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**DISSIDENT STORIES OF TRAVEL AND DISPLACEMENT:  
MIDDLE EASTERN HERITAGE GERMAN WRITERS' INTERVENTIONS  
INTO THE NATIONALIST IMAGINATION**

A Dissertation in German

by

Yasemin Mohammad

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The dissertation of Yasemin Mohammad was reviewed and approved\* by the following:

Daniel Purdy  
Professor of German  
Dissertation Co-Adviser  
Chair of the Committee

Martina Kolb  
Assistant Professor of German and Comparative Literature  
Dissertation Co-Adviser

Bettina Brandt  
Instructor of German

Jonathan Brockopp  
Associate Professor of History and Religious Studies

Reiko Tachibana  
Associate Professor of Japanese and Comparative Literature

B. Richard Page  
Associate Professor of German and Linguistics  
Head of the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures

\* Signatures are on file in the Graduate School

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how German writers of Arab and Turkish heritage form aesthetic, cultural, and political reorientations in the process of imagining German national identity and history in the course of the twentieth century. Focusing on *Unerwarteter Besuch: Auf der Suche nach der Gegenwärtigen Zeit VI* (1997) by Aras Ören, *Alman Terbiyesi* (2007) by Zafer Şenocak, *Der Marschländer* (1999) by Hussain Al-Mozany, and *Kafka und Andere palästinensische Geschichten* (1991) and *Absturz im Paradies: Geschichten eines Eingewanderten* (1998) by Wadi Soudah, I engage in a comparative study of four male protagonists' experiences of travel, displacement, and exile in the Middle East and in Germany, as dramatized in their major novels and short stories.

Debunking an ethno-culturally defined German identity and collective memory, this dissertation contributes to a critical and nuanced understanding of the literature produced by German writers of Arab and Turkish heritage, thus moving beyond the prevalent paradigm that these writers represent the clash of contradictory worlds. Most contemporary research on the topic has focused on immigration and hybridity. My dissertation, by contrast, explores exile as experienced by individuals, who voluntarily or involuntarily left their homelands because of political, social, and cultural upheavals and dilemmas. I read exile as a complex and contradictory term: it involves not only feelings of nostalgia and painstaking loss, but moments of enrichment and empowerment as well.

Each of my chapters depicts the protagonists' negotiation of exilic experience in the twentieth century, as well as the effects this has on their understanding of time, space, language, culture, and the nation. Furthermore, I analyze how these protagonists' experiences overlap with or differ from the other fictional characters who experience exile. I argue that the exilic vision of Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany, and Soudah instill them with a plurality of vision, which makes them question one-dimensional interpretations of ethnic, religious, and national affiliations. By drawing analogies between the national imagination in Germany and their own countries, these authors and their protagonists form transnational historical connections and enable new imaginary spaces of cosmopolitan existence. To the best of my knowledge, mine is the first study to bring into dialogue German writers of Turkish and Arab origin, who share the historical heritage of the Ottoman Empire, and who confront similar stereotypes and prejudices related to Islam and the Middle East.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

When I began my research about exile and immigrant German writers of Turkish and Arab origin fifteen years ago, most of the prevalent discussions about these writers propagated an essentialist understanding of their cultural identities and focused on the trope of in-betweenness. In many research articles, emphasis was given to the identity dilemmas or assimilation stories of the characters in the works of these authors. The complexity of the characters' exilic identities and past and present experiences was disregarded because of the one-dimensional understanding of their national, cultural, and religious affiliations. For instance, those German writers of Arab origin who drew on the Arabian fairy tale and fable/parable tradition gained more prominence for the entertaining values of their works. Unfortunately, these writers' aesthetic, political, and cultural contributions to the German present and the critical analogies they formed between the collective memories of their country of heritage and Germany was not researched in detail. Nevertheless, in the last decade scholars such as Leslie Adelson, Andreas Huyssen, and Azade Seyhan have significantly transformed the debates on authors of non-German heritage. Adelson and Huyssen primarily depicted how German writers of Turkish heritage negotiated German collective memory and national identity through a new perspective. Seyhan, on the other hand, focused on these writers' (including the Arab heritage writer Rafik Schami) critical affiliations with the history and collective memory of their home countries, and how these affiliations impact their present consciousness as transnational writers. While these critics approached the works of German writers of Turkish heritage in different angles, they all explored the multidimensional

engagements of these authors with the concepts of identity, memory, history, and the nation. All of these critics aimed at transcending the unchanged referentiality of the “Turkish figure” in literature and everyday life.

