration* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

immigrants into German civic life, the cultural public sphere proves to have long since opened themselves up to new conceptions of “Germanness,” and to mutual interchange with other cultures.

“Globalization has arrived in German literature!” reads the *Tagesspiegel*’s response to the 2010 short list of the prestigious German Book Prize (*Deutscher Buchpreis*) awarded annually by the Association of German Publishers and Booksellers (*Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels Stiftung*) at the Frankfurt Book Fair.<sup>11</sup> Half of the titles on the long list belonged to writers born outside of the German-speaking world, and the laureate was Hungarian-Swiss writer Melinda Nadj Abonji. The increasingly diverse group of German authors receiving national and international literary awards indicates that an ‘opening up’ and internationalization of the German literary scene and book market is taking place: Turkish-German writer Emine Sevgi Özdamar received the Ingeborg Bachmann Preis in 1991, Hungarian-born writer Terezia Mora received the Ingeborg Bachmann Preis in 1999 and the Prize of the Leipzig Book Fair in 2005, Bulgarian-German writer Ilija Trojanow was a finalist for the German Book Prize in 2006 and the winner of the Berliner Literaturpreis in 2007, Syrian-German writer Rafik Schami was the recipient of the Nelly Sachs Preis in 2007, Feridun Zaimoğlu received the Grimmelshausen Preis in 2009, and Herta Müller the Nobel Prize in 2009.<sup>12</sup>

In Germany two annual book fairs—the Frankfurt Book Fair, *Frankfurter Buchmesse*, and the Leipzig Book Fair, *Leipziger Buchmesse*—have had a significant role

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<sup>11</sup> Gerrit Bartels, “Lob der Welt. Die Shortlist für den Deutschen Buchpreis,” *Der Tagesspiegel* September 8, 2010. Web. 28 November 2011. <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/lob-der-welt/1928982.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Herta Müller, as an ethnic German of the Banat, is an exception, since she has been well established in the German literary scene since the 1980s and her oeuvre has been situated in the body of “deutschsprachige Literatur Rumäniens.” Thomas Krause, “Literatur der deutschsprachigen Minderheit Rumäniens,” *Interkulturelle Literatur in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch*, ed. Carmine Chiellino (Stuttgart; Weimar: Metzler, 2000). 177.

in sustaining, expanding, and changing the German literary scene. Whereas the Frankfurt Book Fair emphasizes international literary trends and recent publications, the fair in Leipzig focuses more on the German context. Furthermore, the Leipzig Book Fair sees itself as a *Publikumsmesse*, or visitor-oriented exposition; by contrast the Frankfurt Book Fair is the largest professional book fair throughout Europe and principally attracts agents and publishing houses from both Germany and abroad.

Under the motto “Turkey in all its colours” (“Faszinierend Farbig”<sup>13</sup>), Turkey was the “guest of honor” of the 2008 Frankfurt Book Fair. The Turkish delegation comprised 350 writers, 100 publishers and more than 300 artists. The book fair was accompanied by 265 events, including art exhibits, concerts, dance and theatre performances as well as lectures and panel discussions dealing with topics such as “Modern Turkish Literature,” “Germany in Turkish Literature, Turkey in German Literature,” and “Turkey and Germany: Literature and Integration.” Ample engagement with Turkish literary culture like this illustrates the degree to which the German publishing industry has taken seriously calls by readers and writers to open up its commercial and critical purview to include a broader, transnational exchange.

The Berlin senate’s department for culture financially supports a variety of theatre, art, and music projects throughout the city. It specifically promotes “art projects, where a continuation of an intercultural dialogue is at the center.”<sup>14</sup> One of the

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<sup>13</sup> Translation taken from their website, Frankfurter Buchmesse/Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels. “Turkish Literature and Culture Bring Colour to Frankfurt.” Web. 29 November 2011. [https://en.book-fair.com/fbf/journalists/press\\_releases/fbf/detail.aspx?c20f0587-85d5-44d3-a9a4-eb75d0c6143b=6ce440e9-2559-4d54-acd1-fbcf511478bd](https://en.book-fair.com/fbf/journalists/press_releases/fbf/detail.aspx?c20f0587-85d5-44d3-a9a4-eb75d0c6143b=6ce440e9-2559-4d54-acd1-fbcf511478bd).

<sup>14</sup> “gefördert werden künstlerische Projekte, in deren Mittelpunkt ... die lebendige Weiterführung des interkulturellen Dialogs stehen.” Der Regierende Bürgermeister von Berlin/Senatskanzlei – Kulturelle Angelegenheiten. “Informationsblatt Projektförderung im Bereich interkulturelle Projekte für das Jahr 2012.” Web. 28 November 2011. <http://www.berlin.de/imperia/md/content/sen->

institutions to receive governmental financial support not only from the senate, but also from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is the *Ballhaus Naunynstrasse* in Berlin's Kreuzberg neighborhood. It was founded in 2008 as a translocal theatre, "translokales Theater," and perceives itself as "a focal point for artists with migrant and postmigrant backgrounds and beyond."<sup>15</sup>

Transnational exchange and connections are also at the center of the *Werkstatt der Kulturen*, another cultural institution based in Berlin since 1993. It "represents the diversity of migrant and minority forms of culture, art, and expression" while promoting "intercultural exchange."<sup>16</sup> Like the *Ballhaus*, it is financed by various governmental departments, such as the Berlin senate and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. In addition to organizing the "Karneval der Kulturen," Carnival of Cultures, the *Werkstatt der Kulturen* also regularly coordinates various cultural events throughout the city. For example, "Transmusikale" and "Migration Music" not only involve the local music scene but also include concerts by international artists. On their website, they describe themselves as showcasing a "new sound of Berlin. As diverse as the city itself: Latin-Bands feature jazz-singers, Afro-Beat formations present soul tinged voices, jazz bands invite Salsa singers."<sup>17</sup>

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kultur/kulturfoerderung/literatur/info/2012\_info\_interkulturelle.pdf?start&ts=1313566635&file=2012\_info\_interkulturelle.pdf

<sup>15</sup> "ein Kristallisationspunkt für KünstlerInnen migrantischer und postmigrantischer Verortung und weit darüber hinaus." Ballhaus Naunynstraße. "Haus." Web. 28 November 2011. <http://www.ballhausnaunynstrasse.de/HAUS.8.0.html>

<sup>16</sup> "die Vielfalt migrantischer und minoritärer Kultur-, Kunst- und Aktionsformen abbildet." Werkstatt der Kulturen. "Über uns." Web. 28 November 2011. [http://www.werkstatt-der-kulturen.de/de/ueber\\_uns/](http://www.werkstatt-der-kulturen.de/de/ueber_uns/) and Carnival of Cultures. "Origin of an Idea." Web. 28 November 2011. <http://www.karneval-berlin.de/de/concept.180.html>

<sup>17</sup> "neuer Sound of Berlin. So vielfältig wie die Stadt selbst: Latin-Bands features Jazz-Sängerinnen, Afro-Beat-Formationen präsentieren Soul-Stimmen, Jazz-Bands laden Salsa-Sänger ..." Werkstatt der Kulturen. "Inhouse:Migration Music." Web. 28 November 2011. <http://www.werkstatt-der-kulturen.de/de/inhouse/produktionen/transmusikale/>



One of the “leading centers for the contemporary arts and a venue for projects breaking through artistic boundaries” is the *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*, which was founded in 1989. It “presents artistic productions from around the world with particular consideration of non-European cultures and societies.”<sup>18</sup> Events organized by the *Haus der Kulturen der Welt* include “Globale Geschichten” (Global Histories) in 2009, which comprised lectures, podium discussions, interviews, concerts and exhibits. In the same year, it housed the international congress “Beyond Multiculturalism? Fragen an Die Einwanderungsgesellschaft” (Beyond Multiculturalism? Envisioning the Immigration Society<sup>19</sup>) featuring speakers like anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, sociologist Yasemin Soysal, politician Rita Süßmuth (Christian Democrats), and DJ Ipek among others.

In light of the German governments’ support for these cultural institutions and events, a repeated emphasis on intercultural dialogue and exchange becomes evident. And in this exchange, cultural producers with minority or migrant backgrounds are perceived as important participants. However, in political debates on dual citizenship, EU expansion, and integration, people of Turkish descent have constituted the marginalized outsider and ultimate “other,” to what has been identified as German.

In their expansion of Bakhtin’s aesthetics of the carnivalesque into the basis for an anthropological analysis of culture and its relationship to power Peter Stallybrass and Alon White argue, “what is socially peripheral is so frequently symbolically central [...]. The low-Other is [...] denied at the level of political organization and social being whilst

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<sup>18</sup> “präsentiert es künstlerische Produktionen aus aller Welt unter besonderer Berücksichtigung nichteuropäischer Kulturen und Gesellschaften.” Haus der Kulturen der Welt. “Über uns: Selbstdarstellung.” Web. 28 November 2011. [http://www.hkw.de/de/hkw/selbstdarstellung/Ueber\\_uns.php](http://www.hkw.de/de/hkw/selbstdarstellung/Ueber_uns.php)

<sup>19</sup> Translation taken from their website, Haus der Kulturen der Welt. “Programm 2009: Beyond Multiculturalism?” Web. 28 November 2011. [http://www.hkw.de/en/programm/2009/beyond\\_multiculturalism/veranstaltungen\\_30155/Veranstaltungsdetail\\_1\\_33283.php](http://www.hkw.de/en/programm/2009/beyond_multiculturalism/veranstaltungen_30155/Veranstaltungsdetail_1_33283.php).

it is instrumentally constitutive of the shared imaginary repertoires of dominant culture.”<sup>20</sup> Building on this insight and adapting it to the Turkish-German context, I argue that Turkish-German writers and musicians challenge the dominant modes in which people of Turkish descent are imagined—as essentially different, socially peripheral, and thus non-integrable—within German society.

In *Enlightenment Orpheus*, Vanessa Agnew points to the significance of margins as a critical site for identity formation.<sup>21</sup> Moving beyond the account of symbolic margins offered by Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, she does not only locate these margins within the geographical space of the nation-state. She also investigates the transformation of music aesthetics through travel, and examines cross-cultural encounters in transnational space as sites where cultural margins and their meanings are negotiated. In her analysis, Agnew attends to the role of music in promoting specific national interests. In a similar manner, I am interested in the representation of cross-cultural interaction as it occurs within Turkish-German music, but also in music’s potential to serve as a medium of social, political, and cultural intervention.

### **German Cultural Studies: A Paradigm Shift**

In the introduction to the *User’s Guide to German Cultural Studies*, editor Irene Kacandes notes that “the definition of what counts as worthy of being studied has surely been shifted by cultural studies...connecting texts with contexts, disciplines with one

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<sup>20</sup> Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986). 5.

<sup>21</sup> Vanessa Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus: The Power of Music in Other Worlds* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

another, and the academy with society at large.”<sup>22</sup> Since 1990, German Studies has undergone significant changes, exhibiting an increased orientation towards cultural studies and an increasing interdisciplinary focus. At conferences and symposia, in academic journals and departments throughout the US, scholars engaged in debates around what methods, and which texts to use to (re)shape the present and future of German Studies.<sup>23</sup> In a special issue of the *New German Critique* (1995) entitled *Cultural History/Cultural Studies*, Geoff Eley pointed out that “an important aspect of this cultural studies wave has been the reopening of old debates around the opposition of ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture, with a notable commitment to engaging popular culture in non-dismissive and non-patronizing ways.”<sup>24</sup> Eley approvingly cites the incorporation of non-literary cultural objects and practices as texts.

One of the most recent debates regarding the transformation of German Studies took place in the *German Quarterly* in 2007, where Frank Trommler suggested “Reconstituting German as a discipline under the cultural paradigm beyond its foundations in German *Germanistik* has tended to throw out the baby - language and literature - with the bathwater.”<sup>25</sup> According to Trommler, the opening up of the discipline to other disciplinary methods has, along with the incorporation of non-literary cultural objects that Eley describes, led to the loss of literature’s privileged position. His article elicited a variety of responses from professors and students in the discipline. Katherine Arens, in response to Trommler, argued that cultural studies should entail a

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<sup>22</sup> Stallybrass and White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> The German Quarterly 62 (1989): *Germanistik as German Studies: Interdisciplinary Theories and Methods*, New German Critique 65 (1995): *Cultural History/Cultural Studies*.

<sup>24</sup> Geoff Eley, “What Is Cultural History?,” *New German Critique*.65 (1995). 25.

<sup>25</sup> Frank Trommler, "Is Literature Still Central to German Studies?" *The German Quarterly* 80.1 (2007): 97+. *General OneFile*. Web. 29 November 2011.

“study in cultural literacies, cultivating not only literature, but a broad archive of texts, including literature and an earlier generation’s mixed canon of *great books*, as well as films, monuments, and visual, aural, electronic, or performance-based texts.”<sup>26</sup> In accord with the majority of the respondents, Arens reiterated that literature would not be replaced as the scope of German Studies’ inquiry was extended to include film, music, the visual arts, and performances.

These developments are significant for my study of Berlin texts insofar as I include non-literary objects as well as artifacts of popular culture. Scholars from various disciplines have written on Berlin in terms of its architecture and surface structures, its representation and reimagination in literary texts, movies, and paintings.<sup>27</sup> In the edited volume *Contemporary German Fiction: Writing in the Berlin Republic*, Stephen Brockmann recently dubbed Berlin the “capital of the German literary imagination.”<sup>28</sup> But the city has been sung about, too, as Marlene Dietrich pointed out half a century ago: “Die Stadt Berlin hat mancher schon besungen” (Many have sung about the city of Berlin). Curiously, however, scholars have left the representation of the city in music a relatively underexamined practice. The repertoire of songs on Berlin is vast, and ranges from folk, rock, and rap to chansons by Marlene Dietrich, Hildegard Knef, Reinhard

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> For example, Katharina Gerstenberger, *Writing the New Berlin: The German Capital in Post-Wall Literature* (Rochester, N.Y. : Camden House: Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK, 2008); Sabine Hake, *Topographies of Class: Modern Architecture and Mass Society in Weimar Berlin* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008); Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003); Dorothy Rowe, *Representing Berlin: Sexuality and the City in Imperial and Weimar Germany* (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003); Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Andrew Webber, *Berlin in the Twentieth Century: a Cultural Topography* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>28</sup> Stephen Brockmann, “Berlin as the Literary Capital of German Unification,” *Contemporary German Fiction: Writing in the Berlin Republic*, ed. Stuart Taberner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). 39.

Mey, Wolf Biermann, Nina Hagen, and Prinz Pi.<sup>29</sup> Comparing musical and textual representations of Berlin not only allows for the identification of common tropes and themes, such as worker's solidarity, negotiations of home and belonging, and the relationship between East and West but also for an encounter with the city as it is aurally constituted.

It is not my intention to equate musical with literary articulations. Rather, I want to show how literary works and pieces of music interact as coeval contributors to a network of cultural representations, and how they corroborate or contradict one another in their representation of Berlin.<sup>30</sup> My analysis further contributes to our understanding of the relationship between Turkish-German literature and music by highlighting the complex interrelation of the lyrical texts and musical arrangements. Specifically, I am interested in understanding what Lawrence Kramer calls the "musicotextual relation," both within a single song, and between songs and literary texts.<sup>31</sup>

Reflecting on the disciplinary divisions which have historically separated musicology from other fields of inquiry, Peter Wicke and John Shepherd write, "If musicology had little to say on the question of music's meanings in their social and

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<sup>29</sup> See, Wolf Biermann "Berlin" (1988); Marlene Dietrich. *Marlene singt Berlin* (1966); Hildegard Knef "Das ist Berlin" (1978); Nina Hagen "Berlin" (1991); Reinhard Mey "Mein Berlin" (1990); Prinz Pi "Willkommen in Berlin" (2007).

<sup>30</sup> While it is important to acknowledge that popular music and literary works speak to different demographics, and differently to people within demographics the question of audience and reception cannot be satisfactorily answered within the scope of this project. Although reading and listening are different practices, they are both sites, which allow the audience to participate making cultural texts meaningful. Thus these texts are not closed but rather open to interaction by those who engage them. For conceptualizations of listening as acts of participation see for instance: Steven Feld and Charles Keil, *Music Grooves: Essays and Dialogues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Simon Frith, "Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music," *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception*, eds. Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

<sup>31</sup> See, Lawrence Kramer, "Dangerous Liaisons: The Literary Text in musical Criticism," *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music* 13.2 (1989): 159–167; Steven Paul Scher, "Melopoetics Revisited: Reflections on Theorizing Word and Music Studies," *Word and Music Studies: Defining the Field. Proceedings of the First International Conference on Word and Music Studies in Graz, 1997*, eds. Walter Bernhart, Steven Paul Scher, and Werner Wolf (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1999). 9–24.

cultural circumstances, then other disciplines have had little to say on the role of music's sounds in generating and articulating social and cultural meaning."<sup>32</sup> They caution against the analytic reduction of music to simply socially conditioned text on the one hand, and against musicology's isolated formalist analysis and confinement to Western canons on the other. My dissertation makes its contribution at precisely these points of scholarly interest, by analyzing musical elements as they correlate to the lyrics, while at the same time highlighting music's multidirectional intertextual relationship with literary works.

In his study of rap's musical poetics, Adam Krims suggests "plac[ing] musical poetics – i.e. the discussion of musical design – in a place parallel to and always bearing complex relation to, other aspects of social imbrications and functions of popular music."<sup>33</sup> Like Krims, I offer historically and culturally contextualized readings of both music and literary texts, paying particular attention to a song's musical poetics, i.e. its musical design.

In my analysis of music and its sonic elements, I engage in what Christopher Small has called musicking, by writing about my own concrete listening experience.<sup>34</sup> I pay attention to timbre, pace, rhythm, melody, and instrument choices. Moreover, I show how music can be emotionally suggestive and indicate a certain mood and how different instruments and voices music can suggest different 'point of views.' I further highlight how the juxtaposition or opposition of melodies and rhythmic patterns can evoke conflict or a tension. Additionally, I draw attention to how some instruments like drums or

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<sup>32</sup> John Shepherd and Peter Wicke, *Music and Cultural Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press 1997). 14.

<sup>33</sup> Adam Krims, *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000). 30.

<sup>34</sup> In a manner, which parallels my own thoughts on the matter, Christopher Small uses music as a verb, which among other activities include listening. "The verb music" he writes "is not concerned with valuation. It is *descriptive* not *prescriptive*." See, Christopher Small, *Musicking: the Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1998). 9.

trumpets in combination with a marching rhythm can lend urgency to what is being sung or create a tension or dissonance. In this way, music registers in my work as a socially implicated practice, rather than an ideal or pre-existing institution with a hierarchy of intrinsic values.

At the heart of my engagement with these questions, is the interaction of lyrical content and sound. I am interested in how “music asserts and emphasizes the text, underscoring and amplifying an intentional meaning,” on the one hand, while “undermin[ing] a literary intention, commenting on it or calling into question” on the other.”<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, I examine how a song’s sound accrues an additional layer of meaning through the inclusion of instruments, which are emblematic for specific genres and music traditions at home in both the West and the East, like the saxophone, the piano, the darbuka, and the bağlama. At the same time, I draw attention to how instrumental arrangements can stage border-crossings, as for example is the case when a song employs a Western instrument like the piano or the saxophone for an ‘Eastern’ accented melody.

“At once symbolic and sentient,” Nora Alter and Lutz Koepnick, write “sound structures spaces in which we construct meanings, take on or refute prefabricated identities, and stake out a place of our own amid the topographies of the present.”<sup>36</sup> The topographies constructed in both songs and literary texts, as I show, offer a means for writers and musicians to map out alternate views of the world around them, while at the

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<sup>35</sup> Russell A. Berman, “Sounds Familiar? Nina Simone’s Performances of Brecht/Weill Songs,” *Sound Matters: Essays on the Acoustics of Modern German Culture*, eds. Nora M. Alter and Lutz Koepnick (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004). 172.

<sup>36</sup> Nora M. Alter and Lutz Koepnick, “Introduction: Sound Matters,” *Sound Matters: Essays on the Acoustics of Modern German Culture*, eds. Nora M. Alter and Lutz Koepnick (New York: Berghahn Publishers, 2004). 14.

same time subverting official discourse and inscribing themselves into political and cultural spaces from which they are normally excluded.

In the theorization of place, cultural theorists have moved away from a perception of place as a singular and static category.<sup>37</sup> According to Doreen Massey “characteristics of any place are formed in part through the location and role of that place within a wider structuring of society [...].”<sup>38</sup> Rather than theorizing place as a hermetically enclosed and static category, she suggests that “the identity of a place is formed out of social interrelations beyond that ‘place’ itself.”<sup>39</sup> Through their narratives and songs, the writers and musicians I study extend the conception of place as a geographically fixed location by endowing Berlin with specific cultural values. In my dissertation, I use the term place to indicate both an actual geographical location as well as that which Massey has termed a “sense of place,” by which she indicates the meaning attached to that location, i.e. the experience of place and its interpretation.<sup>40</sup> Through their textual and sonic interpretation of Berlin, Turkish-German writers and musicians shape its places—of past and present. And while Germany continues to claim to not be an *Einwanderungsland*, a country of immigration, these artists articulate a cityscape in which Turkish presence is deeply embedded, reflecting on Berlin’s status as city of immigration, and the immigrants’ interaction with the city.

Stuart Hall, writing on the importance of place for diasporic subjects in Britain, suggests

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<sup>37</sup> See, Doreen Massey, “A Global Sense of Place,” *Defining Travel: Diverse Visions*, ed. Susan L. Robertson (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2001); David Morley and Kevin Robbins, “No place like Heimat: Images of Home(land) in European Culture,” *New Formations* 12 (1990).

<sup>38</sup> Doreen Massey, “Double Articulation: A Place in the World,” *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*, ed. Angelika Bammer (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1994). 115.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>40</sup> See, Massey, “A Global Sense of Place,” 167–177.



They are people who belong to more than one world, speak more than one language (literally and metaphorically), inhabit more than one identity, have more than one home; who have learned to ‘negotiate and translate’ between cultures and who, because they are ‘irrevocably the product of several interlocking histories and cultures’ have learned to live with, and indeed speak from *difference* [...]. [They] find ways of being both the same as and different from the others amongst which they live.”<sup>41</sup>

Following Hall’s proposition, I show that for these Turkish-German writers and musicians, both sameness and difference are central motifs in their representations of Turkish-Germanness. By this I mean to indicate that Turkish-German identity, as manifest in the songs and literary texts included here, cannot be reduced to homogenous and monolithic notions of either Turkishness or Germanness. These songs and literary texts make idiosyncratic use of symbols from both cultural archives available to them, and articulate both individual and collective identities in the process.

### **German Leitkultur and the Death of Multiculturalism**

The Turkish minority has occupied a central place in debates on integration and immigration. Frequently, as Ruth Mandel has pointed out “‘Turk’ is shown to have become a signifier of instability and anxiety, in national, subnational, and transnational narrations.”<sup>42</sup> This holds true when one looks at the recent debates on immigration and integration amongst every political cadre in Germany prompted by Thilo Sarrazin’s book, *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (*Germany Abolishes Itself*, 2010). The former finance minister of Berlin, member of the executive board of the *Deutsche Bundesbank* (central bank) and former member of the Social Democrats (SPD), Sarrazin caused uproar by

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<sup>41</sup> Stuart Hall, “New Cultures for Old,” *A Place in the World*, eds. Doreen Massey and Pat Jess (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1995). 206. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>42</sup> Ruth Ellen Mandel, *Cosmopolitan Anxieties: Turkish Challenges to Citizenship and Belonging in Germany* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008). 3.

claiming that increased immigration from Muslim countries causes the “decay” and “intellectual degeneration” of German society.<sup>43</sup> He further stated that Muslim immigrants, and in particular Turks and Arabs, are “threatening the cultural and civil balance” in Europe.<sup>44</sup> German political leaders fear that Sarrazin’s xenophobic tone will launch the kind of right-wing populist immigration debate seen in the Netherlands, where the noted Islamophobe Geert Wilders, a major figure in Dutch parliament, campaigned to stop the “Islamization” of Europe.<sup>45</sup>

Members of all parties, including chancellor Angela Merkel, have vehemently criticized Sarrazin’s publication and statements. Disapproving of Sarrazin’s allegations without having read the book, Merkel admits of shortcomings regarding the integration of immigrants in Germany.<sup>46</sup> And yet, in this newly revived integration debate Merkel and other politicians again take recourse on German *Leitkultur* as the guiding principle of integration, which has been defined as rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Foreign minister Guido Westerwelle reminds the Germans “[o]ur cultural roots lie in the Christian-Jewish tradition”<sup>47</sup> and Merkel emphasizes that the Christian Democrats “are closely connected to the Christian understanding of humanity.”<sup>48</sup> At the party convention of the CDU in November 2010, Merkel called upon her colleagues to concentrate on the

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<sup>43</sup> “intellektuell verkümmern,” Thilo Sarrazin, *Deutschland schafft sich ab. Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen*. (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2010). 393.

<sup>44</sup> “Demografisch stellt die enorme Fruchtbarkeit der muslimischen Migranten auf lange Sicht eine Bedrohung für das kulturelle und zivilisatorische Gleichgewicht im alternden Europa dar.” Ibid., 267.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Daryl Lindsey, “Merkel Speaks Out Against Sarrazin,” *Spiegel Online*. Web. 9 March 2010. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,715522,00.html>.

<sup>46</sup> “Angela Merkel im F.A.Z.-Gespräch: ‘Moscheen werden Teil unseres Stadtbildes sein,’” FAZ.NET 18 September 2010. Web. 28 November 2011. <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/angela-merkel-im-f-a-z-gespraech-moscheen-werden-teil-unseres-stadtbildes-sein-11036846.html>.

<sup>47</sup> “Unsere kulturelle Wurzel ist die christlich-jüdische Tradition.” Adam Soboczynski, “Unser Kulturkampf. Die Rede von der christlich-jüdischen Tradition ist ein Skandal,” *Zeit Online* 14 October 2010. Web. 17 June 2011. <http://www.zeit.de/2010/42/Christlich-Juedische-Tradition>.

<sup>48</sup> “Wir in der Union sind dem christlichen Menschenbild verbunden.” Lisa Caspari, “CDU-Regionalkonferenz. Merkel stützt Seehofer - und sich selbst,” *Zeit Online* 16 October 2010. Web. 17 June 2011. <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2010-10/merkel-regionalkonferenz-berlin/seite-2>.

Christian “core values” of their party: “It is not that we have too much Islam. Rather we have too little Christianity. We have too little conversation [...] about the values that guide us. About our Jewish-Christian tradition.”<sup>49</sup>

The focus on Christian roots and values was accompanied by the official declaration of the failure, or “death,” of multiculturalism, *Multikulti*: as Merkel put it, “[t]he approach for Multikulti has failed, utterly failed.”<sup>50</sup> In his speech at the *Deutschlandtag* of the *Junge Union* (Young Christian Democrats) Horst Seehofer, chairman of the CSU (Christian Social Union) and prime minister of Bavaria, similarly stated “we stand for German Leitkultur and against Multikulti – Multikulti is dead.”<sup>51</sup> While the parties of the coalition are quick to lay multiculturalism to rest, and to focus on their supposedly Christian roots, there is little discussion about the actual nature of these core values, which supposedly stand at the center of the German Leitkultur. What politicians call Leitkultur instead resembles a catalogue of assimilation guidelines—pertaining to the German language, law, history, and culture—to be fulfilled by immigrants.

This emphasis on Christian norms is not a new phenomenon, Merkel has been pointing to the significance of Christian values for German Leitkultur since the Leitkultur

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<sup>49</sup> “Es ist doch nicht so dass wir ein zu viel an Islam haben. Sondern wir haben ein zu wenig an Christentum. Wir haben ein zu wenig an Gespräch [...] über die Werte die uns leiten. Über unsere jüdisch-christliche Tradition.” “CDU Parteitag: Merkel sieht Schwarz-Grün als ‘Hirngespinst’,” *Sueddeutsche.de* 15 November 2010. Web. 29 November 2011. <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/cdu-parteitag-merkel-sieht-schwarz-gruen-als-hirngespinst-1.1023966>.

<sup>50</sup> “Der Ansatz für Multikulti ist gescheitert, absolut gescheitert.” “Multikulti ist absolut gescheitert,” *taz.de* 17 October 2010. Web. 29 November 2011. <http://www.taz.de/159843>.

<sup>51</sup> “Wir als Union treten für die deutsche Leitkultur und gegen Multikulti ein – Multikulti ist tot.” Johannes Korge and Matthias Streitz, “Seehofer und Merkel befeuern Leitkultur-Debatte,” *Spiegel Online* October 15, 2010. Web. 29 November 2011. <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,723466,00.html>.

debate arose for the first time, around Friedrich Merz in 2000.<sup>52</sup> Since then, it has become a constant in policy statements of the CDU and CSU. Merz, then the CDU faction leader in parliament, perceived German Leitkultur as a set of principles to be adopted by immigrants in the context of a new immigration law: the *Zuwanderungsgesetz*, passed in 2004 and came into effect in January 2005. The *Zuwanderungsgesetz* replaced the *Ausländergesetz* (foreigners act), which was first passed in 1965 and amended in 1990. The new immigration law intends to regulate immigration, while at the same time facilitating and systemizing integration for those already living in Germany. Furthermore, the law now grants citizenship according to the place of birth (*jus solis*), superseding the citizenship law based on ethnic descent or blood (*jus sanguinis*). It underwent additional reforms in 2007, when an integration course was made mandatory. This integration course comprises 645 lesson units, of which 600 are dedicated to the German language. The course section is known as the orientation course, and focuses on the following areas: “politics in a democracy,” “history and responsibility,” and “people and society.”<sup>53</sup>

Integration, as legislative changes and the political discourse show, is still based on the principles of cultural assimilation, with a special emphasis on the German language. The insistence on the immigrant’s integration into German Leitkultur forecloses ethno-cultural diversity and multilingualism. In the German discourse, *Heimat* (home, homeland) has generally been perceived as a singular, monoethnic entity; therefore, German society has had difficulty embracing cultural pluralism as embodied

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<sup>52</sup> Nicola Brüning, Olaf Opitz and Wolfgang Stock, “Leitkultur trifft den Nerv,” *Focus Online* 6 November 2000. Web. 28 November 2011. [http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/cdu-leitkultur-trifft-den-nerv\\_aid\\_186805.html](http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/cdu-leitkultur-trifft-den-nerv_aid_186805.html).

<sup>53</sup> Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. “Integrationskurse: Inhalt.” Web. 15 October 2010. [http://www.bamf.de/clin\\_180/nn\\_432882/EN/Integration/Integrationskurse/integrationskurse-inhalt.html?\\_\\_nnn=true](http://www.bamf.de/clin_180/nn_432882/EN/Integration/Integrationskurse/integrationskurse-inhalt.html?__nnn=true).

and practiced by immigrants. In the German media and political debates, immigrants' ties to their former home countries are perceived to create parallel societies,

*Parallelgesellschaften*, which are allegedly hermetically sealed off from German society.

Accompanying the integration debate is a discussion about the economic benefit of immigration. Sarrazin, and his colleagues like Seehofer, repeatedly highlight the disadvantages of increasing immigration for the German economy and the strains they feel it will place on the German welfare system. According to Seehofer, Germany should not become “the social welfare office for the whole world.” On the basis of this statement, he then suggests that no further immigration is needed.<sup>54</sup> However, his claim contradicts current statistics. The numbers prove the opposite, because since 2006 more people are emigrating from Germany than are immigrating to the country (including people of Turkish descent, who, together with Arabs, are the major target for statements by Sarrazin and Seehofer).

On October 25, 2010, Seehofer presented his position on immigration to his party in the form of a so-called *7-Punkte-Plan*. In this policy document, the CSU is still opposed to double citizenship, demands sanctions for “integration-deniers,” while still maintaining that “Germany is not a typical country of immigration.”<sup>55</sup> CDU-/CSU-politicians like Seehofer—in addition to Angela Merkel, Wolfgang Schäuble, Jörg Schönbohm, and Edmund Stoiber—have rejected the idea of Germany as a country of immigration, in the past and present. In an interview with *Der Spiegel*, Merkel was asked why the Union still has been clinging to this claim. In response, Merkel introduced the

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<sup>54</sup> “[...] zum Sozialamt für die ganze Welt werden.” Johannes Korge and Matthias Streitz, “Seehofer und Merkel befeuern Leitkultur-Debatte.”

<sup>55</sup> “Deutschland ist kein klassisches Zuwanderungsland.” dpa, “CSU sieht in Deutschland kein Einwanderungsland,” *Zeit Online* 30 October 2010. Web. 28 November 2011. <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2010-10/csu-parteitag-einwanderung-integration>.

idea of Germany's status as country of integration, *Integrationsland*, which has been included into her party's policy statement.<sup>56</sup> A country of integration, according to Merkel, is a country "in which people of all backgrounds are welcome, who are willing to live as fellow citizens according to the legal system and values or even become German citizens."

While the coalition has been criticized by members of the opposition like Renate Kühnast, Claudia Roth, and Jürgen Trittin, few challenge the need for integration by offering alternative perspectives on cultural coexistence rather than homogenization. Furthermore, Sarrazin's and Seehofer's theses have broad public support. Based on a study, one of every two Germans agrees that there are too many "foreigners" living in Germany, and only 16% think that Muslim culture belongs in Germany.<sup>57</sup>

Within this recent debate, the centrality of religion becomes evident. While people of Turkish descent have always been perceived as "ethnonational Others," religion has since 2000 become a factor by which Turks "have become embodiments of a differently underwritten Otherness."<sup>58</sup> In German parlance, a locutory shift has taken place from "Turks" to "Muslims," through which the individuals in question are "situated in a new network of discursive associations" allowing for Turks to be connected to a

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<sup>56</sup> "Was für ein Land sind wir? Wir sind zu dem Schluss gekommen, dass wir ein Integrationsland sind. [...] In einem Integrationsland sind alle Menschen fremder Herkunft willkommen, die bereit sind, auf der Basis der Rechts- und Werteordnung als Mitbürger zu leben oder sogar deutsche Staatsbürger zu werden." Dirk von Kurbjuweit and Mathias Müller von Blumencron, "Wir haben ein freundliches Klima – Gespräch mit Frau Merkel," *Der Spiegel* 44 (2010): 26–29. 28.

<sup>57</sup> "Integrationsdebatte ist entfacht. Merkel: Sarrazins Thesen 'Unsinn'," *n-tv* September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010. Web. 28 November 2011. <http://www.n-tv.de/politik/Merkel-Sarrazins-Thesen-Unsinn-article1409291.html>.

<sup>58</sup> Yasemin Yildiz, "Turkish Girls, Allah's Daughters, and the Contemporary German Subject: Itinerary of a Figure," *German Life and Letters* 62.3 (2009). 466.

larger community of religiously defined antagonists, and thereby linked to “large-scale, hard-to-control incidents of violence.”<sup>59</sup>

Since the labor recruitment of the postwar period, people of Turkish descent have been at the center of attention in the German public, and deemed as the group the least willing to integrate, or least capable of integrating. In the context of the recent integration debate, Seehofer explains it as follows: “the capacity to integrate depends on their origin...It is clear that immigrants from other cultural groups, like Turkey and Arab countries, have more difficulty. I draw the conclusion, that we do not need additional immigration from other cultural groups.”<sup>60</sup>

### **Labor Migration and the Public Sphere**

Already regarding the terms for labor migration, the Turkish labor migrants occupied a special position, Turkey being a non-EEC (European Economic Community) country.<sup>61</sup> Needing manual labor power, Germany concluded multiple labor recruitment agreements—with Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Tunisia, Morocco and former Yugoslavia—between 1955 and 1968. The bilateral labor recruitment contract between Germany and Turkey was signed on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1961. Through Germany’s membership in the EEC, which entailed the full and free movement of its member-states’ citizens between countries, a continued increase of foreign labor was guaranteed. The

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 475.

<sup>60</sup> “Die Integrationsfähigkeit von Zuwanderern hänge auch von ihrer Herkunft ab. ... Es ist doch klar, dass sich Zuwanderer aus anderen Kulturkreisen wie aus der Türkei und arabischen Ländern insgesamt schwerer tun. Daraus ziehe ich auf jeden Fall den Schluss, dass wir keine zusätzliche Zuwanderung aus anderen Kulturkreisen brauchen.” Jens Bauszus, “Horst Seehofer: Kampfansage and Schmarotzer und Zuwanderer,” *Focus Online* October 9, 2010. Web. 28 November 2011. [http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/horst-seehofer-kampfansage-an-schmarotzer-und-zuwanderer\\_aid\\_560515.html](http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/horst-seehofer-kampfansage-an-schmarotzer-und-zuwanderer_aid_560515.html).

<sup>61</sup> For a more detailed account of historical and political implications of labor migration and immigration see, Rita C. K. Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

recruitment of foreign labor was regulated by what was called the rotary system, which mandated a temporary status for the foreign labor force. For non-EEC countries, like Morocco and Turkey, the actual recruitment process was regulated through the *Deutsche Kommissionen* and the *Deutsche Verbindungsstellen*, established by the Federal Labor Agency (*BfA*) in the sending countries.<sup>62</sup>

Treaties between Germany and these countries of emigration laid out the conditions and basic terms of labor migration. There were differences in the contracts among the various countries, mainly distinguishing between EEC countries and non-EEC countries. Lengths of stay were limited to two years in the contracts with Morocco and Turkey. Furthermore, only the contracts with Italy, Spain, Greece and Portugal contained sections on the entry of family members. It was not until 1964 that the limitation of the length of stay was repealed for Turkey; this marked the first step toward Turkish immigration.

The West German government promoted and emphasized the benefits of labor migration for the German economy throughout the years of the *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle). In 1973, due to economic slowdowns and job shortages, the West German government declared a recruitment ban and introduced the *Rückkehrhilfe* (return aid), a program that provided subventions to *Gastarbeiter* (guestworkers) in the hope of encouraging their re-migration to their countries of origin. For the German government and civic authorities, the labor force of guestworkers had been understood as a temporary phenomenon, and one that entailed a transitional status for these workers. Following the recruitment ban, West Germany's handling of the foreign labor force was characterized by a focus on limiting immigration, an encouragement of the return of foreigners, and the

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<sup>62</sup> Verena McRae, *Die Gastarbeiter. Daten, Fakten, Probleme* (Munich: Beck, 1980). 11.



restriction of social integration. Competition for jobs and an increasing unemployment rate gave rise to doubts about the economic benefit conferred by the guestworkers.<sup>63</sup>

What had entered the public discussion as the *Gastarbeiterproblem* (guestworker problem) during recession soon became the *Türkenproblem* (Turk problem).

The terminology used for labor migrants has always carried a notion of temporariness and exclusion with it. In 1970, for example, after almost two decades of labor migration to Germany, the German public broadcasting institution WDR (West German Broadcasting) initiated a contest to try to find a new term replacing the euphemistic label “Gastarbeiter.” The winning selection was *ausländische Arbeitnehmer*, foreign employees, but looking at the other suggestions, the pervasiveness of doubts and unawareness about the status and role of labor migrants in Germany becomes evident: *Devisenboy* (foreign exchange boy), *Erlediger* (handler), *Euroamico*, *Fremdkörperarbeiter* (foreign body worker), *Jobbis*, *Menschen zweiter Klasse* (second-class citizens), *Söldner* (mercenaries), *Teilbürger* (partial citizens), *Willkommene Arbeitskräfte für schlechtbezahlte Arbeit* (welcomed workers for low-wage work), *Zeitgast* (time guest).<sup>64</sup> When looking at the propositions sent in by over thirty thousand participants, the perception of Gastarbeiter as ‘aliens,’ outsiders, and inferiors becomes visible. In the ensuing decade, during Helmut Kohl’s term of office, public criticism against labor migrants and immigrants climaxed.