For nearly four decades, especially the immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees from the Middle East have been excluded from the German national imagination. Although a large number of Turkish immigrants came to Germany as guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s, followed by the arrival of asylum seekers from the Middle East in the 1980s, the lack of initiative to consider Germany as a country of immigration and the belated amendments in the 1913 citizenship law (based on “jus sanguinis”) resulted in the exclusion of non-German minorities from the German national body. Unlike immigrants of German origin, who were categorized as *Aussiedler* and were easily conferred citizenship, Middle Eastern heritage residents have been constantly indicted for their failure to assimilate into “German Leitkultur” and confronted stereotypes about their cultures and identities. The negative attitude toward Middle Eastern heritage minorities has once more become apparent in the polemical book of Thilo Sarrazin<sup>1</sup>, which has sold over one million copies. In *Deutschland Schafft sich ab* (2010), Sarrazin criticized the immigration policies of Germany by portraying Turkish and Arabic immigrants as a threat to Germany’s future claiming that their culture and religion was incompatible with European values. In the same year Horst Seehofer, a member of the Christian Social Union and the state premier of Bavaria, called for a halt to the immigration of Turks and Arabs. A week later, Chancellor Angela Merkel claimed that Germany's attempt to create a multicultural society had failed. Not only the discourses in the German political sphere, but also those in the socio-cultural sphere embraced a differentialist attitude towards Middle Eastern heritage residents. From their

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<sup>1</sup> Sarrazin (1945) is a politician in the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the former member of the Executive Board of the *Deutsche Bundesbank*.

emergence in the 1970s up until the middle of the 1990s, the works of German writers of Turkish and Arab heritage were categorized under the problematic labels of *Gastarbeiterliteratur*, *Ausländerliteratur*, and *Migrantenliteratur*. Interpreted through the framework of binary opposing worlds and considered as distinct cultural artifacts, the works of Middle Eastern heritage German writers were considered for decades as mere supplements to German literature. Scholarly research focused on the ethnic and cultural differences of these works. This also influenced the topic choice of some writers who did not want to be relegated to oblivion. However, especially after the 1990s, more and more writers began to engage critically with the discourses of German national history, collective memory culture, and identity. After the German Unification (1990) when the hostilities and attacks against non-Germans escalated and debates on German national identity intensified, it became especially imperative for these writers to search for new imaginary topographies of the German nation.

As Leslie Adelson rightfully states, it is crucial to analyze the works of contemporary German writers of Turkish heritage (and also of Arab heritage) as “Orte des Umdenkens” that “provoke us to ponder the historical intelligibility of our time, to become historically literate by reading against the grain of existing categories, concepts, and statistics of migration in order to ask what worlds we inhabit as the millennium turns” (*The Turkish Turn* 14). Similarly, Zafer Şenocak considers European writers of Muslim heritage to be giving rise to a new aesthetic. “By means of ironing distancing” this new aesthetic “ties the severed strands of communication between cultures anew” (*Atlas of Tropical Germany* 41). In this way, the “repressed components of the Other in the Self” can be opened up to experience again (41). The “bastardization of European literature” (*Atlas of Tropical Germany* 41) by Turkish-German writers can be considered a powerful tool in transcending prejudices, stereotypes, and superiority claims of

cultures and nations. In a different formulation Azade Seyhan states, “Writers who have become chroniclers and agents of the modern history of migrations and displacements fortify us with insights about our own culture(s) and the means to turn lamentations of loss into statements of empowerment” (158).