The political climate in Germany changed drastically during the Kohl administration in the 1980s. In his first television appearance after his election to office, Kohl, chancellor and leader of the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU)

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<sup>63</sup> Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerbeschäftigung in Deutschland, 1880 bis 1980: Saisonarbeiter, Zwangsarbeiter, Gastarbeiter* (Berlin: J.H.W. Dietz, 1986). 222.

<sup>64</sup> Ernst Klee, *Gastarbeiter. Analysen und Berichte* (Frankfurt Main: Suhrkamp). 149–157.

stated that the numbers of foreigners (“Ausländer”), and particularly Turks, was too high and needed to be reduced.<sup>65</sup> For subsequent political proceedings, the main premise was that Germany never was and never would be a country of immigration, something that had already been proposed by Kohl’s predecessor Helmut Schmidt in 1979.<sup>66</sup> Racist statements by government officials were frequently circulated through media. Alfred Dregger, the CDU faction leader in the German parliament, for example, stated that, “They want to stay what they are, Turks... Turks cannot only not be assimilated, it is also difficult to integrate them... they are only seeking proximity with fellow Turks in Germany.”<sup>67</sup> On another occasion he carried it to further extremes, saying, “We agree on this: the foreigners have to go.”<sup>68</sup> Xenophobic sentiment, particularly against Turks, escalated further in the early 1990s when a series of assaults occurred in quick succession: in September 1991 in Hoyerswerda (an arson attack on residents of an asylum seeker-shelter); in August 1992 in Rostock (a week long xenophobic riot and attack on residents of a refugee-shelter), November 1992 in Mölln (an arson attack on a Turkish family home); and in May 1993 in Solingen (an arson attack on a two-family home inhabited by Turks).

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<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Detlef Lüderwaldt, “Ausländerpolitik als Ausländerverdrängungspolitik,” *Türken raus? oder Verteidigt den sozialen Frieden. Beiträge gegen die Ausländerfeindlichkeit*, ed. Rolf Meinhardt (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1984). 107; Dieter Thränhardt, “Germany: an undeclared immigration country,” *new community* 21.1 (1995): 20.

<sup>66</sup> Karl-Heinz Meier-Braun, “Gastarbeiter” oder Einwanderer? *Anmerkungen zur Ausländerpolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Frankfurt/Main: Ullstein, 1980). 78.

<sup>67</sup> Sie wollen bleiben was sie sind, nämlich Türken... Türken sind nicht nur nicht zu assimilieren, sie sind auch schwer zu integrieren... sie wollen in Deutschland Nachbarschaft mit ihresgleichen suchen.” Quoted in Konrad Knolle, “Migration und Rassismus.” *Türken raus? oder Verteidigt den sozialen Frieden. Beiträge gegen die Ausländerfeindlichkeit*, ed. Rolf Meinhardt (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1984). 80-99. 88.

<sup>68</sup> “Darüber sind wir uns doch einig, die Ausländer müssen raus.” Quoted Christian Habbe, “Die verfeimten Fremden: Das deutsche Ausländerproblem – ein Problem der Ausländer mit den Deutschen.” *Ausländer: Die verfeimten Gäste*, ed. Christian Habbe (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1983). 15.

These events had a lasting impact on the artistic productivity of the Turkish-German minority. Throughout the 1990s, writers and musicians like Kemal Kurt and Islamic Force increasingly dealt with current events critically while at the same time emphasizing their right to remain in and belong to Germany. My analysis illustrates how Turkish-German cultural producers construct textual and musical means of accessing and challenging German public political discourse—and this despite their exclusion from formal political participation and, in many cases, from participation in discourse in the German public sphere.

In order to understand this second, more subtle exclusion from participation in debates on Germany's national identity, it is important to understand how the public sphere has been formed as a concept, and as an institution, in postwar Germany. Refining his famous definition of the public sphere, Jürgen Habermas writes, “[b]y ‘the public sphere’ we mean first of all the realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed [...] The public sphere ... mediates between society and state, in which the public organizes itself as the bearer of public opinion.”<sup>69</sup> Nancy Fraser has identified a major shortcoming of this conception of the public sphere: “Habermas idealizes the liberal public sphere but . . . fails to examine other, nonliberal, non bourgeois, competing public spheres.”<sup>70</sup> Fraser's work therefore “aim[ed] to overcome the limitations of the bourgeois-liberal model” and “sought to ensure full access and real parity of participation to those whom that model excluded or marginalized: women,

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<sup>69</sup> Jürgen Habermas, “The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article” (Sara Lennox and Frank Lennox, trans.), *New German Critique* 3 (1974): 49–50. Habermas first conceptualized the public sphere in *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (Munich: Luchterhand, 1967).

<sup>70</sup> Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 60.

minorities, and the poor.”<sup>71</sup> For my purposes, her conceptualization of “alternative publics” is particularly useful.<sup>72</sup> She suggests that these “alternative publics” emerge as “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs.”<sup>73</sup> Taking Fraser’s reconceptualization of the public sphere as a premise, I show how Turkish-German musicians and writers construct alternative publics, through which they formulate, circulate and invent their own interpretations of Turkish-German participation in German political discourses surrounding issues of citizenship, integration, and belonging.

In *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany* (2007) Rita Chin examines public discourses about guestworkers starting with the beginning of the labor recruitment phase in 1955 until German reunification in 1990. She argues “policymaking and cultural production...need to be understood as constituent parts of an ongoing, continually shifting public dialogue on the guest worker question.”<sup>74</sup> She thus investigates both how German public policy was influenced by cultural considerations of labor migrants and how cultural production by minorities, specifically the Turkish-German minority, intervened into public debates about immigration. Where Chin’s work focuses on the interventions of Turkish-German texts into German public discourse, and maps in this way a kind of political history of ethnic minorities’ contributions to the German public sphere, my own primary interest lies with Turkish-German musical and literary representations of Berlin—specifically the interaction of various cultural, national, and

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<sup>71</sup> Nancy Fraser, “Transnationalizing the Public Sphere,” March 2005. Web December 18, 2011. [http://republicart.net/disc/publicum/fraser01\\_en.htm](http://republicart.net/disc/publicum/fraser01_en.htm).

<sup>72</sup> Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking,” 62.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>74</sup> Rita C. K. Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany*, 14

ethnic contexts within the texts considered. My framework extends beyond the question of the history of the guestworker, and expands Chin's time frame so that texts that produced in the post-unification period can be considered as well.

### **Turkish-German Texts and Contexts**

“The literature of Turkish migration,” Leslie Adelson writes, “functions as kind of cultural archive, where changing perceptions and phantasms of sociality are both tracked and imagined.”<sup>75</sup> Without overlooking the specificity of their aesthetic properties and reducing them to transparent sociological documents, I perceive Turkish-German songs and literary works as texts which provide commentary on—and “archive,” as Adelson suggests—political, social, and cross-cultural issues of the past and present. It is important to understand what they have to say about their own broader historical contexts, and how they at the same time interact with the literary or musical cultures within which they position themselves. Distancing themselves from previous designations, which (in an essentializing and frequently discriminatory manner) described them in terms of “in-betweenness,” and “uprootedness,” the music and writing I discuss in this dissertation articulate multiple affiliations, rather than presenting binary oppositions or mutually exclusive attachments (e.g. East/West, Turkish/German). As Ruth Mandel puts it, “In looking at the ways migrants have appropriated multiple spaces, it becomes evident that Turkish Germans continually reposition themselves as part of increasingly complex transnational networks.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Adelson, *The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature: Toward a New Critical Grammar of Migration*. 15.

<sup>76</sup> Mandel, *Cosmopolitan Anxieties: Turkish Challenges to Citizenship and Belonging in Germany*. 9.

Since its emergence as “Gastarbeiterliteratur” in the early 1970s, the categorization of minority writing has proven difficult resulting in various labels, ranging from *Ausländerliteratur*, *Literatur der Betroffenheit*, *Migrantenliteratur*, *Wahlheimatliteratur*, *Deutschlandliteratur*, *Interkulturelle Deutsche Literatur*, *Neueste Deutsche Literatur* and *Literatur der Migration*. In the past two decades, scholars like Leslie Adelson, Tom Cheesman, Venkat Mani, and Kader Konuk have striven to resituate Turkish-German minority writing in the context of German literature, and made efforts to include it in the category German literature. In *The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature* (2005), Leslie Adelson has emphasized the need for “a new critical grammar for understanding the configuration of cultural contact and Turkish presence in contemporary German literature.”<sup>77</sup> She has stressed the importance of looking at the “cultural effects of Turkish migration” on German society.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, Tom Cheesman, in his monograph *Novels of Turkish German Settlement: Cosmopolite Fictions* (2007), has argued for shifting the focus from the migratory process to aspects of Turkish settlement in Germany. In his recent study on Turkish-German literature Venkat Mani “explores aesthetic and political claims that unsettle concepts of home, belonging and cultural citizenship.”<sup>79</sup> Kader Konuk has investigated the role the Turkish minority assigns itself regarding the German past, and tracked both cultures’ convergent (and divergent) conceptions of humanism as they emerged in nationalizing discourses through the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, arguing that “the doors to the German past are now open and

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<sup>77</sup> Adelson, *The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature: Toward a New Critical Grammar of Migration*. 5.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>79</sup> B. Venkat Mani, *Cosmopolitical Claims: Turkish-German Literatures from Nadolny to Pamuk* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2007). 7.

the notion of a shared past is evolving.”<sup>80</sup> Like these scholars, I focus on Turkish-German interventions in Germany’s culture and history, and move beyond critical paradigms, which emphasize in-betweenness and identity politics.

### **Textual Transcendence: Gérard Genette’s Transtextuality**

Gérard Genette’s theory of transtextuality provides a useful framework for disentangling the multiple layers of signification which inhere in every literary and musical text. Reading texts in relation to each other, rather than limiting textual analysis to the text itself and perceive texts as isolated and closed entities, Genette favors what he terms “open structuralism,” which “demonstrates how a text can [...] read another.”<sup>81</sup> In my engagement with both music and literature, I am interested in their associations and connections to other traditions and cultural contexts.

Applying Genette’s concept of transtextuality to Turkish-German literary texts and songs, I examine the contrasts and confluences of Turkish and German cultural production. As literary texts are interconnected, so is music. For Genette, transtextuality is “all that sets the text in relationship, whether obviously or concealed, with other texts.”<sup>82</sup> He divides transtextuality into five subtypes. The first category is intertextuality, which constitutes the “actual presence of one text within another,” and is limited to the practices of quotation, allusion, and plagiarism.<sup>83</sup> In the texts I discuss, quotation is the most commonly deployed intertextual practice. Quotation, in the literary context, is a

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<sup>80</sup> Kader Konuk, “Taking on German and Turkish History: Emine Sevgi Özdamar’s *Seltsame Sterne*,” *Gegenwartsliteratur: German Studies Yearbook* 6 (2007). 234.

<sup>81</sup> Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997). 399.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

common phenomenon and easily identified. In music, an example of quotation is sampling “a process in which a sound is taken directly from a recorded medium and transposed onto a new recording.”<sup>84</sup> In most rap music, sampling is a central musical feature; for the Turkish-German rap music I analyze here, it is a crucial element of each song’s sonic texture. Quotation can be rhythmic (e.g. a drum loop) or melodic, but is also textual.

The second category of transtextuality is paratextuality, and includes those elements, which “direct and control the reception of a text.”<sup>85</sup> Titles, prefaces, notes, interviews, and reviews are all paratextual elements. Genette refers to these as “secondary signals.”<sup>86</sup> Paratexts can be “autobiographic, by the author, and allographic, by someone other than the author.”<sup>87</sup> My analysis incorporates interviews, epigraphs, titles and subtitles, and liner notes as paratexts. For example, Emine Sevgi Özdamar comments on her oeuvre in various interviews; these both complement her literary works and inform our readings of them. Islamic Force and Orientation explain their musical influences, and comment on their songs, in their liner notes.

The third subcategory is metatextuality, or “labeled commentary,” which occurs when a text comments explicitly and critically upon another text, as for example reviews and critiques.<sup>88</sup> Considering metatexts helps us to contextualize these texts with respect to the ways in which the news media and public viewed these works and responded to them.

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<sup>84</sup> Willford Jones, “Sampling,” *Grove Music Online*. Web. 29 November 2011.  
<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/47228>.

<sup>85</sup> Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. 3.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>87</sup> Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000). 103; 106.

<sup>88</sup> Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. 4.



In my engagement with metatextual materials, I am interested in the placing, labeling, and valuation offered by both German and Turkish reviewers and commentators.

Genette conceptualizes hypertextuality, a fourth type of transtextuality, as “the relationship of a text with another earlier text.” In the literary context, hypertextuality manifests itself through indirect references to previous publications and writers as a source of influence. When one work (a hypertext) evokes another literary work without necessarily citing it explicitly, a hypertextual relationship is established which implicates pre-existing hypotexts in a transtextual dialogue that may span several decades or centuries. Genette’s example is the *Odyssey* being a hypotext for two hypertexts: *Aeneid* and *Ulysses*.<sup>89</sup> Nazım Hikmet’s and Bertolt Brecht’s bodies of work often function as sources of influence, on the thematic as well as structural level, for Turkish-German artists under discussion here. In this way, they are hypotexts in Genette’s sense. In the songs analyzed, music traditions of the East and West—ranging from dub, rap, workers’ march, jazz, to Turkish wedding and classical music—serve as hypotexts for various subsequently arranged and recorded compositions.

The final category is architextuality (designation of a text as part of a genre). Architextual elements “can be titular [...] or most often subtitled and are of a purely taxonomic nature.”<sup>90</sup> Titles and subtitles of literary texts can indicate the subject matter and form of a text. Musicians also offer their own labels and genre specifications for their sound, as for example Oriental hip hop and jazz *Alla Turca*. Accordingly, the subtitle “Poem” of Aras Ören’s Berlin trilogy or Kemal Kurt’s designation of “Bilder” (tableaux) further specifies the genre of their texts.

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>90</sup> Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. 3.

## Chapter Outline

Berlin has always had a strong working class tradition, and a history of political activism, which was echoed in its music, literature, and film. The second chapter “‘Gastarbeiter’ in Berlin: Writing and Singing Solidarity,” picks up this theme to analyze how new generations of workers and working-class sympathizers deal with the problematic. In examining the representation of international worker’s solidarity during the 1970s, this chapter considers whether Turkish-German labor migrants can be regarded as contiguous with the earlier tradition of urban political unrest and labor protest. The chapter analyzes the Berlin trilogy by Aras Ören (1939-), one of the earliest and most significant Turkish-German writers to emerge in Germany. Given Ören’s longstanding connections to leftist causes and the international labor movement, his work is examined alongside songs by musician Tahsin Incirci (1938-) and the *Türkischer Arbeiterchor Westberlin* (Turkish workers’ choir Westberlin), the first Turkish workers’ choir to have been formed anywhere in the world.

Ultimately, I argue that these artists contributed to the tradition of German labor and protest movements in their works—even during the early stages of immigration during the late 1960s and early 1970s. They did so by incorporating the perspective of the newly arrived Turkish guestworkers. In their works, both Ören and Incirci stress the need for solidarity and the necessity for the workers to emancipate themselves and become the agents for social change. A further connection between the works involves the influence exerted on them by Turkish and German literary figures, especially Nazım Hikmet and Bertolt Brecht. By emphasizing the influence and interaction of Turkish and German cultural traditions—like workers’ songs and politically engaged literature—in their works

these artists created something new: an aesthetic that consults and synthesizes both traditions.

Chapter three, “*Heimisches* Berlin: Longing and Belonging” centers on the representation of Berlin as a Heimat throughout the 1980s and the 1990s in the works of the Turkish-German writer Kemal Kurt (1947-2002) and the rap group Islamic Force (1986-2000). Kemal Kurt’s *Was ist die Mehrzahl von Heimat* (What is the Plural of Heimat, 1995) and songs from Islamic Force’s debut album *Mesaj* (The Message, 1997). Despite the term’s polysemy and its adaptability to different historical contexts, Heimat has always involved the relationship of people to space. Frequently, it has been associated with ethnic Germanness. This chapter demonstrates, however, that Heimat is not endemic to Germany, or at least not only to Germany. I argue that in laying claim to Heimat, whether through literature or music, Turkish-German artists articulate their belonging to Germany as a new Heimat. Without abandoning cultural, familial, or even political ties to their former home, they forge a sense of belonging that is inclusive of their multiple attachments. In drawing on the Turkish tradition of notions of home and abroad, they open Heimat’s frame of reference to incorporate hitherto excluded minorities. In this reconceptualization of Heimat, home emerges as a plural and not a singular concept, and despite its global range—Kreuzberg, Turkey, writings, the US and the world—it has its local base in Berlin.

Since 1989, Berlin and Istanbul have officially been sister cities. My fourth chapter, “East meets West: Connecting Istanbul and Berlin,” argues that this governmental connection has been aesthetically realized in Turkish-German cultural production, as well. Central to this chapter are literary works by award-winning writer

Emine Sevgi Özdamar (1946-) and songs by the band Orientation (1997-). I examine Özdamar's novel, *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* (Strange Stars Stare to Earth, 2003), and songs by Orientation from their first two albums *Bosporus Bridge* (1997) and in *9 Istanbul 8 In Berlin* (2006). These works create transnational connections between Istanbul and Berlin, transgressing the boundaries between East and West.

Özdamar uses theatrical and cinematic strategies—techniques of montage, cutting, and staging—in her representation and appropriation of Berlin, which is pervaded by memories of and associations with Istanbul. Orientation do not explicitly name Istanbul or Berlin, but draw instead on the connections and synergies of musical traditions and styles embedded in these cities. In addition, by including the piano, the darbuka, and the bağlama in their arrangements, they incorporate instrumental sounds emblematic of specific genres and music traditions at home in both the West and the East. Sonically and textually linking Berlin to Istanbul and vice versa, Özdamar's and Orientation's works not only cross national boundaries, but also investigate them and contest their limitations. For these artists, the cities are mirrored within one another. This relationality is aesthetically articulated through the interweaving of these metropolises' sounds and histories. The cityscape emerging from both Özdamar's and Orientation's works is a personal map of the city incorporative of all their attachments.

Turkish-German belonging in the city is communicated through these texts in a number of ways: by their participation in and contribution to cultural traditions; broader socio-political movements and concerns like the labor movement and the protest songs; as a result of their ongoing negotiation and conceptualization of Germanness which is

closely tied to the Heimat discourse; and through the presentation of Berlin as a global city through the making of transnational connections.

Against the supposed incommensurability of Turkish and German culture propagated by German media and politicians in debates on dual citizenship, EU expansion, and integration, the artists whose works this dissertation considers emphasize the vibrancy of the ongoing intercultural exchange taking place between these two countries. My dissertation illustrates how German culture is profoundly shaped by its Turkish-German citizens, and how fundamentally Germany's capital has been constituted by their cultural contributions. The city of Schinkel and Speer, of Hessel and Benjamin, of Brecht and Weill, is now also the city of Aras Ören and Emine Sevgi Özdamar—of Islamic Force and Orientation.

## Chapter II

### “Gastarbeiter” in Berlin: Writing and Singing Solidarity

What makes the world what it is, is labor.  
Niyazi Gümüşkılıç<sup>91</sup>

Having signed the first bilateral labor recruitment contract in 1955, the West German government promoted and emphasized the benefits of labor migration for the German economy throughout the years of the *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle).<sup>92</sup> In 1973, due to economic slowdowns and job shortages, the West German government declared a recruitment ban and introduced the *Rückkehrhilfe* (return aid), a program that provided subventions to *Gastarbeiter* (guestworkers) in the hopes of encouraging their remigration to their countries of origin—principally Turkey, but also Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Tunisia, Morocco and former Yugoslavia. For the German government, the labor force of guestworkers had been intended as a temporary phenomenon that entailed a transitional status for these workers. Following the recruitment ban, (West) Germany’s handling of the foreign labor force was characterized by a focus on limiting immigration and encouraging the return of foreigners. Competition for jobs and an increasing unemployment rate gave rise to doubts about the economic benefit conferred by the guestworkers.<sup>93</sup> What entered the public discussion as the *Gastarbeiterproblem*

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<sup>91</sup> “yeryüzünü yeryüzü yapan emektir.” Aras Ören, *Berlin Üçlemesi: Poem*, Türk yazarları dizisi (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1980). 40. Henceforth quoted as *BÜ*. Translations are all mine unless noted otherwise.

<sup>92</sup> Parts of this chapter have been published in a modified version in “The Soundtrack of Migration: Tahsin Incirci and the Türkischer Arbeiterchor West Berlin.” *Studien zur deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 24.2: (2010). 119–131.

<sup>93</sup> Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1990: Seasonal Workers, Forced Laborers, Guest Workers* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990). 222.

(guestworker problem) during recession soon became the *Türkenproblem* (Turk problem). An example of this can be seen in the 1973 July issue of the weekly news magazine *Der Spiegel*, which published an article entitled “Die Türken kommen - rette sich, wer kann” (The Turks are coming, save yourself if you can) in which Turkish immigration was described in pejoratives like “Andrang vom Bosphorus” (storm from the Bosphorus), “Invasion” (invasion), “Scharen” (flocks), and “Türken-Run auf die Städte” (Turk-run on the cities).<sup>94</sup> The rhetorical choices in this article construes Turkish immigration as, at best, disconcerting and, at worst, alarming; *Der Spiegel* places Turkish immigrants on par with animals, using words like “storm,” “invasion” and “flocks,” traditionally associated with animal husbandry, to describe the movement of people.

In the face of growing discrimination and the West German consolidation policy, writers and musicians have used their work to document the experience of Turkish guestworkers, representing Turkish immigrants as an undeniably permanent presence in Germany. In what follows, I analyze Aras Ören’s Berlin trilogy and songs from the album *İşçi şarkıları ve marşları* (Workers’ Songs and Marches, 1974) by Tahsin Incirci and the Türkischer Arbeiterchor Westberlin (1973–1985). Though they drew on different media, both Ören’s trilogy and Incirci’s album agitate for an international worker’s solidarity based in Berlin. I argue that these artists, already in the early stages of immigration during the late 1960s and early 1970s, draw on a longstanding tradition of German labor and protest movements in their work, while incorporating the perspective of the newly-arrived Turkish guestworker. Through their works, they call into question the public discourse of the city’s past. Specifically, their claim to German worker’s culture allows them to form an alternative public, while at the same time reforming the

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<sup>94</sup> “Die Türken kommen - rette sich wer kann,” *Der Spiegel* (July 30, 1973).

working-class through migrants, as evident in new institutions such as the choir. In contrast to *Der Spiegel*'s representation of Turkish guestworkers as an uncontrollable and disorderly "flock," these artists focus on workers' participation in and continuation of German labor traditions and political movements. In their works, in addition to emphasizing the need for solidarity, both Incirci and Ören underline the importance and necessity for the workers to emancipate themselves and become the agents for social change.

Both Incirci (1938-) and Ören (1939-) have themselves been politically active. Incirci's choir was involved with union work, and especially with the ATTF (Avrupa Türkiyeli Toplumcular Federasyonu), the organization of Turkish socialist workers abroad, and Ören was a member of the artists collective "Rote Nelke" (red carnation), which set as its goal the active participation in the class struggle.<sup>95</sup> These artists' own political activities within the labor movement inform their works and their conception of the work of art as political tool.

What is striking about both Incirci's and Ören's works is the influence exerted on them by Turkish and German literary figures, especially Nazım Hikmet and Bertolt Brecht. In the introduction to the Turkish edition, well-known Turkish writer Fakir Baykurt, refers to the trilogy as "destan," an epic poem, influenced by the Marxist intellectuals Bertolt Brecht and Nazım Hikmet.<sup>96</sup> Similar to Baykurt, Gino Chiellino classifies it an "episches Gedicht" (epic poem) situating the trilogy in close proximity to

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<sup>95</sup> Cf. *Sozialistische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Gesellschaft* (25): 1974, special issue on the "Die Rote Nelke West-Berlin."

<sup>96</sup> Baykurt, Fakir. "Hoşgeldin Aras Ören." Introduction. Ören, *Berlin Üçlemesi: Poem*. 5–10. 8.



the Brechtian “Lehrgedicht” (didactic poem).<sup>97</sup> In a review of the first section, Ingeborg Drewitz compares Ören’s writing to the style introduced and made popular in Turkey by Hikmet: the free verse poem (“reimlose[s] Poem”).<sup>98</sup> Similarly, a reviewer for *Die Weltwoche* characterized Hikmet as Ören’s precursor in the use of the narrative poem.<sup>99</sup> The song repertoire of Incirci’s choir included songs based on poems by Brecht and Hikmet sung in Turkish.

In foregrounding the standpoint of the workers and the proletarian experience, Incirci and Ören draw theoretical inspiration from Brecht’s and Hikmet’s conceptualizations of socialist realism in the arts and create a transtextual connection in which these intellectuals body of work serve as hypotexts, a source of influence. According to Brecht, “socialist realist artists treat reality from the standpoint of the working population and its allied intellectuals, who are for socialism.”<sup>100</sup> And that “a socialist realist work of art is based on the working-class viewpoint and appeals to all men of good will. It shows them the aims and outlook of the working-class, which is trying . . . transforming society and abolishing exploitation.”<sup>101</sup> Similarly Hikmet perceived himself as “an ordinary proletarian poet/with a Marxist-Leninist conscience”<sup>102</sup> who “speak[s] of the problems, sufferings, and needs of that class.”<sup>103</sup> Hikmet’s poetics,

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<sup>97</sup> Carmine Chiellino, *Am Ufer der Fremde: Literatur und Arbeitsemigration, 1870-1991* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1995). 314.

<sup>98</sup> Ingeborg Drewitz, “Poem von den Kreuzberger Türken,” *Der Tagesspiegel* December 12, 1973.

<sup>99</sup> Hans Jürgen Heise, “Orientale in Kreuzberg,” *Die Weltwoche* November 22, 1978.

<sup>100</sup> “sozialistisch realistische Künstler behandeln die Realität vom Standpunkt der werktätigen Bevölkerung und der mit ihnen verbündeten Intellektuellen, die für den Sozialismus sind.” Bertolt Brecht, “Über sozialistischen Realismus.” [1954]. *Bertolt Brecht: Ausgewählte Werke in sechs Bänden*, Vol. 6 (Frankfurt Main: Suhrkamp, 2005) 625.

<sup>101</sup> Quoted in John Willet ed., *Brecht on Theatre. The Development of an Aesthetic* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964). 269.

<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Review of *Things I Didn’t Know I Loved: Selected Poems by Nazım Hikmet*; Randy Blasing; Mutlu Konuk, *World Literature Today* 52:1 (1978:Winter), 173.

<sup>103</sup> Quoted in Talat S. Halman, *Rapture and Revolution: Essays on Turkish Literature*, ed. Jayne L. Warner (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2007) 333.

similar to Brecht's, is based on a commitment to realism and social causes. It is no coincidence that there is an overlap between their conceptualizations, since both "were in Moscow during the same period" and "subject the similar political influences in the SU."<sup>104</sup> It is my aim to show how Hikmet's and Brecht's legacies are central to Incirci's and Ören's works—not only given their conceptualization of art as a political tool, but also in their formulation of the aesthetics of socially engaged art.

In my analysis of Incirci's and Ören's texts I will focus on the ways in which Turkish labor migration and workers' solidarity in Berlin are represented aesthetically, inquiring into the significance of Berlin itself, or specific workers' districts, such as Kreuzberg. How do these artists represent the relationship between Berlin and its new inhabitants? How do the musical and textual representations of the city interact and/or overlap? These artists understand the guestworkers' experience as integral to Berlin's history and its cultural productions, and, in what follows, I will explore the ways in which this understanding is musically and literarily articulated. Furthermore, I will show how Incirci and Ören continue Eisler's and Brecht's efforts to revive traditions of the worker's movement, by not only focusing on the workers' standpoint but also bringing a working-class conception of the audience into play.

### **Aras Ören: Chronicler of Berlin**

Aras Ören, a Turkish-German intellectual originally from Istanbul, moved permanently to Berlin in 1969. In the preceding decade he had worked as actor and dramaturge on different stages in Istanbul, Frankfurt (Main) and Berlin. In addition, he

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<sup>104</sup> Albert Nekimken, *Brecht in Turkey, 1955-1977: the Impact of Bertolt Brecht on Society and the Development of Revolutionary Theatre in Turkey*, (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1998), 178.

was a member of a Turkish theatre group that was influenced by Brecht's consciousness raising theatre.<sup>105</sup> Together with some of his friends it was his goal to establish theatre for guestworkers in Berlin. Due to financial problems and disagreement among friends and colleagues, the project failed within a few months of existence.<sup>106</sup> In order to make a living, Ören worked in temporary jobs in various factories until his literary breakthrough in 1973. *Was will Niyazi in der Naunynstraße* (1973) constitutes the first part, *Der kurze Traum aus Kağthane* (1974) the second, and *Die Fremde ist auch ein Haus* (1980) the third part of his well-acclaimed "poetic cycle."<sup>107</sup> With the publication of the first part of the Berlin trilogy, Ören became a well-known literary figure in Germany. In all three parts of this trilogy, Ören combines lyrical, dramatic, and epic elements.<sup>108</sup> As with all of his works, the trilogy was written in Turkish and subsequently published in German translation with the left-wing *Rotbuch Verlag*. In 1980, all three parts were published in Turkish, as a trilogy entitled *Berlin Üçlemesi* (Berlin trilogy), indicating that Ören chose to address both a Turkish-speaking as well as German-speaking audience.

The trilogy's first part sold approximately 12,000 copies, which comprised a larger audience than any preceding texts by his Turkish-German colleagues that in contrast were often published in smaller publishing houses with limited circulation.<sup>109</sup> Subsequently reviews and articles on Ören's work started to appear in local and regional German newspapers, broadening the scope of his reading audience further "provok[ing]

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<sup>105</sup> Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany*. 69.

<sup>106</sup> Werner Mathes, "Seemann in der Wasserlache," *TIP* 1977. 23.

<sup>107</sup> In English these titles translate as *What does Niyazi want in Naunynstraße?*, *The short dream from Kağthane*, and *A foreign country is a home too*. In Turkish the titles are: *Niyazi'nin Naunyn Sokağında işi ne?*; *Kağthane rüyası*; and *Gurbet değil artık*.

<sup>108</sup> Heidrun Suhr, "Fremde in Berlin: The Outsiders' View from the Inside," *Berlin: Culture and Metropolis*, eds. Charles Werner Haxthausen and Heidrun Suhr (Minneapolis; Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1990). 228.

<sup>109</sup> Monika Frederking, *Schreiben gegen Vorurteile: Literatur türkischer Migranten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Berlin: Express, 1985). 31–32

a mass-mediated dialogue in the German-language press.”<sup>110</sup> The trilogy received even further media attention when the *SFB* (Radio Free Berlin), a German public radio and television service, hired Ören as editor for a daily radio news and cultural program, which broadcast the first regular Turkish-language programming in Germany.<sup>111</sup> This “position brought Ören’s role as public intellectual full circle” and allowed him, in addition to the attention his publication received, to access a broader public.<sup>112</sup>

With its focus on the workers in Berlin, the trilogy follows a general trend among Turkish-German writers of the 1970s. Ören’s contemporary, Yüksel Pazarkaya, himself a pioneer in Turkish-German literature, published the poetry collection *Koca Sapmalar* (Meanders) in 1968. These poems, which he wrote and published in the magazine of the German union *IG Metall* (Industrial Union of Metalworkers) during the 1960s, are today seen as the first published texts to thematize Turkish migration.<sup>113</sup> The first part of this poetry collection, entitled *Almanya’da bizden çizgiler* (Our Contours in Germany), narrates the first Turkish guestworkers’ arrival to Germany. Carrying names of actual people as titles, such as “Halil Güzel,” “Yusuf Yücel” and “Bozbeyli Murat,” Pazarkaya introduces the labor migrants from Anatolia—tailors, shepherds, and peasants. In the majority of these poems, their place of origin and former occupation is symbolized by motifs such as “wells,” “reapers,” “rake,” “steppe,” and “earth,” which are starkly juxtaposed against the factory work they perform in urban Germany. Rather than focusing on the new experiences gained in Germany, Pazarkaya provides insights into rural Turkey, and describes the immigrants’ places of origin.

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<sup>110</sup> Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany*. 78.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>113</sup> Yüksel Pazarkaya, “Türkiye, Mutterland - Almanya, Bitterland...Das Phänomen der türkischen Migration als Thema der Literatur,” *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 14.56 (1984). 105.

The Turkish-German poet Fethi Savaşçı was recruited as a guestworker by German authorities in 1965. His works concentrate on the experiences of the Turkish guestworkers, and on their lives in Germany. His first poetry collection, *Duvarcı Hasan usta* (Foreman Hasan, the Bricklayer), was published in 1970, followed by a new publication almost every year.<sup>114</sup> His first poetry collection, similar to Pazarkaya's poems, is full of metaphors signifying rural Turkey, its peasantry and low wage manual labor in general. His work followed the literary tradition of "village fiction," which had been prevalent in Turkey since 1950s, with representatives like Yaşar Kemal and Fakir Baykurt, who in turn were influenced by their predecessors Kemal Tahir, Orhan Kemal and Nazım Hikmet.<sup>115</sup> Savaşçı "was a productive working-class poet [...]," who "in his clearly distanced observation projected his own experience" as a factory worker "on his characters, which mainly came from rural areas in Turkey."<sup>116</sup>

Fakir Baykurt, the most popular among the exiled writers, also focuses on the guestworkers' experiences in Germany. He was already a renowned writer in Turkey, and published more than twenty novels and stories before emigrating. In his collection of twenty-two short stories, *Gece Vardiyası* (Night Shift, 1982), Baykurt thematizes several distinct experiences of the Turkish workers in the city of Duisburg, in the Ruhr area of Germany: the stories' focus range from an anecdote about the wife who burns her husband's return ticket to Germany in "Ucak Bileti" (The Plane Ticket) to his description of the daily routine in factories in "Makarna" (Pasta), and the transport of a

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<sup>114</sup> Just to mention a few: *İş dönüşü* (Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları, 1972); *Çöpçü türküsü* (Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayınları, 1975); *Almanlar bizi sevmedi* (Ankara: Kerem Yayınları, 1986).

<sup>115</sup> The village novel as "combin[es] techniques of social realism and lyrical narration." Halman, *Rapture and Revolution*, 132.

<sup>116</sup> "war ein produktiver Arbeiterdichter...in seinen scheinbar distanzierten Beobachtungen projizierte er seine eigene Betroffenheit auf seine Figuren, die hauptsächlich aus den ländlichen Gebieten der Türkei stammende Arbeiter waren." Sargut Sölçün, "Literatur der türkischen Minderheit," *Interkulturelle Literatur in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch*, ed. Carmine Chiellino (Stuttgart; Weimar: Metzler, 2000). 136.

worker's remains in "Mezar" (Grave). Throughout this collection he addresses subjects ranging from family separation, illegal workers, and poor living conditions, to factory work in major factories of Western Germany, like Krupp in Essen, Mannesmann in Düsseldorf, Thyssen in Düsseldorf, and Bayer in Leverkusen.

Particular to Ören's work is an emphasis on solidarity among workers and their interactions with the city of Berlin. I concentrate primarily on the first volume, because it emphasizes the early stages of labor migration.<sup>117</sup> Though I focus mainly on the first part, I also take into consideration the second and third part of the Berlin trilogy, examining how they elaborate on topics taken up in the first part: the interaction of Turkish guestworkers with the city, workers' solidarity, and the Berlin workers' movement in general.<sup>118</sup> Further, I have selected poems from his poetry collections *Deutschland ein türkisches Märchen* (Germany a Turkish Fairy Tale, 1978) and *Mitten in der Odyssee* (In Midst of the Odyssee, 1980), in which Ören further comments on these themes.

Although each part of the Berlin trilogy is formally self-contained, the three sections are interlinked by the reappearance of some characters, identical settings, and formal characteristics. In the first part, *Was will Niyazi in der Naunynstraße*, Ören narrates the lives of the (mainly Turkish) inhabitants of Naunynstraße: Niyazi Gümüşkılıç,<sup>119</sup> Atifet, Sabri San, Halime, Frau Elisabeth Kutzer, Klaus Feck and Nermin among others. Even though the title character of the first part is Niyazi, there is no clear protagonist, but rather a variety of characters with changing focus throughout the

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<sup>117</sup> My analysis will be based on the Turkish original. My primary focus is not on questions of translations, but I will incorporate the German translation whenever it deviates from the Turkish original.

<sup>118</sup> To this day, there is a relative neglect of Ören's Berlin trilogy in critical literature. For an analysis of his other novels, as for example *Bitte nix Polizei: Kriminalerzählung* (1983), *Eine verspätete Abrechnung oder der Aufstieg der Gündoğdus* (1985) and *Berlin Savignyplatz* (1993), see Elizabeth Loentz (2003), Leslie Adelson (2005), and Venkat Mani (2002).

<sup>119</sup> Typographical error in the German translation: Gümüşcilio.

narrative. Each character is introduced by a short paragraph told by a third-person narrator, which is then followed by an introduction in the first person by the characters themselves. The passages narrated in the third person are often brief factual reports on biographical aspects of the character, such as place of origin, marital status, and occupation. These sequences stand in contrast to the passages narrated in the first person, which are a mix of retrospection and introspection, alternating between monologues, dream sequences, memory snippets, and flashbacks. They provide the reader with additional information on the past of the characters involved, including their reasons for immigrating to Berlin but also their consumer power, e.g. their income.<sup>120</sup> Ören, through the character of Niyazi, reveals the aim of the trilogy in the second part: “I tried to draw attention to the importance of rewriting history from a class standpoint. This is a beginning, it has to continue; we will certainly write our own class’ history.”<sup>121</sup> The trilogy thus presents a history of Kreuzberg’s working class beyond racial, ethnic, and gender differences. In the style of Nazım Hikmet’s *Memlektimden İnsan Manzaraları* (Human Landscapes from my Home Country), Ören paints a panorama of Kreuzberg’s inhabitants: specifically its workers, present and past.

Nazım Hikmet’s oeuvre is influential for many writers who immigrated to Germany from Turkey; Aras Ören, Yüksel Pazarkaya, Zafer Şenocak, and Güney Dal number among them. With the publication of his *835 Satır* (835 lines) in 1929, Nazım Hikmet introduced free verse to Turkish poetry. He was the first poet to abstain from uniform metric structures, drawing on the everyday for his topics. For him, the poem became a means of verbalizing and publicizing political and social ideals, and decrying

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<sup>120</sup> Chiellino, *Am Ufer der Fremde: Literatur und Arbeitsemigration, 1870-1991*. 317.

<sup>121</sup> “Tarihin, sınıfsal açıdan yeniden yazılmasının önemine parmak basmaya çalıştım. Bu bir başlangıçtır, sürmesi gereklidir; biz de elbet kendi sınıfımızın tarihini yazacağız” (*BÜ* 167).

injustices. This paved the way for later poets and writers like, for example, Orhan Veli Kanık. Hikmet's oeuvre comprises numerous dramas, novels, and poems. His political commitment to communism led to his imprisonment of fifteen years and expatriation in 1951, as well as a publication ban of his works for over thirty years in Turkey. In his poem, entitled "Autobiography" which Hikmet wrote in 1961 in East Berlin, he puts it as follows, "My writings are published in thirty, forty languages, in my Turkey in my Turkish they are banned [...] even if today in Berlin I'm croaking of grief, I can say that I lived like a human being."<sup>122</sup> His decision to join the communist party resulted from a 1921 encounter with Turkish students, who had been involved in the Spartacus movement in Berlin. In the same year he left for Moscow to attend university, where he took classes on Marxism-Leninism, Russian and French. It was throughout this stay that Hikmet was exposed to Russian Futurism and Symbolism, through the works of Vladimir Mayakovsky and Vsevolod Meyerhold, intellectuals that would remain central to his literary activity. Hikmet, who perceived of himself as socialist poet, decided to return to Turkey in 1924 to "put his newly gained knowledge into practice."<sup>123</sup> His poems published in the journal *Aydınlık* in 1925 marked his first attempts to make Marxist theory accessible to the Turkish readership. Due to growing suppression of oppositional forces, especially on the left, Nazım Hikmet fled Turkey and spent another three years in the former Soviet Union. While there, he was sentenced in absentia to a fifteen-year prison term. Upon reentering Turkey in 1928 without permission, he was arrested. Though acquitted on the 1925 charges, he was sentenced to three months of prison, which

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<sup>122</sup> Nazım Hikmet, "Autobiography," *Things I didn't know I loved*, transl. Randy Blasing and Mutlu Konuk. New York: Persea Books, 1975. 78.

<sup>123</sup> Saime Göksu and Edward Timms, *Romantic Communist: The Life and Work of Nazım Hikmet* (London: Hurst & Co., 1999). 51.



he had already served while awaiting the sentencing. He was imprisoned for the second time in 1932 because of his “seditious texts,” and spent two years in prison. Between 1929 and 1938, he was constantly in and out of prison for “spreading communist propaganda and inciting workers to strike.”<sup>124</sup> His focus on anti-fascism in his poems throughout the 1930s, and his support of the Republicans in Spain through his involvement in the organization of a support committee, provided grounds for his arrest in January 1938.<sup>125</sup> The first conviction amounted to fifteen years, the second conviction in 1939 to twenty years. They were principally based on three charges against him: encouragement of acts of military insubordination; inciting a revolt against army discipline; and causing a mutiny.<sup>126</sup> In the end, his sentence was reduced to twenty-eight years and four months. There was no evidence for the charges, even though these were widely distributed to the Turkish military academy’s corps of cadets.

Hikmet continued writing in prison and with the aid of his friends and colleagues was published in newspapers around the world, especially in France and the US, but also, under a pseudonym, in Turkey. Suffering from sciatica, rheumatism, and liver problems the newspapers also kept reporting on Hikmet’s deteriorating health while in prison. His early release from prison in 1950 was the result of international pressure from Amnesty International as well press campaigns, and petitions sent to the Turkish president by artists, like Bertolt Brecht, Pablo Neruda, Louis Aragon, Pablo Picasso, Paul Robeson, and Jean-Paul Sartre.

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<sup>124</sup> Göksu and Timms, *Romantic Communist: The Life and Work of Nazım Hikmet*. 110.

<sup>125</sup> In 1937 there were several battles fought between the Fascists and Republicans around Madrid. The Republicans succeeded in holding Madrid until the end of the Civil War in 1939. Cf. Helen Graham, *The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005)..

<sup>126</sup> Göksu and Timms, *Romantic Communist: The Life and Work of Nazım Hikmet*. 145.

Hikmet started writing *Memlektimden İnsan Manzaraları* in Bursa Prison in 1941, and continued working on it after his release in 1950 while in exile. However, it was not published until three years after his death, in 1966. In this work, Hikmet narrates a broad variety of Turkish lives—those of workers, peasants, and state officials—in lyrical and epic form through short biographical vignettes. His narrative alternates between monologues, dialogues, and correspondence snippets. Following Hikmet’s willingness to experiment with form, Ören introduces and develops his characters in a montage of reports, anecdotes, and tales. Divided into seven cantos, the first part of the Berlin trilogy traces a genealogy of workers in Kreuzberg. Although the cantos do not follow a chronological order, the characters are interlinked through their location, profession, and Niyazi, coalescing to “landscapes” (manzaralar)<sup>127</sup> of Naunynstraße inhabitants in Berlin.

The first character introduced to the reader is Frau Kutzer—or, to be more precise, the Kutzer family: the sixty-seven year-old Frau Kutzer and the life of her late husband Gustav, who died in 1959. Hailing from East Prussia, Frau Kutzer’s family, then the Brummel family, moved to Berlin when Franz Christian Naunyn (1799-1860) became its mayor in 1848, during a time when “capital was exploiting labor unscrupulously.”<sup>128</sup> Having moved to Naunynstraße in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, which was “just any street back then,”<sup>129</sup> the Brummel family—later Kutzer family—occupies the place of a constant in the history of the street, which survives different regimes with differing ideologies.

In the aftermath of WWI, the Brummels’ income decreases because the father’s locksmith shop goes out of business. In 1924, with the death of her father and the worsening of economic conditions, Elisabeth Brummel marries Gustav Kutzer at age 19.

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<sup>127</sup> See, *BÜ* 214, and Epilogue *BÜ* 241.

<sup>128</sup> “kapitalizminin...sermayenin emeği hiç aldırmadan sömürdüğü” (*BÜ* 23).

<sup>129</sup> “gene bir sokaktı işte” (*BÜ* 24).

Gustav, an assembly worker at *Borsig*, is politically active and a member of the Communist Party (KP). While his wife struggles to accept her status as a member of the working class, for her husband being a proletarian is “nothing to be ashamed of.”<sup>130</sup> For him it is clear that “tomorrow proletarians will take over power.”<sup>131</sup> While his wife longs for material wealth and comfort, daydreaming of things they cannot afford, his political beliefs lend Gustav Kutzer support and a sense of fulfillment. The contrast between capitalistic and Marxist ideologies is manifest in the juxtaposition of husband and wife—Gustav and Elisabeth Kutzer.

Through the Kutzers’ past, Ören alludes to Hitler’s rise to power and the dictatorship of the Third Reich. Unsurprisingly, a key date is 1933, when husband Gustav arrives home in shock, stating, “we are being followed.”<sup>132</sup> Thereafter he burns his communist flyers printed with the KPD campaign slogan for the elections in 1932 and 1933: “suicide is no solution, fight with the KPD.”<sup>133</sup> In fear of persecution by Hitler’s regime, he turns his back on politics, circumstances that Rita Chin compares to a “silence that, . . . amounts to nothing less than psychological suicide.”<sup>134</sup> Gustav’s forced silence is emblematic of the “backlash against growing political power of the working class in Germany” by the Nazi regime.<sup>135</sup> In addition to Gustav’s political and ideological immobilization, his family’s financial situation continues to deteriorate, when they are forced to sell all of their valuable belongings in the aftermath of WWII. Frau Kutzer comprehends neither her husband’s ideology and political beliefs, nor the consequences

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<sup>130</sup> “utanılacak bir şey olmadığım” (ibid., 29).

<sup>131</sup> “yarın bütün proletaryanın iktidara sahip olacağını” (ibid., 29).

<sup>132</sup> “Takip ediliyoruz” (ibid., 29).

<sup>133</sup> “Selbstmord ist kein Ausweg Kämpf mit der KPD.” Ören provides this information in the appendix of the Turkish publication, *BÜ* 245.

<sup>134</sup> Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany*. 67.

<sup>135</sup> Andrei S. Markovits and Philip S. Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). 3.

of losing them, until long after his death—when, alone and impoverished, she reveals: “now I understand him, left like a hollow tree needing something to lean on—in order not to fall over.”<sup>136</sup>

Apart from the historical contextualization for the Kutzers, allusions to the Holocaust appear early in the story, during Frau Kutzer’s interior monologue about death. Her own fear of dying keeps her from sleeping at night, as she lies contemplating about death. According to her “the most common death was the one induced by humans...to sink down in barbed wire camps like melting candles, when out of hunger, only skin is sticking to the bones, these bodies then thrown into the flames, by various dirty hands...”<sup>137</sup> This passage is clearly referring to cremation in concentration camps during the Third Reich. Having survived both World Wars, Frau Kutzer’s story is marked by confrontations with death, the victims of war and the deaths of her loved ones: her father, her son, and her husband. In 1924, she loses her father; in 1946, she loses her 12-year old son Fridolin to scarlet fever; and in 1959, her husband dies of a heart attack. The year 1959 is crucial, and not randomly chosen by Ören; it symbolizes the end of workers’ representation by a political party in the Federal Republic of Germany. After the Federal Constitutional Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*) sanctioned the dissolution of the Communist Party (KPD) in 1956, in 1959 the Social Democratic Party (SPD) ratified the Bad Godesberg program, “in which the SPD shed its traditional status of a class or workers’ party for that of a mass or people’s party.”<sup>138</sup> Through the biography of

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<sup>136</sup> “Şimdi anlıyorum onu; içi boşalmış bir ağaç gövdesi gibi kalınca ve devrilmemek için dayanacak bir yer ararken” (BÜ 21-22).

<sup>137</sup> “En kanıksanmış fakat kişiden kişiye gelen ölümdüki...erimek mumlar gibi telörgülü kamplarda ve açlıktan deriler kemiklere yapışınca birtakim murdar ellerin sonra o vücutları atmaları ateşe ...” (BÜ 17).

<sup>138</sup> Markovits and Gorski, *The German Left: Red, Green and Beyond*. 34. Furthermore, 1959 marks a milestone in the Berlin Crisis, the Cold War and the construction of the Wall in 1961 respectively; it is the year of the Geneva Conference. The Geneva Conference refers to meetings of the Foreign Ministers of the

character Gustav Kutzer, Ören subtly weaves in historic events which remind the reader of major setbacks experienced by the working class in Germany: Hitler's rise to power and persecution by the Nazi regime, the dissolution of the Communist Party after WWII, and the reform of the Socialist Party in 1959.

Further analogies to the Nazis appear in relation to the rise of racism and xenophobia during the early stages of labor migration, which is addressed in connection to Ali, Nermin's husband. Ali, now a refrigerator repair technician, left their village Acıbayram two years before, in 1970. Once he moves from the workers' dormitory to his own apartment in Naunynstraße, his wife Nermin follows him to Berlin. Ali experiences discrimination twice. He is insulted first by his co-workers while leaving work, and then by the factory worker Klaus Feck later that same day on his way home. They call him "pis yabancı" (dirty foreigner), and blame him (for them, Ali epitomizes all guestworkers) for low wages, the increase of work hours, and their general dissatisfaction.<sup>139</sup> In both situations, the following sentences appear in the narrative: "In their hands no machine guns, no automatics. On their heads no steel helmets, on their feet no boots, they did not wear brown uniforms and swastikas."<sup>140</sup> Both the analogy drawn between the verbal attackers and the Nazis and the repetition of these sentences in unaltered form emphasizes the persistence of racist ideology beyond the Third Reich.

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occupying forces, France, the US, USSR and Great Britain, from May 13 through August 5 in 1959 to continue the discussion on the question of German reunification as well as the future of Berlin. The Western allies, in agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany, presented their "Peace Plan" that stipulated the reunification of Germany and a gradual reduction of armed forces. The Soviet Union rejected this proposal insisting on the division of the two German states. Reaching no agreement in the German question, the ministers' attention turned to the subject of Berlin. The negotiations failed due to disagreement on the status of Berlin: the assurance of free access, limitation of armed forces and of the time period granted to allies for regulation of stipulations. Cf. Wilhelm Georg Grewe, *Germany and Berlin; an Analysis of the 1959 Geneva Conference with Documents* (Washington: Press and Information Office, German Embassy, 1960).

<sup>139</sup> BÜ 51.

<sup>140</sup> "Ne ellerinde mitralyözler, otomatik tabancalar; ne başlarında çelik miğfer, ayaklarında çizmeler; ne kahverengi uniformaları,; ne de gamalı haçları" (BÜ 67).

Ören takes “conventional German New Left linkage between capitalism and fascism in new directions” showing that “in spite of similar work experiences, mutual economic complaints” workers are “unable to recognize their common plight.”<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, this passage serves as a reminder of the principal impediment to the workers’ movement: racism and fascism. Throughout Europe, workers’ movements and their parties have been shattered by fascist regimes, therefore, the fight of the workers is presented as aiming against both material exploitation as well ideological oppression.

All references to the Holocaust and the Third Reich take the form of brief and neutral statements, like the passages narrated in the third person, which introduce the political contexts the characters inhabit: the Nazi regime for the Kutzers, and the student revolts in Turkey for Atifet. Ören does not assign them any specific significance, nor does he emphasize one over the other. Historical and political events appear in factual enumerations that read like reports. We see this in the metafictional comments provided by the third-person narrator, who while summarizing Frau Kutzer’s family history remarks “nothing else worthy to report.”<sup>142</sup> The sobriety of the portrayal of events and characters creates a distance between text and reader. In a Brechtian move, empathy on the part of the reader is prevented and distance is reinforced to elicit a critical attitude.<sup>143</sup> In addition to his use of montage and non-chronological structuring, Ören inserts bracketed sentences. He thereby provides additional information on Niyazi’s apartment, on Halime’s earnings and expenses, on Ali’s whereabouts, which slow down the narrative

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<sup>141</sup> Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Postwar Germany*. 76–77.

<sup>142</sup> In the Turkish original the writer uses the verb “kayıt etmek” (*BÜ* 25) which translates into “to record,” extenuated in the German translation as “erwähnen” (to mention) (Aras Ören, *Was will Niyazi in der Naunynstraße*, trans. H. Achmed Schmiede and Johannes Schenk. Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, 1973.14).

<sup>143</sup> Cf. Douglas Kellner, “Brecht’s Marxist Aesthetic: The Korsch Connection,” *Bertolt Brecht: Political Theory and Literary Practice*, eds. Betty Nancy Weber and Hubert Heinen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980).

flow and create a sense of extemporaneity, reinforcing the distance between reader and text.<sup>144</sup>

### **Naunynstraße – Kreuzberg: Home of the Workers**

As the title already indicates, Naunynstraße is central to the Berlin trilogy and links the protagonists through their experiences as members of the working class without ethnic or national differentiation. Naunynstraße is a street located in the center of the district of Kreuzberg—a district that, at the time Ören was writing, was located in West Berlin bordering the East. After World War Two, Kreuzberg was in ruins with half of its living space and two thirds of its businesses destroyed.<sup>145</sup> During the early stages of labor migration, one of the few alternatives to living in austere barracks was to inhabit condemned tenements which needed to be torn down or renovated in traditionally working-class districts such as Kreuzberg, Schöneberg, and Wedding. These apartments were temporarily rented to migrant laborers, who could not afford to live in the prosperous neighborhoods like Zehlendorf, Wilmersdorf, Steglitz, and Charlottenburg.<sup>146</sup> With the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, Kreuzberg was transformed from a central Berlin district to an isolated area at the margins of West Berlin, bordered by the GDR on three sides. Because of standing plans to refurbish vast areas of Kreuzberg in the future, many houses and buildings were neither renovated nor adequately maintained.<sup>147</sup> Kreuzberg's condition, specifically its run-down houses, is illustrated by Ören in the first

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<sup>144</sup> BÜ 34; 44; 69.

<sup>145</sup> Cf. Heinrich Kaak, *Kreuzberg* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1988).

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Hartmut Häussermann and Andreas Kapphan, *Berlin: von der geteilten zur gespaltenen Stadt?: sozialräumlicher Wandel seit 1990* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2000).

<sup>147</sup> Barbara Lang, *Mythos Kreuzberg: Ethnographie eines Stadtteils (1961 - 1995)* (Frankfurt Main Campus-Verlag, 1998). 230.

part of the trilogy when comparing Naunynstraße to a “forgotten dowry chest of a young girl who died without becoming a bride.”<sup>148</sup> The dowry chest—its hidden treasures—symbolizes the potential of the street and the district that have been left untouched and forgotten.

Kreuzberg’s architecture, its backyards framed by the *Hinterhäuser* (rear buildings), constitutes a building design that goes back to turn of the century when Kreuzberg was the prime location for small industrial shops and factories. This is a prominent building style for workers’ districts, like Tiergarten, Wedding, and Schöneberg in particular. While these buildings housed small businesses in the front parts, they at the same time accommodated their workers in the rear, the *Hinterhäuser*. Buildings were structured in this way in order to meet working as well as living needs. In contrast to the front buildings, the rear buildings were made of plain materials without stucco or any other decorative elements. Furthermore, they did not have direct access to the street, they lacked direct sunlight, and they provided less comfort, as they were equipped only with shared bathrooms.<sup>149</sup>

Kreuzberg’s backyards recur in Ören’s works, as both a motif and a setting. He dedicated an entire short story, entitled “Arka Avlu” (backyard), to these Kreuzberg spaces in his collection *Anlatular 1970–1982* (Stories), which was published in 1991. Here, the narrator describes Kreuzberg from the bird’s eye view: its countless roofs and chimneys, which appear stacked upon one another; its gray-black coloring; its

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<sup>148</sup> “gelin olmadan ölen bir genç kızın tavanarasında unutulmuş ceyiz sandığına benziyordu” (*BÜ* 20). In the German translation the metaphor of the forgotten dowry chest has been omitted and replaced by the adjective “verstaubt” (dusty). While the simile of a forgotten dowry chest symbolizing neglected potential is apprehensible, the reference to a young female dead virgin remains problematic, implying that fulfillment for women can only be achieved through the consummation of marriage.

<sup>149</sup> Ruth Mandel, “A Place of Their Own: Contesting Spaces and Defining Places in Berlin’s Migrant Community,” *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe*, ed. Barbara Metcalf (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). 149.



accumulation of TV satellite antennas—all features which distinguish Kreuzberg from all other parts of the city.<sup>150</sup> By emphasizing the visual features, Ören thereby evokes overcrowdedness, poverty, and industry. But in the first part of the trilogy he offers a closer look at its inhabitants: “Only if you step into the backyards, you will feel, taste, and smell what is in the air. Then you will notice...that here the class lives, that will breach and change societal norms and reconstitute them.”<sup>151</sup> Thus Ören locates the potential for change and its agents in the *Hinterhäuser* of Kreuzberg, the home of the workers.<sup>152</sup>

Kreuzberg has been defined as a working-class district since the mid 17th century and in 1875 Kreuzberg was the meeting point for labor movement in Berlin.<sup>153</sup> From 1921 until 1933 Berlin was also the center of the solidarity movement.<sup>154</sup> Furthermore, Kreuzberg was also a point of origin for leading corporations: Werner Siemens founded *Siemens & Halske* there in 1847, and, together with *AEG*, they established *Telefunken* in 1903.<sup>155</sup> At the same time it has been the destination for immigrants going back to the Huguenot refugees in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and for immigrants from Silesia, Pomerania, and Eastern Prussia after the foundation of the German Reich. In “Şehir Turu” (city tour) a

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<sup>150</sup> Aras Ören, “Arka Avlu,” *Anlatılar 1970-1982* (Berlin: Babel Verlag, 1991), 14.

<sup>151</sup> “Arka avluya çıkınca ilk duyarsın, tadarsın, koklarsın işte havada yatan şeyi. Burada...daha çabuk anlarsın bir sınıfın yaşadığını ki toplumsal kuralları kırıp bozup, ki yeniden kuracak olan” (83).

<sup>152</sup> Walter Benjamin’s *Berliner Kindheit* begins with the vignette entitled “Loggia.” Located at the rear of the house, loggias overlooked the backyards, the living quarters of the poor and service staff.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Karl-Heinz Fiebig, Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm, Eberhard Knödler-Bunte, Bewag-Halle (Berlin Germany) and Bauausstellung Berlin GmbH., eds., *Kreuzberger Mischung: Die innerstädtische Verflechtung von Architektur, Kultur und Gewerbe* (Berlin: Verlag Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 1984). 207.

<sup>154</sup> Heinz Sommer, “Internationale Arbeiterhilfe und ausländische Kulturschaffende in Berlin,” *Berliner Begegnungen: Ausländische Künstler in Berlin 1918 bis 1933. Aufsätze, Bilder, Dokumente*, eds. Klaus Kändler, Helga Karolewski and Ilse Siebert (Berlin: Dietz, 1987).

<sup>155</sup> Walther Georg Oschilewski, *Kreuzberg. Ein Berliner Bezirk gestern und heute* (Berlin: Arani-Verlag, 1965). 47.

poem in the third part of the trilogy, Ören invokes Kreuzberg's long-standing tradition as a home of workers and shelter for immigrants:

You are seeing the workers quarters of the turn of the century when Silesians and east Prussians left their native soil to settle down in the industrial metropolis. Back then the smell of cabbage supposedly filled the streets, now it is a smell of mutton and thyme and garlic.<sup>156</sup>

Kreuzberg's transformation occurs on all levels, even its scent, which in the past was dominated by a sour cabbage smell, now being replaced by the scent of fresh thyme, garlic, and of the steppe.<sup>157</sup> Cabbage does not only symbolize a typical German food, but also poor people's food, which is contrasted with the enumeration of thyme, garlic, and the steppe, allegorically standing in for Turkishness. Repetition is a recurring literary device in the trilogy, and is employed for emphasis as well to connect narrative instances, which are formally and temporally disconnected. For example, the smell of cabbage is mentioned in narrations of Naunynstraße's past, and repeated in the context of Turkish migration in the present.

Whereas this passage refers to Kreuzberg in general, the first part of the trilogy documents the transformation through Turkish migration of Naunynstraße in particular. It is a positive transformation, such that "without Turks, Naunynstraße today would in its old days, not lose anything of its characteristics as street, but would be in its nascent beginnings."<sup>158</sup> The interaction of Turkish labor migrants with Naunynstraße remains central throughout trilogy. The physiognomy of Naunynstraße and its buildings is likened to that of the exploited workers: "The houses which look at you in Naunynstraße, turn

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<sup>156</sup> "Yüzyıl başının işçi evleri bunlar, Silezya'dan, Doğu Prusya'dan, topraktan kopup bu endüstri metropolünde kök salanların konutları. O zamanlar ekşi lahana kokuları sarmışmış bu sokakları; şimdi koyun eti, biraz kekik, biraz sarımsak kokusu" (BÜ 221).

<sup>157</sup> BÜ 24; 34.

<sup>158</sup> "Öyle ki bugün Türklerin olmadığı bir Naunyn Sokağı belki sokaklığından kaybetmez ama şu yaşlı günlerinin sonunda çocuksu bir başlangıçtan olurdu" (BÜ 34).

their facade away and their backside to you, like dull transport workers who do not pay attention to the weight they carry.”<sup>159</sup> The fatigue and exhaustion of its working-class inhabitants is transferred to the street, which is “uykulu, uyuşuk” (dozy, sluggish) having “uykulu pencereleri yol kenarındaki su tulumbalarına bakan” (sleepy windows which stare at the water pumps on the curbside).<sup>160</sup> This anthropomorphization of Naunynstraße strengthens the linkage between the street and its inhabitants, lending body imagery to a longstanding class association.<sup>161</sup> The connection between street and inhabitants is further extended when the narrator personifies Naunynstraße as mother, who “put the lost people from the foreign countries to sleep at its damp bosom.”<sup>162</sup> Not only is Naunynstraße a welcoming place for its new inhabitants, it also comforts them. In the German translation, “Und die Naunynstraße dämmrigfeucht nahm sie auf aus den Orten der Wildnis,”<sup>163</sup> Naunynstraße only accommodates its new inhabitants. There is a fundamental difference between allegorizing a street as mother on the one hand, and as host on the other. By conceiving of the street as mother, Ören establishes a familial relationship between the street and its inhabitants, rather than permitting the more distant host/guest relation maintained by the German translation.

Kreuzberg, and especially Naunynstraße, remain significant throughout Ören’s oeuvre in general; they reappear in other poems and novels. In his poetry collection *Mitten in der Odyssee* (1980), the poem “Die Strassen von Berlin” (The Streets of Berlin)

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<sup>159</sup> “Naunyn Sokağı’na bakan evlerin öncepheleri, kıcını sana çevirmiş, sağır transport işçileri gibidir ki; taşıdıkları yükün pek ağırlığına aldırmayan” (BÜ 82-83).

<sup>160</sup> BÜ 20; 82.

<sup>161</sup> Frederking, *Schreiben gegen Vorurteile: Literatur türkischer Migranten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. 66.

<sup>162</sup> “ve Naunyn Sokağı yaban illerinin o yitik insanın loş, rutubetli göğüsünde uyuttu” (BÜ 34).

<sup>163</sup> (And Naunynstraße, dim and damp, took them in from the wilderness.) Aras Ören, *Was will Niyazi in der Naunynstraße*, 21.

acknowledges, “the people living in these streets are those with zero capital.”<sup>164</sup> In *Deutschland ein türkisches Märchen* (1978) he included a poem entitled “Was ist los in der Naunynstraße” (What’s going on in Naunynstraße?). In this fragment, as the poet himself labels it, the plural lyrical subject—the workers—proclaim “This street is our street, even if there are no poplars growing in a row here. These apartments are our apartments, we are the architects, we are the construction workers, we are the owners, we are the tenants.”<sup>165</sup> Here, Ören represents the workers as a united collective, emphasized through the use of “we,” which claims Naunynstraße as its own. Ören represents the workers as inextricably linked to this street through their relationship with it on various levels.

While Ören pays great attention to the transformation of Naunynstraße by Turkish labor migration and immigration, only one passage addresses the arrival of the first Turkish guestworker in Naunynstraße: “One day a crazy wind swirled the mustache of a Turk, and the Turk who ran after his mustache found himself in Naunynstraße...then, one day, as quietly he had come, he left again.”<sup>166</sup> It is represented as random, quiet and quick, and mentioned in passing—as is the case with all other historical facts and events. Except for his origin as Turkish, this person remains an anonymous and silent stranger. This passage emphasizes, as Monika Frederking has pointed out, the arbitrariness and

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<sup>164</sup> “[i]n diesen Strassen, leben die Leute mit einem Kapital gleich null.” Aras Ören, “Die Straßen von Berlin,” *Mitten in der Odysse* (Frankfurt Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980). 15.

<sup>165</sup> “Diese Strasse ist unsere Strasse, wenn auch keine Pappeln hier wachsen in langer Reihe. Diese Wohnungen sind unsere Wohnungen, wir sind die Architekten, wir sind die Bauleute, wir sind die Besitzer, wir sind die Mieter.” Aras Ören, *Deutschland, ein türkisches Märchen: Gedichte* (Frankfurt Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1982). 97.

<sup>166</sup> “Deli rüzgâr bir gün bir Türk’ün bıyığını savurdu ve bıyığının peşinden koşan Türk kendini Naunyn Sokağı’nda buldu...Sonra günün birinde, geldiği gibi, sessizce çekip gitti” (*BÜ* 33).

temporariness of the immigration process in its initial stages.<sup>167</sup> Similarly in the beginning of the second part, which mainly focuses on the conditions in Turkey and the reasons for emigration, the process of labor recruitment is described in terms of uncertainty and nescience. Ören employs the metaphor of sick fish swimming in muddy aquariums without sunlight in order to describe the situation of the waiting applicant, waiting for decisions to be made for him.<sup>168</sup>

Although the arrival of the first Turkish guestworkers passes without the provision of further detail or commentary, specific information follows on the Turkish labor migrants who came subsequently, like Niyazi, Atifet, Halime, Kazım, and Sabri. All of these characters come to emblemize different forms of immigration, which cover a wide variety of economic motivations.<sup>169</sup> Atifet, Niyazi's close friend, came to Berlin in 1967 to work at *Siemens*; she is politically active and participates in demonstrations organized by the workers' union. Halime also came to Germany for work and, because her husband is in prison in Turkey, she has to support her two children herself by completing piecework at *Telefunken* and by working as a prostitute. Kazım lost his transportation business in Turkey, and came in 1971 to Berlin, where he works as a carpenter. Sabri, an unskilled laborer employed as a transport worker, came to Germany after an earthquake hit his home village. Throughout the first part Aras Ören adds the experiences of Turkish guestworkers to the proletarian history of this street. By contrast with the tropes used in *Der Spiegel*, Ören emphasizes the interaction of Turkish workers with fellow workers. He also narrates their participation in (and continuation of)

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<sup>167</sup> Frederking, *Schreiben gegen Vorurteile: Literatur türkischer Migranten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. 61.

<sup>168</sup> *BÜ* 93.

<sup>169</sup> Frederking, *Schreiben gegen Vorurteile: Literatur türkischer Migranten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. 76.

traditions in the places they immigrated to. This interaction between workers and their new environment is central for Ören's writing, because

people coming from Turkey, no matter where they came from and which class they belonged to, they now were part of a historical process, they were new members of the working class in Germany...[he] had the expectation, that they would take on the legacy of the German labor movement. That they would appropriate this legacy and carry it into the future.<sup>170</sup>

In Ören's view, Turkish guestworkers immigrated and—despite their differing backgrounds—integrated into Germany's labor movement by adapting to its existing legacies as participants, not outsiders, in the shaping of German history.

In addition to Naunynstraße, the character of Niyazi is pivotal to the narrative, connecting characters through his various relationships to them as friend, neighbor, and colleague.<sup>171</sup> Originally from Bebek, a prosperous district in Istanbul, Niyazi lives above Frau Kutzer and works as pressman at *Preussag*. Living in poor conditions in Bebek, he comes to Berlin for better prospects: “When this thing with Germany came up, I told myself, like anyone else, me too: Germany is a little America. Go there, Niyazi, and live like the rich in Bebek.”<sup>172</sup> Just as Frau Kutzer dreams to be the rich woman in the Neukölln villa she cleans, Niyazi wishes for better prospects in Germany. The connection between these two characters is made early in the story, when both of them are briefly mentioned in juxtaposition, Niyazi going to his night shift, while Frau Kutzer is unable to fall asleep. Not only are they located next to each other in narrative sequence, they live

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<sup>170</sup> “Die Menschen die aus der Türkei, egal woher und aus welcher Schicht sie kamen, waren hier Teil eines historischen Prozesses, sie waren jetzt neue Mitglieder der Arbeiterklasse in Deutschland...Ich hatte die Erwartung, dass sie das Erbe der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung antraten. Dass sie sich diese Erbe aneigneten und es in die Zukunft trugen.” Aras Ören, “Die Metropole ist kein Völkerkundemuseum,” *Literatur und Identität. Deutsch-deutsche Befindlichkeiten und die multikulturelle Gesellschaft*, ed. Ursula E. Beitter (New York: Peter Lang, 2000). 182.

<sup>171</sup> Cf. Frederking, *Schreiben gegen Vorurteile: Literatur türkischer Migranten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. 62.

<sup>172</sup> “Bu Almanya işi çıkınca, herkes gibi ben de dedim kendikendime: Almanya bir küçük Amerika. Gidersin oraya Niyazi ve yaşarsın orada Bebek'in zenginleri gibi” (*BÜ* 37–38).

above/below each other, in a spatial relation which is also mirrored by their appearances in textual sequence. Another parallel between the Kutzers and Niyazi is their immigrant status. While the Brummel family, later the Kutzers, moved to Berlin in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Turkish guestworkers (Niyazi, Sabri, and Halime) arrive a century later, continuing the line of labor migration. Ören thus creates “a poetic ancestral portrait gallery, to which, without breaks, a generation of Turkish proletarians attaches itself.”<sup>173</sup>

After his move, Niyazi’s perception of Germany as the land of better opportunities becomes clouded; he admits to having realized where his place is in society.<sup>174</sup> Seven years in Berlin have changed Niyazi and make him aware of the necessity to fight for his rights instead of quietly accepting his fate, because all “those giving their labor have the same share in the world.”<sup>175</sup> He further notes, “I have learned that my right is a right too. Never again will I abdicate my right, even if it costs my life.”<sup>176</sup> He is ambitious in enlightening other workers regarding their rights, and works with his comrade Horst Schmidt, a chimney repairman,<sup>177</sup> and regular at Marxist night school, to recruit neighbors and friends to show solidarity in their fight against exploitation and capital. Towards the end of the trilogy, Naunynstraße becomes a symbol for political change, as its inhabitants realize that they should cooperate and help each

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<sup>173</sup> “[...] eine poetische Ahnengalerie. Der sich nun ohne Bruch eine türkische Proletariergeneration anschließt” Harald Weinrich, “Deutschland - ein türkisches Märchen. Zu Hause in der Fremde Gastarbeiterliteratur,” *Deutsche Literatur 1983. Ein Jahresüberblick*, eds. Volker Hage and Adolf Fink (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1984). 233.

<sup>174</sup> “toplumda, toplumsal durumumu kavradım” (*BÜ* 39).

<sup>175</sup> “Emek veren herkesin yeryüzünden payı eşittir” (*BÜ* 40).

<sup>176</sup> “Benim hakkımın da bir hak olduğunu öğrendim, bundan böyle vazgeçmem ben hakkımdan, canım pahasına da olsa...” (*BÜ* 40).

<sup>177</sup> In the German version “baca tamircisi” (*BÜ* 83) (chimney repairman) is mistakenly translated as “Töpfer” (potter) (*Was will Niyazi* 64).

other to improve labor conditions.<sup>178</sup> In a conversation with Horst Schmidt, Niyazi requests an international solidarity among workers: “We live here, and here, in this street, in this neighborhood we are many, many, who every day are being pushed against the wall anew. We have to join forces.”<sup>179</sup> The “system,” which denies workers the products of their work, deserves the blame for their situation. Those who benefit from Niyazi’s efforts as he melts scrap metal in the oven, are those living in villas in South-West Berlin; those who receive the cream, are not those milking the cow.<sup>180</sup> Ören’s writing bears strong resemblance to Brecht’s conception of “realistische Schreibweise” (realist writing), which for Brecht is “writing from the standpoint of the class, which provides the broadest solutions for the most pressing difficulties human society faces.”<sup>181</sup> Here Brecht refers to the working class, the “working masses” (die arbeitenden Massen),<sup>182</sup> who hold the solution and potential for change to counter the imbalance between labor and capital, laborers and rulers, between those milking the cow and those receiving the cream (to recall Ören’s formulation). Throughout the trilogy, Ören follows Brecht’s conception of realist representation, and focuses on the perspective of Kreuzberg’s workers as well as their ability to improve upon and overcome inequalities. The only way to overcome, as suggested by Horst in the first part, is to join forces, “yes, only when people show solidarity they can make themselves aware of the fact that they can be together in an

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<sup>178</sup> Frederking, *Schreiben gegen Vorurteile: Literatur türkischer Migranten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. 65.

<sup>179</sup> “İşte, bu sokaktan başlamalı işe...Burada oturuyoruz, burada, bu sokakta, bu çevrede bak biz ne çoğuz: onun gibi, senin gibi, benim gibiler, her gün yeniden bir köşeye kısıtılan...El ele verip herkese göstermeliyiz bugünün nasıl olduğunu, yarın nasıl kurtulacağımızı...biz kendikendimiz kendi sorunlarımıza el atmayınca” (BÜ 85–86).

<sup>180</sup> BÜ 15; 56.

<sup>181</sup> “[...] vom Standpunkt der Klasse aus schreibend, welche für die dringendsten Schwierigkeiten, in denen die menschliche Gesellschaft steckt, die breitesten Lösungen bereit hält [...]” Bertolt Brecht, “Volkstümlichkeit und Realismus,” *Bertolt Brecht: Ausgewählte Werke in sechs Bänden*, vol. 6 (Frankfurt Main: Suhrkamp, 2005). 325.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 323.



organization and change something.”<sup>183</sup> In the end, Naunynstraße becomes a street again, “in which something is stirring...workers, Naunynstraße inhabitants, together drinking beer, having political disputes, under the same flag head-to-head.”<sup>184</sup>

### **Berlin: Setting and Addressee**

For Ören, Berlin is more than just a setting. The city becomes an addressee, to which he, the poet, directs his words. In the trilogy’s epilogue, entitled “Bir Sokak Bir Şehir Bir Şahir” (A Street a City a Poet), he writes: “We set out from Naunynstraße, our word was to Berlin. We set out from a little word; our Turkish word was to Berlin. This is how Aras saw his days, this is how he arranged his words in his poetry, his arranged words were to Berlin.”<sup>185</sup> Through the use of the collective personal and possessive pronouns “we” and “our,” Aras Ören closes ranks with the Turkish guestworkers he represents in the trilogy. Furthermore, he expands the genealogy of workers in Berlin to include himself, by naming his first name at the end of the trilogy. In disclosing Berlin as addressee, Ören dedicates the trilogy to the city.

In addition to being setting and addressee, Berlin is also established as the subject of narration. His representation of Berlin is based on an interaction of both his Turkish past and his Berlin-based present. Of the trilogy, Ören reveals, “I have narrated Berlin in Turkish...my Turkish is a Berlin-based Turkish, not the language of Turkey. Everything I ever wrote, is a testimony of times, times which I shaped and temporalities whose witness

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<sup>183</sup> “Evet kişiler birbirine dayanarak ancak bilincine varırlar kendilerinin olan bir örgütte birlikte olmanın ve değiştirmenin” (BÜ 87).

<sup>184</sup> “Ve Naunyn Sokağı içinde birşeylerin kımıldadığı bir sokaktı işte...Biraz başka türlü 50 ya da 60 yıl öncesinden; evet gene eskisi gibi hantal ama, hiç beklenmedik birşeyle bu sokakta karşılaşır bazan: Naunyn Sokağı sakinleri, işçiler, siyasi tartışmalarda, ya da bira içerken, yan yanadırlar bakarsın, aynı bayrak altında” (BÜ 87).

<sup>185</sup> “Naunyn Sokağından çıktık yola sözümüz Berlin’eydi. Bir sözcükten çıktık yola Türkçe sözümüz Berlin’eydi. Böyle gördü gününü Aras böyle dizdi sözü şiirinde dizdiği söz Berlin’eydi” (BÜ 241).

I am.”<sup>186</sup> In a special issue of the *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* on Turkish literature edited by Yüksel Pazarkaya, Ören elaborates further on his relationship with Berlin:

Berlin: a city whose past is lived in the present, while its future is marked by question marks. A crossing between two borders. A waiting area. The arrival of the Turks. A migration, which will have unforgettable implications for Europe’s history. My participation in this migration and at the same time my appearance as witness.<sup>187</sup>

For Ören, the recording of events is central to the process of writing, as it documents the process of migration and the Turkish immigrants’ participation in Berlin’s past, present, and future. As Ören understands it, the relationship between the poet and the surroundings he presents is dynamic. Ören’s literary precursor Nazım Hikmet emphasized that the relation between poet and his surroundings is never passive. Hikmet foregrounded the effect of the poet’s oeuvre on his environment; he perceived it as a factor for change.<sup>188</sup> Similarly, Ören underlines the interaction of himself, the poet, with his city, as participant in and archivist of Berlin’s history.

### **The Soundtrack of Solidarity: Tahsin Incirci and the Türkische Arbeiterchor**

While Aras Ören is dedicated to narrating Berlin, Incirci and his choir provide a kind of soundtrack for the labor movement. Workers’ solidarity is a key theme in the works of the composer, musician, and choir director Tahsin Incirci. He came to Berlin in 1963 in order to study at the UdK (Berlin University of the Arts), formerly HdK. After

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<sup>186</sup> “Ich habe Berlin auf türkisch erzählt...mein türkisch ist ein berlinerisches, es ist nicht die Sprache der Türkei. Alles was ich je geschrieben habe, ist ein Zeugnis der Zeiten, die ich mitgestaltete und der Zeitlichkeiten, deren Zeuge ich war.” Ören, “Die Metropole ist kein Völkerkundemuseum.” 186.