By utilizing the theories of Adelson and Seyhan in my dissertation, I form critical comparisons of the post-unification fictional narratives of the Iraqi heritage German writer Hussain Al-Mozany (1954, Amarah), Palestinian heritage German writer Wadi Soudah (1948, Nablus) and the Turkish heritage German writers Aras Ören (1939, Istanbul) and Zafer Şenocak (1961, Ankara). My critical study will be the first attempt to put in a productive dialogue the works of German writers who have different national affiliations in the Middle East. Having moved to Germany between the years 1969 and 1980, a turbulent period in Turkey and Middle East due to military coups, dictatorships, and wars, Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany, and Soudah established their careers as public intellectuals and writers. Among these writers, Şenocak is the only one who came to Germany in his childhood and had a bilingual upbringing; for the others German is a second language. While Ören published all of his literary works in Turkish, the other writers have published in two languages. During their residency in Germany, these writers have confronted strong political and cultural barriers against Turkish- and Arab-heritage immigrants, asylum seekers, and German citizens. In the face of the repetitive stereotypical depictions of Islam and Middle East in the public discourse, and the exclusionist rhetoric of the ultra-right and conservative politicians who have propagated an ethno-cultural understanding of the nation, these writers have tried to transgress narrow conceptualizations of identity, culture, and the nation.

In this study, I compare and contrast Ören's novel *Unerwarteter Besuch: Auf der Suche nach der Gegenwärtigen Zeit VI* (*Unexpected Visit: In Search of the Present VI*, 1997), Şenocak's novel *Alman Terbiyesi* (*German Education*, 2007),<sup>2</sup> Al-Mozany's novel *Der Marschländer* (*The Marsh Dweller*, 1999), and Soudah's story books *Kafka und andere palästinensische Geschichten* (*Kafka and Other Palestinian Stories*, 1991) and *Absturz im Paradies: Geschichten eines Eingewanderten*: (*The Fall in Paradise: Stories of an Immigrant*, 1998). These works span from the early twentieth century up until the late 1990s and take place in Iraq, Lebanon, the West Bank, Jordan, the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish Republic, the German Empire, Weimar Germany, Nazi Germany, the German Democratic Republic (GDR), the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), and the reunified Germany. Fragmented, troubling memories of WWI, WWII, the Holocaust, the Iran-Iraq War, the Lebanese Civil War, the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, the Ottoman-Balkan Wars and the Armenian Genocide are manifested in these narratives. I argue that these fictional narratives form cosmopolitan engagements mainly with the twentieth- and twenty-first century Turkish, Iraqi, Palestinian, and German nationalist imagination, identity politics, and collective memory discourse.

One important way that Al-Mozany, Ören, Soudah, and Şenocak destabilize homogenous national imagination, identity, and culture is through the concepts of "travel", "displacement," and most importantly, "exile". These concepts harbor various historical, material, and cultural meanings in their texts. In her innovative study of travel and displacement Caren Kaplan rightfully states, "As travel, changing locations, and leaving home become central experiences for more and more people in modernity, the difference between the ways we travel, the reasons for our movements, and the terms of our participation in this dynamic must be historically and politically accounted for" (102). Concurrent with Kaplan's perspective, I aim to show how in

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<sup>2</sup> Ören and Şenocak published their novels in Turkish.

Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany, and Soudah's works the characters are shaped by their experiences of asylum, immigration, tourism, and expatriation, and in what ways these experiences overlap and differ from each other. I also explore what aesthetic forms these writers employ to portray their protagonists' travel experiences, and the connections they form to other exile writers.

Furthermore, I contend that Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany, and Soudah reflect mobility, change, and borrowing as main components of cultures. An important overlap in their literary narratives is a multidimensional engagement with exilic identities and their reluctance to define exile in a narrow dimension. The experiences of exile are neither represented in a solely negative perspective such as causing pain and nostalgia, nor are they only portrayed in a celebratory mood as a condition of empowering detachment from their national affiliations. For instance, in Al-Mozany's *Der Marshländer*, the protagonist already has an exilic outlook in Iraq because of his minority status as a Shiite Marsh Arab and emphasizes his affiliation to Mesopotamia (as a region of rich cultural heritage) rather than to Iraq. At first, the protagonist's cosmopolitan exilic outlook seems empowering. However, when faced with discrimination in West Germany, he slowly experiences exile as a painful and nostalgic state. Al-Mozany ridicules a free-floating individual's hasty celebrations of hybrid identity, and foregrounds the dilemmas of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe. In the same way, Wadi Soudah in his *Kafka und andere palästinensische Geschichten* and *Absturz im Paradies* also portrays a complex notion of exile through the Palestinian author-narrator, who, on the one hand, feels nostalgic for the Palestine of his dreams, but who also strives to integrate himself into the German nation. In Şenocak's *Alman Terbiyesi*, the literal and metaphorical exile of the protagonist, Salih Süvari, does not prevent him from being an ardent nationalist. Even though Salih spends his life in Monastir, Istanbul, and Berlin, and loses his home city during the Balkan Wars, he does not embody a cosmopolitan

consciousness. While at certain moments in the novel he feels empowered by his exilic consciousness and becomes critical of ultra-nationalism, at other times he is immersed in pain and nostalgia and supports a Pan-Turkic Federation. These contradictions also inform his memoir, in which it is impossible for him to represent a stable self-identity. In Ören's *Unerwarteter Besuch*, only through the exilic outlook of the unnamed poet-narrator can an alternative conceptualization of German collective memory and history be imagined, and analogies drawn to Turkish collective memory. However, the anonymous poet-narrator's exilic state does not result in a creative celebratory writing career, since it is difficult for him to represent and write down his experiences and perceptions. Exile is simultaneously an empowering state that causes confusion and pain.

One of the important consequences of the protagonists' multiple displacements in Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany, and Soudah's literary texts is their reluctance to conform to the truth claims of nationalist and historical discourses. There is a tension in these novels between the hybrid and cut-off diasporic memories of the characters and the reified, and homogenous national memory. The novelty of these works lies in the multidirectional analogies they form between the private and collective memories of Germans, and German Turks, German Arabs, and German Jews. Different important historical events and traumas, which seem to be isolated, touch each other (Adelson) in these literary works. They conjure up images of hope, disillusionment, anger, and hatred as experienced by characters of different nationalities and cultures. These literary works indeed reflect the constant tensions and transformations in the national memory cultures. In our global age of massive movements, a new form of transnational memory culture has emerged which is formed of the complex relationship between diasporic and national memories. According to Andreas Huyssen, it is important not to dismiss diasporic memories as homogenous

and nostalgic and focus on their creative potentials. He rightfully states: “I would rather opt for a changed and changing understanding of diaspora itself—one that denaturalizes notions of memory and culture and takes account of its changing relationship to the equally changing world of the national” (151). In considering Huyssen’s premise as an alternative possibility, I analyze in what ways the characters negotiate their diasporic (exilic) memories and how this affects their interactions with national histories.

For instance, in *Der Marschländer*, the asylum-seeking protagonist, Alwan, forms fleeting analogies between the histories of the Holocaust, the Farhud (Pogrom against Iraqi Jews), German romantic national imagination, and the Iraqi nationalist imagination. In *Absturz im Paradies* the Palestinian author-narrator, who resides in Germany, forms analogies between his memories and the ones of the former East German citizens after the Reunification. In *Unerwarteter Besuch* analogies are formed between the memories of the German proletariat and the Turkish-heritage guest workers, and traces of the histories of Ottoman-German relations appear in fissures. Finally, in *Alman Terbiyesi*, critical connections are formed between the memory discourses of the Ottoman-Turkish soldiers in Germany, German-Jewish citizens, Nazi groups, ultra-nationalist Turkish groups, and the Jews who moved to Palestine before 1948. The fragmented traumatic memories of the Holocaust and Armenian Genocide also haunt the narrative. Al-Mozany, Soudah, Şenocak, and Ören do not only remap and rewrite the national histories of Turks, Iraqis, and Palestinians through their foregrounding the gaps and fissures in the historical discourse, but also portray the multicultural historical heritage of Germany. It becomes imperative for them to visualize new imaginary topographies in Germany that can lead to formative dialogues between Germans and non-Germans and between citizens and minorities. All in all, while occupying different subject positions and different locations, all of these works



depict a new form of diasporic consciousness in which it is difficult to easily define travel, displacement, exile, and immigration.

## 1.2 The National Imagination

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said rightfully states, “reading and writing texts are never neutral activities: there are interests, powers, passions, pleasures entailed no matter how aesthetic or entertaining the work” (385). Engaging with the “wordliness” of literary texts is of paramount importance for Said, which requires considering authors as transforming and being transformed by the history of their societies and their social experiences. Indeed, culture and aesthetic forms cannot be thought apart from historical and ideological discourses. The formation and reception process of exile and transnational literatures also reveal the complexities of clashing historical realities and ideologies. In her innovative study *The Guest Worker Question in Contemporary Germany*, Rita Chin depicts the importance of relating the production and reception of immigrant literature to the political debates on immigration and the fluctuating economic transformations in Germany. In her words, “Both policy making and cultural production . . . need to be understood as constituent parts of an ongoing, continually shifting public dialogue on the guest worker question” (14). Indeed, as Chin demonstrates, considering cultural productions (such as literature) as nodal points in a network that interact with the political and economic spheres lays bare how they can become embodiments of certain ideologies. Yet, they can also form mordant criticisms of these ideologies and transgress them. In my dissertation, I offer an ideological and interdisciplinary reading of the works of Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany, and Soudah which foregrounds their “wordliness”. I am interested to see how the experiences of travel, displacement, and exile have different impacts on the literary