<sup>187</sup> “Berlin: eine Stadt deren Vergangenheit in der Gegenwart gelebt wird, während ihre Zukunft mit einem Fragezeichen behaftet ist. Ein Übergang zwischen zwei Grenzen. Eine Wartestelle. Die Ankunft der Türken. Eine Völkerwanderung, die in Europas Geschichte unvergessliche Folgen haben wird; meine Teilnahme an dieser Wanderung und zugleich mein Auftreten als ihr Zeuge.” Aras Ören, “Meine Bindung an Berlin,” *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch* 1 (1985). 81.

<sup>188</sup> Nazım Hikmet, *Sanat ve edebiyat üstüne* (Istanbul: Bilim ve sanat, 1987). 36.

graduating he had to return to Turkey to complete his military service, but decided to come back to Berlin in the aftermath of the military coup in 1971. Back in Berlin, he founded the Türkischer Arbeiterchor Westberlin (Turkish Workers' Choir Westberlin) in 1973, the first Turkish workers' choir to have been formed anywhere in the world. Some 90% of the choir members were guestworkers. The repertoire of the choir included Turkish folk songs, as well as political and protest songs.<sup>189</sup> The choir was closely connected with union activities, especially the ATTF (Avrupa Türkiyeli Toplumcular Federasyonu). The ATTF is the organization of Turkish socialist workers abroad, and was formed by various socialist organizations throughout Western Europe (mainly the FRG) in 1968, with its headquarters in Cologne. It was dedicated to the problems of the workers and stipulated the solidarization of workers in Europe as its primary aim. Its organizational magazine entitled "Kurtuluş" (liberation)<sup>190</sup> was well received by a broad readership in Germany as well as Turkey.<sup>191</sup>

Music has always been a significant part of the organization of the working class. Workers' songs, *Arbeitergesang*, especially in the form of the choir, have a longstanding tradition in Germany, which extends back into the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>192</sup> During the Weimar Republic the *Deutscher Arbeitersängerbund* (Federation of German workers' singers)

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<sup>189</sup> Edda Brandes, Dieter Hauer and Marcella Hoffmann, "Der türkische Arbeiterchor in West-Berlin," *Musik der Türken in Deutschland*, ed. Max Peter Baumann (Kassel: Verlag Yvonne Landeck, 1985). 172.

<sup>190</sup> A magazine of the same name and intent had existed decades before. In 1919, Turkish workers were sent to Berlin for professional training. They established a party, the *Türkiye İşci ve Çiftçi Fırkası* [Turkish workers' and peasants' party] and its accompanying journal entitled *Kurtuluş*. The first issue was entitled "To the Proletariat of all Countries" (May 1919). When they returned to Turkey the same year, they continued the journal until allied occupation in 1920 brought an end to their activities. George S. Harris, *The Origins of Communism in Turkey* (Stanford: Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace, 1967). 40–49.

<sup>191</sup> Ertekin Özcan, *Türkische Immigrantorganisationen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: die Entwicklung politischer Organisationen und politischer Orientierung unter türkischen Arbeitsimmigranten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Berlin West* (Berlin (West): Hitit, 1989). 223–254; ATTF, "Avrupa Türkiyeli Toplumcular Federasyonu," (Munich: Stein, 1975).

<sup>192</sup> Inge Lammel, *Arbeiterlied, Arbeitergesang. Hundert Jahre Arbeitermusikultur in Deutschland. Aufsätze und Vorträge aus 40 Jahren, 1959-1998* (Teetz: Hentrich & Hentrich, 2002). 72.

belonged to one of the largest socialist organizations in Germany.<sup>193</sup> Incirci's choir continues the tradition of "Arbeitergesang," while at the same time supplying a new perspective: that of the Turkish workers in Germany. Incirci emphasizes the building of bridges between the Turkish and German workers' movements, while at the same time having international solidarity as his ultimate goal.

The Türkischer Arbeiterchor Westberlin was innovative, as they transformed traditionally solo and male-dominated repertoires into choral repertoires for performance throughout Germany and the rest of Europe.<sup>194</sup> They performed at events organized by German leftist parties and newspapers throughout Western Germany, the *Festival des politischen Liedes* (Festival of the Political Song, 1981) in East Berlin, but also across Europe: in France, Belgium, and Sweden for Turkish *Arbeitervereine* (workers' associations). For events that were mainly attended by a German audience, which was the case with most events organized by leftist parties and organizations, the choir provided brief German introductions to and translations of the songs they performed. They further performed in cooperation with German choirs, such as the Bert-Brecht-Chor from Essen, Die Zeitgenossen from Bremen, the Ernst-Busch-Chor from Kiel and the Hanns-Eisler-Chor from Berlin (West). An example of this collaboration is the album *Wenn die Feinde mächtig sind...: Chöre live* (When the Enemies Are Powerful, 1981), where workers' solidarity is enacted at the level of professional cooperation and musical collaboration among choirs.

The first LP, entitled *İşçi şarkıları ve marşları*, was released in 1974. Central to this album's songs, which are all sung in Turkish, is the solidarity among workers in

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<sup>193</sup> Richard Bodek, *Proletarian Performance in Weimar Berlin: Agitprop, Chorus, and Brecht* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1997), 5.

<sup>194</sup> Phil V. Bohlman, "Chapter 12: The Nation in Song," (2008), 256.

Berlin and beyond. They are characterized through political lyrics, based on texts by Marxist literary figures like Nazım Hikmet and Bertolt Brecht, like “Dayanışma” (“Solidaritätslied” in the original by Bertolt Brecht and Hanns Eisler, 1931) and “İşçi Birlik Cephesi” (“Lied von der Einheitsfront” in the original by Bertolt Brecht and Hanns Eisler, 1934). They also recorded “The Internationale” for the first time in Turkish, and the recording appears on the album as well. Workers’ marches from various countries were sung in Turkish, like the Austrian March “Kızıl Yıldız” (Die Arbeiter von Wien, 1929), the Italian march “Kızıl Bayrak” (Bandiera Rossa, 1908), and the Chilean march “Venceremos” (1970). Through this inclusion of workers’ hymns from around the globe, the Turkish-German collaboration is taken to the international level.

This album familiarizes the Turkish speaking/listening audience with Brecht and Eisler who were largely unknown in Turkey at that time, while at the same time introducing German audiences to Turkish poets—like Nazım Hikmet, Fazıl Hüsni Dağlarca, and Ahmet Arif—through song. “With music” Incirci suggests, “we can form the content of a poem more dramatically.”<sup>195</sup> He was a pioneer in setting Turkish poems to music. Many leftist musicians, like Zülfü Livaneli, Ahmet Kaya, Ruhi Su, and Kerem Güney, followed his example in the subsequent years. The choir’s first album was banned in Turkey, but the union, especially DİSK (Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu), the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions of Turkey founded in 1967, made black-market copies and distributed them, with a high demand.<sup>196</sup> The

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<sup>195</sup> “mit Musik können wir den Inhalt eines Gedichtes effektvoller gestalten.” Tahsin Incirci, “Die Vertonung der Werke Nazım Hikmets,” *Nazım Hikmet*, ed. Türkenzentrum Berlin (West), 2nd ed. (Berlin: Elefanten Press Verlag, 1982) 170.

<sup>196</sup> Incirci gave me this information in a conversation we held in Berlin on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

choir's songs had an impact on the labor movement in Turkey, and were sung in union strikes and demonstrations in Turkey.<sup>197</sup>

### **Songs of Solidarity**

Both the opening and concluding song of the album are based on poems by Nazım Hikmet, which endow him with a particular significance for the album as a whole.<sup>198</sup> The opening song, “Kerem Gibi” (Like Kerem), sets the theme for the album: a call for political action in solidarity. Composed when he was breaking new grounds in Turkish poetry, this is one of the first poems Hikmet wrote in free verse. He wrote it in May 1930, when most revolutionary militants had gone underground to avoid repressive measures which had been strengthened in the aftermath of the ban of the Turkish Communist Party in 1922. The poetry Hikmet produced throughout the 1920s and 1930s until his imprisonment in 1938 “brought him into conflict with increasingly authoritarian tendencies of the Kemalist regime.”<sup>199</sup> For Hikmet literature became a means “to convey political ideas to adherents and to propose practical methods of political action.”<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Cf. Tahsin Incirci, “Die Oboe ist im Klang ähnlich unserer Zurna,” *Die Reise hält an: Ausländische Künstler in der Bundesrepublik*, ed. Carmine Chiellino (Munich: Beck, 1988)., and F.W., “Kulturelle Pioneararbeit: Der türkische Arbeiterchor in Westberlin,” *Deutsche Volkszeitung* July 3rd, 1975. The 1970s in Turkey were characterized by political unrest and terror. Accusing the Demirel regime of failure with regard to economic and social problems, the Turkish military intervened once again in 1971. This time the military did not dissolve government and parties as it had in 1960, but nullified democratic basic rights and de facto overruled fundamental freedom, thousands of democrats and socialists were imprisoned, the Turkish workers' party (TIP), democratic and socialist organizations, oppositional newspapers, magazines, and publishing houses were banned. The repression of any group that was considered leftist, especially the worker's party and its union, the oppression of political opposition to the military regime in general, constituted the backdrop for all legal amendments, and was embedded in the “restoration of law order.” Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London; New York: Routledge, 1993). 148.

<sup>198</sup> I would like to thank Mark Clague for his guidance and feedback in listening to the songs analyzed throughout my dissertation.

<sup>199</sup> Göksu and Timms, *Romantic Communist: The Life and Work of Nazım Hikmet*. 177.

<sup>200</sup> Kemal Karpat, “The Turkish Left,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 1.2 (1966). 172.

The figure of Kerem is based on a Turkish folk story “Kerem and Aslı,” who burned the night of his wedding, due to an inability to consummate their marriage (Kerem’s incineration was soon after followed by the burning of Aslı).<sup>201</sup> This song begins with the flute and the violin, introducing the leitmotif. The melody sounds monotonous and lugubrious, until a second violin, in higher register, disrupts and suspends the melody. Next the piano joins in and restates the leitmotif, together with violin and flute in unison. The flute sounds the melody of the leitmotif throughout the first stanza accompanied by the choir, female and male voices together. They sing in deep and slow tone, articulating ponderousness, which reflects the content of the lyrics: “The air is lead-heavy, I’m scream-scream-screaming! Come running! I’m calling you to melt the lead.”<sup>202</sup> The metaphor of lead in the air, repeated twice for emphasis, symbolizes the problems of the time. In Hikmet’s case, these included censorship, political oppression, and growing authoritarianism. In the case of the worker’s choir, singing more than three decades later, workers’ legal discrimination, exploitation and lack of political representation were the main issues. With the second stanza, the tempo quickens and a single male voice starts singing, accompanied by the piano. The singer responds to the first stanza’s call for action with the reminder of the consequences for speaking up: turning into ashes after burning like Kerem, a scenario which allegorizes suffering. In contrast to the first stanza, the voice of the male solo sounds cheerful probably to mark

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<sup>201</sup> The Muslim boy Kerem fell in love with the Armenian girl Aslı. Her father is against Kerem marrying his daughter, but with the help of the governor, he convinces her father to consent. However, Aslı’s father has his daughter wear a magic robe with forty buttons on the wedding day. During night, Kerem is unable to unbutton the robe; when trying to unfasten the last one, all other buttons fasten again. Tirelessly trying all night but not succeeding, he opens his mouth to express his emotions for not being able to consummate their marriage. Flames come out of his mouth and as a result he burns to death. Today in Turkey, there is still the saying, “Kerem gibi yaniyorum” (I am burning like Kerem) to express, when someone cannot tolerate the suffering. Kemal Sılay, ed., *An Anthology of Turkish Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Turkish Studies, 1996). 327.

<sup>202</sup> “Hava kurşun gibi ağır! Bağır bağır bağır bağırıyorum. Koşun kurşun eritmeğe çağırıyorum.”

and reflect his airiness when reminding the singers to be cautious, warning them about the possible fate awaiting them when speaking up. This section concludes with a paradox: “there are many problems, and there are no problems.”<sup>203</sup> This verse reflects the oppositional mindsets: inaction versus commitment. The final verse attests to the general ignorance of existing problems, “the ears of the heart are deaf,” first sung in male solo, then, for emphasis, repeated by the choir.<sup>204</sup> The “deafness” of the hearts, or souls, is countered through song and constant repetition. Following the second stanza, the melody of the leitmotif reappears, and the first two verses repeat. Through the iteration of the metaphor of lead-laden air, the song reconnects this section to the beginning, reminding the listener of the problems that continue to exist. After this statement, a male voice accompanied by the piano again delivers a response to the male solo sung in the second stanza: “I shall turn into ashes burning like Kerem.”<sup>205</sup> The repetition of this verse and word-by-word utterance add authority and assertiveness to what is being sung. Rather than emphasize a specific word, the singer ensures every word is given equal significance. The chorus joins in to sing the last verse, extending the statement being made in the male solo through their communal support: “For if I do not burn and if you do not burn and if we do not burn who else is here to dispel the darkness.”<sup>206</sup> This verse addresses everyone—first, the singular individual through the use of “I” and “you,” and then the collective “we” by the end of the verse. Unity and solidarity is achieved on both levels, textually through the use of the pronoun “we” and musically through the voices of the choir. In addition the song transitions into a marching tune accompanied by the

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<sup>203</sup> “Dert çok, hem dert yok.”

<sup>204</sup> “Yüreklerin kulakları sağır.”

<sup>205</sup> “Kül olayım Kerem gibi yana yana.”

<sup>206</sup> “Ben yanmasam, sen yanmasan, biz yanmasak, nasıl çıkar karanlıklar aydınlığa.” Translation taken from Larry Clark, in *Sılay*, 328.



drums, underlining the urgency to act. Since Hikmet had to remain unspecific in his poem, mentioning neither a concrete date nor particular issue due to censorship restrictions allows for Incirci to adopt “Kerem Gibi” for the purpose of calling workers into action in unity through song.<sup>207</sup>

Of equal importance to this album are the Brecht poems set to music by Hanns Eisler. The “Lied von der Einheitsfront” (İşçi Birlik Cephesi/United Front Song) and the “Solidaritätslied” (Dayanışma/Solidarity Song) (both sung in Turkish on Incirci’s album) are the most popular Eisler compositions based on Brecht poems. “Solidaritätslied” is the theme song of *Kuhle Wampe oder wem gehört die Welt?* (Kuhle Wampe or Who Owns the World? 1932). The screenplay was written by Bertolt Brecht and Ernst Ottwald, and its musical score was provided by Hanns Eisler. In this montage of “documentary footage and fictional narrative,” which was shot in the Berlin’s workers’ district Wedding, more than four hundred thousand workers participated.<sup>208</sup> The “Solidaritätslied” constitutes the leitmotif of this film and is crucial both diegetically and non-diegetically. Throughout the movie, the song sounds in three different versions all based on Brecht’s original version of the poem written in 1931: an instrumental version, a version sung by a mixed choir, and an all male version with the lead soloist Ernst Busch. The song itself “suggests an active participation in the class struggle based on unity among workers.”<sup>209</sup> It emphasizes the necessity of the political organization of the working class—a feat that was at the time of great urgency, as the proletariat was divided between two parties, the KPD and

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<sup>207</sup> Recent studies that emphasize music’s agency include: Vanessa Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus: The Power of Music in Other Worlds* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Tia DeNora *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>208</sup> Nora M. Alter, “The Politics and Sounds of Everyday Life in Kuhle Wampe,” *Sound Matters: Essays on the Accoustics of Modern Culture*, eds. Nora M. Alter and Lutz Koepnick (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004). 82.

<sup>209</sup> Alter, “The Politics and Sounds of Everyday Life in Kuhle Wampe.” 83.

the SPD. It further expressed an opposition to growing fascism, replacing current political passivity by active political engagement of the workers. It calls for workers to take the class struggle into their own hands, as a united front against the exploitation by capital and the rise of fascism in Germany.<sup>210</sup>

The version sung by the choir is an abbreviated version of the poem, which Brecht modified in 1947. This version incorporates the first, third, and last stanza, and the chorus. The song begins with the chorus that directly addresses the workers, and asks them to remember that solidarity is source for strength endowing the workers with the ability to bring about change. The use of slogans like “haydi” (“forward”) heightens the dynamic effect of the song. The clear diction of the lyrics, as well as the simple regular marching rhythm provided by the drum, enables listeners and singers to easily remember and memorize the song and reinforces its dynamism. In contrast to Eisler’s original in *Kuhle Wampe*, Incirci excludes the trumpet, relying solely on the drums and the piano. Incirci structures the song alternating between the chorus sung by the choir and stanzas sung in two voices. The pronoun used in the chorus, the plural “we,” is replaced in all three stanzas by the personal plural pronoun “you.” This underlines the explicit call to workers across the globe to join in solidarity. All three stanzas provide the listeners with the potential of showing solidarity, and are sung by a female and male voice in unison. Hence, workers’ solidarity is not presented as a matter of gender, equally addressing and incorporating men and women.

After the chorus’ reminder to get into motion and to never forget solidarity, the first stanza following the chorus, explicitly calls for the workers to unite with the same

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<sup>210</sup> Peter Whitaker, *Brecht's Poetry: a Critical Study* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1985). 65.

goal. Furthermore, the choir reminds all workers to share the goods in the world, emphasizing equal distribution to everyone. The repetition of the chorus throughout the song gives emphasis to the call for action, underlined by “haydi,” and to the reminder that solidarity is the main source of workers’ potential to act against exploitation and injustice. The chorus further underlines that solidarity has to be maintained as a constant, independent from material well-being: indeed, both when “hungry and when full” (“hem açken hem de tokken”).

In comparison to “Kerem Gibi,” “Dayanışma” (Solidaritätslied) is more explicit in its demands for an international workers’ solidarity, which becomes the sole solution to all problems, lending power to the united workers to overcome oppression and to enable the fraternization of all people “zenci, beyaz, sarı, esmer” (black, white, yellow, and dark). Both songs address the urgency to act, asking workers to take matters into their own hands, which shows similarities to the trilogy where Ören also locates the potential for change within the working class. “Dayanışma” ends with a repetition of the chorus, and modified final two verses: “Bu dünya kimin dünyası? Gelecek kimindir?” (Who owns the world? Who owns the future?). The movie *Kuhle Wampe* ends with the “Solidaritätslied” sounded extra-diegetically, accompanying footage of marching workers. And as the song asks the question as to who owns the world and future, the visual responds: the workers. Similarly, the version sung by Incirci’s choir lends emphasis to this question, which is reminding the workers, of their share in the world. The answer to this question can be found in Ören’s trilogy, when Niyazi states “those giving their labor have the same share in the world.”<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> “Emek veren herkesin yeryüzünde payı eşittir” (BÜ 40).

In addition to their compositions based on German and Turkish poems and their Turkish rendition of international workers' marches, Incirci's choir included an original composition on the album, entitled "İşçi yürüyor baştan" (The Workers March at the Forefront). This song's lyrics are the outcome of the collective effort of the choir members. Its melody is taken, in modification though, from a prominent Turkish folk song (türkü) by Sadettin Kaynak entitled "Gemim geliyor baştan" (My Boat Is Coming at the Forefront). Although the songs' lyrics do not have anything in common with one another, the choir's title choice is a variation of the original title, replacing the "coming boat" with the "marching workers." The piano and the tambourine accompany the voices of the choir, the tambourine being the main sound. The constant rattling sound of the tambourine throughout the song serves the function to innervate and activate the listeners while at the same time providing a regular rhythm. Similar to "Dayanışma" the song's structure alternates between chorus and three stanzas, starting with the chorus. The first verse of the chorus announces the arrival of the workers, "we are coming breaking the chains" ("geliyoruz zincirleri kıra kıra hey"). This is followed by the second verse, where they sing, "knocking the head of the bourgeois" ("burjuvanın kafasına vura vura hey"). The third verse is a repetition of the first, and the fourth is an iteration of the second, replacing the "bourgeois" with the "fascist" ("faşist"). The repetition of the verbs "kırmak" (to break) and "vurmak" (to knock) in the gerund underlines the acuteness and simultaneity of the actions described. Further, the choir adds assertiveness to what is being sung, by ending each verse of the chorus with the exclamation "hey." In addition, each verse ends in a double clap, which functions as an exclamation mark and underlines the singers' determination. The chorus achieves two goals, announcing liberation from

the “chains” of capital and exploitation, while at the same time establishing the bourgeoisie and the fascists as enemies of the working class.

The chorus is followed by the first stanza, which begins with the song’s title stating that “the workers march at the forefront” (“işçi yürüyor baştan”); the workers, who are victorious in overcoming all obstacles and fights.<sup>212</sup> The second verse underlines, as do the other two songs discussed here, the solidarity and comradeship which exist among workers, but also between workers and farmers.<sup>213</sup> Their strength and force is likened to a natural catastrophe through the allegory of the “flood” (“sel”). The last verse harkens back to the first verse, which consists of words used interchangeably to denote workers in low wage and manual labor: “amele, ırgat, köle” (peon, peasant, servant), summarizing those, who are joining forces and are gathering the sheer force of a flood. The last stanza, introduces the listeners to their characteristics and strengths, “güçlüyüz” (we are powerful), “kavgada bilinçliyiz” (we are experienced and knowledgeable in struggle), and “faşizme hınçlıyız” (we are vengeful toward fascism).

The chorus and stanzas consist of short slogans, which deliver the singers’ goals and self-perception, accompanied by a catchy and rhythmic tune. The stanzas are syncopated, which alters the stress pattern of the song. All verses last four seconds, but the difference lies in the number of syllable per line; in the chorus, each line consists of thirteen syllables, while in the stanzas each line contains only seven syllables. The syncopation allows the singers to stretch the syllables of each verse in the stanzas, which modifies the melody and results in a melodic difference between chorus and stanza.

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<sup>212</sup> “galiptir her savaştan.”

<sup>213</sup> “işçi köylü elele” (workers, peasants hand in hand).

All three songs discussed here have as their aim to call workers into action. Whereas “Kerem Gibi” is more implicit, “Dayanışma” and “İşçi yürüyor baştan” are more explicit, directly addressing workers to unite in solidarity. The acuteness to act is underlined through the use of instruments such as drums and the tambourine, and regular rhythmic patterns. In all three songs, the instruments and voices support the lyrics, translating the content of the lyrics musically. This enables the listener to associate a specific mood or atmosphere with the song: in “Kerem Gibi” ponderousness is evoked by the deep voices of the choir and the sound of the flute, in “Dayanışma” acuteness is induced by the drums and the accentuation of the choir voices, in “İşçi yürüyor baştan” the double clap in the chorus and the sound of the tambourine strengthen assertiveness.

In Brecht’s oeuvre, music has always played a central role,<sup>214</sup> For Brecht, music, “makes possible a certain simplification of the toughest political problems, whose solution is life and death matter for the working class.”<sup>215</sup> As with his didactic plays, music fulfilled a specific function for Brecht; in it, “human behavior is shown to be alterable; man himself dependent on certain political and economic factors and at the same time . . . capable of altering them.”<sup>216</sup> His collaboration with Hanns Eisler, “who more than matched Brecht’s commitment to art for ideology’s sake” started in 1930 and spanned nearly three decades.<sup>217</sup> Similar to Brecht, for Eisler “Music, like every other art

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<sup>214</sup> As Kim H. Kowalke notes, “Only one of his nearly fifty completed dramatic works lacks music. Over 600 of his more than 1,500 poems refer to musical genres in title or structure.” See Kim H. Kowalke, “Brecht and Music: Theory and Practice,” *The Cambridge Companion to Brecht*, ed. Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 242.

<sup>215</sup> Bertolt Brecht, “On the Use of Music in an Epic Theatre,” *Brecht on Theatre. The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. and transl. John Willet (London: Shenvall Press, 1964). 88

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>217</sup> Kowalke, 246.

has to fulfill a certain purpose in society.”<sup>218</sup> For the workers’ movement, Eisler assigned music a new function: it was “to activate their members and to encourage political education.”<sup>219</sup> Therefore its characteristics were determined as follows: “easily understood, vigorous and accurate in attitude” at the same time foregrounding that “the construction depends on the content of each piece.”<sup>220</sup> Incirci adheres to a Brechtian/Eislerian agenda, insofar as he believes that music can induce working-class audiences to act. This is not only expressed in the lyrics, but also in the musical material.

## Conclusion

The literary texts and songs analyzed here represent political concerns and express the necessity that workers show solidarity in their fight against exploitation and capital. The potential for change lies in the hands of the workers themselves, and can only be achieved through an international solidarity, which in both cases has its base in Berlin, a landmark in the tradition of German labor protest. Both Ören and Incirci understand the experiences of the Turkish workers as part of the Berlin/German labor movement in their texts; where in Ören’s text the focus is on the microcosm of Kreuzberg, Naunynstraße in particular, in the songs by Incirci and the Türkischer Arbeiterchor Westberlin it is on West Berlin in general. They represent Berlin’s transformation into a city where something is “stirring again,”—to recall Ören. They emphasize the influence and interaction of Turkish and German cultural traditions—like

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<sup>218</sup> Manfred Grabs, ed. *Hanns Eisler. A Rebel in Music. Selected Writings*, transl. Marjorie Meyer (Berlin: Seven Seas Publishers, 1978), “Our Revolutionary Music” [1932], 59.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>220</sup> Manfred Grabs, ed. *Hanns Eisler. A Rebel in Music. Selected Writings*, transl. Marjorie Meyer (Berlin: Seven Seas Publishers, 1978), “The Birth of a Worker’s Song” [1935], 80.

workers' songs and politically engaged literature—in their works, thus creating something new: an aesthetic that draws on and synthesizes both traditions.

In Incirci's and Ören's works, Turkish immigration is represented as enriching and contributing to German culture. Whereas early immigrants were felt to be a temporary phenomenon and conceived of as ultimately non-German, these texts place the experience of Turkish migration in dialogue with German culture rather than outside of it. Both artists emphasize the novelty of their works in synthesizing Turkish and German cultural elements. As Ören suggests,

[t]he literature that is emerging here has its root in Turkish literature and feeds from it, but it is neither its extension nor its export good. . . . The here emerging Turkish literature engages both its own Turkish as well as the German tradition, it wants to be progressive, democratic, creative, experimental, avant-garde, and bold.<sup>221</sup>

He insists on the influence and interaction of Turkish and German cultural traditions, creating something new that draws on both traditions. The aspect of cultural mediation is central to both artists, familiarizing both their German and Turkish audiences, and in the case of Incirci also European listeners, with Turkish and German literary traditions. Their works are informed by the Marxist intellectuals Bertolt Brecht and Nazım Hikmet, who emphasize the artist's responsibility to his historical situation and perceive art as a means laying bare political injustices and eliciting a critical response. In addition to drawing upon this political-aesthetic archive for support, these texts are very much a document of their time. That is, these works have to be situated in the context of the recession years 1966 and 1973, the recruitment ban, mass unemployment, and discriminatory practices

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<sup>221</sup> “Die hier entstehende türkische Literatur entspringt zwar der Literatur in der Türkei und nährt sich von ihr, doch sie ist weder eine Verlängerung noch ein Exportartikel der Literatur in der Türkei. . . . Die hier entstehende türkische Literatur setzt sich sowohl mit der eigenen türkischen als auch mit der deutschen Tradition auseinander, sie möchte fortschrittlich, demokratisch, kreativ, experimentell, avantgardistisch und wagemutig sein.” Ören, “Die Metropole ist kein Völkerkundemuseum.” 184.



towards Turkish guestworkers and immigrants, circumstances Ören and the choir address more generally through the thematization of workers' exploitation, which is of concern to all. While Ören emphasizes the testimonial function of his writings, the recording of the recent past, for Incirci the immediate present has precedence. Ören emphasizes his role as witness and archivist in representing an international workers' solidarity, while Incirci and his choir, add their voices to the call for solidarity.

### Chapter III

#### *Heimisches Berlin: Longing and Belonging*

The first beautiful city I came to  
I live you Berlin  
Sometimes hope sometimes grief  
I am overwhelmed by emotions Berlin  
Şahturna<sup>222</sup>

Over the past three centuries, *Heimat* has come to signify a variety of emotions and meanings.<sup>223</sup> Loosely translated, *Heimat* means home or homeland in English, and is a concept that has “provided a symbolic common denominator among different regions, their inhabitants and territories.”<sup>224</sup> Whether in the local, regional, or national context, *Heimat*’s capacity to carry differing meanings for different people has allowed for its appropriation by disparate groups since the nineteenth century. It therefore provides a “national lexicon to think and talk about Germanness.”<sup>225</sup> Furthermore, it has been a source of stability, security, and comfort, and has provided a sense of community—whether real or imagined, symbolic or tangible, regional or national in times of national fragmentation, instability, and upheaval.<sup>226</sup>

It is widely assumed that German is the only language in which the concept *Heimat* exists. This may be true of English, but Turkish certainly has a correlate in the

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<sup>222</sup> İlk geldiğim güzel şehir /Seni yaşıyorum Berlin/Bazen ummak bazen kahır/Dolup taşıyorum Berlin. “Sanat Yuvası Berlin.” Şahturna, *Sanat yuvası Berlin* (n.d.).

<sup>223</sup> Parts of this chapter have been published in a modified version in “*Heimisches Berlin: Turkish-German Longing and Belonging*.” *Jahrbuch für Türkisch-deutsche Studien* 2. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2011.

<sup>224</sup> Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). 126.

<sup>225</sup> Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006). 28–35.

<sup>226</sup> Cf. Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). 19.

notion of *memleket*. Significantly, Turkish also uses an antonym, *gurbet*, to describe the opposite condition. In Turkish literature and music, the concepts of *memleket* and *gurbet* have long featured in a variety of genres including poetry, prose, and folk songs; following Turkish migration to Germany, similar themes appeared in Turkish-German literature and music as well. First examining the use of these concepts in a Turkish context, this chapter considers how Turkish-German artists and authors introduced the notion of *gurbet* into a new national context.

In order to explore this question, this chapter focuses on a number of contemporary Turkish-German works in which a sense of home and estrangement from home from the central organizing feature. This commonality allows us to treat genres that are otherwise very different—literature and rap—and that enjoy quite different audiences. Yet their common foregrounding of *memleket* and *gurbet* allows us to make important observations about cultural responses to the experience (even at a generational remove) of migration. The concern with belonging extends across class and age barriers.

As it was for many Turkish immigrants to West Germany, Berlin is our destination in Kemal Kurt's *Was ist die Mehrzahl von Heimat?* (What is the Plural of Heimat? 1995) and Islamic Force's album *Mesaj* (The Message, 1997). Through my analysis I show how these Turkish-German artists imagine 'Heimat' in multiple ways: they attach a *Heimatgefühl*—sense of Heimat—to both an actual geographical location and to an imagined one. These artists thereby challenge homogeneous and monolithic concepts of both Germanness and Turkishness in their reconfigurations of Heimat. Important representatives of Turkish-German culture, like Kemal Kurt and Islamic Force, inflect the Heimat discourse by adding the experience of Turkish-German migration to its

archive. In their literary and musical engagement with the question of home and belonging, they therefore “accent” the concept of Heimat by placing it in dialogue with the Turkish equivalents as well as a new national context.<sup>227</sup>

Given the centrality of Heimat to this chapter, a brief summary on the scholarly discourse on the notion of Heimat, its modification, and its transformation in the past two centuries is in order. In the *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (German Dictionary, 1877), the Grimm Brothers date the use of the word Heimat to as early as the fifteenth century defining it as “land or swath of land, in which one was born or one has permanent residence [...]”<sup>228</sup> The term “gathered political and emotional resonance” in the late eighteenth century, and played a particularly important role for the Romantics, who in their efforts “to restore ancient and neglected words [...] recommended the adoption of Heimat and began to incorporate it into their vocabulary.”<sup>229</sup>

We can think of this as a response to rapid urbanization. With changes to rural life and the accelerated growth of cities, Heimat expressed nostalgia for preindustrial conditions. The novels of Joseph von Eichendorff are a good example. In Eichendorff’s *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (1826), the main character devotes the best part of his time gazing at the sky, recumbent under the branches of his ancestral oak tree. The notion of Heimat, in other words, served as a means of preserving the memories of entire landscapes, like the Ruhr area, where rolling hills became dotted with industrial

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<sup>227</sup> Film scholar Hamid Naficy conceptualized “accented cinema” as an aesthetic response to the experience of displacement through exile, diaspora, or migration. According to Naficy the “accent emanates [...] from the displacement of the filmmakers [...]” whose films “signify and signify upon the conditions both of exile and diaspora [...]” Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005). 4.

<sup>228</sup> “das Land oder auch nur der Landstrich, in dem man geboren ist oder beliebigen Aufenthalt hat” Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, “Heimat,” *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Munich: dtv, 1984 [1877]). 865.

<sup>229</sup> Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat*. 4; 7.

equipment and rivers were appropriated for manufacturing.<sup>230</sup> Heimat signified an ideal, no longer tangible place. In Gottfried Keller and Wilhelm Raabe we find something similar—a longing for idyllic nature and a glorification of rural life. By the end of the century the meaning had changed. The *Heimatkunstbewegung* (Heimat art movement) and the *Heimatabewegung* (Heimat movement) responded to modernization, seeking to protect and promote what were perceived to be traditional values. These movements also privileged the rural and the regional over the urban, the once familiar over the strange. Various new institutions took on this mandate; as for example the journal *Deutsche Heimat* (German Heimat) and *Heimatvereine* (Heimat clubs and associations), accompanied by museum exhibits on local customs, and folk festivals throughout the German Reich.<sup>231</sup> The main proponents of the *Heimatvereine* were not, as one might imagine, those people most affected by rural dispossession or urban overcrowding and squalor. Rather, the urban middle class—professors, museum directors, teachers, lawyers, and architects—made up the force behind the movement.<sup>232</sup> The demographic facts of the matter stand in marked contrast to contemporary understandings of Heimat preservation's origins as a project and concept. And as I will show, in the Turkish-German context, Heimat is not an exoticization of another segment of one's own society, or of a past state of affairs, but rather a form of self-representation.

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<sup>230</sup> Christian Graf von Krockow, "Heimat — Eine Einführung in das Thema," *Heimat. Analysen, Themen, Perspektiven*, eds. Susanne Althoetmar-Smarczyk, Jochen Henrich and Ansgar Klein (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1990). 56–58.

<sup>231</sup> Gunther Gebhard, Oliver Geisler and Steffen Schröter, *Heimat: Konturen und Konjunkturen eines umstrittenen Konzepts* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007). 25–27, and Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat, a German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture, 1890-1990* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). 2.

<sup>232</sup> Karl Ditt, "Die deutsche Heimatabewegung 1871—1945," *Heimat. Analysen, Themen, Persepektiven*, eds. Susanne Althoetmar-Smarczyk, Jochen Henrich and Ansgar Klein (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1990). 136.

The *Heimatbewegung* entered a new phase with the 1904 founding of the *Heimatschutzbund* (Heimat protection league), an umbrella organization for various *Heimatvereine*, which took on the task of preserving historic monuments, the protecting of local fauna and flora, conserving ruins, and promoting of folk art, customs, celebrations, and traditional costumes.<sup>233</sup> These Heimat clubs and associations emphasized their regional contributions to the German nation, celebrating its diversity even while supporting its unity.<sup>234</sup>

During World War I, the notion of Heimat was appropriated in the service of the nation. The willingness to go to war was closely associated with love of home, and the preparedness to protect it. The term *Heimatfront* (home front) came into vogue and was used by military leaders as an umbrella term for mobilizing troops and endorsing military actions in order to protect and defend the place what people thought of as their Heimat.<sup>235</sup> With wartime sentiment running high, Heimat could mean “nation” or “fatherland,” and was used indiscriminately by officials of the *Reichszentrale für Heimatdienst* (national headquarters for Heimat services) founded in 1918.<sup>236</sup> After its defeat, Germany had to make territorial concessions and was subject to significant reparation payments according to the terms of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. In the years that followed, the country was marked by economic and political instability. Heimat soon came to be associated with the need for unity and stability.<sup>237</sup> When compared with its early associations, Heimat now

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid., 138–140.

<sup>234</sup> Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat*. 13.

<sup>235</sup> Gebhard, Geisler and Schröter, *Heimat: Konturen und Konjunkturen eines umstrittenen Konzepts*. 28.

<sup>236</sup> Michael Neumeyer, *Heimat: Zur Geschichte und Begriff eines Phänomens* (Kiel: Im Selbstverlag des Geographischen Instituts der Universität Kiel, 1992). 32.

<sup>237</sup> Gebhard, Geisler and Schröter, *Heimat: Konturen und Konjunkturen eines umstrittenen Konzepts*. 36–37.

evoked not only an emotional and geographical but also a new social and political unity. Increasingly, Heimat was tied to the nation and nationalism.<sup>238</sup>

This found acute expansion in Nazi Germany, Heimat was central to National Socialist “Blut and Boden” ideology, which “sought to bring together all people of German race (*Blut*) from all regions and provinces (*Boden*) to a unified German community (*Volksgemeinschaft*).<sup>239</sup> Heimat connoted a racially homogenous community with blood, soil, and race as its organizing principles. The celebration of local and regional diversity—a central characteristic of the turn-of-the-century Heimat movement—was compounded by an ideology of racial homogeneity.<sup>240</sup>

From the post-war period through the 1960s, the notion of Heimat became a means of articulating a German identity and for territorial claims made by the *Heimatvertriebene*, expellees.<sup>241</sup> This period was characterized by attempts to come to terms with the fascist past, culturally manifest in an abundance of Heimat films, novels, and pop songs (*Schlager*) and local monuments. These cultural products not only attempted a flight from the past and an evasion of questions of guilt, but also attempted to formulate a new understanding of Heimat.<sup>242</sup> With almost 300 titles in circulation, the *Heimatfilm* provided “a site where 1950s (film) culture negotiated ...the ongoing process of national reconstruction.”<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Ditt, “Die deutsche Heimatbewegung 1871—1945.” 145.

<sup>239</sup> Chris Wickham, *Constructing Heimat in Postwar Germany: Longing and Belonging* (Lewiston, N.Y.: E. Mellen Press, 1999). 7.

<sup>240</sup> Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History*. 64.

<sup>241</sup> Cf. Will Cremer and Ansgar Klein, “Begriffliche Annäherungen: Heimat in der Moderne,” *Heimat. Analysen, Themen, Perspektiven*, eds. Susanne Althoetmar-Smarczyk, Jochen Henrich and Ansgar Klein (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1990). 33–55; Neumeyer, *Heimat: Zur Geschichte und Begriff eines Phänomens*. 43.

<sup>242</sup> Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History*. 89.

<sup>243</sup> Johannes von Moltke, *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). 23.