productions of these writers, and in what ways these fictions form dialogues with historical and political discourses. I inquire how these writers' works embody the complexities of minority experiences in the realms of Europe and the Middle East in the twentieth century.

One of the overarching themes that intersects Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany, and Soudah's fictions is their critical affiliations with nationalist rhetoric and their understanding of it as an "imaginary construct." In the wake of the discrimination against Muslim-heritage minorities in Europe, one wonders if nationalism can be steered to a new direction so that ethno-cultural and religious affiliations are not considered the primary markers of a European national identity. My central concern is to show the ways in which these writers form critical interventions into an ethno-cultural understanding of national imagination, and to demonstrate how the discourse of nationalism might overlap with racist, ethno-centric, sexist, and religious discourses that provoke hatred and aggression against minority populations. Their literary works explore how the religious, cultural, and ethnic affiliations of the Turkish-, Iraqi-, and Palestinian- heritage characters in Germany prevent their integration to the German nation. Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany, and Soudah wonder if this discrimination might be considered a new form of racism, and how it can be related to other forms of racism in Germany and Europe. Accordingly, before I offer a detailed analysis of Al-Mozany, Ören, Soudah, and Şenocak's works, I would like to discuss the present crisis in European and German nationalist imagination in the following section.

### 1.2.a The Conflicts between Demos and Ethnos in Contemporary Europe

In the last decades, the concepts of nationhood, citizenship, and democracy have sparked intense debates over the political, social, and cultural transformations in Europe. In the second half of the twentieth century, Europe has received a new immigration wave as a result of the widening socio-economic gap between the first- and third-world countries, the independence of colonized countries, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In the postcolonial and former Soviet countries, the experiences with nationalism yielded atrocities such as the Bosnian and Rwanda genocides and the quite recent political conflicts in the entire Middle East. While independence from the cultural, political, and economic hegemony of the European or Soviet powers pointed to a hopeful future, citizens of these countries have confronted new forms of segregation created by the corruption of nationalist discourses. Many of these traumatized individuals have become immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers in Europe, where, however, they still confront indissoluble nationalist barriers and breaches in human rights.

Muslim cultural heritage residents from the Middle East and North Africa, whose population amounts to more than seven million in the EU countries, Switzerland and Norway, have faced especially immense problems following the Salman Rushdie controversy, 9/11, and the subsequent Islamic fundamentalist attacks in London, Istanbul, and Madrid. The exaggerated media images and right-wing political rhetoric which conflate terrorism and illiteracy with the essence of Islam and depict Islamic religious and cultural values as incompatible with the Enlightened Judeo-Christian norms have bred unrest among Europe's host populations.<sup>3</sup> The present discrimination of Muslim-heritage immigrants points to a new form of racism in Europe,

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<sup>3</sup> One of the innovative books that thematizes the situation of Muslim heritage immigrants in Europe from a multidimensional perspective is *Muslim Europe or Euro-Islam* edited by Nezar AlSayyad and Manuel Castells. Read also *Multiculturalism, Muslims, and Citizenship: a European Approach* edited by Tariq Modood and *Islam and Muslims in Germany* edited by Ala Al-Hamarneh and Jörn Thielmann.

where a cultural discourse has become the basis for segregation and hatred. While European countries have tightened their legislation regarding asylum seekers and family reunions in order to prevent further population increases, controversial debates focus on how to approach the current minorities in Europe. For many left-wing intellectuals such as Jürgen Habermas and Seyla Benhabib, integration with strict adherence to basic democratic values becomes a viable solution, whereas many right-wing intellectuals embrace assimilation to European host culture as an unconditional standard. Since more right-wing political parties were elected in numerous European countries starting in 2002, an ethno-cultural understanding of nationhood continues to be propagated by ultra-right wing political partisans.<sup>4</sup>

In light of the mounting animosity against third-world and Muslim-heritage immigrants and asylum-seekers in Europe, several theorists such as Etienne Balibar and Pierre-Andre Taguieff have foregrounded the dangerous complicities of racist and national discourses. In the rhetoric of right-wing politicians and the media, negative images of non-European minorities have been propagated, who are said to have “invaded” or “flooded” the national homogenous space. In these arguments there seems to be a shift from biological to cultural racism, which depicts the culture of Middle Eastern heritage residents as incompatible with and inferior to the enlightened European culture. Verena Stolcke stated that in Europe “there has risen since the seventies a rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion that emphasizes the distinctiveness of cultural identity, traditions, and heritage among groups and assumes the closure of culture by territory”

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<sup>4</sup> Read *Ethnic Europe: Mobility, Identity, and Conflict in a Globalized World* by Roland Hsu, *Migration, Citizenship and Ethnos* by Y. Michal Bodemann and Gökçe Yurdakul, and *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe* by Fatima El-Tayeb.

(25). Pierre-André Taguieff, who based his studies on the changing rhetoric of French right-wing political parties in the 1980s, labeled this new mindset as “differential racism”, which depicted itself as a form of anti-racism. For Taguieff, who analysed cultural racism in France, discriminatory racism presupposes “an imperial and/or colonial type of domination legitimated by the ideology of inequality of human types” (“The New Cultural Racism in France” 117). Differentialist racism, however, “is predicated on the imperative of preserving the group’s identity whose ‘purity’ it sanctifies” (117-118). While cultural differences are respected from a safe distance, their intermingling is depicted dangerous in this rhetoric. The propagators of differentialist racism consider the concepts of rootedness, heritage, and homogenous tradition and memory as benchmarks of defining a collectivity.<sup>5</sup> Taguieff states, “The national-racist discourse joins two obsessions: the erasure of identity and interracial mixing. Xenophobia derives from mixophobia. The foreigner is detestable only in that he is postulated as being inassimilable without provoking a destruction of community identity” (120).

In a similar way Etienne Balibar, detects the ascendancy of a neo-racism in Europe which he coins as “racism without races” (21). For him this new racism is a consequence of the era of ‘decolonization’, a period in which a large number of formerly colonized populations moved to Europe. Balibar stresses that “biological or genetic naturalism is not the only means of naturalizing human behavior and social affinities” (22). While in the new racist discourse the focus has shifted from the topic of biological heredity (the superiority of certain peoples) to the insurmountability of cultural differences and incompatibility of cultures and traditions, Balibar considers this shift only as a “general displacement of the problematic” and a form of “meta-racism” (22). For him “*culture can also function like a nature*, and it can in particular function as

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<sup>5</sup> In France, the former president of the National Front, Jean-Marie Le Pen, made use of differentialist rhetoric in his speeches. By merging together the ethno-nationalist rhetoric with a racist one, he propagated the return of the Maghrebi immigrants for the sake of national harmony.

a way of locking individuals and groups a priori into a genealogy, into a determination that is immutable and intangible in origin” (22). Balibar considers European anti-Semitism as the prototype of differentialist racism. Although bodily stigmata play an important role in anti-Semitism, “they do so more as signs of a deep psychology, as a sign of a spiritual inheritance rather than a biological heredity” (Balibar 24). For the anti-Semites, the person became more truly a Jew when he was more indiscernible since his “essence is that of a cultural tradition, a ferment of moral disintegration” (24). According to Balibar, this can be compared to Arabophobia in France which mistakenly interprets Arabness in the light of Islam and considers Islam as “an enterprise of universal ideological domination” (24). Balibar argues that there is always “reciprocity of determination “between the discourses of nationalism and racism” (52). The reciprocity can be detected “in the way in which the development of nationalism and its official utilization by the state transforms antagonisms and persecutions that have quite other origins into racism in the modern sense (and ascribes the verbal markers of ethnicity to them).” (52). Nationalism is a dividing concept for Balibar that on the one hand forms a state or community and, on the other, subjugates and destroys. This ambiguity can be utilized by racist ideologies which, by creating fictive ethnicities emphasize the naturalness or authentic mythic origins of the nation. While the identity of the true nationals becomes invisible, the false nationals always threaten the desired homogeneity.