By the mid-1970s, Heimat's appropriation was no longer the preserve of conservatives, but spanned a broad political spectrum from left to right. In her study on the subject, Elizabeth Boa cites three reasons for the popularity of Heimat during the 1970s and 1980s: first, the reexamination of German national identity vis-à-vis the Nazi past; second, a change in the relationship between the two German states with the prospect of a Cold War thaw; and third, the change of politics in the 1960s, that came with the rise of green politics.<sup>244</sup>

Despite the term's polysemy and its adaptability to different contexts, Heimat has always involved the relationship of people to space and frequently, it has been associated with ethnic Germanness.<sup>245</sup> As Alon Confino observes, "Germans like to think of the Heimat idea as unfathomable, mysterious, above all, peculiarly German."<sup>246</sup> What I show here, however is that Heimat is not endemic to Germany, or at least not only to Germany. The most conspicuous contributions to present day notions of Heimat are, in fact Turkish-Germans drawing on their own traditions of *memleket* and *gurbet*. This point has been largely overlooked in the scholarly work on the subject, which has not yet accounted for the role of immigrants in the conceptualization of home, and to broaden the argument, within German culture generally.<sup>247</sup> I argue that in laying claim to Heimat, whether through literature or music, Turkish-German artists articulate their belonging to Germany

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<sup>244</sup> Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat, a German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture, 1890-1990*. 17.

<sup>245</sup> von Moltke, *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema*. 10.

<sup>246</sup> Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918*. 97.

<sup>247</sup> A notable exception is Kader Konuk, who investigates the significance of the Heimat discourse for migrants, tracing its manifestation in the literary works of Emine Sevgi Özdamar. While drawing attention to Özdamar's "accented speech," and the "Entfremdung" [estrangement] of the German language in Özdamar's works—a process which emphasizes the hybrid nature of all cultural forms, including language—Konuk argues that Özdamar shatters and exceeds homogenizing and marginalizing Heimat discourses. See, Kader Konuk, "Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei": Heim-at bei Emine Sevgi Özdamar," *Kein Land in Sicht: Heimat - weiblich?* Ed. Gisela Ecker (Munich: Fink, 1997). 143–57.



as a new Heimat. Without abandoning cultural, familial, or even political ties to their former home, they forge a sense of belonging that is inclusive of their various attachments. From this restructuring and expansion of its affiliations, Heimat reemerges as a plural concept, instead of being limited to one singular national context.

### **Being at Home and Abroad in the Turkish Context**

Memleket is the Turkish term that corresponds most closely to the German Heimat, but it is frequently used interchangeably with its synonyms *yurt*, and *vatan*. Memleket has its origins in Arabic, and translates as “dominion, country, town, a person’s home district, native land.”<sup>248</sup> Vatan also has its roots in Arabic, and means “one’s native country, motherland.”<sup>249</sup> Yurt is the only term among these three that derives from old Turkish, but its etymological roots are unknown.<sup>250</sup> It translates as “native country, home, habitation, student dormitory, and estate.”<sup>251</sup> Though some nuances distinguish these three terms from one another, they all signify a place of origin and birth, like Heimat.<sup>252</sup>

The thematization of memleket has been prominent in Turkish literature. This is especially so in the works of exiled writers and—above all—in the work of writer Nazım Hikmet. This is hardly surprising given his biography. Through fifteen years of prison, twelve years of exile, and thirty years during which he was prohibited from publishing, Hikmet continuously addressed his lost memleket. He himself put it as follows: “the roots

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<sup>248</sup> James W. Redhouse, "Memleket," *Redhouse yeni Türkçe-İngilizce sözlük. New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary* (Istanbul: Redhouse Yayınevi, 1968). 752.

<sup>249</sup> James W. Redhouse, "Vatan," *Redhouse yeni Türkçe-İngilizce sözlük. New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary* (Istanbul: Redhouse Yayınevi, 1968). 1220.

<sup>250</sup> Hasan Eren, "Yurt," *Türk dilinin etimolojik sözlüğü* (Ankara: Bizim Büro Basım Evi, 1999). 461.

<sup>251</sup> James W. Redhouse, "Yurt," *Redhouse yeni Türkçe-İngilizce sözlük. New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary* (Istanbul: Redhouse Yayınevi, 1968). 1263.

<sup>252</sup> Hamza Ermiş, *Arapça'dan Türkçeleşmiş kelimeler sözlüğü* (Istanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2008).

of my poetry lie in the earth of my home country.”<sup>253</sup> Notwithstanding his political difficulties, Hikmet played a leading role in the modernization of Turkish literature after the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923, becoming one of the most prominent figures in the literary (poetic) movement of *Memleket Edebiyatı* (homeland literature, 1923–1940). Turkey, the newly founded homeland, was the subject of the majority of the works in this genre, which was further characterized by the usage of the folk meter, *hece* (rather than the Arabic *aruz*).<sup>254</sup> Anatolia, home to the bulk of Turkish population and the country’s least developed and largest area, enjoyed a particularly important status. While he was imprisoned and in exile, and his works were banned from publishing in Turkey, Hikmet’s efforts were carried forward by subsequent generations of novelists, playwrights, and poets, including, for example, the *garip* poets Orhan Veli Kanık, Oktay Rıfat, and Melih Cevdet.

The antonym of *memleket*, the equivalent of the German *Fremde*, is expressed by the word *gurbet*. In the Turkish context, *gurbet* describes a sense of separation from one’s homeland. German captures this meaning in two distinct terms: exile, *Exil*, and the place away from home, *Fremde*.<sup>255</sup> The originally Arabic word *gurbet* means “absence from the homeland; separation from one’s native country; banishment; exile; life or place away

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<sup>253</sup> “şiiirim kökü yurdumun topraklarındadır,” Nazım Hikmet, *Gurbet ölümden beter* (Ankara: Bilgi yayınevi, 1987) 9.

<sup>254</sup> Cf. İnci Engingün, *Cumhuriyet dönemi Türk edebiyatı* (Istanbul: Dergah yayınları, 2001).

<sup>255</sup> For recent studies on the condition of exile in German culture see: Alexander Stephan, *Exile and Otherness. New Approaches to the Experience of the Nazi Refugees* (Oxford; New York: Peter Lang, 2005) and Kader Konuk, *East West Mimesis* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010). Konuk “inquires into the condition of exile and the status of the outsider in processes of cultural and political change,” criticizing scholars’ common equation of the condition of exile with isolation (12). By contrast, Konuk theorizes exile as a condition for “cultural transfer and transnational exchange,” using Erich Auerbach’s exile in Istanbul and the writing of *Mimesis* as a prime example of such a configuration (12). She further reconceptualizes the condition of exile as one of multiple attachments, rather than of isolation and detachment.

from home.”<sup>256</sup> This polysemy renders *gurbet* effectively untranslatable, and therefore its meaning has to be retrieved through interpretation. The Turkish *gurbet* is emotionally charged, and does not solely refer to the place away from home. Being in *gurbet*, whether by reason of exile or economic or intellectual migration, is associated with a sense of displacement and uprootedness, and frequently with feelings of nostalgia: of longing for what has been left behind and lost. One can be in *gurbet* in a foreign country, through immigration to Germany; but also within one’s home country, as in the case of labor migration within Turkey, from rural to urban areas. For these reasons, *gurbet* has been thematized in various different contexts within literature and music.

### **The Musical Engagement with *Gurbet***

In music, the nostalgia emanating from the state of *gurbet* has found its expression in the folk music tradition, as well as in *arabesk* music. As a musical genre *arabesk* is an amalgam of Anatolian folk music, Arabic arrangements, and Western pop music. In Turkey, *arabesk* music is closely linked to the rural-urban migration, economic and social hardships in urban society.<sup>257</sup> Its songs thematize longing, the coldness of cities, unrequited love, homesickness, and despair. They are composed, performed, and heard as a means of “mak[ing] sense of urban experience of the city.”<sup>258</sup> The *darbuka* (single-headed goblet drum) and the *bağlama* (long-necked fretted lute) for example are a

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<sup>256</sup> Ayşe Çağlar, “German Turks in Berlin: Migration and their Quest for Social Mobility,” McGill University, 1994. 39.

<sup>257</sup> Martin Stokes, *The Arabesk Debate: Music and Musicians in Modern Turkey* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1992). 227.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

common feature. Characteristic of the musical organization of arabesk performances are spontaneity and individuality.<sup>259</sup>

As a musical genre, arabesk has been in existence since the mid-1960s. Until the 1980s, however, it was considered a rural, even backward art form. Initially, the term was used as a form of denigration until “it later came to describe the entire migrant culture formed at the peripheries of Turkish cities.”<sup>260</sup> By the 1980s, it had become the most popular music genre throughout Turkey, with the commercialization of arabesk and the expansion of its audience to the middle and ruling classes.<sup>261</sup>

One of the most popular arabesk singers to incorporate gurbet as topos with regard to inner-Turkish migration is Orhan Gencebay, often described as the “father” of arabesk. Another well-known arabesk performer, Ferdi Tayfur, included the topic of labor migration to Germany into his repertoire with the song “Almanya Treni” (Germany Train). Through his gurbet songs, he ensured the popularity of arabesk outside of Turkey.<sup>262</sup> In the early 1970s and 1980s arabesk taverns, bars, and restaurants, started to appear in German cities. *Gurbet konserleri* (gurbet concerts), featuring artists from Turkey performing arabesk but also folk music, became very popular throughout Germany. Many were organized by an agency in Cologne entitled *Gurbet Kervani* (gurbet caravan).<sup>263</sup>

In the Turkish folk music tradition, gurbet figures prominently in *gurbet türküleri*, a musical subcategory of *Almanya türküleri*. *Almanya türküleri* literally translates into

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<sup>259</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>260</sup> Meral Özbek, “Arabesk Culture: A Case of Modernization and Popular Identity,” *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, eds. Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (Seattle; London: University of Washington Press, 1997). 211.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 220.

<sup>262</sup> Nazife Güngör, *Arabesk: sosyokültürel açıdan arabesk müzik* (Ankara: Bilgi yayınevi, 1990). 76.

<sup>263</sup> Martin Greve, *Die Musik der imaginären Türkei: Musik und Musikleben im Kontext der Migration aus der Türkei in Deutschland* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2003). 47.

Germany folk songs, and refers to the music made by Turkish immigrants in Germany.<sup>264</sup> In the majority of these songs, *memleket*, often referring to places in rural Turkey, is compared and contrasted with *gurbet*, signifying urban centers within Germany. Composed during the 1970s and 1980s, many of these songs are concerned with the intolerability of experiencing *gurbet*, being in Germany, coupled with a longing for Turkey, *memleket*.<sup>265</sup> Especially the Turkish folk singers, *âşık*, incorporated this nostalgia into their repertoire, as for example Âşık Garip Ali's "Geçti gurbette yıllar" (The Years Went By in Gurbet), Âşık Devriş Can's "Yol üstünden yol geçiyor" (One Journey Follows Another), and Âşık Muzaffer's "Yağmur yağar Almanyada" (It is Raining in Germany). An *âşık* is a minstrel poet in the folk musical tradition of central and eastern Anatolia, someone whose music is considered the highest form of folk music.<sup>266</sup> The majority of *âşık* are Alevis, the second largest religious community in Turkey, and closely related to the Sufi tradition.<sup>267</sup> Their songs are known for their socio-critical content, and a distinct feature of the *âşık* is their primary instrument: the *saz*, or long-necked lute. During the early 1960s, shortly after the labor recruitment contract between Germany and Turkey, the first *âşık* came to Germany and began thematizing labor migrants in their repertoire.<sup>268</sup>

Âşık Şahturna is one of the most popular singers in the folk music tradition of *âşık*, in both Turkey and Germany. She came to Germany in 1975 with the help of

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<sup>264</sup> Cf. Ali Osman Öztürk, *Almanya Türküleri* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2001).

<sup>265</sup> For example, Yağmur Atsız "Almanya Beyleri," S. Gürbüz "Almanya Üzerine Deyişler," Yüksel Özkasap "Gurbet," Cem Karaca "Almanya" Hasret (1980).

<sup>266</sup> Kemal Hayrettin Akdemir and Werner Schiffauer, "Şah Turna - Zur Rezeption und Weiterentwicklung der *âşık*-Musik im politischen Lied," *Musik der Türken in Deutschland*, ed. Max Peter Baumann (Kassel: Yvonne Landeck, 1985). 44.

<sup>267</sup> For further information on Alevism see, David Zeidan, "The Alevi of Anatolia," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 3.4 (199).

<sup>268</sup> Greve, *Die Musik der imaginären Türkei: Musik und Musikleben im Kontext der Migration aus der Türkei in Deutschland*. 222–228.

Amnesty International, after having been accused of disseminating communist propaganda and imprisoned several times in Turkey. Following her expatriation in the aftermath of its second military coup in Turkey in 1980, she became a German citizen. Many of her songs deal with life in exile. “Gurbet Acısı” (Pain of Gurbet) for example describes feelings of “separation, longing, and the sorrow of gurbet” (“ayrılık, hasretlik, gurbet acısı”). In this song the sound of the saz underlines the yearning for the lost homeland, further emphasized by her mournful singing style. In another song entitled “Bu diyor ki çekin gidin” (This One Says Go Away), she specifically deals with the situation of labor migrants when she asks, “where is your home, worker?” (“hani senin yurdun işçi?”). She addresses being considered as foreign and outsider in both countries, someone who is nowhere at home: “yabancı” (foreigner) in Germany, but “Almancı” (a derogatory Turkish term for Turkish-Germans) in Turkey.

Other musicians in Turkey have also incorporated the impact of migration into their repertoire. Ruhi Su (1912–1985), one of the most prominent folk musicians included two songs about the notion of gurbet, in collaboration with the singer Sümeyra Çakır and the choir Dostlar Korusu on his album *El Kapıları* (The Gates of Strange Lands, 1977).<sup>269</sup> One of these songs entitled “Almanya Acı Vatan” (Germany, Bitter Home) presents a new perspective: that of those left behind, rather than of those who have emigrated. This song emphasizes the bitterness and agony felt towards Germany as the cause for the separation from and the grief of the family members, especially the children and wives. To underline that the women are the ones being affected, the song is performed by female voices. Throughout the 1990s, ‘aşık’ music fell increasingly out of style in both Turkey

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<sup>269</sup> Sümeyra also collaborated with Tahsin Incirci on two albums *Lieder für den Frieden/Lieder für die Fremde* (Songs for Peace/Songs for Abroad, 1979) and *Çok uzaklardan geliyoruz/Wir kommen von weit her* (We Come From Very Far Away, 1986).

and Germany. However, the genre's musical thematization of gurbet and memleket was picked up and continued in a different sociocultural and genre context by Turkish-German rap, which emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Music has offered Turkish immigrants a means of articulating their experiences of migration, which inheres an affective dimension tied to nostalgia for Turkey through the genres of arabesk and aşık music. The recurring characteristic in Portuguese Fado for example is *saudade*, which loosely translates as homesickness, and can be compared to the nostalgia felt when in the state of gurbet. In the Turkish context, the notion of gurbet was used to refer to the migration from rural areas to the cities and emigration to other countries. In the early stages of migration, however, Turkish-German musicians adapted it to the German context in order to express the emotional dimension—the suffering, longing, and hopelessness of the experience of gurbet—of their experiences in Germany.

### **Experiencing Gurbet in Turkish-German Literature**

In the Turkish-German literary context, thematizations of gurbet highlight the suffering in the new country. This is true across the genres; Yüksel Pazarkaya's poetry collection *Incindiğin yerdir gurbet* (Gurbet Is the Place Where You Get Hurt, 1979)<sup>270</sup> and bilingual short story collection *Heimat in der Fremde?/Yaban sıla olur mu?* (1979) both have gurbet as a primary concern.<sup>271</sup> In the former, Pazarkaya writes, “despised, expelled, dispersed, withered, cursed, when a person is not respected, then he has fallen

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<sup>270</sup> In this poetry collection gurbet is used in reference to both Germany as the foreign country, in the sense of Fremde, as well as the condition of exile. Therefore I left it untranslated.

<sup>271</sup> In Pazarkaya's bilingual title *Heimat in der Fremde?/Yaban sıla olur mu?* the Turkish and the German titles have slightly different connotations. Without corresponding English equivalents, neither title can be conveyed adequately in translation. *Heimat in der Fremde?* would roughly translate as “home in the strange land/foreign country?” and *Yaban sıla olur mu?* as “Can the world of strangers become a home?”

into gurbet's web."<sup>272</sup> To this enumeration of sensations, he adds loneliness: "in gurbet, a person is hopeless and desperate, someone without a branch to hold onto."<sup>273</sup> Aysel Özakın's short story collection *Kanal Boyu* (Alongside the Canal, 1981) juxtaposes her new experiences in Berlin with her past in Istanbul, her former home. In the short story "Berlin'de mi yaşlanacağım" (Will I Grow Old in Berlin), she narrates the longing for Turkey and the despair of an exile as follows:

I look up into the cloudy sky. The days of Berlin seem to pass by without having an effect on me. I cannot feel days and nights. When I came here I did not bring things, but I carried Turkey's faces and voices with me; every day I look at them and I listen to them.<sup>274</sup>

Nostalgia for Turkey is a constant presence for the narrator, experienced both visually and aurally, through memories of "Turkey's faces and voices." The feeling of apathy and the notion of timelessness that accompanies the narrator's life in Germany recurs in the lyrical work of Özakın's colleague, Gültekin Emre. With his poetry collection *Bizsiz Gibi* (As Without Us, 1983), he focuses on the devastating effects of being in gurbet. In this collection, gurbet becomes a "timeless emptiness [...] without night and morning, endless days."<sup>275</sup> Gurbet emerges from these varied texts as an intolerable, gloomy, empty, timeless, inhuman condition experienced in Germany, which is coupled with nostalgia for Turkey.

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<sup>272</sup> "horlanan, kovulan, savrulan kavrulan, sövüp sayılan, sayılmıyorsa bir insan, düşmüş demek gurbet ağına" (Yüksel Pazarkaya, *İncindiğin yerdir gurbet* (Ankara: Şiir-Tiyatro Yayınları, 1979). 64).

<sup>273</sup> "gurbette insan, umutsuz umarsız tutunacak bir dalsız" (Pazarkaya 1979: 65).

<sup>274</sup> "Bulutlu gökyüzüne bakıyorum. Berlin'in günleri benim dışımda akıp geçiyor sanki. Günlere, gecelere dokunamıyorum. Buraya gelirken eşya getirmedim, ama Türkiye'nin yüzlerini, seslerini taşıdım; hergün onları gözden geçiriyorum, dinliyorum." Aysel Özakın, *Kanal boyu* (Istanbul: Yazko, 1982). 21.

<sup>275</sup> "zaman dışı boşluk [...] Akşamsız, sabahsız bitmez tükenmez günler" (Gültekin Emre, *Bizsiz gibi* (Ankara: Dayanışma Yayınları, 1983).



## Longing for the Future: Kemal Kurt and Islamic Force

Unlike in these literary and musical examples of the 1970s and 1980s, where the state of *gurbet* invokes suffering and a nostalgia for what was lost and left behind, the condition of uprootedness emerges in both Kurt's book and Islamic Force's songs as a transitional stage—as part of the process of “arriving” at home in Germany. But while Islamic Force's songs explicitly identify feelings of uprootedness as the condition of *gurbet*, in Kemal Kurt's work it is implied through the notions of betweenness and exile. As was the case with the literary and musical examples I referred to earlier, in the works of Kurt and Islamic Force the condition of uprootedness and displacement is also accompanied by longing. However, Kurt's and Islamic Force's longing is geared towards finding a future home in Germany, and not towards returning to a past one. In other words, these texts operate prospectively rather than retrospectively. With the exception of Boe-B, who spent his early childhood years in Kadıköy/Istanbul, the members of Islamic Force never in fact lived in Turkey. Their relationship to Turkey could be described as kind of “nostalgia without memory” as Arjun Appadurai has termed it.<sup>276</sup> The longing for a homeland said to have been metaphorically lost is expressed through the incorporation of Turkish music into their songs, the music of their imagined past, and is connected with the music of their present, rap and soul. I argue that through this synthesis of diverse musical genres, Islamic Force create new lines of cultural affiliation and belonging, thereby developing a sense of home that is inclusive of their various attachments.<sup>277</sup> Importantly, Islamic Force's music proposes that *memleket* be found in the land of

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<sup>276</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). 30.

<sup>277</sup> Cf. Ayhan Kaya, *Sicher in Kreuzberg. Constructing Diasporas: Turkish Hip-Hop Youth in Berlin* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2001). 156; 191.

Heimat—rearranging both the Heimat discourse and the memleket/gurbet conceptual pair to accommodate their creation of a new, multiply-affiliated own place.

In Kurt's text, longing is equally directed towards the future, and strives to find a sense of home that, as in the case of Islamic Force, allows for plurality. Kurt identifies the location of his books, Berlin, as his tangible home, and the canon of world literatures, within which he locates himself, as his figurative home. Both Islamic Force and Kurt, open up the concept of Heimat to manifest their multiple attachments—professional, cultural, literary, geographical, and emotional. But while these claims of attachment are embedded in sensory and affective impressions of Berlin, and of its spaces and its streets, Turkish genre elements reassert the concepts of memleket/gurbet in the midst of this discovery of Heimat.

In his study on the Heimatfilm, Johannes von Moltke argues against conceptualizations of Heimat as essentially antimodern. He perceives the Heimatfilm as a modern phenomenon, and further suggests to view Heimat as a reaction to economic and political modernization. He illustrates “how different aspects of spatial, economic, social or cultural modernization leave their mark on the space of Heimat.”<sup>278</sup> He further argues against the “habitual treatment of Heimat and Fremde in binary terms,” and calls for “a more dialectical perspective that allows us to see the mutual interdependence of the two terms.”<sup>279</sup> In my understanding, as in his, home (Heimat/memleket) and abroad (Fremde/gurbet) are contingent on one another. Accordingly, the encoding of one term with positive connotations and the other with exclusively negative associations begins to fail. Heimat and Fremde become codependent and mutually productive of one another;

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<sup>278</sup> von Moltke, *No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema*. 17

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

longing for the homeland drives cultural production in the Fremde, just as the possibilities of the foreign experience empower fantasies entertained while at home. The condition of gurbet, being *in der Fremde* or away from home, is for Kurt and Islamic Force, a transitional phase en route to finding and arriving at home. This phase is presented as a source of dynamism and creativity—writing in Kurt’s, and music in Islamic Force’s texts—through which Heimat’s conceptual contours are formulated anew. In their appropriation and reconfiguration of the Heimat discourse to suit their own complex of affiliations, their works challenge its purported Germanness and singularity.

### **Heimat in the Plural: Kemal Kurt and Literature**

Kemal Kurt was born in Çorlu, a small town twenty-two miles northeast of Istanbul located on the European continent. Between 1966 and 1975, he studied engineering in Ankara and Miami. In 1975, he moved permanently to Berlin, where in 1983 he received his PhD in physical engineering from the Technische Universität (Technical University). He started to write part-time in the early 1980s, and decided to become a full-time free-lance writer in 1990. His work covers a variety of genres, from children’s books, novels, and essays to screenplays, radio plays, and poetry. His essay collection *Was ist die Mehrzahl von Heimat?* (What is the Plural of Heimat?) was published in 1995.<sup>280</sup> Divided into twenty-six interrelated essays, the volume presents an eclectic assortment of observations, childhood memories, socio-political commentary, critique, and literary excursions. Some of the essays were published independently, in slightly modified versions, in newspapers and were presented in radio programs.

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<sup>280</sup> Kemal Kurt, *Was ist die Mehrzahl von Heimat?: Bilder eines türkisch-deutschen Doppellebens* (Reinbek: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995).

Though each of the essays is self-contained, the book nevertheless follows a perceptible temporal progression. The collection begins with reflections on his childhood in the first two essays, and slowly approaches the present. The progression is not, however, linear; Kurt inserts historical digressions and political commentaries that are contrasted with his more autobiographical essays. Furthermore, while Kurt progresses from his childhood memories onward, he inserts analepses within and between some of the essays, occasionally oscillating between present and the past events. All essays are written in the first-person and in prose, with the exception of the epigraphs (these are mainly quotations from poems).

The theme of the book is introduced by the title: *Heimat* and its location. From the rhematic title<sup>281</sup> “*Bilder eines deutsch-türkischen Doppellebens*” (Pictures of a German-Turkish Double Life) the reader can infer two things with regard to the genre of this book: first, that what follows is a collection of tableaux, *Bilder*; and second, that it is based on (auto)biographical data. Having moved between Çorlu, the place of his childhood, Istanbul, Ankara, Miami, and Berlin, Kurt comes to the conclusion that “*Heimat* is where you have your books.”<sup>282</sup> His longing for Berlin, the place where he has spent most of his time on his journeys, grows stronger with time: “I am homesick for my home,” he confesses, “Quietly I say its name: Berlin.”<sup>283</sup> And although Berlin is never explicitly referred to as a *Heimat* per se Kurt starts to realize that it is,

[t]he city, in which I stayed the longest. Neither Çorlu, nor Istanbul, Ankara nor Miami, can come temporally close. Was it good like this? I do not know. The city to which I return just as much as I leave it. Which attracts and repels me, which

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<sup>281</sup> The rhematic title, as conceptualized by Gérard Genette, refers to how the theme, as introduced by the title, will be performed. Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997). 79.

<sup>282</sup> “*Heimat* ist, wo man seine Bücher hat” (WMH, 129).

<sup>283</sup> “Ich habe Fernweh nach meinem Heim. Leise spreche ich seinen Namen aus: Berlin” (Ibid., 150).

entertains and bores me, stimulates and depresses. When I am gone for long, I yearn for it.<sup>284</sup>

Kurt's travels are not limited to actual journeys to and from these places. Kurt undertakes "Imaginary journeys—from A for Aitmatow and O for Orhan Veli to Z for Zuckmayer," leading him "to a city, that once actually existed. Berlin: I sit in a chaos of books [...]." <sup>285</sup> Kurt thus travels with his books in a twofold manner; physically to and from geographical places like Ankara, Miami, and Berlin, and through the journeys he imagines when he unpacks and arranges his books at the various places he moved to and lived in. Before establishing an order to his books, he uses the metaphor of a "ruin-landscape" *Ruinenlandschaft* in which the books he owns—works by Marcel Proust, Salman Rushdie, Mark Twain, and Sevgi Soysal and others—come to signify "archeological finds," *archäologische Funde*. His books form a pile of unrelated works, the rubble of a "ruin-landscape." By alphabetically organizing his books, Kurt brings order into this "chaos," restoring the ruins while at the same time creating his own index of world literature. In referring to these books as "archeological finds" Kurt also emphasizes their relevance to both unlocking and preserving the past—past locations, past reading experiences, past moments of acquisition. The ordering of his books, through which he embarks on "imaginary journeys," is necessary for him to relive the past.

His library not only allows him to travel in his imaginary *Bücherwelt*, "world of books," but is also an archive permitting him access to his past. Upon finding that he is

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<sup>284</sup> "Die Stadt, in der ich mich am längsten aufgehalten habe. Weder Çorlu, noch Istanbul, Ankara oder Miami reichen zeitlich annähernd daran heran. War es so gut? Ich weiss es nicht. Berlin. Die Stadt, in die ich genauso zurückkehre, wie ich sie verlasse. Die mich anzieht und abstößt, unterhält und langweilt, animiert und deprimiert. Wenn ich lange weg bin, sehne ich mich nach ihr" (Ibid., 128–129).

<sup>285</sup> "Kopfreisen—von A wie Aitmatow über O wie Orhan Veli bis Z wie Zuckmayer [...] in eine Stadt, die es einmal tatsächlich gegeben hat. Berlin: Ich sitze in einem Durcheinander von Büchern [...]" (Ibid., 145).

missing some of his books, Kurt suggests that “one should not lend books, otherwise, when needed, one may be missing a part of one’s own past.”<sup>286</sup> His relationship to his books is that of a collector to his objects. It is one that Walter Benjamin captures in the well-known piece “Unpacking my Library. A Talk about Book Collecting” (1931). Here Benjamin provides “some insight into the relationship of a book collector to his possessions.”<sup>287</sup> Each of his books unlocks the memories behind its acquisition, taking him back to places in his past—“Riga, Naples, Munich, Danzig Moscow, Florence, Basel, Paris [...] memories of the rooms where these books had been housed.”<sup>288</sup> Like Benjamin, Kurt associates specific readings with various places and stages of his past. Çorlu, the place of his childhood, is associated with classics of world literature, ranging from Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*, to Charles Dickens’ *Oliver Twist*.<sup>289</sup> While Kurt was in boarding school in Istanbul, classics of the Anglophone and Turkish literary traditions were required reading. He thus became acquainted with the works of George Orwell, William Golding, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Emily Brontë along with Orhan Veli Kanık, Yaşar Kemal, and Aziz Nesin.<sup>290</sup> In Berlin, Kurt encountered German literature, and added to his collection the works of Ingeborg Bachmann, Max Frisch, Paul Celan, and Martin Walser. As in Benjamin, over time Kurt’s collection becomes “one of his dwellings.”<sup>291</sup> Though not directly referencing Benjamin in his essay collection,

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<sup>286</sup> “Bücher soll man auch nicht borgen, sonst fehlt einem später, womöglich gerade dann, wenn man es braucht, ein Stück der eigenen Vergangenheit” (Ibid., 144).

<sup>287</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Unpacking my Library. A Talk about Book Collecting,” *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969). 60.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>289</sup> *WMH* 51.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>291</sup> Benjamin, “Unpacking my Library. A Talk about Book Collecting.” 67.

Benjamin's essay serves as a hypotext, a "major source of signification" for the passages where Kurt writes about his relationship to his books.<sup>292</sup>

In addition to functioning as archives of and connection to his past, books also provide Kurt with a source of comfort in his past and present. Definite arrival happens through language. He dedicates three consecutive essays in his book to the German language, and to his memories of learning and writing German: "Die Crux mit der Sprache" (The crux with language), "The Awful German Language," and "Die verlorene Zunge" (The lost tongue). In the first two, Kurt describes his problems and trouble with German syntax, gender, modus, and number. Despite his frustration, however, he is determined to master the "language of Goethe, Brecht, and Böll."<sup>293</sup> Dealing with the difficulties of learning German, Kurt notes that he often looked for "protection and comfort in the written."<sup>294</sup> In a dialogue with himself, Kurt further admits (while addressing himself in the second person) that merely learning German colloquialisms would not have sufficed: "For whatever reason, it was not enough for you to learn this language which has remained foreign to you as a colloquial language; you are trying to live and write in it."<sup>295</sup> Whereas Berlin constitutes home in the sense of physical space, in a figurative sense, Kurt locates it in the process of writing and also reading. And while speaking German becomes Kurt's most difficult endeavor, reading and writing not only allow him to cope with his feeling of uprootedness, but also with his "voicelessness."<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Allen, *Intertextuality*. 108.

<sup>293</sup> "Du wolltest die Sprache von Goethe, Brecht, und Böll lernen" (Ibid., 99).

<sup>294</sup> "Schutz und Trost im Geschriebenen" (Ibid., 99).

<sup>295</sup> "Aus welchen Gründen auch immer, dir reichte es nicht, diese dir fremd gebliebene Sprache als Umgangssprache zu lernen; du versuchst darin zu wohnen und zu schreiben" (Ibid., 110).

<sup>296</sup> "zwischen den Welten," "Sprachlosigkeit," *ibid.*, 57; 109. I will address the notion of betweenness later in this chapter.

Books provide him with a sense of “protection and comfort,” and with a sanctuary when words fail.<sup>297</sup>

Kurt’s intent to live in these texts bears striking similarities to a scenario envisioned by Adorno in *Minima Moralia*: “For those who no longer have a Heimat, writing becomes a place to live.”<sup>298</sup> Writing, in both cases, serves as a means for coping with feelings of displacement and uprootedness, whether these emanate from voluntary immigration as in Kurt’s case, or from the exilic condition Adorno experiences. The analogy between exile and immigration is implicitly woven into the fabric of his text, by means of hypertextuality through indirect references to the texts of Adorno and Benjamin, as well as intertextuality, through direct quotations within the essays or in the form of the epigraph.

The first epigraph appears in the first essay and is taken from a poem by Aras Ören, entitled “Hagia Sophia” in a poetry collection *Dazwischen* (Between, 1987). In the passage quoted by Kurt, Ören defines ‘betweenness’ metaphorically as “pain, which separates the East with one wing flap from the West, while it also carries the West with one wing flap into the East.”<sup>299</sup> In *Dazwischen*, the larger collection from which the poem stems, Ören uses the majority of his poems to thematize a voluntary exile that he refers to as “Privatexil” (private exile). He published another collection of poetry, *Privatexil*, in 1977, and an essay collection of the same title in 1999. In the latter volume, he states, “My private exile would end on the day on which I conquered my new Heimat, felt it as

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>298</sup> “Wer keine Heimat mehr hat, dem wird das Schreiben zum Wohnen.” Theodor W Adorno, *Minima Moralia. Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben* (Berlin and Frankfurt Main: Suhrkamp, 1951). 152.

<sup>299</sup> “Ein Schmerz, der den Osten mit einem Flügelschlag vom Westen trennt, aber auch den Westen mit einem Flügelschlag in den Osten trägt.” Aras Ören, “Hagia Sophia,” *Dazwischen*, transl. Helga Dağyeli-Bohne and Yıldırım Dağyeli (Frankfurt Main: Dağyeli Verlag, 1987). 34.



my new real Heimat. That would happen here in Berlin. I would discover my new Heimat through writing.”<sup>300</sup> This notion of private exile resurfaces in Kurt’s poem “Ambivalenz,”<sup>301</sup> (Ambivalence), where Kurt also refers to his experience of immigration, as “Leben im privaten Exil” (life in private exile). This usage again underlines the analogy between the condition of exile and immigration, mentioned earlier, though it quantifies and differentiates his experience and “voluntary” emigration. Ören achieves the same effect with the use of the adjective “private” as opposed to “forced.” For both Ören and Kurt, writing serves as a means of transcending their condition of private exile. It is an undertaking through which Berlin is appropriated as their home. Furthermore, both writers perceive the loss of home, and the transitional phase of ‘homelessness’ experienced through their immigration, as conditions shared with exiles, and processed through the endeavor of writing.

Kurt’s construction of Heimat is not limited to literary texts, to reading and writing, but also incorporates a discussion of current political issues. For Kurt, locating Heimat is an active process, of which literature forms one part, and his reflections and commentary on contemporary political and cultural discourse form another. Examples of the latter are the categorization of literature by writers of non-German origin, the recent xenophobic attacks on Turks, or German immigration policy and its development. In the last of the three essays dealing with the German language, “Die Verlorene Zunge” (The lost tongue), Kurt comments on the status of German language writers of non-German heritage. The title of this essay is a word play on Elias Canetti’s *Die gerettete Zunge* (The

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<sup>300</sup> “Mein privates Exil würde erst an dem Tag zu Ende gehen, an dem ich meine neue Heimat für mich erobern, sie als meine tatsächliche neue Heimat empfinden würde. Das würde hier in Berlin stattfinden. Ich würde sie, meine neue Heimat, schreibend entdecken.” Aras Ören, *Privatexil: Gedichte*, trans. Gisela Kraft (Berlin: Rotbuch-Verlag, 1979). 39.

<sup>301</sup> This poem is unpublished, and can be located as a manuscript currently in the care of his literary estate.

Tongue Set Free, 1977), which is based on Canetti's childhood memories. Kurt refers to Canetti as a prime example of an author who does not write in his mother tongue, and continues with an enumeration of other writers who are literary polyglots: Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov, Joseph Brodsky, Panait Istrati, Charles Simić, and Joseph Conrad. He enlists these authors in support of his argument against the common assumption that writing literature is only possible in one's mother tongue. He emphasizes that "all these writers have their literary language," which is not their mother tongue. In his list of authors he includes Michael Ondaatje, Salman Rushdie, Tahar Ben Jelloun, and Amin Maalouf, all of whom write in the language of their *Wahlheimat*, "Heimat of choice." These laureates' literary competence, he claims, was not called into question. In Germany, though, Emine Sevgi Özdamar's winning the Ingeborg-Bachmann Prize in 1991 caused lively debate; it was considered a scandal that a non-native speaker of German—a category of authors that was excluded until 1991 from the competition—could win such a prestigious German literary prize.<sup>302</sup> In the afterword of the English edition of *Mutterzunge* (Mother Tongue, 1994), Özdamar commented, "I was accepted, but merely as a 'guest-writer'."<sup>303</sup>

Kurt laments the status of the minority writer "who must continuously emphasize his otherness, and foreignness,"<sup>304</sup> and who is always situated outside of and apart from German literature, in "separate anthologies, separate publishing houses, separate prizes, and separate journals."<sup>305</sup> Kurt positions this essay collection against this professional

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<sup>302</sup> For further information see, Karen Jankowsky, "German Literature Contested: The 1991 Ingeborg-Bachmann-Prize Debate, 'Cultural Diversity,' and Emine Sevgi Özdamar," *The German Quarterly* 70.3 (1997).

<sup>303</sup> Emine Sevgi Özdamar and Craig Thomas, *Mother Tongue* (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1994). 157.

<sup>304</sup> "[...] der Autor muss also unentwegt seine Andersartigkeit, Fremdheit betonen," WMH 115.

<sup>305</sup> "Getrennte Anthologien, getrennte Verlage, getrennte Preise und getrennte Zeitschriften" (Ibid., 115). One of these "separate prizes" is the Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Prize of the Robert Bosch Stiftung, which,

marginalization and thematic confinement in two ways: first, at the level of content by taking on the very German subject of *Heimat*, most often reserved for ethnic Germans. And second, at the level of production, by being published by the well-known German publishing house *Rowohlt*. Kurt's construction of *Heimat* thus emphasizes, and sets into motion, the incorporation of non-ethnic German writers like himself into the corpus of German literature. His homecoming not only requires professional acknowledgement, like (for example) the acceptance of ethnically non-German writers in the German literary public sphere, but also the political and legal acknowledgment of migrants and minorities within Germany.

Published in 1995, the essays were written in the immediate aftermath of the xenophobic attacks that occurred throughout Germany in the early 1990s, which Kurt makes the subject of his essay titled "Kein orientalisches Märchen" (No Oriental Fairy Tale). This essay's epigraph differs from his previous ones by reason of its genre; it is a quote by one of the survivors of the Solingen arson, in which a fifteen-year-old victim shares his perplexity about the identity of the arsonist. The perpetrator was a schoolmate of the victim, and had also been a frequent guest at the his home. Kurt does not comment further on this epigraph. Instead, he offers his observations and reflections on the current German political climate, which, as the use of litotes in the title suggests, is anything but an "Oriental fairy tale."

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since 1985, has been awarded to authors "whose mother tongue and cultural background are non-German and whose works make an important contribution to German literature." Robert Bosch Stiftung, "The Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Prize," Web. 2 June 2010. <http://www.bosch-stiftung.de/content/language2/html/4595.asp>. Past winners include Aras Ören, Zafer Şenocak, and Emine Sevgi Özdamar.

Like Aras Ören before him, Kurt addresses xenophobia and racism against Turks by deploying an analogy to the Holocaust and Nazi Germany.<sup>306</sup> He quotes from one of Paul Celan's best-known poems, "Todesfuge" (Deathfuge): "Death is a Master from Germany."<sup>307</sup> Providing the reader with a list of places that were settings for racist attacks on ethnic non-Germans Kurt remarks, "in the past years the Master has been working overtime."<sup>308</sup> Referring to the arson attacks in Solingen, Mölln, and Rostock, he states, "like Auschwitz and Dachau, these places are branded."<sup>309</sup> Kurt draws attention to the rise of neo-fascism; the arsonist responsible for the attack in Mölln openly performed the Nazi salute, but the police still presumed private motives behind his actions.<sup>310</sup> At a trial in Paderborn, the regional court decided that the circulation of the slogan "Türken raus" (Turks out) fell in the category of free speech, and was neither a human rights violation nor an incitement to racist hatred.<sup>311</sup> Kurt continues with a quote by Berlin's Interior Minister Heinrich Lummer, who in 1983 said the following in a speech he held in the district of Kreuzberg: "Of course there will be tension, if a German feels: I am not in my Heimat here, rather they have stolen it from me in a very specific way. This whole

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<sup>306</sup> The associational link between Turks and Jews in Germany, as we have seen in Ören and now see here in Kurt, is made through a comparison of xenophobia and racism with anti-Semitism in Germany, which is not limited to the literary context and was common in the German media in the aftermath of the xenophobic attacks in the early 1990s (see Jeffrey M. Peck, *Being Jewish in the New Germany*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2006. 90). For this articulation of an interethnic relation between Turks and Jews, see, Gökçe Yurdakul and Y. Michal Bodemann, "'We Don't Want To Be the Jews of Tomorrow.'" Jews and Turks in Germany after 9/11," *German Politics and Society* 24.79 (2006) ; for the relationship between Turkish-German immigration and the German-Jewish past in literature, see Konuk, "Taking on German and Turkish History: Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Seltame Sterne*."

<sup>307</sup> "Der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland" (*WMH*, 152).

<sup>308</sup> "Der Meister hat in den letzten Jahren Überstunden gemacht" (*Ibid.*, 152).

<sup>309</sup> "wie Auschwitz und Dachau sind derlei Orte gebrandmarkt" (*Ibid.*, 154).

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

environment has become foreign to him.”<sup>312</sup> Kurt cannot hide his bewilderment when the same person who openly has contacts with the right-radical National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD), in May 1994, became the Christian Democratic Union’s (CDU) key representative on the commission of the German parliament for human rights.<sup>313</sup> Three years after the publication of Kurt’s book, Lummer more boldly and clearly stated his anti-foreigner preferences in an interview with *Der Tagesspiegel*: “If foreigners are an enrichment, then we could have said long ago: We are rich enough.”<sup>314</sup> In order to set a precedent and put an end to the policy of exclusion, Kurt suggests a reformation of the citizenship law and the right to vote, as well as the introduction of anti-discrimination laws as necessary next steps.

As Kurt construes it in his essay collection *Heimat*, encompasses a private, figurative and a public, social dimension. While writing and reading, the process of locating home in language and texts, provides for Kurt a *Heimat* that is not territorially bound; his reflections on current German political and cultural issues, like xenophobia, and the status of ethnically non-German writers, place *Heimat* geographically in Germany. Through the latter, he focuses on the political and professional aspect of being at home—that is, on the professional status of the writer and the socio-political status of the migrant minority in Germany.

The difficulties of arriving at home not only stem from matters of place, language and politics, but from the Turkey/Germany, East/West dichotomy, as well. The East/West

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<sup>312</sup> “Natürlich entsteht eine Spannung wenn ein Deutscher das Gefühl bekommt: hier bin ich nicht in meiner Heimat, sondern die haben sie mir in einer ganz bestimmten Weise geklaut. Diese ganze Umgebung ist ihm fremd geworden.” Quoted in *WMH*, 153.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>314</sup> “Wenn Ausländer eine Bereicherung sind, dann können wir schon seit langem sagen: Wir sind reich genug.” Interview. *Der Tagesspiegel*, June 30, 1998.

dichotomy, as figured in the quote from Ören's poem earlier, is central in Kurt's text. The transition from a former to a new Heimat, along with the apparent incommensurability of East and West, summons feelings of estrangement, doubt and confusion:

When I open the door and look to the West, there is a draft; when I turn eastwards, it blows in my face [...] I calculate and count: One Heimat and another Heimat do not make two Heimate[n] [...] My two Heimate[n], one more difficult than the other, do not have the same name [...] <sup>315</sup>

Though grammatically correct, Kurt's use of Heimat in the plural is unusual, since it refers to two different countries and national contexts. While Heimat can include a region, place, and nation at the same time, it has always been limited to one national context. One Heimat plus another seems an impossible addition, since it consists of two disparate summands, Turkey and Germany.

His two Heimate[n], their relationship to each other, as Kurt points out, is marked by a history of their incommensurability. Kurt provides an abbreviated history of Turkish-German relations in nineteen parts, which harks back to the eleventh century. He cites chroniclers of the crusades, which describe Turks as "barbaric, wild, coward, evil" to a statement by Luther "He [the Turk] is God's rod and the devil's servant."<sup>316</sup> And despite military alliances and trade treaties throughout the past two centuries (between Friedrich Wilhelm II and Selim II for example) the relationship between the two countries is, as Kurt writes, a "community of interest among disparate partners. Until today they remain alien to each other."<sup>317</sup> Contemplating the two cultures, he describes himself as "someone who cannot describe his position, who cannot define where to

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<sup>315</sup> "Wenn ich die Tür öffne und nach Westen schaue, zieht es, wenn ich mich gen Osten drehe, bläst es mir ins Gesicht. [...] Ich rechne und rechne: Eine Heimat und noch eine Heimat ergeben nicht zwei Heimate[n] [...] Meine zwei Heimate[n], eine schwieriger als die andere, die nicht auf den gleichen Namen hören [...] (WMH 57).

<sup>316</sup> "böartig, grausam... barbarisch;" "Er [der Türke] ist Gottes Rute und des Teufels Diener" (Ibid., 60; 63).

<sup>317</sup> "Interessengemeinschaft unter ungleichen Partnern. Bis heute sind sie sich fremd" (Ibid., 70).

belong.”<sup>318</sup> Kurt’s hesitation to call Germany his home emerges from difficulties with language, socio-political marginalization, and the cultural rift that has dominated the relationship between these two countries—a rift which is at the center in three of his essays about Turkish-German relations.

Following these three essays, Kurt continues with his enumeration of common stereotypes about Turks and Turkey in Germany. He focuses particular attention on public debates on EU accession, double citizenship, and integration in the following two essays. One essay’s title, “Das übelste Land der Welt” (The worst country in the world), quotes a conversation Kurt had in which Turkey was assigned this title “of worst country in the world,” because of—according to his conversation partner—its oppression of women and Kurds, and Islamic fundamentalism.<sup>319</sup> This essay’s title provides a contrast to its epigraph, which is an excerpt from Hikmet’s poem, “Davet” (Invitation, 1947): “Galloping from Far Asia and jutting out into the Mediterranean like a mare’s head, this country is ours.”<sup>320</sup> Hikmet’s love for his country, and his desire “to live like a tree, single and at liberty and brotherly like the trees of a forest,” continues to fulfill him despite the nine years he had, at the time of writing, spent incarcerated. In lyric form, Hikmet expresses his love for his Turkey, the country that banned and expatriated him; this contrasts with the title of Kurt’s piece, in which Turkey is indirectly referred to as the worst country in the world. Through this essay, Kurt addresses more recent German attitudes toward Turkey and Turks, and toward the two countries’ perceived cultural divergence.

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<sup>318</sup> “der seinen Standort nicht beschreiben, seine Zugehörigkeit nicht definieren kann” (Ibid., 15).

<sup>319</sup> *WMH* 94.

<sup>320</sup> “Dörtına gelip Uzak Asya’dan Akdenize bir kısrak başı gibi uzanan bu memleket bizim.”

Throughout his book, Kurt presents the incommensurability of his two Heimaten, as creating a condition of betweenness. Kurt emphasizes his feelings of being torn in two, by portraying himself “as someone, who is used to making himself comfortable in the gap between two chairs, without calling one of the chairs his own.”<sup>321</sup> The notion of being between two chairs, as metaphor for the state of between cultures, is also employed by the British-Indian writer Salman Rushdie, who, like Kurt, states that “[o]ur identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools. But however ambiguous and shifting this ground may be, it is not an infertile territory for a writer to occupy.”<sup>322</sup> As Rushdie implies, the state of “betweenness” for Kurt also becomes an impetus for writing, which in turn becomes a way to cope with the feeling of “betweenness” that haunted him in the past and throughout the larger part of this book.<sup>323</sup> He says: “Against these new old ghosts I want to proceed in the only way I can: writing [...] East and West, twain shall meet, will continue to be my motto.”<sup>324</sup> Writing not only becomes a means of overcoming “these new old ghosts,” but is also a homecoming: “ ‘Der ungebetene Gast’ [the uninvited guest] (Konstantin Kavafis), ‘Traveller on One Leg’ (Herta Müller), ‘Landless Juan’ (Juan Goytisolo) is coming home—in his natural and naturalized Heimat: into the masses of

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<sup>321</sup> “als einer, der daran gewöhnt ist, es sich in der Ritze zwischen zwei Stühlen bequem zu machen, ohne auch nur einen Stuhl sein eigen nennen zu können” (*WMH* 57).

<sup>322</sup> Salman Rushdie, “Imaginary Homelands,” *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991* (London; New York: Granta Books, 1991). 15.

<sup>323</sup> In her “Against Between: A Manifesto” literary critic Leslie Adelson argues against the perception of the between as constraint rather than enrichment. Against the notion that “Turks and Germans are separated by an absolute cultural divide” denying the links established by writers and other artists (246). For a literary and filmic analysis of the trope of the between, see the dissertation by Adile Esen “Beyond the ‘in-between,’ travels and transformations in contemporary Turkish-German Literature and Film” (Ann Arbor, 2009).

<sup>324</sup> “Gegen diese neuen alten Geister will ich in der einzigen Art vorgehen, wie ich es kann: schreibend [...] East and West, twain shall meet, wird weiterhin mein Wahlspruch sein” (*WMH* 185).



paper out of which thoughts arise.”<sup>325</sup> Not only is this a homecoming for the writer himself—who, by the time he writes this passage, has arrived at the end of his endeavor—but also at the same time for the exilic protagonists in the works of the exilic writers he mentions above, and whom Kurt welcomes in his “world of books.”<sup>326</sup>

Kurt’s slogan “East and West, twain shall meet” is a reformulation of the first line from Rudyard Kipling’s *The Ballad of the East*: “Oh East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet” (emphasis mine). In his modification, Kurt blurs the boundaries between East and West reconnecting these two spaces. Finally, according to Kurt, the locations of East and West lie in the eye of the beholder:

West is West. But where is the East? Where does it begin, where does it end?  
Eastward of the east is the West. Westward of the West is the Orient. No matter  
how you look at it, it remains a question of one’s standpoint. Just half a turn and  
the world already looks different.<sup>327</sup>

Here, Kurt shows how he distorts the limits and perimeters of East and West by reducing these parameters to easily interchangeable geographical locations. East and West are malleable terms, depending on the point of origin and view of the observer.

Kurt already blurs the boundaries between East and West in the process of writing this book. He creates a new canon of world literature through his inscription of non-Western works into the Western canon, like those of Aziz Nesin and Orhan Veli Kanık, but also his inclusion of Turkish-German writers, Emine Sevgi Özdamar and Aras Ören, and eventually himself. By writing this book, Kurt further integrates himself as a writer,

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<sup>325</sup> “‘Der ungebetene Gast’ (Konstantin Kavafis), ‘Der Reisende auf einem Bein’ (sic!) (Herta Müller), ‘Johann ohne Land’ (Juan Goytisolo) kehrt heim—in seine natürliche und naturalisierte Heimat: in die Papiermassen, aus denen Gedanken entspringen” (Ibid., 185).

<sup>326</sup> The nature of exile differs among these writers: Herta Müller was forced to emigrate due to censorship restrictions in Communist Romania; Juan Goytisolo fled from the fascist Franco Regime in Spain, and Constantine Cavafy exiled himself from the outside world in Alexandria.

<sup>327</sup> “West ist West. Wo aber liegt der Osten? Wo fängt er an, wo hört er auf? Östlich des Ostens liegt der Westen. Westlich des Westens ist der Orient. Wie man es auch dreht, es bleibt eine Frage des Standpunktes. Nur eine halbe Umdrehung und schon sieht die Welt anders aus” (Ibid., 185).

along with his works, into German literature, exilic, and world literature. Through transtextuality—the inclusion of epigraphs based on texts by Nazım Hikmet, Elias Canetti, Aras Ören, and hypotexts by Benjamin and Adorno, as well as intertextual references such as quotations from Gertrud Stein and Orhan Veli—Kurt “cho[oses] his peers and thus his place in the pantheon.”<sup>328</sup> He thus textually creates his place among his precursors, successors, and contemporaries.

Kurt quotes the following passage from Gertrude Stein’s *Paris/France*, which becomes the blueprint for his book:

After all, everybody, that is, everybody who writes is interested in living inside themselves in order to tell what is inside themselves. That is why writers have to have two countries, the one where they belong and the one in which they live really. The second one is romantic, it is separate from themselves, it is not real but it is really there.<sup>329</sup>

Berlin becomes the actual geographical place where Kurt locates belongingness, and in his world of books, literature constitutes his abstract, “romantic” Heimat, which is “not real” but “really there”—to recall Stein. Kurt situates Heimat locally in Berlin, and globally in the canon of world literature. Providing the answer to the question posed by the book title, *What is the Plural of Heimat?* in his book he interweaves his various attachments: the processes of writing and reading, his cultural affiliations with Germany and Turkey, and his physical attachment to the location of his books, Berlin. Heimat thus emerges in the plural, being at once real and utopian, tangible and abstract.

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<sup>328</sup> Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. 160.

<sup>329</sup> Gertrude Stein, *Paris/France* (New York: Scribner, 1940). 2. Quoted in German in *WMH*, 113.

## **Sounding Nostalgia: Islamic Force and Gurbet**

While Kurt engages in a literary construction of Heimat, Islamic Force formulate Turkish-German belongingness musically. In contrast to the literary text, music enjoys a sensory immediacy. The quest of belonging in Kurt's works is a personal, solitary, and private endeavor, whereas Islamic Force's journey is public, collective, and shared. In 1986, Kreuzberg locals Killa Hakan, DJ Derezon and Nellie, along with Boe-B from the Istanbul neighborhood of Kadıköy (Istanbul) founded Islamic Force. Unlike any other rap group in Berlin, they were considered closely connected to the community in Kreuzberg.<sup>330</sup> In 2000, with Boe-B's death, the members of Islamic Force went separate ways working on their solo careers.

In the course of their career they published a maxi single (*My Melody*, 1992), one EP (*The Whole World is your Home*, 1993) and one album (*Mesaj*, 1997). Their records were self-released and sold approximately 2000 copies apiece.<sup>331</sup> Though their first two 12" releases were rapped in English, Islamic Force decided to rap their debut in Turkish. Turkish facilitated communication with their community (and, indeed, identifies and interpellates that community in the first place), whereas English lyrics would have presented a language barrier for the majority of their intended audience. Furthermore, since it was their native language, Turkish permitted them greater lyrical dexterity than English.<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> Murat Güngör and Hannes Loh, *Fear of a Kanak Planet: HipHop zwischen Weltmusik und Nazi-Rap* (Höfen: Hannibal, 2002). 174.

<sup>331</sup> Killa Hakan. "Ich will keinen Augenkontakt." *Kozmopolit*. February/March 2003. Web. 2 June 2010. <http://www.kozmopolit.com/Subat03/Kultur/killahakan.html>.

<sup>332</sup> In 2000, with Boe-B's death, the members of Islamic Force went separate ways working on their solo careers.

*Mesaj*, the group's 1997 debut, pays tribute to Kreuzberg. The final song on the album is entitled "Kreuzberg," and personifies their neighborhood<sup>333</sup> when they sing "you have not forgotten us, you brought us up Kreuzberg."<sup>334</sup> Through prosopopeia they address "Kreuzberg" as parent or guardian, connecting themselves to its space emotionally. Like the labor migrants represented in Aras Ören's poems, the poets' emphasis on their familial ties to Naunynstrasse, Islamic Force establish their connection to Kreuzberg as a relational one. Having introduced this district on previous tracks, they synthesize the album's various references to Kreuzberg in this last song. Elucidating contemporary problems in the neighborhood, such as drug abuse and a gang mentality, the group publicizes Kreuzberg's reality. Two of the band members, Killa Hakan and Boe-B, had been actively involved with the street gang *36 Boys*, and drugs. Both of them served prison sentences, which lent them a certain degree of street credibility in the Kreuzberg community. Islamic Force were particularly engaged in the activities of youth centers within their community, especially *Naunynritze*, where they performed already in the late 1980s, introducing their listeners, mainly youngsters, to rap music. Youth centers like the *Naunynritze*, the *Jugend-und Kulturzentrum Schlesische 27*, and *Kreuzberger musikalische Aktion e.V.*, were financed by the local government in Berlin and have been offering break dance and hip hop classes, including performances. In these centers, hip hop culture was promoted as an alternative form of communication. As sociologist Ayşe Çağlar has pointed out, these centers had an "impact encouraging the diaspora youth to

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<sup>333</sup> This is similar to Özdamar's personification of Istanbul as nursing mother in her short story "Mein Istanbul." Emine Sevgi Özdamar, *Der Hof im Spiegel: Erzählungen* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2001). 73.

<sup>334</sup> "Unutmadın, bizi büyüttün, helal olsun sana Kreuzberg." The quotations from lyrics by Islamic Force are from songs of their first album. The translations from Turkish into English are all mine.

use an emerging global music and expressive art forms and to mix them with other forms for their own expressive purposes.”<sup>335</sup>

The goal of speaking for and enlightening their community through rap is central for Islamic Force, for whom rap constitutes the voice of the people.<sup>336</sup> For DJ Derezon “Rappers are the speakers of the streets [...] the politicians of the community [...]”<sup>337</sup> Furthermore, they refer to themselves as “music ambassador[s]” in one of their songs. These artists’ self-perception of serving the community, and their responsibility to it, is comparable to Public Enemy’s reference to rap as “Black CNN.” For Islamic Force, rap offers a means of addressing social injustices and instances of xenophobia and racism that are overlooked or not sufficiently addressed by mainstream media. Referring to the series of xenophobic attacks of the early 1990s, Islamic Force lament the loss of Turkish lives on the album’s first track, “Selamın aleyküm” (peace be with you): “We are losing life, losing blood/Homes are on fire, people go mad sometimes/I was chosen to tell about these things.”<sup>338</sup> Furthermore, Islamic Force organized and participated in a festival in Kreuzberg in 1994, *STREET’94: The Posse Effect*, with the mottos “To Stay Here is My Right” as well as “We all are one.” Local artists agitated for their right to stay through a variety of artistic expressions and events, ranging from street exhibitions, rap, reggae, and pop concerts, to open-air screenings supported by invited artists from around the globe.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> Ayşe Çağlar, “Popular Culture, Marginality and Institutional Cooperation,” *Cultural Dynamics* 10.3 (1998). 249.

<sup>336</sup> “rapde halkin sesiyle geliyoruz,” quoted from their song “Canlardır.”

<sup>337</sup> Kaya, *Sicher in Kreuzberg. Constructing Diasporas: Turkish Hip-Hop Youth in Berlin*. 195.

<sup>338</sup> “Kaybediyoruz can, kaybediyoruz kan, evler yanıyor, bazen deliriyor insan/Ben bunları anlatmak için seçildim/Hepsi bağıyor ‘Bobby söyle’ [...] Burda onlari size anlatıyoruz, haberlerimizi size evet sunuyorum [...]”

<sup>339</sup> See, Levent Soysal, “Labor to Culture: Writing Turkish Migration to Europe,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 102.2/3 (2003).

In addition to their involvement in local protest and solidarity activities, Islamic Force were also committed to nationwide initiatives, and collaborated with the rap artists Cora E. and Hype·A·Delics, on their single “Halt keine Gewalt” (Stop no Violence, 1994), which was arranged by DJ Derezon.<sup>340</sup> The rappers involved identified themselves as the collective of “Hip Hop Aktivisten” (hip hop activists) showing solidarity, calling for respect and peace, and speaking up against the recent violent attacks, racism and xenophobia.<sup>341</sup>

In histories of hip hop culture in Germany (both East and West), but also in other European countries, artists, producers and academics have consistently cited two films as the main impetus: *Wild Style* (1983) and *Beat Street* (1984).<sup>342</sup> Through these films, German youths were introduced to the elements of hip hop culture: breakdancing, graffiti, rap and DJing. *Wild Style*, a combination of fiction and documentary portraying the New York hip hop scene, was a co-production between Charlie Ahearn and the German public television channel ZDF. It premiered on ZDF in English with German subtitles. It features the “godfathers of hip hop” such as Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five. Harry Belafonte’s *Beat Street* was the first commercial film made about hip hop culture, and, as was the case with *Wild Style*, it stars many of the New York scene’s most influential pioneers: Afrika Bambaataa & The Soul Sonic Force and Kool Herc.

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<sup>340</sup> The title of the song provides a clear reference to KRS-One’s 1989 initiative in New York City, the “Stop the Violence” movement.

<sup>341</sup> Islamic Force were not the only ones to address the recent attacks in their music, rap artists throughout Germany reacted to the attacks with the compilation “Hand in Hand gegen Rassismus” (Hand in Hand against Racism, 1995).

<sup>342</sup> Cf. Dieter Elflein, “From Krauts with Attitudes: Some Aspects of Hip-Hop History in Germany,” *Popular Music* 17.3 (1998), Sebastian Krekow and Jens Steiner, *Bei uns geht einiges: Die deutsche HipHop-Szene* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2002), Mark Pennay, “Rap in Germany: The Birth of a Genre,” *Global Noise: Rap and Hip Hop Outside the US*, ed. Tony Mitchell (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001).

The title of Islamic Force's album, *Mesaj*, emphasizes American rap's significance for Islamic Force. The album title makes reference to the rap song "The Message" (1982), in which Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five denounced the hard realities of living in the housing projects of the South Bronx in New York City. It has been acknowledged as the first major political rap song.<sup>343</sup> With their choice of title, Islamic Force situate their first album within the genre of socially conscious and message rap. They rap in Turkish, and sample American soul and rap songs by Grandmaster Flash, Isaac Hayes, Bobby Womack alongside Turkish folk and pop songs by Sezen Aksu, Zülfü Livaneli, Zerrin Özer, and Barış Manço. Boe-B puts it this way: "We do it in Germany, originating from Turkey and using an American black style of music and Turkish melodies."<sup>344</sup>

On *Mesaj*, Islamic Force explore the notions of gurbet and memleket in three of their tracks: "Gurbet," "Gurbetçi Çocukları" (Children of Gurbetçi)<sup>345</sup> and "Bu Dünya" (This World). "Gurbet" is the seventh track on the album, and the first to address, as the title already indicates, the notion of uprootedness and loss. The song starts with a soul-tinged intro, played on drums and the guitar. This regular and steady rhythmic pattern continues throughout the whole song. Nellie introduces the first stanza with a soft and pining voice. The wistful tone supports the lyrics, as she sings about "falling stars" ("yıldızlar yere düşer") and "separation" ("ayrılık"). The intro, the passages sung by Nellie, the instrumental interlude between the fourth and fifth stanza, and the outro are all accompanied by the sound of chimes. The sound of the chimes fades out throughout the

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<sup>343</sup> For further information see, Mark Anthony Neal, "Postindustrial Soul: Black Popular Music at the Crossroads," *That's the Joint! The Hip-Hop Studies Reader*, eds. Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal (New York; London: Routledge, 2004). 372.

<sup>344</sup> Elflein, "From Krauts with Attitudes: Some Aspects of Hip-Hop History in Germany." 263.

<sup>345</sup> Gurbetçi can both be translated as "guest worker" and also refer more generally to someone living away from home/the homeland. I left it untranslated because the maintenance of both of these meanings is important; this emphasizes the inheritability of the condition of 'gurbet' for the second and third generation of Turkish-Germans.

parts that are rapped by Boe-B, and is then replaced by a constant, dissonant siren-like sound. While the sound of the chimes adds to the nostalgia evoked by Nellie's voice and the lyrics, the siren-like sound functions as a signaling device indicating a shift in thematic focus in Boe-B's rapped verses. Whereas Nellie does not directly refer to the notion of gurbet in the first stanza, Boe-B introduces the consequences of living in gurbet in the second stanza. Not only does he introduce himself as a "child of gurbet" ("gurbetler çocuğu"), he also presents the impact of gurbet on his life. Gurbet is metaphorically presented as an active force, which "dried him up" ("gurbet ellinde ... kurudum"), "swallowed him," ("beni ... yuttu") and "killed his dreams" ("hayallarımı öldürdü"). It further replaced his hopes, with a "longing for his motherland" ("vatan özlemi"). The characteristics of gurbet put forth by Boe-B are rapped in alternation with a repetition of the phrase "Türkülerimi Dağlarda Unuttum" (I forgot my lyrics in the mountains). This verse invokes a song title by Turkish pop star Zerrin Özer, from her album *Zerrin Özer '97* (1997). Its repetition throughout the song lends cohesion to the song together and adds emphasis to this verse. This is not the only intertextual reference to this Özer song; all passages sung by Nellie are taken from the lyrics of his song as well, and consist of a sequence of symbols of longing and separation: "the scent of burnt carnation on my skin," "nights with broken wings," "a poem of separation, the sound of a dove."<sup>346</sup>

Boe-B raps the fourth stanza, which starts with his request to "the mountains, the lands, the skies to listen what [he] has to say about gurbet." He further admits that, "until now I kept all of this to himself [...] the wind shall blow my words to you and everybody

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<sup>346</sup> "tenimde yanık karanfil kokusu," "kanadı kırık...geceler," "bir ayrılık şiiri, bir güvercin sesi."



shall know, that I forgot my folk songs in the mountains.”<sup>347</sup> Nellie sings the fifth and last stanza, and this time with a modification of Özer’s lyrics, when she says, “life is falling, rising, passing by disappearing in the loneliness of a brigand [...] hope is left for tomorrow.”<sup>348</sup> She repeats this verse once, in a higher pitch and elongating some syllables, which turns her voice into wailing sound. Through the textual thematization of nostalgia for a return and sorrow emanating from the condition of gurbet, this song thematically connects to the songs of the early immigration stages in Germany, I discussed earlier in this chapter. Musically, Islamic Force contextualize their own sense of, being in gurbet by interpolating elements of soul, rather than a Turkish musical style. This distinguishes their treatment of gurbet from earlier thematizations in arabesk and folk music. It is the delivery—Nellie’s pining voice, Boe-B’s fiercely rapped verses—that interacts with and supports the content of the lyrics, rather than the musical style they chose. Apart from the chimes and siren-like sound, which are used for emphasis, nothing in the music interacts with the song text. On the contrary, the steady rhythmic pattern provides the song with a stable anchor, from which the nostalgic theme and the plaintive voice depart.

“Gurbetçi Çocukları,” the album’s twelfth track, also thematizes the notion of exile. In contrast to “Gurbet,” this song is less melodic, and more rhythmic. Grandmaster Flash’s “The Message” resurfaces in “Gurbetçi Çocukları,” in which they sample the song’s synthesizer melody. It starts with the chorus sung by Nellie: It starts with the chorus sung by Nellie: “In Turkey I am an almancı, in Germany I am a foreigner; I am a

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<sup>347</sup> “dağlar, yerler, gökler dinlesin gurbetden anladıklarımı [...] şimdiye kadar bunların hepsini kendime tuttum [...] rüzgar essin sözlerimi sizlere getirsin ve herkez bilsin ki türkülerimi dağlarda unuttum.”

<sup>348</sup> “Düşe kalka geçip gidiyor hayat bir eşkiya yalnızlığında [...] umutlar kaldı yarına.”

child of a gurbetçi.”<sup>349</sup> Gurbet here is used to describe their marginalization in both countries, in Turkey and in Germany; they sing of being referred to as “Almancı” in Turkey and as “yabancı” (foreigner) in Germany.<sup>350</sup> Whereas Kurt points to the plurality of Heimat, Islamic Force draw attention to the plurality of its antonym, Fremde. This already occurs in the song “Gurbet,” in which Islamic Force refer to themselves as “gurbetler çocuğu” (child[ren] of [multiple] exiles). Multiplying the experience of exile, they thus foreground their marginalization in both countries.

Their determination to respond not only to xenophobic sentiment but also to their marginalization is made clear when Boe-B vows to take “recourse to music and not to violence.”<sup>351</sup> Alluding to the arson attacks of the early 1990s, Boe-B raps “in spite of Molotov cocktails at my heels, I reach you [...] neither liar, neither foreigner, nor almancı, we are only children of gurbetçi.”<sup>352</sup> Here, they reject the terms reserved for them in Turkey and Germany, which describe them in terms of otherness, and declare themselves children of gurbetçi.

This first stanza is followed by the chorus, in which Nellie underscores Boe-B’s statement, and criticizes the exclusionary terms used for second and third generation Turkish youth. In the last verse of the chorus, Nellie also announces, “we are finding a way backstage.”<sup>353</sup> In the second stanza, Boe-B specifies the identity of the plural *you* he is addressing in the first stanza by rapping, “for our Turkish youth in the whole world I

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<sup>349</sup> “Türkiyede almancı Almanyada yabancı; gurbetçi çocuğuyum ben.”

<sup>350</sup> “Almancı” is a derogatory term for Turkish-Germans used in Turkey. Another example is “Almanyalı/Yabancı” by the Turkish-German rap group Karakan from Nuremberg.

<sup>351</sup> “Şiddete değil müziğe baş vuruyorum.”

<sup>352</sup> “Molotof kokteylleri peşimde, yinede size ulaşıyorum [...] Ne yalancı ne yabancı ne almancı, sadece gurbetçi çocuklarıyız evet.”

<sup>353</sup> biz perde arkasında yolumuzu buluyoruz.”

found a new way with music.”<sup>354</sup> Because they were pioneers in the Turkish-German rap scene, Islamic Force’s members stress an innovative accomplishment: communicating with the Turkish diaspora through rap music. When looking at their record sales statistics, it becomes clear that their goal to reach listeners around the globe remains as yet unrealized. However, even if their aimed global success failed, at a local level they were of great importance for Kreuzberg’s youth and the Berlin rap scene.

Furthermore, the song text is used as a means of identifying and condemning prevailing stereotypes against people of Turkish descent: “according to the Germans we dirty their motherland and steal their jobs.”<sup>355</sup> Speaking out against prejudices and marginalization, Boe-B proclaims: “it is time, we are revolting with music.”<sup>356</sup> This stanza ends with the message of the song: “our time between two cultures will pass [...] our time of longing for our motherland will pass. We, the Turkish youth abroad.”<sup>357</sup> Islamic Force have introduced the Turkish youth abroad as their addressee at the beginning of this stanza. Here, by using the plural possessive pronoun “bizim” (our) and personal pronoun “bizler” they include themselves in, and connect themselves to, the Turkish diaspora. These last verses have a different rhythmic pattern that allows for a slower pronunciation, while at the same time marking this part as different for the listeners, distinguishing it from the rest of the song. After this last stanza, Nellie sings the chorus one last time—a chorus that, as the song progresses, functions as a reinforcement of what Boe-B communicates in his two stanzas.

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<sup>354</sup> “Tüm dünyada yaşayan Türk gençliğimiz için, yeni bir müzik yolu buldum.”

<sup>355</sup> “almanlara göre vatanlarını pisletiyoruz işlerini alıyoruz.”

<sup>356</sup> “Artık zamanı geldi müzikle ‘başkaldırıyoruz.’”

<sup>357</sup> “Bizim zaman iki kültür arasında geçer [...] bizim zaman vatan özlemiyle geçer. Bizler yurt dışında yaşayan gençler.”

The last minute of the song highlights DJ Derezon's turntable techniques, his scratching abilities, accompanied by repetitive exclamations of "hey, hey." Scratching is a common rap technique, which produces a distinct sound by moving a record backwards and forwards very quickly and was first put on record by Grandmaster Flash.<sup>358</sup> By showcasing this technique, Islamic Force include a central element in the emergence of rap music in their song, while at the same time drawing attention to their scratching skills, through the interpellation "hey." With both the sampling of "The Message," and their own rapped lyrics, they emphasize the message-function of "Gurbetçi Çocukları." The notion of betweenness that characterizes Kemal Kurt's search for and construction of Heimat resurfaces in this song. And for Islamic Force, as for Kurt, liminality also denotes a transitional stage that can be overcome and reevaluated. This occurs in and through music, which not only provides them with a means for self-assertion but also a connection to the diasporic Turkish community.

With their local ties expressed in "Selamın Aleyküm" and "Kreuzberg," and with their diasporic connections put forth in "Gurbetçi Çocukları," in "Bu Dünya" they manifest their belonging as cosmopolitan, extending to the whole world. "Bu Dünya" is the only song of the three songs discussed here which incorporates a Turkish instrument, the *mey* (cylindrical oboe).<sup>359</sup> *The Vinyl Ain't Final* contributor Timothy S. Brown casts "Kreuzberg-Turks" as "living an uneasy existence between and across cultures" and as a group "caught between two worlds" living in a "situation of uncertainty."<sup>360</sup> Islamic

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<sup>358</sup> Cf. Nelson George, "Hip-Hop's Founding Fathers Speak the Truth," *That's the Joint! The Hip-Hop Studies Reader*, eds. Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal (New York; London: Routledge, 2004). 45.

<sup>359</sup> The descriptions for the musical instruments are taken from *Grove Music Online*.

<sup>360</sup> Timothy Brown, "'Keeping it Real' in a Different Hood: (African-)Americanization and Hip Hop in Germany," *The Vinyl Ain't Final: Hip Hop and the Globalization of Black Popular Culture*, eds. Dipanita Basu and Sidney J. Lemelle (Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2006). 145–147.

Force counter this statement with their song “Bu Dünya” (This World). Here, they postulate “this world is the home for all of us.”<sup>361</sup> In referring to the world as “memleket,” they extend their ties, their space called Heimat, from Berlin to the world.<sup>362</sup> As the borders of Heimat become coterminous with those of the world, Islamic Force open up the sonic space of rap music to the East, by incorporating the tune of the *mey*.

The twenty-two second intro, played on drums and the *mey*, immediately draws attention to, and supports, Boe-B’s request in the first verse: “I want to see you all together [...] a world full of sisters, brothers, friends, I say we shall be one big family.”<sup>363</sup> In “this world” they sing of, people come together irrespective of class—“without difference between rich and poor”<sup>364</sup>—or ethnicity and race—“Black, Japanese, Indian.”<sup>365</sup> The first stanza is followed by the chorus, sung by Nellie, where she again reiterates “It does not matter where you were born, the whole world is your home,” which is repeated twice for emphasis.<sup>366</sup> Between the chorus and the second stanza, there is a short instrumental interlude, played by the *mey* and the drums. Following this musical link, Boe-B raps the second stanza in which he once more emphasizes the equality of all people. This stanza is suspended by a dialogue between Nellie and Killa Hakan, where Nellie asks a very common question in the Turkish language—“compatriot, where are you from?”—which usually involves one’s place of birth. Killa Hakan responds, “You are wrong. The whole world is my home.” This is followed by the repetition of her question, to which Killa Hakan again responds, “I could not explain it to you, apparently;

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<sup>361</sup> “hepimizin memlektidir bu dünya.”

<sup>362</sup> Similarly Muhabbet, founder of the genre of R&Besk, sings “wir teilen alle doch dasselbe Dach” (we all share the same roof).

<sup>363</sup> “Hepinizi bir arada görmek istiyorum [...] Bir dünya dolu bacı abi kardeş, Bir büyük aile olalım derim.”

<sup>364</sup> “zenginle ve fakir arasında fark olmadan.”

<sup>365</sup> “zenciyi, japonu, hinti...ayrım, kayrım yapmayın.”

<sup>366</sup> “Nerde doğdun önemsiz bütün dünya dünyandır.”

the whole world is my neighborhood.”<sup>367</sup> This dialogue between Nellie and Killa Hakan is almost taken verbatim from the chorus of a song by Turkish pop singer Barış Manço, “Hemşerim memleket nere?” (Compatriot Where Are You From?). In this song, Manço claims the world to be his memleket, his home—just as Islamic Force will do later on. Extending his Heimat space to the world on the one hand, Killa Hakan emphasizes cosmopolitan affiliations across borders; referring to the world as his neighborhood, he implies a sense of familiarity and reaffirms a close bond on the other hand. The second stanza then resumes, with Boe-B supporting Killa Hakan’s answers in rapped verse: “whether from this place, that place or from here, a person is a person [...] one has to draw a line [...] and protect the world, because it is the home of all of us.”<sup>368</sup> Following Boe-B’s lines, Nellie sings the chorus twice, again accompanied by the mey. In her repetition her singing style changes, to both emphasize as well as reiterate, “the whole world is our fatherland.” The song ends in an outro played by drums, which resonates with Nellie’s words. The melody played by the mey is sampled from another Barış Manço song entitled “Ölüm Allahın Emri” (Death is God’s Will, 1972).<sup>369</sup> This is a song on the pain of separation from a loved one, which is the reason for a deeply felt melancholy, *hüzün*. While they only sample the melody from this song, Islamic Force incorporate the nostalgia for Turkey, which persists despite their having located Heimat in the world, through sound. With their incorporation of global musical influences, their interweaving of American and Turkish music, they reinvent the local, Berlin. The sound

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<sup>367</sup> “Hemşerim memleket nere? Yanlışsın Bütün dünya memleketimdir. Hemşerim memleket nere. Anlatamadım galiba dünya benim sentimdir.”

<sup>368</sup> “İster oralı şuralı, ya da buralı, insan insandır” “sinir koymalı [...] ve dünyayı korumalı çünkü hepimizin memlektidir.”

<sup>369</sup> On the album “Ben bilirim” (1975).

of Berlin as it emerges in Islamic Force's music, allows for a musically produced synthesis of various cultural influences and links, Turkish, American, and German.

In the three songs dealing with the notion of gurbet discussed here, Islamic Force address its various facets: from "Gurbet"'s description of the nostalgia for Turkey, to "Gurbetçi Çocukları," a message to the Turkish youth in the diaspora, that the state of betweenness will pass, to "Bu Dünya" where the world becomes their home. In addition to the songs on the notion of gurbet, Islamic Force included songs on their album that clearly manifest belonging in Kreuzberg/Berlin. They introduce themselves as "Kreuzberg rapperleri" (rappers from Kreuzberg) and specifically address Kreuzberg locals, "Kreuzbergliler," on their album. In the first song on the album, "Selamın aleyküm" (peace be with you), they establish Kreuzberg as "their neighborhood" and the last song on the album, "Kreuzberg," is dedicated to this district. And while they address the notion of gurbet in-between these songs, they arrive where they started, in Kreuzberg. Through the songs on their album, Islamic Force express their belongingness locally (Kreuzberg)—as in "Selamın Aleyküm"—but also diasporically—as in "Gurbetçi Çocukları"—as part of a "relational network."<sup>370</sup>

American music genres like soul and rap—and especially songs by Grandmaster Flash—are significant for Islamic Force. Their songs attest to this by means of intertextuality, e.g. the sampling of the "Message"'s melodic line, and the song's title. Furthermore, they quote lyrics from pop songs by Turkish pop singers Özer and Manço, which emphasizes the significance of Turkish music. In paratextual sources like interviews, they repeatedly emphasize their responsibility to the local community in

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<sup>370</sup> Paul Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000). 123.

which they live. Finally they assign their music the genre classification of “Oriental hip hop.” In their work, the transtextual relationships they create produce an overall sense of plurality, of inclusion, and a multiplicity of affiliations.

## **Conclusion**

In her essay, “Against Between: a Manifesto,” literary critic Leslie Adelson criticizes the fact that critics in Germany imagine migrants as “suspended on a bridge between two worlds” not “crossing the bridge and arriving somewhere new.”<sup>371</sup> For Islamic Force and Kurt, the notion of *gurbet*, and betweenness, emanating from their condition of uprootedness, is revaluated and transformed from a disadvantageous—as criticized by Adelson above—to an enriching condition, which becomes an impetus to write and sing. Kurt and Islamic Force blur the boundaries between East and West, Turkey and Germany respectively, and connect these two cultural spaces through transtextual references. Through their textual and musical construction of home, they formulate their own sense of *Heimat*—a sense that is inclusive of both Turkish and German cultural traditions.

While Berlin comes to signify *Heimat* in a geographical sense, Kemal Kurt also locates *Heimat* within literary works. Kurt’s literary home, which consists of his “world of books,” provides him with a sense of security. More than this, the books in his personal library serve as an archive to his past, as each book bears memories of a certain place and stage in his life. In writing this book, Kurt not only locates his own text, and himself as a writer, within the canon of world literatures; he also chooses a close

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<sup>371</sup> Leslie A. Adelson, “Against Between: A Manifesto,” *Unpacking Europe: Towards a Critical Reading*, eds. Salah Hassan and Iftikhar Dadi (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2001).245–246.



proximity to exilic writers, for whom, like Kurt, writing and the written become “a place to live.” Kurt’s homecoming thus operates on two levels: the geographical and the figurative sense.

Like Kurt, Islamic Force find their figurative Heimat in varied and plural affiliations, in traditions which span borders and epochs. They create their own way of dealing with and overcoming the betweenness through rap music, where melodies, in addition to the lyrics, can signify a sense of belonging. By quoting lyrics and sampling melodies from songs by well-known Turkish musicians and rapping in Turkish, Islamic Force maintain their ties to Turkey. Music enables them to manifest multiple attachments and links to Berlin/Germany, Turkey, the US, and the world. Just as Kemal Kurt seeks comfort, protection, and support in writing and the written, Islamic Force find it in rap music. To access the full range of what home constitutes for them, Kurt and Islamic Force had to venture through the stories they tell in their works.

For Islamic Force and Kurt, prose and music also become a medium for political protest as well as lamentation. In the aftermath of the attacks in the early 1990s, they address and condemn rising racism, emanating from a felt responsibility to speak to their community of belonging. Kurt makes space for socio-political and cultural criticism, commenting on the status of minority writing, political discourse on immigration, and the history of incommensurability between Turks and Germans. He thus raises an awareness for these matters, which is embedded in his own quest for Heimat. In Islamic Force, the significance of conveying a message is foregrounded in multiple ways: the lyrics, album titles, and the melodic samples.

For the artists discussed here being between Turkish and German cultures becomes a driving force in their creativity, enabling them to leave the between space in challenging the dichotomies of East/West, Turkish/German, and Fremde/Heimat. Their uprootedness and feeling of betweenness is figured as a transitory stage, a catalyst, necessary to formulate the location and contours of what constitutes home. An essential feature accompanying this transitory stage is their longing for home, but instead of a return to a past of home, it is directed towards finding a new home. In their reconceptualization of Heimat, home emerges as a plural and not a singular concept, as polyglot and not monolingual, in flux and not static, at once tangible and emotional; despite its global range—Kreuzberg, Turkey, writings, the US and the world—it has its local base in Berlin.

## Chapter IV

### East meets West: Connecting Istanbul and Berlin

Jeder hat in einer Stadt seine persönliche Stadt.  
Emine Sevgi Özdamar

Since 1988, Berlin and Istanbul have been sister cities. The partnership between these two cities has been explored and showcased through various art forms at festivals, exhibits, and concerts. Since 2008, the *Kreuztanbul* festival takes place annually in Berlin. It “presents intrinsic intersections and influences...between Kreuzberg and Istanbul.”<sup>372</sup> In 2009, a variety of events including art shows, plays, sound installations, and lectures took place in Berlin and Istanbul to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the partnership between these two cities. In the same year, *Türkiyeah*, the inaugural RnBesk festival, took place in Berlin.

In this chapter, I examine literary texts and songs that intertwine the spaces of Berlin and Istanbul. Central to my analysis are Emine Sevgi Özdamar’s novel *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde: Wedding – Pankow 1967/77* (Strange Stars Stare to Earth, 2003) and songs by Orientation. I will illustrate that the official connection between these two cities has been aesthetically realized in music and literature, as well. Rather than

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<sup>372</sup> “[...] stellt wesentliche Positionen aus Überschneidungen und Beeinflussungen [...] zwischen Kreuzberg und Istanbul vor.” x-tract-production. "Kreuztanbul." Web. June 13, 2011. <http://www.x-tract-production.de/pages/deutsch-/kreuztanbul/kreuztanbul-08/konzept-kreuz08.php>,

reaffirming the East/West dichotomy Edward Said identified as underpinning Orientalist discourse, Orientation and Özdamar choose to intertwine the “familiar” and the “strange.”<sup>373</sup>

This chapter further examines the possibilities the city offers to maintain multiple attachments—emotional, spatial, and cultural—for both Özdamar’s texts and Orientation’s songs. I argue that Turkish-German works, such as Özdamar’s and Orientation’s, model the possibility of alternative forms of belonging which cross national boundaries. I read Özdamar’s texts and Orientation’s songs as instances of the cultural exchange between Istanbul and Berlin. For these artists, both cities are mirrored within each other, a relationality which is aesthetically articulated through weaving these metropolises’ sounds and spaces together. This chapter further explores how they challenge static and dichotomous notions of place, musically and textually rearranging the Western space in which they live to reflect their own conception of an intertwined space of East and West. East and West are emblemized by Berlin and Istanbul, respectively; but Istanbul’s Asiatic and European sides, along with Berlin’s different neighborhoods, also assume similar representational roles. Despite the patent differences between the cities, which emerge as they are narrated in her text, the boundaries within and between them appear porous and fluid—whether geographic (frontiers, waters), ideological (Orient/Occident), or physical (the Berlin Wall).

Orientation and Özdamar create linkages in differing ways. Özdamar looks back at a certain time period, and connects the cities by textual association. Orientation’s compositions make use of both cities’ musical traditions. While Özdamar connects the

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<sup>373</sup> In *Orientalism*, Edward Said suggests “Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, “us”) and the strange (the Orient, the East, “them”).” Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978). 43.

cities through acts of remembering, prompted by visual and aural stimuli, Orientation synthesizes various musical elements into a new sound. Through the inscription of Turkish memories onto Berlin and the infusion of the city's sound with Turkish rhythms and song samples, Özdamar and Orientation create transnational links between these two cities.

As in my previous chapters, a central feature regarding the works of both Özdamar and Orientation, is transtextuality. By contrast with Ören and Kurt, Özdamar adds a novel dimension by using excerpts from her own previously published works as intertexts (alongside poems by Else Lasker-Schüler and Konstantin Kavafis, Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht songs, and news snippets and headlines). In Orientation's music, the Turkish musical tradition serves as a hypotext, or "source of signification" for their original Berlin sound.<sup>374</sup> They use meters, rhythms, and instruments at home in the Turkish music tradition, and combine these with Western musical genres and elements. When comparing Özdamar to Orientation, one notices that they differ not only in their choice of medium, but also with respect to the time frames their texts involve. Özdamar writes about specific periods in the past, while Orientation's music emerges from their present experience of both cities.

### **Staging Berlin: Emine Sevgi Özdamar**

Emine Sevgi Özdamar is a Turkish-German actress, novelist, and dramatist. She was born in Malatya, Turkey in 1946. Her first experiences with the theatre reach back to her childhood years. At age twelve, she appeared on stage for the first time at the state theatre in Bursa in Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*. In 1965, she migrated to Germany, and worked until 1967 in a factory in West Berlin. After returning to Istanbul

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<sup>374</sup> Allen, *Intertextuality*. 108.

in 1967, she studied acting, spending three years at drama school. In 1976, she traveled to East Berlin, where she fulfilled her dream to work with Brecht pupil Benno Besson. From 1979 until 1984, she held a position at the Bochumer Schauspielhaus and published her first play *Karagöz in Alemania* (Blackeye in Germany, 1982), which was performed in 1986 at the Schauspielhaus in Frankfurt/Main under her own direction. In addition, she has appeared in various movies, including Hark Bohm's *Yasemin* (1988), Doris Dörrie's *Happy Birthday Türke* (1992), and Thorsten Wacker's *Süperseks* (2004). Since 1982, she has devoted herself to writing on a full-time basis composing poems, novels, and plays that are based on her experiences in Germany and Turkey. She has received numerous awards for her literary work: the Ingeborg Bachmann Preis in 1991, the Adalbert von Chamisso-Preis in 1999, and the Heinrich-von-Kleist-Preis in 2004.

Her semi-autobiographical novels *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei hat zwei Türen aus einer kam ich rein aus der anderen ging ich raus* (Life is a Caravanserei 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*<sup>375</sup> constitute a trilogy called *Sonne auf halbem Weg: Die Istanbul-Berlin Trilogie* (Sun Halfway: The Istanbul-Berlin Trilogy, 2006). In each of the novels of the trilogy, Özdamar told the *FAZ*, she covers a certain "time period, in which a story is lived to its end. Like in a fairy tale: ...Once upon a time there was a wall."<sup>376</sup> Özdamar employs narrative techniques in her semi-autobiographical novels that point towards the narration of the past as a creative act.

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<sup>375</sup> Henceforth cited as SeSt.

<sup>376</sup> [...] Zeitabschnitte, in denen eine Geschichte zu Ende gelebt war [...] Wie im Märchen: ... Es war einmal die Mauer. Nils Minkmar, "Wir wohnen in einer weiten Hölle," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* November 21, 2004.

Özdamar's literary assessment of German history, divided Berlin, and the events of the *Deutscher Herbst* presents a novel perspective and creates a new subject of German memory discourse: the migrant, who is, as Silke Schade suggests, a "simultaneous insider and outsider."<sup>377</sup> Scholars like Laura Bradley, Silke Schade, and Kader Konuk have written about Özdamar's unique insights into the German past.<sup>378</sup> My primary concern here, however, is not how Özdamar represents German historic events in her works. Rather, I am concerned with how she represents Cold War Berlin as a setting in her novel. How does she use theatre and film, formally and thematically, to stage Berlin and its connection to Istanbul?

As the title of her trilogy already indicates, the connection between the cities of Istanbul and Berlin is central to her oeuvre. *Seltsame Sterne*, the final part, portrays the female protagonist's life in her late twenties in the divided Berlin, focusing on her private relationships as well as her professional life as Benno Besson's assistant at the Volksbühne. The novel covers the years of 1976-77, and while the text contains references to the narrator's past life in Turkey, it never alludes to the future.<sup>379</sup> The novel is written in diary form and is divided into two parts. Both parts are characterized by a fragmentary structure. The first part includes quotations from Brecht and Weill songs, Besson's archive notes, and news headlines, while the second part incorporates dialogues, play excerpts, original sketches and notes from her time as intern at the Volksbühne.

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<sup>377</sup> Silke Schade, "Rewriting Home and Migration: Spatiality in the Narratives of Emine Sevgi Özdamar," *Spatial Turns: Space, Place, and Mobility in German Literary and Visual Culture*, eds. Jamie Fisher and Barbara Mennel (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2010). 336.

<sup>378</sup> Cf. Silke Schade, "Rewriting Home and Migration: Spatiality in the Narratives of Barbara Honigmann and Emine Sevgi Özdamar," University of Cincinnati, 2007, Laura Bradley, "Recovering the Past and Capturing the Present: Özdamar's *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*," *New German Literature: Life-Writing and Dialogues with the Arts*, eds. Julian Preece, Frank Finlay and Ruth J. Owen (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), and Konuk, "Taking on German and Turkish History: Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Seltsame Sterne*."

<sup>379</sup> Bradley, "Recovering the Past and Capturing the Present: Özdamar's *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*." 284.

Özdamar thus intentionally blurs the boundaries between author and narrator, as well as between diary, fiction, and autobiography. Throughout both parts, she also repeatedly quotes her own work, establishing connections between her literary texts, which, as Liesbeth Minnaard has shown, “refer to and even pre- and re-tell each other.”<sup>380</sup>

A variety of scholars have analyzed Özdamar’s works’ use of theatrical features. Venkat Mani, for example, examines Özdamar’s incorporation of “various elements of several theatrical traditions...non-Western and Western,” such as the Turkish aesthetic traditions of *Meddah* (public storyteller and mimic) and *Karagöz* (main figure in Turkish shadow theatre) in *Die Brücke*.<sup>381</sup> Kader Konuk investigates Özdamar’s “staged speech,” (“inszeniertes Sprechen”), focusing on Özdamar’s staging of accented German in *Die Brücke*.<sup>382</sup> For her part, Silke Schade analyzes “the ways in which [...] literary and theatrical spaces are perceived, conceived, and lived” in *Die Brücke* and *Seltsame Sterne*.<sup>383</sup> My analysis of *Seltsame Sterne* also centers on the theatrical and cinematic strategies Özdamar uses in her representation and appropriation of Berlin. However, I inquire into the significance of theatre and film on the formal as well as the thematic level. That is, I focus both on the techniques of montage, cutting, and staging that are in evidence, and on the ways in which sounds, voices, and music are shown to constitute the city aurally.

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<sup>380</sup> Liesbeth Minnaard, *New Germans, New Dutch: Literary Interventions* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008). 72.

<sup>381</sup> B. Venkat Mani, “The Good Woman of Istanbul: Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*,” *Gegenwartsliteratur: German Studies Yearbook 2* (2003). 35.

<sup>382</sup> Kader Konuk, “Identitätssuche ist ein [sic!] private archäologische Graberei: Emine Sevgi Özdamars inszeniertes Sprechen,” *AufBrüche: Kulturelle Produktionen von Migrantinnen, Schwarzen und jüdischen Frauen in Deutschland*, eds. Cathy S. Gelbin, Kader Konuk and Peggy Piesche (Königstein/Taunus: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 1999). 67.

<sup>383</sup> Schade, “Rewriting Home and Migration: Spatiality in the Narratives of Barbara Honigmann and Emine Sevgi Özdamar.”106.



Özdamar's emigration from Turkey is central to her trilogy. Writing about her past enables her "to stage the old world one more time, as if I could see it with different layers on stage, in order to make it accessible anew and never forget, as a staging."<sup>384</sup> In comparing her writing style to the process of staging, Özdamar bestows a visual quality on her writing. For Özdamar, as we can deduce from the lines above, writing is not so much about a factual preservation of something as it occurred, but a means of reimagining events so that they might be seen in a different light. For Özdamar, "staging" what has been lost is a crucial part of dealing with her past; not an act of reproduction but an opportunity for reinvention and rediscovery through which she can represent the city as a product of her own experiences, her own "personal" city that is inclusive of her various attachments. And although her experiences are the basis for her writing—"my experiences are my material"—"when one starts writing," as she explains, "one does not reproduce the past, but rather one goes on a different journey."<sup>385</sup>

Theatre has played a central role in Özdamar's life. She wrote various plays and staged them in theatres throughout Germany, as for example in Bochum and Stuttgart. Bertolt Brecht was an important figure in her development as playwright and writer: "I belong to the 68ers. This movement also existed in Turkey and is, without Brecht, whom we adored, unthinkable."<sup>386</sup> His poems and songs recur as intertexts in her oeuvre; the following lines from *Nannas Lied* (Nanna's Song, 1936) are especially striking: "Thank

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<sup>384</sup> die alte Welt noch einmal inszenieren, als ob ich es auf der Bühne noch einmal mit anderen Ebenen sehen könnte, um mir so diese Welt neu zu erschließen und nie wieder zu vergessen, als Inszenierung." "Interview with Emine Sevgi Özdamar by Rotbuch Verlag." 7.

<sup>385</sup> "Meine Erlebnisse sind mein Material [...] wenn man zu schreiben beginnt, bildet man die Vergangenheit nicht ab, sondern geht auf eine andere Reise" "Die Türkei im Banne Brechts," *Rheinische Post* April 22nd, 1998.

<sup>386</sup> "Ich gehöre zu den 68ern. Diese Bewegung gab es auch in der Türkei und ist ohne Brecht, den wir vergöttert haben, nicht denkbar." Cited in Erol M. Boran, "Eine Geschichte des türkisch-deutschen Theatres und Kabarets," Ohio State University, 2004. 138.

the Lord the whole thing's quickly over, all the loving and the sorrow, my dear. Where are the teardrops you wept last evening? Where are the snows of yesteryear?"<sup>387</sup> Brecht's words were a source of comfort and "promised a utopia,"<sup>388</sup> as Özdamar explains, and as is expressed in the preceding lines of *Nannas Lied*, hope of better times. The German language, via literature and theatre, affords a kind of refuge from the militarist regime in Turkey. The language of Brecht was also the incentive for Özdamar's emigration to Germany, as she reveals in an interview:

I had the feeling, that my Turkish words had become sick. They say that you lose your mother tongue in a foreign country. But you can also lose your mother tongue in your own country [...] That's why I wanted to go to Germany and work with a Brecht pupil. Because Brecht has a language. Perhaps, I hoped that my sick Turkish words would thereby recover.<sup>389</sup>

Early in *Seltsame Sterne*, Özdamar's narrator similarly anthropomorphizes her Turkish words as *krank*, "sick," as in the passage above: "I am unhappy in my language. For years, we have been saying only sentences like: They will hang them. Where were the heads? No one knows, where their graves are. They did not release the corpse! The words are sick. My words need a sanatorium."<sup>390</sup> In need of a "sanatorium" for the Turkish language, the narrator immigrated to Germany and involved herself with German theatre. In both instances, Özdamar relates her inability to express herself in her mother tongue directly to the dictatorship in Turkey—its censorship, violence, and political oppression.

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<sup>387</sup> "Gott sei Dank geht alles schnell vorüber auch die Liebe und der Kummer sogar. Wo sind die Tränen von gestern Abend? Wo ist der Schnee vom vergangenen Jahr?" Bertolt Brecht, "Round Heads and Pointed Heads," trans. Tom Kuhn, *Bertolt Brecht. Collected Plays*, eds. Tom Kuhn and John Willet (London: Methuen, 2001). 22.

<sup>388</sup> "versprachen eine Utopie." Minkmar, "Wir wohnen in einer weiten Hölle."

<sup>389</sup> Ich hatte das Gefühl, dass meine türkischen Wörter krank geworden waren. Man sagt, in einem fremden Land verliert man die Muttersprache. Man kann aber auch im eigenen Land die Muttersprache verlieren [...] Deswegen wollte ich nach Deutschland und mit einem Brecht-Schüler arbeiten. Denn Brecht hatte eine Sprache. Vielleicht, hoffte ich, werden meine krank gewordenen türkischen Wörter dadurch wieder zu sich kommen" Annabel Wahba, "Ost-Berlin roch wie Istanbul," *Der Tagesspiegel* April 17, 2005.

<sup>390</sup> "Ich bin unglücklich in meiner Sprache. Wir sagen seit Jahren nur solche Sätze wie: Sie werden sie aufhängen. Wo waren die Köpfe? Man weiß nicht, wo ihr Grab ist. Man hat die Leiche nicht freigegeben! Die Wörter sind krank. Meine Wörter brauchen ein Sanatorium" (*SeSt* 23).

Theatre is also important when it comes to the use of language, because Özdamar's "first encounter with German was via the theatre."<sup>391</sup> Not only did drama help her to access the German language, it also enabled her to express herself in the foreign language, as she admits, "I am certain that these dramatists [Kleist, Büchner, Brecht] did a lot to lure my words out in the open."<sup>392</sup> In conversations with journalists, in her prize acceptance speeches, and in *Seltsame Sterne*, Özdamar repeatedly cites the following sentence to be her first words in German, "Mr. Besson, I have come in order to learn Brechtian theatre from you."<sup>393</sup> In addition to allowing her mother tongue to "recuperate," her immersion in German drama served as both a catalyst for writing and a point of entry to the German language.

And yet, German theatre also provides Özdamar with a connection to the life she had to leave behind. In numerous interviews, Özdamar foregrounds how her involvement with theatre in Germany and German dramatic literature allowed her to keep a connection to Turkey: "...German theatre, its plays seemed to me like an extension of my country."<sup>394</sup> Through drama, Özdamar finds a means to revive and continue a part of her life in Germany, which she had been forced to abandon in Turkey. In *Seltsame Sterne* this continuation is realized through Brecht: his *Mann ist Mann* (Man Equals Man, 1926) is the last play she performed in before emigrating, and upon arrival in Berlin her first destination is the Volksbühne in order to learn Brechtian theatre.

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<sup>391</sup> David Horrocks and Eva Kolinsky, eds., *Turkish Culture in German Society Today* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996). 47.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>393</sup> Emine Sevgi Özdamar, "Rede zur Verleihung des Kleist-Preises," November 21, 2004. 3; "Herr Besson, ich bin gekommen um von Ihnen das Brechttheatre zu lernen" (*SeSt* 34).

<sup>394</sup> "...das deutsche Theater, seine Stücke erschienen mir wie die Verlängerung meines Landes" Bettina Göcmener, "In der Fremde wird die Heimat magisch," *Berliner Morgenpost* November 27, 2002.

Theatre is central to *Seltsame Sterne* on many levels: it is a setting within the novel, it is a metaphor used for Berlin, and, on a meta-level, the narrator's gateway to the German past and language. Sonja Klocke has drawn our attention to the way in which in the novel, East and West Berlin are set up like a revolving stage, a "theatrical device for scene changes, or shifts, by which three or more settings are constructed on a turntable around a central pivot and revolved before the audience."<sup>395</sup> This way, both cities, despite being different stage sets, work together to function as a whole.<sup>396</sup> As the narrator commutes daily between East and West Berlin, once she traverses over to the East, she acknowledges "Westberlin is again a thousand years behind me."<sup>397</sup> When she moves from one part of the city to the other, the setting she leaves behind disappears and remains in static—like the stage set that disappears with the movement of the revolving stage. In *Cosmopolitical Claims*, Venkat Mani refers to this kind of temporary oblivion as effecting an "instant amnesia."<sup>398</sup> Upon her return, the narrator continues where she left off. It is therefore always the narrator who—whether by walking or by remembering—gives life to settings in East or West Berlin, or in Istanbul. She only conceives of either city-section's (East and West Berlin) existence when she is physically there, within it: "Every time I came here, I forgot the other part of the city, as if a large sea divided these two parts from one another."<sup>399</sup> Istanbul, on the other hand, is projected onto both parts of

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<sup>395</sup> "Revolving stage," Encyclopedia Britannica. Web. 28 November 2011.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/500684/revolving-stage>.

<sup>396</sup> Cf. Sonja Klocke, "Orientalisierung der DDR?: Spuren von DDR-Literatur und antifaschistischer Tradition in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Seltsame Sterne* starren zur Erde," *NachBilder der Wende*, eds. Inge Stephan and Alexandra Tacke (Cologne; Weimar; Vienna: Böhlau-Verlag, 2008). 144.

<sup>397</sup> "Westberlin liegt wieder tausend Jahre hinter mir" (*SeSt* 169).

<sup>398</sup> Mani, *Cosmopolitical Claims: Turkish-German Literatures from Nadolny to Pamuk*. 106.

<sup>399</sup> "Jedesmal, wenn ich hierher kam, vergass ich den anderen Teil der Stadt, als ob tatsächlich ein grosses Meer diese Beiden Teile voneinander trennen würde" (*SeSt* 18).

divided Berlin, through the act of remembrance. In terms of the *mise-en-scène*, one can imagine a screen on stage, reproducing images of her past in Istanbul.

Monika Shafi points out that “Özdamar foregrounds the immediacy of experience, which results in a vivid, scene-by-scene account that often resembles a theatrical performance.”<sup>400</sup> Moreover, Özdamar creates a pastiche of news clippings within the novel, which disrupts the narrative flow. As the scene-by-scene account reflects the narrator’s observant capacity, the news clippings, being disjointed from the narrative text, represent the narrator’s detachment from personal involvement in political occurrences and debates. On rare occasions where the narrator addresses political concerns voiced by those surrounding her, she finds herself outside of the conversation, without access to what is being said: “When Müller, Maron and Gabi speak, I feel like I am in a foreign language course.”<sup>401</sup> She lacks the vocabulary to engage with German political reality, as the comparison to a foreign language course would indicate. In an interview with Dave Horrocks and Eva Kolinsky, Özdamar describes her early experiences in Germany as follows:

[...] when you live in a foreign country. Whether you want to or not, you find yourself in two places at once. On the one hand you have the experience of your everyday existence in the new land, which is long and drawn out but has gaps in it; on the other hand you have sudden memories of the land you came from. But the whole thing runs like a simultaneous film in which images and yearnings merge without any gaps. When the two come together in this way, it makes for a beautiful encounter.<sup>402</sup>

These “gaps” are synonymous with the narrator’s detachment regarding Germany’s past and current political and historical events. Further, Özdamar sets up a contrast between

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<sup>400</sup> Monika Shafi, “Talkin 'Bout My Generation: Memories of 1968 in Recent German Novels,” *German Life and Letter* 59.2 (2006). 214.

<sup>401</sup> “Wenn Müller, Maron und Gabi sprechen, fühle ich mich wie in einem Fremdsprachenkurs” (*SeSt* 202).

<sup>402</sup> Horrocks and Kolinsky, eds., *Turkish Culture in German Society Today*. 53-4.

her German present and her Turkish past. She compares her sudden memories of her home country to a movie that runs simultaneously to her present. Her Turkish memories flow in continuous sequences of images. By contrast, her present experiences in Germany are characterized by a sense of incompleteness—by “gaps” still to be filled. Her present in Berlin is in progress, whereas her past in Turkey is concluded.

Her Turkish past’s structural resemblance to a film—a series of continuously running images—receives special emphasis in *Seltsame Sterne*. Here, memories from Istanbul are frequently superimposed upon the narrator’s experiences of Berlin. Specifically, these passages take the form of analepses introducing snapshots (and sound bites) of her past in Turkey. As a result, the three cities—her past in Istanbul and her present in East and West Berlin—merge with each other, sutured together by acts of remembrance which enable her to experience all three places simultaneously.

The persistence of Istanbul was predicted by the narrator’s husband: “The city will follow you.”<sup>403</sup> Her husband’s words come true when memories of Istanbul, especially those of her grandmother, husband, and friends accompany her to Berlin, and arise due to specific sights, sounds or scents. For example, a tree in the courtyard in Berlin reminds her of a tree next to her cabin in Istanbul and her husband.<sup>404</sup> At times, the memories of Istanbul seem to be haunting and even overburdening the narrator, when she demands, “leave me alone in Berlin!”<sup>405</sup> In contrast to Istanbul, the narrator’s experience of Cold War Berlin is comforting. Istanbul, due to political turmoil, has become the city of “darkness,” Berlin, in contrast, is experienced as “pretty,” with a “soft heart” and

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<sup>403</sup> “Die Stadt wird dir folgen” (*SeSt* 56).

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>405</sup> “lasst mich in Ruhe in Berlin!” (*Ibid.*, 123).

“soothing.”<sup>406</sup> With these metaphors, Özdamar—like Aras Ören—personifies Berlin as caretaker and source of solace.

### Sounds of the City

The sounds of each city, in addition to the sight of them, evoke memories:

The voices of Berlin: The alarm clock. Birds’ twittering, motors, children, streetcar. The voices of Istanbul: water sellers, sweets sellers, grain sellers, white canes on the pavement, the suddenly soaring pigeons, seagulls’ cries, honking ships at the Bosphorus, the chirping of the crickets, cats on the roofs etc.<sup>407</sup>

Though it does not refer to specific parts of either city, the description of the various voices belonging to them, allows for the reader to visualize the images of these sound collages. Juxtaposed within the text, placed in quick succession, these soundscapes are emblematic of both cities.

In addition to the sounds of the streets, songs by Brecht, Eisler, Weill, and Biermann are central to the soundtrack of each city. In Istanbul, she sings “Das Lied von der Moldau” (Song of the Moldau), which is part of Brecht’s *Schweyk im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Schweyk in the Second World War, 1943), a “resistance play” play he wrote while in exile.<sup>408</sup> The musical setting for it was composed by Hanns Eisler. Situated at the end of the play, the song is an “assertion of the passage of time, the destruction of the powerful, and the renewal of society.”<sup>409</sup> Early in the novel Özdamar’s narrator sings the following lines from this song: “The great shall not stay great, the darkness is lifting. The

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<sup>406</sup> “dunkel;” “schön;” “beruhigend” (Ibid., 124; 138; 19).

<sup>407</sup> “Die Stimmen von Berlin: Der Wecker. Vogelgezwitscher, Motoren, Kinder, Autos, Strassenbahn. Die Stimmen von Istanbul: Wasserverkäufer, Süßigkeitenverkäufer, Getreideverkäufer, die Blindenstöcke auf dem Pflaster, die plötzlich hochfliegenden Tauben, Möwengeschrei, hupende Schiffe am Bosphorus, das Zirpen der Grillen, Katzen auf den Dächern etc.” (SeSt 147).

<sup>408</sup> Albrecht Betz, *Hanns Eisler. Political Musician* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). 230.

<sup>409</sup> Mark W Roche, “Comic Reduction and Comic Negation in Brecht,” *Bertolt Brecht: Centenary Essays*, eds. Steve Giles and Rodney Livingstone (Amsterdam; Atlanta: Rodopi, 1998). 130.

night has twelve hours, but at last comes the day.”<sup>410</sup> Immediately after the Turkish military searched the narrator’s home in Istanbul, this song promises hope and optimism, and eventually a change in power structures. In Brecht’s play, the character of Anna Kopecka sings it after the SS searched and demolished her bar “Zum Kelch” in Prague. By situating this song in *Seltsame Sterne* right after the search, Özdamar creates an analogy between the Turkish military regime and the German fascist dictatorship in Brecht’s play. As German fascism was eventually defeated, the hope is that the Turkish oppressive military regime will be, as well. In an interview Eisler calls the “Song of the Moldau” a *Lichstrahl*, ray of light, which “suggests a way out, the solution.” He then continues “And what does this song say? That after twelve hours already, the day breaks – nothing but the simple laws of nature. Impossible to give more hope in this moment. Just a cold comfort, but the necessary minimum. They say: Our life is changing, as days and times change – not more and no less.”<sup>411</sup> Repeatedly emphasizing the comforting nature of Brecht’s works, Özdamar incorporates “Das Lied von der Moldau” in *Seltsame Sterne* precisely because of its ability to provide hope and consolations as pointed out by Eisler above.

Another song that occurs in *Seltsame Sterne* is “Oh Falladah, die du hangest! (Ein Pferd klagt an).”<sup>412</sup> The narrator hears it for the first time when her roommate, Peter, who has become her “Stadtführer,” city guide, sings it in East Berlin while walking down

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<sup>410</sup> “Das Große bleibt groß nicht und klein nicht das Kleine. Die Nacht hat zwölf Stunden, dann kommt schon der Tag” (*SeSt* 27). Translation taken from John Willett and John Manheim, eds., *Bertolt Brecht. Collected Plays* (London: Methuen, 1976). 138.

<sup>411</sup> “den Ausweg, die Lösung durchblicken läßt...Und was besagt dieses Lied? Daß nach zwölf Stunden schon der Tag kommt, nichts weiter – nichts weiter als die einfachen Gesetze der Natur. Unmöglich in diesem Moment, mehr Hoffnung zu geben. Ein kleiner Trost nur, aber notwendige Minimum. Es heißt: Unser Leben verändert sich, wie Tage und Zeiten wechseln – nicht mehr, aber auch nicht weniger...” Hanns Eisler, *Materialien zu einer Dialektik der Musik* (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam jun., 1973). 296.

<sup>412</sup> “Oh Falladah, there you hang (a horse complains)”



Frankfurter Allee together, and later in the novel, she sings it to her lover Graham.<sup>413</sup> Based on a Brecht poem, the song was set to music by Eisler in 1932. Brecht wrote it in 1919, in the context of postwar famine and revolution.<sup>414</sup> Frankfurter Allee is not a random choice by Özdamar, as it is the setting of the poem. It was a central transit axis, but also site of poverty, crime, and prostitution in Berlin, when Brecht wrote the poem. He knew this area well from visits to his friend and colleague Alfred Döblin, who lived there since 1919. After WWII, it was one of most destroyed areas of the city and was chosen by the government as starting point for reconstruction. On the Karl-Marx-Allee, which is an extension of Frankfurter Allee, was located the Karl-Marx-Buchhandlung, the first socialist book store. There, Brecht participated in the first *Schriftstellerbasar* (writers' convention), where publishing houses showcased new publications with the writers present for book signings. In the novel, Özdamar's narrator regularly passes this bookstore on her walk to the Volksbühne. She retraces Brecht's steps in Berlin by visiting sites which were significant for him: the Volksbühne, the Karl-Marx-Buchhandlung, the Berliner Ensemble, and his grave at the Dorotheenstädtischer Friedhof. But her walks through Berlin are no mere enumeration of these places. Michel de Certeau's "Walking in the City" offers a theoretical model for understanding the constitution of a city as personal space. While walking in the city, pedestrians read and write the city like a text. The "intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave these places together." Hence walking "is a process of *appropriation* of the topographical

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<sup>413</sup> *SeSt* 78.

<sup>414</sup> Michael Bienert, *Mit Brecht durch Berlin. Ein literarischer Reiseführer* (Frankfurt Main: Insel Verlag, 1998). 215–233.

system on the part of the pedestrian [...].”<sup>415</sup> The narrator thus makes the city an object and plenum constituted in individual experience; for her, walking the city is marked as an act of appropriation by which she gives original meaning to its spaces.

In addition to visiting the places Brecht frequented, the protagonist attends the theatre regularly to watch his and other plays. After her arrival in Berlin, one of the first plays she watches in East Berlin is Brecht’s didactic play *Die Mutter* (The Mother, 1931), for which again Eisler composed the music. While watching the play, the protagonist frantically takes notes. Excerpts from the song “Wie die Krähe” (Like the Raven) sung by the choir made up of the revolutionary workers are incorporated as intertext.<sup>416</sup> It is a fight song, *Kampflied*, and located right at the beginning of Brecht’s play. The narrator, “Emmi,” as Frank Castorf calls her late on the novel, does not really engage with the song excerpt she is noting down. In Brecht’s original production guidelines for the staging of *Die Mutter*, he requested texts and visual materials to be projected on a screen—a technique Özdamar has, through the snapshot like incorporation of Istanbul memories and the interpolation of newspaper clippings and other documentary materials, adopted for *Seltsame Sterne*.<sup>417</sup>

In her co-op in Wedding, “an old workers’ district, where communists fought behind the barricades,” the narrator and her roommates regularly listen to (unspecified) records by Brecht.<sup>418</sup> Other songs that surface in Wedding, are the “International” sung by their neighbor, the “alter Kommunist Alfredo,”<sup>419</sup> and Kurt Weill’s “Berlin im Licht”

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<sup>415</sup> Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998). 97.

<sup>416</sup> Werner Mittenzwei and Fritz Hofmann, eds., *Bertolt Brecht. Stücke I* (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1973). 44.

<sup>417</sup> Mittenzwei and Hofmann, eds., *Bertolt Brecht. Stücke I*. 355.

<sup>418</sup> “in einem alten Arbeiterviertel... dort haben die Kommunisten hinter den Barrikaden gekämpft” (*SeSt* 48).

<sup>419</sup> *SeSt* 164.

(Berlin in Light) sung by Manfred, the narrator's roommate. "Berlin im Licht" was jointly written with Brecht in 1928 for the four-day festival *Berlin im Licht* held in October 1928, "which celebrated both the ultramodern shop-window lighting and neon advertisements of the city center...and the city's illuminated monuments and commercial buildings."<sup>420</sup> In contrast to the Brecht/Eisler songs, this Weill song celebrates Berlin's glamour and comparability to cities like Paris and London.

Brecht's songs and plays, in addition to the emotional support they provide, establish a continuity and constant in the life of the narrator as they accompany her from Istanbul to Berlin. In addition to the Brecht songs the narrator listened to in Istanbul, she also mentions Wolf Biermann, who was a protégé of Eisler's until the latter's death. In Berlin, Biermann is only a topic of conversation because of his expulsion from the GDR in November 1976. While it causes great agitation among her friends and colleagues, the narrator, once again leaves this event uncommented-upon and remains detached.

In addition to songs with clear roots in the history of the German working class and the protest songs, Mozart and Schubert are mentioned in passing "Schubert saddens, Mozart does not."<sup>421</sup> Introduced to the narrator by the political figure and dissident East German writer Rudolf Bahro, who is listening to Schubert, the narrator decides to buy a record by Schubert.<sup>422</sup> While Schubert is playing in the background, Bahro criticizes the GDR's governing elite. In this instance, what affects the narrator and elicits an emotional response is the music, rather than the topic of conversation.

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<sup>420</sup> Jürgen Schebera, *Kurt Weill: An Illustrated Life*, trans. Caroline Murphy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). 125.

<sup>421</sup> "Schubert macht etwas traurig, Mozart nicht" (*SeSt* 197).

<sup>422</sup> *SeSt* 91, 92.

While Brecht helps her to process Turkish oppression, Mozart serves as a source of comfort when she is nostalgic for Istanbul:

Oh, beautiful years, to be on stage in Berlin, Josef, oh, forest in Istanbul, oh, the dead, the killed. I did not go backwards, I fled forward, all is good. The loneliness is useful, even if sometimes in the afternoon it is difficult, when I come home. Then I listen to Mozart, and I feel better.<sup>423</sup>

Here, the narrator idealizes Mozart as providing an emotional refuge. She does not name specific compositions, and instead merely mentions the names of these two particular composers, and the emotional response they elicit. And though she does not explain why these two composers have different effects on her, as with the Brecht songs, classical music also serves as source of comfort.

Music also functions a metaphor for her perception of Berlin. East and West Berlin seem to be mutually incommensurate to her: “I could not think both parts together” To envision both parts as a whole was as difficult as visualizing Freddy Quinn and Mozart on a record.”<sup>424</sup> Although she juxtaposes the divided parts with each other by the contrast between *Schlager*, pop song, and classical music, Istanbul serves as the link between both parts. Furthermore, music figures as common denominator for all three cities. As mentioned earlier, the “soundtrack” of *Seltsame Sterne* comprises works by Brecht/Eisler, Weill, Biermann, Mozart, and Schubert. The instances where she sings or listens to music pass without comment, and her mentioning of the music is part of an enumeration of events. Whereas Brecht/Eisler songs were already present for her in Istanbul, she was introduced to Mozart and Schubert in East Berlin by Rudolf Bahro.

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<sup>423</sup> Ach schöne Jahre, in Berlin auf der Bühne stehen, Josef, ach, Wald in Istanbul, ach, die Toten, die Getöteten. Ich bin nicht rückwärts gegangen, ich bin nach vorne geflüchtet, alles in ordnung. Die Einsamkeit ist nützlich, wenn es auch manchmal am Nachmittag schwer ist, wenn ich nach Hause komme. Dann höre ich Mozart und es geht mir gut” (*SeSt* 104).

<sup>424</sup> “Ich konnte die beiden Teile nie zusammendenken ... Sich die beiden Teile zusammen vorzustellen, war genau so schwer wie sich Freddy Quinn und Mozart auf einer Schallplatte zu denken” (*SeSt* 18).

Music, in addition to theatre, has an uplifting and consoling quality for the narrator. She recontextualizes the musical pieces for her own purpose of mainly emotional support. Walking through Berlin, the narrator, in tandem with her Istanbul associations, allows the narrator to create an urban space, which is inclusive of all three cities. Furthermore, music allows her to connect all three cities on the aural level. Her mapping of Berlin is thus not only physically, but also aurally constituted.

In addition to the sounds of the cities, the moon, the weather, and the waters serve as “metaphors of connection” and synchronization. For example, when in the West Özdamar’s narrator notes that “It rains here like in the East.”<sup>425</sup> And that in winter “it was cold on both sides of Berlin. In both parts of the city I heard the same sounds.”<sup>426</sup> As with the rain, the snow covers both parts equally “The city is white, West, East.”<sup>427</sup> Just as music is shown to permeate boundaries, weather phenomena like the snow, rain, and cold, similarly transcend borders between East and West Berlin—at least temporarily. What is intriguing about the portrayal of divided Berlin is that it is the East that is experienced as “mysterious” and “comforting.”<sup>428</sup> In an interview, Özdamar explains it as follows: the “pace of life was slower; people moved differently... Often I found life in the West very tiring, and then I would cross over to the East... recover for a while.”<sup>429</sup> The narrator’s experience of the East is conditioned by detachment regarding the political reality, and her idealization of East Berlin: “But I have become happy here at the theatre.” Her involvement with theatre allows her to realize her goals in a way which was

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<sup>425</sup> “Hier regnet es ja wie im Osten” (*SeSt* 40).

<sup>426</sup> “Der Winter war auf beiden Berlin-Seiten sehr kalt... In beiden Teilen der Stadt hörte ich die gleichen Geräusche” (*SeSt* 60).

<sup>427</sup> “Die Stadt ist weiß, West, Ost” (*SeSt* 186).

<sup>428</sup> “geheimnisvoll,” “beruhigend” (*SeSt* 19).

<sup>429</sup> Horrocks and Kolinsky, eds., *Turkish Culture in German Society Today*. 53.

denied to her in Istanbul. But as her friend Gabi notes: “Yes, but your happiness, is not the happiness of others. You are normalizing the Wall. For you living here means an expansion of your possibilities to work and live. Others perceive their possibilities as restricted.”<sup>430</sup> The limitation she felt in Istanbul, her East German friends feel in East Berlin, which for the narrator becomes, by contrast, the place where her theatre career can develop most fully. Although she regularly crosses the border, she admits, “In Berlin I never thought of the Wall.”<sup>431</sup> In an interview with *Die Welt*, Özdamar similarly states, “I normalized the Wall. I experienced what was happening at the border crossing as theatre.”<sup>432</sup> On a different occasion she compares each part of Berlin to a stage set: “I actually commuted between two stages. In the West was the co-op, in the East the Volksbühne.”<sup>433</sup>

The narrator feels that the city’s division is characterized by artificiality or superficiality; thus both Berlin sectors’ evocation of her Istanbul memories places them on common ground with respect to one another. On the one hand, Özdamar’s narrator appears to be oblivious to the division of Berlin by the Wall; she connects or equates East Berlin and West Berlin through sounds, scents, weather phenomena. On the other hand, she contrasts East and West with each other, as seen in the contrast between Pop and Classical music as well as well the emotional effect each city part has on her. But what finally links these two cities are her memories of Istanbul as they are summoned during

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<sup>430</sup> “Aber ich bin hier am Theatre glücklich geworden. Ja, sagte Gabi, aber dein Glück ist nicht das Glück der anderen. Du normalisierst die Mauer. Für dich bedeutet hier zu sein eine Erweiterung deiner Möglichkeiten zu arbeiten und zu leben. Andere aber sehen ihre Möglichkieten beschränkt” (*SeSt* 182).

<sup>431</sup> “In Berlin hatte ich nie an die Mauer gedacht” (*SeSt* 244).

<sup>432</sup> “Ich habe die Mauer normalisiert. Ich empfand auch das, was am Grenzübergang passierte, als Theatre.” Bettina Göcmener, “Die Immigration beginnt erst jetzt,” *Die Welt* November 20, 2004.

<sup>433</sup> “Ich bin eigentlich zwischen zwei Bühnen gependelt. Im Westen war die Wohngemeinschaft, im Osten die Volksbühne.” Cornelia Geissler, “Die 40. Tür im Märchen,” *Berliner Zeitung* March 5, 2003.

her experience of both Berlins. She uses the techniques of simile and juxtaposition to express this ambivalence on a structural level. For example, while walking the East, a specific scent reminds her of Istanbul:

The morning atmosphere and the smell in the streets of East Berlin reminded me, how my grandmother fired the furnace every morning...I deeply inhaled the air, smelling of coal and exhaust, like in Istanbul.<sup>434</sup>

At times, the trigger of her memory is not a specific scent, sound, or object, as is the case the example above, but rather the dynamics of a moment. For instance, families interacting on the weekend remind her of Istanbul: “Evening tram. Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz. The families are tired, children sleep in their arms, today is Saturday. It was also on a Saturday, when my husband and I separated in Istanbul. The mailmen, street cleaners, carriers, workers, and families were strolling the harbor back then.”<sup>435</sup>

Özdamar uses theatrical and cinematic devices, such as the montage, image projections, and musical accompaniment in her representation of Berlin. These allow her to connect and contrast all three cities on a visual as well as aural level. As with Tahsin Incirci, for Özdamar Brecht/Eisler songs are important, albeit in a different manner. She does not engage with music from a worker’s standpoint, like Incirci’s choir does; rather, her use of music occurs on a more personal level, functioning as a source of comfort, rather than a means for change. Music, in addition to theatre, not only functions as a source of comfort and happiness, but also serves as a structuring metaphor for the narrator’s perception of Berlin. Paying attention to the aural and spatial topography in

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<sup>434</sup> “Die Morgenstimmung und der Geruch in den Strassen von Ostberlin erinnerten mich daran, wie meine Grossmutter jeden Morgen den Ofen heizte...Ich atmete die Luft tief ein, ein Geruch von Kohle und Autoabgasen wie in Istanbul” (*SeSt* 80–81).

<sup>435</sup> “Abend Straßenbahn. Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz. Die Familien sind müde, Kinder schlafen in ihren Armen, heute ist Samstag. Es war auch an einem Samstag, als ich und mein Mann uns in Istanbul trennten. Die Postboten, Straßenfeger, Lastenträger, Arbeiter und Familien gingen damals am Hafen spazieren” (*SeSt* 99).

Özdamar's representation of Berlin opens new avenues for our understanding of belonging to the city, as it is seen, lived and heard.

### **Oriental Soul in Berlin: Orientation**

The mixing of various musical influences has been a central feature in Turkish-German music from its beginning, as I have shown with Tahsin Incirci and Islamic Force. A variety of genres are inflected with Turkish musical instruments and melodies as for example rock, jazz, rap, and r&b. Founded in 1987 by Dieter and Sema Moritz in Berlin, Sema & Taksim play Turkish jazz analog to Western jazz, which they call Oriental jazz and jazz alla Turka. Taksim is a district in Istanbul, as well as a musical style rooted in improvisation. Sema, who came to Berlin in 1983, was also a singer in Tahsin Incirci's Türkischer Arbeiterchor West Berlin; from 1984-86 she was the soloist for the Ensemble Kreuzberger Freunde, which was Incirci's first project after the workers' choir. Sema became popular singing Brecht and Dietrich songs, and in Turkey she is called "Istanbul'un Piafi" (Istanbul's Piaf). The song texts by Sema & Taksim are mainly based on literary works by Nazım Hikmet, Yunus Emre, Orhan Veli, and Yahya Kemal Beyatlı.

Another flavor of Oriental jazz is played by Mesut Ali and the Oriental Connection. Their music constitutes, to hear them tell it, a "bridging of European and Oriental music traditions."<sup>436</sup> They have regularly performed at popular jazz music venues in Berlin, such as the A-Trane, B-Flat, and the Junction Bar. Their music has been labeled Balkan Beats, Gypsy jazz, and Istanbul Casino Music.

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<sup>436</sup> "Brückenschlag zwischen europäischen und orientalischen Musiktraditionen." "Mesut Ali's Oriental Connection - Jazz von Istanbul bis Berlin & Paris - präsentiert von kultTürkei - 14.10.2010," Pressemeldungen.at. Web. 6 June 2011. <http://www.pressemeldungen.at/141781/mesut-alis-oriental-connection-jazz-von-istanbul-bis-berlin-paris-prasentiert-von-kultturkei>.



Regarding Classical music, Carlo Domeniconi and Adil Arslan released *Concerto di Berlinbul* in 1987, a concerto in three movements (for saz, guitar and orchestra).

Commissioned by the Berlin senate for the celebration “750 Jahre Berlin” in 1987, it was performed in the Philharmonie the same year. Adil Arslan, who came to Berlin in 1979, is also the founder of the *Orient Musikschule* in Berlin, and later the *Deutsch-Türkische Musikakademie*.

In 2010 the cultural institution *Werkstatt der Kulturen* organized a concert series entitled “Bosporock,” featuring various Oriental Rock bands such as Konveks, PanZehir and Kobra. Kobra is the most popular among them, and is considered founder of Orient Rock. Adnan Bayrakçı (keyboard), Hayrettin Önesol (percussion), Nedim Ünal (guitar and saz), Fevzi Bineylioğlu (bass and vocals) founded Kobra in 1980 in Berlin. They perceived themselves as a “cultural bridge between Europe and Orient” with their music they call Orient Rock.<sup>437</sup> Their music is a “mix of Western Rock sounds with tones of Oriental music, the combination of drums, electric guitar, bass and keyboard with the lute.”<sup>438</sup> They had previously performed as a cover band at weddings and clubs under different names: Atlantic, Westwind, and Harem V. They found their own style in Orient Rock as Kobra. Their first album, *Orient Express* was released in 1983. And although the songs were sung in Turkish, of the 1000 copies of their first album sold, half were purchased by German listeners. In fact, their concerts were mainly attended by a German audience, for which the group provided brief summaries of their songs. In 1982, they

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<sup>437</sup> “[...] kulturelle Brücke sein zwischen Europa und Orient.” Klaus Pokatzky, “Die türkische Gruppe Kobra. Rock orientalisches. Mit Musik wollen sie zwischen der alten und der neuen Heimat vermitteln,” *Die Zeit* March 4, 1983.

<sup>438</sup> “Mischung von westlichen Rock Klängen mit Tönen der orientalischen Musik, die Verbindung von Schlagzeug, E Gitarre, Baß und Keyboard mit der Saz.” Pokatzky, “Die türkische Gruppe Kobra. Rock orientalisches. Mit Musik wollen sie zwischen der alten und der neuen Heimat vermitteln.”

were the opening act for the popular GDR band Karat at the open-air (West Berlin) venue Waldbühne, where they performed their only song in German, composed for this occasion, “Die Mauer in deinem Kopf” (The Wall in Your Head).

In the past five decades, Tahsin Incirci has become renowned for the mixing of Western and Eastern musical genres and elements. In 2007, together with Wolfgang Köhler, he released the album *Duo Divan*. The record features popular Turkish folk songs, asyncopated to fit a jazz pattern, accompanied by piano but also, as with Sema, influenced by Turkish *taksim*, which is an improvised instrumental solo here with a violin.

All of these bands enjoy a devoted live following and critical praise for their albums. Orientation, though, stands out not only by reason of their popularity, but also because of their combination of instrumental and vocal music, in addition to their emphasis on the relevance of Berlin and Istanbul for their music.

### **Listening to Orientation**

Orientation became popular through their contributions to the soundtracks for two movies by the Turkish-German filmmaker Fatih Akin: *Gegen die Wand* (Head on, 2004) and *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul* (2005). More recently, they collaborated with Muhabbet, the founder of the newly emerging genre of R&Besk (a fusion of Arabesk and R&B), on the song “Wie Lange” (How Long, 2009). Bekir Karaoğlan (who collaborated with Killa Hakan on *Semt, Semt Sokak*) and Andreas Advocado (who co-produced Aziza A’s album *Kendi Dünyam*) are the composers, singers and producers of Orientation. Their first album, entitled *Bosporus Bridge*, was released in 1997 and

featured prominent musicians from Berlin like Aziza-A, and from Istanbul Sultana and Mercan Dede, among others. Bekir Karaođlan identifies the district of Neukölln, Sonnenallee and Andreas Advocado mentions Prenzlauerberg, Kastanienallee—both Berlin neighborhoods—as places that have influenced their music. According to Orientation, Berlin “is a musical fountainhead [...] a microcosm which accurately in every detail reflects the world map of music.”<sup>439</sup> The band “avails itself of the huge treasure chest which Berlin has to offer in a musical respect,” further emphasizing the eclecticism of musical genres and influences central to their work.<sup>440</sup>

They furthermore acknowledge the significance of Istanbul for their songs, which is accentuated in the titles of both of their albums, *Bosporus Bridge*, and *9 in Istanbul 8 in Berlin*. On their most recent album, *9 in Istanbul 8 in Berlin*, Orientation stress that only one hour of time difference separates these two metropolises. In their liner notes, they write that “the closeness to Istanbul is made a programmatic point with the new album.”<sup>441</sup> The connection of these cities is thematized on their album cover, which features images of the television tower in Berlin and the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, two of the most recognizable landmarks each city has to offer.

On their website they describe their music as fusing “soulful, club grooves with longing arabesque melodies, funky sounds with austere Arabic percussion.”<sup>442</sup> Their music features key instruments employed in Turkish musical traditions, like *bađlama* (long-necked lute), *ney* (oblique rim-blown flute), *kanun* (zither) and *darbuka* (single-

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<sup>439</sup> “ist ein musikalischer Fundus, [...] ein Mikrokosmos der detailgetreu die Weltkarte der Musik abbildet.” “Orientation Philosophie: ‘9 in Istanbul, 8 in Berlin’.” Web. November 29, 2011. <http://www.orientation-music.com/de/orientation.html>.

<sup>440</sup> “bedient sich der großen Schatztruhe, die Berlin in musikalischer Hinsicht zu bieten hat,” Ibid.

<sup>441</sup> “Die Nähe zu Istanbul, ... wird mit dem neuen Album ... zum Programm gemacht” (ibid.).

<sup>442</sup> “soulige, clubtaugliche Grooves mit sehnsüchtigen arabesquen Melodien, funkige Sounds mit herber arabischer Percussion.” “Orientation – Oriental Soul,” Cross Culture Music. Web. November 24, 2008. <http://www.crossculturemusic.de/orientation>.

headed goblet drum). In an email exchange, Orientation's producer Andreas Advocado explained to me "Orientation links the harmonic wealth of the Occident with melodic variety of the Orient. In other words: we undergird Turkish melodies with Western harmonies, partially quite complex, with modern jazz harmonies and chords."<sup>443</sup> They stress that "the culture of the Occident does not contradict with the culture of the Orient," and aim to create a new musical genre with their music, called "Oriental Soul" or "Arabesk Soul."<sup>444</sup> When I asked Andreas about the meaning and idea behind their band name, he said the following:

Our band name is a concept. We are looking for orientation, structures, rules, regularities, accordance. But it is a search, the pathway is the goal. Orientation conceptually captures this perfectly, because it is a process not a result. Furthermore, it there is Orient in it, which is one of the main sources we use.<sup>445</sup>

In addition to the incorporation of a broad variety of musical styles, here he also underlines the continuous evolution, development, and fluidity of their sound.

Three songs by Orientation indicate the importance of the two city-spaces for their music, and the fluidity of the boundaries between them. "What is Orientation" is the first song of their debut album. The song starts with somebody searching on a radio dial, traveling through sonic space. Since the user takes action in tuning in, there is a shift from the artist to the user, emphasizing the agency of the listener. As the first song on the album, it provides an explanation as to what their music style is and a manual on how to listen to their music:

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<sup>443</sup> "Orientation verknüpft den harmonischen Reichtum des Okzidents mit der melodiosen Vielfalt des Orients. Mit anderen Worten: wir unterlegen türkische Melodien mit westlichen Harmonien, zum Teil recht komplex, mit modernen Jazzharmonien und Akkorden." December 23rd, 2009.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

<sup>445</sup> "Unser Bandname ist ein Konzept. Wir suchen nach Orientierung, Strukturen, Gesetzen, Regelmäßigkeiten, Übereinstimmung. Es ist aber eine Suche, der Weg ist das Ziel. Orientation gibt das begrifflich perfekt wieder, da es ein Prozeß, nicht ein Ergebnis, ist. Außerdem steckt Orient drin und das ist eine unserer Hauptquellen aus denen wir uns bedienen" (ibid.).

Listen to the new sound, where Orient and Occident melt together, as the Bosphorus bridge connects Europe with Asia. This music bridges the gap between two cultures making them one, listen to Orientation, feel the strength, sadness, and melancholy, but also joy, happiness, and power. Dance to it, love to it, do with it what you will, here we go...

A female voice, slowly uttering these words, is accompanied by the percussion: the *daf* (round single-headed frame drum), and the piano, already emblematic of the East/West binary, the *daf* being an Eastern, and the piano, a Western instrument. After forty seconds, a second female voice accompanies what is being said, through a vocalise (a wordless vocal exercise or concert piece sung to one or more vowels<sup>446</sup>), continuing solo throughout the remainder of the song. It is trance-like, and expresses the emotions described by the first female voice. The second female voice is counterpoint to the piano, creating a tension. Her voice is emotionally engaging and evocative because of the physical effort she puts in. Further, her voice is the ornamentation to the song and moves from one pitch to another, akin to a violinist sliding over a string, resulting in a wide range of emotional associations. The intensity, dissonance, and volume of her voice increases as the song progresses. The sung part and vocalise blend into each other halfway through the song, but while the lyrics provide the explanation regarding the music's purpose and consumption, the vocalise provides an interpretation thereof. As the song fades out, the volume of instruments and vocalise decrease, and as the female voice exhales her last vocal the radio dial's sound returns. To begin and end the song with someone searching on the radio dial, directs the listener's attention to the question posed by the title of the song: What is Orientation? The search continues as the album tracks progress.

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<sup>446</sup> "Vocalise." The Oxford Dictionary of Music. Web. July, 25, 2011.  
[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e10773?q=vocalise&search=quick&pos=3&\\_start=1#firsthit](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e10773?q=vocalise&search=quick&pos=3&_start=1#firsthit).

The second song is entitled “Aziza’s Advice,” and features, as indicated by the title, Aziza-A. Aziza-A, born Alev Yıldırım, is a well-known Turkish-German female rapper from Berlin. Since the release of her debut album *Es ist Zeit* (It is time) in 1997, she has been labeled the “Queen of Oriental hip hop” by the press and audiences alike. This song begins with a sax solo, a choice that links this composition to R&B songs, which often use the sax for an instrumental intro. The sax crosses borders, as a Western instrument employed for an Eastern accented melody. This tune connects back to the first song on the album, where it is briefly heard as part of the radio dial sequence. It is clearly coded as an Oriental tune, almost seductive, interspersed with her utterance of “boom-chicky-boom,” a kind of vocal percussion.

Aziza-A raps in Turkish, but the band provides an English translation of the lyrics in the liner notes. In the first verse, after introducing herself, she demands for attention from the listeners for what she has to say,<sup>447</sup> which is followed by her message: we live in this world together, uniting East and West, overcoming borders. Here the enunciation changes: syllables are elongated and pronounced one by one for emphasis.<sup>448</sup> In addition, the verb “aşmak” (to overcome), here in the first person plural “aşıyoruz,” is repeated twice times for emphasis, underlining the action and its collaborative nature. She further raps that the cultures melt together and complement each other, to her rhetorical question as to how, she responds to listen to Orientation.<sup>449</sup> Again, as with the first song, their music provides the answer to how East and West blend together. This is woven into the musical fabric too, through its inclusion of instruments embedded in both musical

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<sup>447</sup> “Beni dinleyin kulak verin, sözlerim dağlara taşlara yansıyor, nehir gibi denize akıp gidiyor sizlere söylemek istediğim bir şey var.”

<sup>448</sup> “Bu dünyada beraberce yaşıyoruz, ya ya boom chicky boom boom, doğuyu ve batıyı birleştiriyoruz sınırları aşıyoruz ya, aşıyoruz aşıyoruz.”

<sup>449</sup> “kültürler kaynaşiyor, bir birini tamamlıyor nasıl mı oluyor dinleyin Orientation sizlere cevabı veriyor.”

traditions. She adds further emphasis to the verb, “tamamlamak,” to complement, through a scat-like repetition of the syllable “ta-,” accentuating the compatibility of East and West.

Furthermore, her song is structured like a rap song, based on a looped rhythmic pattern, with little harmonic interaction, emphasizing a sense of motion through repetition. Added as a contrast to the beat, however, is her incorporation of a vocalise performed by a male voice, reminiscent of the *Ezan*, the muezzin’s call to prayer, which is counterpoint to her voice. Rather than emphasizing her rapping skills by increasing the pace of her flow, she raps slowly foregrounding the communicative function of the song, which is also evident in the syllable-by-syllable utterance. She demands that the listener pay close attention to what is being communicated. She additionally performs vocal percussion, reminiscent of Doo-Wop and scat singing, so that this song, is exactly what she raps about: a synthesis of East and West, realized through instrument choice and music styles. The softness and gentleness of her voice, together with the introductory tune, have a seductive effect on the listener, as if one is lured into song. This further underlines the objective to communicate. As opposed to the occasional harshness of rap, this piece is reminiscent of the softer trip hop, “slowed-down hip hop” as represented by Massive Attack.<sup>450</sup> Aziza-A references Massive Attack in her verbal percussion-like utterance of “boom chicky” which features in their song “Daydreaming” (1991). The song’s last thirty seconds feature all elements together in heterophony: the prayer-like vocalise, the darbuka, and the sax.

The title song of Orientation’s *9 in Istanbul 8 in Berlin* album is an especially powerful song in this vein. Tenor saxophone, electric bağlama, kanun, base, and drums

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<sup>450</sup> Roy Shuker, *Key Concepts in Popular Music* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998).

are all employed in this song. The song starts off slowly, with a melancholic intro played by the bağlama and the kanun. After 23 seconds, the song's two melodic themes are introduced; one is played by the saxophone, and the other by the kanun. In the melody played by the saxophone, the notes blend into each other, whereas in the tune played by the kanun the notes are played discretely and in a descending manner. Throughout the song, these melodic themes are repeated and either played individually or interwoven with each other, carrying equal weight. Both are short, catchy, and upbeat tunes that evoke liveliness and an impulse to move.

After the initial introduction of the melodic themes, a dub-influenced rhythm begins that continues throughout the song. It is a 8/9 time signature, a meter central to Turkish wedding music; here it also functions as a reggae-inflected meter. This song is instrumental except for the vocalise provided by a male voice that follows the rise and fall of the notes two minutes into the song. This vocalise is reminiscent of scat, a jazz practice, and evokes an instrumental line, which is also supported by the sax. This occurs only once between the melodic sequences, and sounds soft and romantic in contrast to the vibrant melodies, allowing the listener to pause for a moment and take a break from the upbeat rhythm and melodies. The song then continues with the repetition of the melodic sequence played by kanun, accompanied by the dub-influenced rhythm. The repetition of the melodic and rhythmic sections lends regularity and structure to the song. In addition to the repetition of these sonic elements, the song also showcases various instruments in solos: the drums, the kanun, the sax, and the bağlama. For some solos, the dub-influenced rhythm is suspended, which serves to accentuate the melodic line of the instrumental solo, rather than overwhelming it with the beat. Orientation is selective and wide-ranging



in their use of Western and Eastern accented elements. The solo by the kanun for example is reminiscent of Turkish classical music, but the sax solo of jazz. As in Aziza-A's song, each element carries equal weight. Despite more tranquil and serene elements like the intro, the vocalise, and the saxophone solo, which Orientation describe as "contemplative and melancholic," the steadiness of the rhythm and repetition of the melodic themes transform it into dance music.<sup>451</sup>

An instrumental piece, the song does not make direct references to the two cities, except for its title. Rather, it draws on the connections and synergies of musical traditions and styles embedded in these cities. While the use of instruments like the kanun and the bağlama expresses the East/Orient in the fabric of musical language, the dub-influenced rhythm evokes the Occident. In this way, urban correspondence is signaled structurally, rather than linguistically.

In the songs discussed here, music traditions of the East and West serve as hypotexts, underlying their compositions. The various musical elements they synthesize into what they call Oriental soul range from dub, ska, trip hop, rap, jazz, to Turkish wedding and classical music. Further, they incorporate instruments emblematic for specific genres and music traditions at home in both the West and the East, like the saxophone, the darbuka, and the bağlama.

Through paratextual materials Orientation comment on their music. Paratextual materials are "those elements which lie on the threshold of the text which help to direct and control the reception of a text by its readers. This threshold consists of peritext" and "also includes an epitext [...] the paratext is the sum of the peritext and epitext [...]" which can be "autobiographic, by the author, and allographic, by someone other than the

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<sup>451</sup> "kontemplativ and melancholisch." Email exchange December 23rd, 2009.

author.”<sup>452</sup> In the case of Orientation, their liner notes and cover image constitute peritexts. Interviews with the band and reviews of their albums are epitexts. In addition to the paratextual materials, architextual elements, which “can be titular [...] or most often subtitled and are of a purely taxonomic nature.”<sup>453</sup> Orientation assigns their music to a specific genre, Nu-Oriental and Orientation soul. According to Genette, paratextual and architextual elements guide and determine the listener’s perception.<sup>454</sup> With respect to Orientation this implies that through their liner notes, cover images, interviews, and genre classification of their music, signpost the listening experience.

## Conclusion

In Özdamar’s novel and Orientation’s songs, the presence of one city within the other is a significant feature. Genette’s concept of transtextuality provides a useful framework for identifying the various layers of signification in their works: their use of intertextual, paratextual and hypotextual elements. In Özdamar’s novel, we find intertexts—mainly quotations from songs, notes, and news snippets. And through instrumentation, melodies, and rhythms Orientation include hypertextual and intertextual elements that are eclectic and incorporative of Occidental and Oriental music traditions. Furthermore, through paratextual materials, mainly interviews, both comment on their works and guide the reader’s and listener’s perception. They complement their works by providing a commentary upon them. Özdamar’s interviews similarly provide another discourse where she stages something which is in dialogue with her novel. Orientation and Özdamar create a specific sound, and text, that combines various cultural attachments

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<sup>452</sup> Allen, *Intertextuality*.103; 106.

<sup>453</sup> Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. 3.

<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.*, 4–5.

and influences relevant to them. In Özdamar's case, her past in Istanbul and her present in Berlin—East and West; in Orientation's case, the various sounds, and sonic influences, are of their present.

In both cases, Istanbul is present within East and West Berlin—in Özdamar's case in Cold War Berlin, and for Orientation in the post-Wall era. East and West figure as categories, which divide Berlin as well as separate Istanbul and Berlin, and as emblematic categories of Orient and Occident. The cityscape emerging from both Özdamar's and Orientation's works is a personal map of the city incorporative of all their attachments. Through different mediums, they make their experience of Berlin audible—a mix of various cultural influences.

## Conclusion

On October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011, the bilateral labor recruitment agreement between Turkey and Germany celebrated its 50th anniversary. Commemorative events like the Goethe Institute's six-month "Fiktion Okzident" event series, held in Istanbul, Ankara, and Berlin, heralded the landmark date. Another event, sponsored by the *Auswärtiges Amt* (Federal Foreign Office), was the Turkish-German film festival "Alamanya hier, Alamanya da" (Germany Here, Germany There) which took place in the *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*. In the literary sphere, the Turkish journal *Varlık* published a special issue, with contributions by pioneers of Turkish-German literature like Yüksel Pazarkaya, Gültekin Emre, and Habib Bektaş.<sup>455</sup> Regarding his experiences and role as a writer, Pazarkaya volunteered the following:

I have been a witness to this development from day one. I was not among those sent as a result of the Recruitment Agreement, but came to Germany as a student. However, [...] I took part in the process directly, keeping a chronicle of the people who were exposed to the process. As a sufferer of the process I had acquired something new – this is what writer colleagues who came to Germany later told me. I had acquired two countries, two societies, two histories, and two languages. I had the ability to portray the individual from that person's own perspective.<sup>456</sup>

Pazarkaya's words are emblematic for the texts I analyzed in this dissertation. He foregrounds the advantages enjoyed by writers who are culturally rooted in both contexts, and identifies as a vantage point for these writers' literary production a plurality of places

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<sup>455</sup> *Varlık* (10/2011): *Alamnya'ya göçün 50. yılı. "Biz işçi çağırdık, insanlar geldiler."*

<sup>456</sup> An English excerpt of the original Turkish essay appeared as "Traces that won't go away: The Gastarbeiter fifty years on." Transl. Sila Okur. Eurozine October 27, 2011.

of belonging. At the same time, he points to literature's ability to function as both an archive and a medium for commenting upon, documenting, and publicizing the experience of Turkish migration to Germany. While Pazarkaya writes about literature, emphasizing the experience of writers like himself as "Zeitzeuge[n]," his claims can be expanded to include Turkish-German music analyzed here.<sup>457</sup> Turkish-German cultural producers like Aras Ören, Kemal Kurt, Tahsin Incirci, Orientation, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, and Islamic Force, as I have shown, open up the frame of reference and include the experience of Turkish migration in their representation of Berlin. In these artists' textual and musical interpretation of the city, German cultural traditions are set in dialogue with Turkish literary and musical genres. In their works, historical key moments in German history are thematized and presented in a new light, in which immigrants are presented as active participants, rather than passive bystanders, in the constitution of Berlin's *Stadtbild*.

In my analysis, I have shown how Turkish-German cultural producers call into question the public discourse of the city's present and past, which has excluded and denied people of Turkish descent a role as active participants. Music and literature has provided Turkish-German musicians and writers with a means to represent and circulate their own conceptions of Turkish-Germanness. At the same time, their works have offered a forum in which Turkish-German perspectives on key issues such as integration, belonging, and immigration can be articulated and debated.

The dissertation's first chapter introduced musical, geographical, and literary scholarship on Berlin. It also elucidated the historical and political context for Turkish

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<sup>457</sup> A slightly modified version of his Turkish article appeared also in German as "Az zamanda çok işler başardık – In kurzer Zeit Großes geleistet." *Jahrbuch für Türkisch-deutsche Studien* 2 (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2011). 113–124.

immigration to Germany. In addition, it outlined the dissertation's contribution with respect to existing scholarship on literary and musical traditions within literary criticism, musicology, and cultural studies. Most importantly, however, it defined the stakes of the discussion: we will fail to understand the changes German self-definitions are undergoing, unless we develop a nuanced understanding of the complex ways in which German identity has become fundamentally plural. And such a nuanced conception cannot be developed without a consideration of Turkish-German cultural production.

In my second chapter I analyzed Incirci's songs by the worker's choir and Ören's Berlin trilogy, in light of their focus on workers' solidarity. Their representation of Berlin is that of the workers, who in unity are presented as agents for change and the betterment of their economic situation. In their works the standpoint of the workers is central, which presents the worker as key agents for change. In this way they build on the theoretical works of Turkish and German Marxist intellectuals like Nazım Hikmet, Hanns Eisler and Bertolt Brecht. Both Incirci and Ören foreground the responsibility of the artist to document the experience of immigration and the significance of art as a medium for cultural mediation. Through their works, German readers and audiences have been familiarized with Turkish literary figures such as Nazım Hikmet, and Turkish audiences with Brecht and Eisler. They contribute to and reconfigure the German tradition of worker's literature and music, by including the perspective of the Turkish workers in Berlin. The significance of Bertolt Brecht for leftist Turkish intellectuals like Ören and Incirci, sheds new light on Brecht reception outside of Germany, as well as in the context of Turkish immigration to Germany.

In Kurt's and Islamic Force's works, Berlin is located within a transnational network; the city is connected to other places through the sights and sounds associated with specific Berlin locations, as well as with the city's figurative spaces. The Heimat discourse is opened up to and modified by the Turkish traditions of *gurbet* and *memleket*. In this way, the notion of Heimat receives a new perspective, that of Turkish immigrants, who through "accenting" Heimat forge a sense of belonging that is inclusive of their various attachments—cultural, spatial, and professional. In the case of Islamic Force, the nostalgia for Turkey is "without memory" to recall Appadurai, since the members of the band never lived in Turkey. Their nostalgia for Turkey is thus imagined and expressed through the sampling of Turkish pop music and put in dialogue with the music of their present, American rap and soul. For Kurt, arriving at home in Germany is linked to the mastering of the German language, his access to German literature as well as maintaining his multiple attachment—geographical, figurative, and emotional. The process of arrival is therefore a cultural one, and not just a physical or bureaucratic endeavor. In Kurt, initial immigration to Germany is accompanied by a feeling of uprootedness and betweenness; this transitory state then serves as a catalyst for the active exploration, through culture, of the location and contours of what constitutes home.

In both Kurt's and Islamic Force's texts, Heimat includes a dimension that transgresses the national borders of Germany and pluralizes the notion of Heimat and belonging. Kurt locates Heimat in the canon of world literature, in which he inserts Turkish and Turkish-German writers. In this way, he reconceptualizes the canon, by opening it up to non-Western works. For Islamic Force music that is embedded in various national traditions, like the US and Turkey, serves as a medium of self-expression and

self-discovery. They use American rap and soul and Turkish pop samples and synthesize various genres and elements into a new genre, Oriental hip hop, which is deeply rooted in Berlin Kreuzberg. Therefore, one could say that Islamic Force, like Kurt does with the literary canon, extend the musical canon of world music by specific Turkish-German adaptations of “Western” genres and mixing them with Turkish musical elements. Heimat in both instances, becomes plural, and is rooted on German soil, while figuratively crossing borders to include Turkey.

In Özdamar’s and Orientation’s texts, the connection between Berlin and Istanbul is central. In Özdamar’s memories of the divided Berlin, Istanbul is always present. Through various triggers, like a scent, a sound, or a visual phenomenon, memories of Istanbul are evoked and written into Berlin’s cityscape. Brecht is also significant for Özdamar’s Berlin. Brechtian theatre, as Özdamar has repeatedly pointed out in her interviews, is central for her oeuvre. In the text analyzed in my fourth chapter, this becomes apparent, both thematically and on a structural level. What makes Özdamar’s text unique, is the role of music within her text. Brecht and Eisler songs in particular, are a constant companion of the narrator, and thus serve as a means to link the various city spaces together: East and West Berlin, both parts of Berlin and Istanbul. In Özdamar’s text, Berlin’s topography is thus spatially and aurally constituted.

Orientation also connect both cities musically, although in contrast to Özdamar, it is their experience of these cities and is embedded in the present. The musical connection happens through the use of various musical traditions and elements as well as by metatextual materials like their liner notes, album cover, and interviews in which they repeatedly emphasize the significance of these city spaces for their music. Istanbul and



Berlin are not directly referenced, but their music traditions stand emblematically for these cities, Germany and Turkey respectively. They situate their music in the genre of Nu-Oriental and Oriental soul, which at the same time includes an American component, as we saw with Islamic Force. In this way, their music is not only geographically anchored in Berlin and Istanbul, while at the same time drawing inspiration from these places, it also connects to the US. It allows them to connect past and present, locations in and cultures of East and West.

Berlin, which emerges from the texts considered, is a culturally and historically multilayered place, in which the experience of migration is deeply embedded. Berlin's connection to diverse literary and musical traditions, not only limited to the German and Turkish national context, but extends to the US in the case of Islamic Force and Orientation, while at the same time representing the city as the space of belonging, which is located as part of a transnational network.

In this dissertation, I have begun to explore how within Turkish-German literature a reorganization of both the German and Turkish literary and musical canons is taking place. This reorganization occurs through the juxtaposition and comparison of texts whose putatively differing points of national origin would previously have made them incomparable or mutually incommensurate. Turkish-German writers put Western and non-Western writers in close textual proximity. For instance, I pointed out how Kemal Kurt incorporates citations from and references to non-Western works into the Western canon, like those of Aziz Nesin and Orhan Veli Kanık. This, alongside his inclusion of Turkish-German writers like Emine Sevgi Özdamar and Aras Ören, and eventually himself, results in the formation of a new canon of world literatures. Intertextual

references to the works of literary figures like Bertolt Brecht, Can Yücel, Charles Baudelaire, Lewis Carroll, Federico García Lorca, and Joseph Conrad also figure prominently in Özdamar 's own oeuvre. She occupies a special position, because of her incorporation of musical pieces—among others—Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Weill and Hanns Eisler into her works. Brecht has been a pivotal figure for Turkish-German writer and musicians.

The next step will be to explore how literary texts and songs interact both within literary texts, and in relation to the canon they produce. Moreover, a question arises is to what extent Turkish-German writers like Kurt and Özdamar “orientalize” the canon, by prominently including Turkish and Turkish-German writers. By investigating these processes of literary interaction and canonization I will show that these Turkish-German writers' texts fundamentally restructure debates about the constitution of the canon in a global age, the effects of migration on literature, and literature's ability to transgress national boundaries.

Transnational cultural practices are not unidirectional. Our attention needs to be directed away from the Spree to the Bosphorus, in order to investigate the Eisler and Brecht reception in Turkey. This would allow for an examination of the mutual interaction of Turkish and German literary traditions in both Berlin and Istanbul, and in between the two cities and the countries they have come to represent metonymically. My dissertation has addressed the significance of Brecht and Eisler for Turkish-German culture, which points to their importance within Turkish culture. What was the Brecht/Eisler reception in Turkey before Turkish-German musicians and writers

immigrated to Germany, and recontextualized Brecht/Eisler within Germany through their oeuvre?

Further, in light of musical interchange, as I have shown with Incirci, Islamic Force, and Orientation, the long-term development of musical exchange between Turkey and Germany has to be addressed in the context of transnational, and even transcontinental, music history. Contact with the Ottoman Empire influenced German and, to a broader extent, European music. For instance, *alla turca* style, which employed Turkish instruments and themes, marked compositions by Haydn, Beethoven, and Mozart. In the nineteenth century, Sultan Mahmut II invited Italian musician Giuseppe Donizetti to Istanbul in order to reorganize and Europeanize his imperial band with the help of Italian and German colleagues. After the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk welcomed German composers and musicians like Paul Hindemith and Eduard Zuckmayer, to Turkey in order to modernize Turkish music and music education. Investigating this long process of cultural interchange, will help me to shed new light on the Turkish-German conversation as it took place over the past few centuries, and provide further context for—in addition to raising new questions about—my findings regarding contemporary Berlin. Further, while engaging with questions of Orientalization and Orientalism, this would allow me look at the other end of the spectrum, namely at Occidentalism, the Westernization of Turkish music and music education, in the context of the Turkish nationalization and modernization in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The cultural synergies between Turkey and Germany span time periods and genres. In the works analyzed, Berlin's places are appropriated and imagined anew in the

process of their being written—and sounded. In these representations of Berlin, the city's places emerge as dynamic, transformative and multi-layered in signification. Turkish-German writers and musicians presented here challenge static and dichotomous notions of place and space, linking real and imagined places, arranging written and sounded spaces in cross-cultural topographies that allow for renegotiations of notions of home and belonging. Through literary texts and songs, Turkish-German cultural producers construct alternative publics, through which they restructure, comment upon, and participate in the public discourse on the city's present and past, and its relation to its immigrants. Berlin becomes a stage upon which Turkish-German visions of transnational German culture are choreographed, performed, and witnessed.

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