Considering the contemporary clash between the notions of *ethnos* and *demos* in European nation-states, political philosophers Seyla Benhabib and Jürgen Habermas are in search for alternative forms of nation-states which foreground democratic ideals. Habermas considers the nation as Janus-faced since there is a constant tension between the universalism of an egalitarian community and the particularism of community united by destiny: “Whereas the

voluntary nation of citizens is the source of democratic legitimation, it is the inherited or ascribed nation focused on ethnic membership . . . that secures social integration” (115). As long as priority is given to a cosmopolitan understanding of nation, this ambivalence is harmless. Nevertheless, Habermas sees a conceptual gap in the legal construction of the constitutional state which might be filled with a naturalistic concept of the people. For him, it is by historical chance and the arbitrary outcomes of wars and civil wars that the boundaries of historical communities are drawn. The need for an organic imagination of nation depicts the tendency to hide the contingency of the arbitrary boundaries of the nation by creating inherited legitimacy. This artificiality of national myths makes them more prone to misuse by political elites. The misuse of nationalist rhetoric can only be prevented if constitutional patriotism is embraced by the nation-state. According to Habermas, “multicultural societies can be held together by a political culture . . . only if democratic citizenship pays off not only in terms of liberal individual rights and rights of political participation, but also in the enjoyment of social and cultural rights” (118). As long as the protected faiths and practices do not contradict the reigning constitutional principle, it is important to respect their individuality. Habermas posits that cultures can only survive if they are open to transformation and criticism. He rightfully asserts, “Even a majority culture that does not consider itself threatened preserves its vitality only through an unrestrained revisionism, by sketching out alternatives to the status quo or by integrating alien impulses—even to the point of breaking with its own traditions” (223).

Seyla Benhabib also voices her concern over the redefinition of the moral and political boundaries of Europe vis-a-vis geographical borders. In Europe’s history of nation-states, stereotypical attitudes against minorities revealed through stricter border regulations and a reluctance to naturalize foreigners, reflect the tension between *ethnos* and *demos*. Border-

crossings and claims of residency by non-Europeans are seen as criminal acts; however, these individuals should be treated with the dignity of the moral personhood. According to Benhabib, human movements should be interpreted as “an expression of human freedom and the search for human betterment in a world which we have to share with our fellow human beings” (*The Rights of Others* 177). While it is a fundamental right for people to exit their countries, this also naturally involves the right to enter another country. Every country might have a different policy in dealing with the claims of the newcomers, yet it is imperative to hear the claims of these people and not treat them as mute, abstract numbers. The negative outlook toward the newcomers cannot be thought disparate from how the nation-states grapple with the problems of minorities within. Benhabib contends, “To want to excise the outsiders or to close one’s doors to newcomers is always accompanied by the need to discipline the outsiders within and to prevent reform, innovation, dissent, and transformation within the walls of one’s own parish” (*The Rights of Others* 173).

One of the most complex problems in Europe is the reluctance of many European nation-states to naturalize the alien residents and foreigners within their borders. This for Benhabib reflects a contradiction within the democratic principles of the liberal nation-states: “Whereas democracy is a form of life that rests on active consent and participation, citizenship is distributed according to passive criteria of belonging, such as birth on a given piece of land, and socialization in that country, or ethnic belonging to a people” (“Citizens, Residents and Aliens” 102). The modern social contract of the nation-states bases its legitimacy on the principle that “the consociates of the nation are entitled to equal treatment as right-bearing persons precisely because they are also human beings . . .” (“Citizens, Residents and Aliens” 108). According to Benhabib, citizenship rights should be based on this “more fundamental moral equality that



individuals enjoy as persons” (108). Benhabib’s approach to political membership involves the fundamentals of discourse ethics and a normative theory of deliberative democracy. According to this outlook, “only those norms and normative institutional arrangements are valid which can be agreed to by all concerned under special argumentation situations named discourses” (*The Claims of Culture* 107). Universal, moral respect and egalitarian reciprocity are fundamentals in this process. Universal respect means that in “we recognize the rights of all beings capable of speech and action to be participants in the moral conversation” (*The Rights of Others* 13). Furthermore, the principal of egalitarian reciprocity stipulates that “in discourses each should have the same rights to various speech acts, to initiate new topics, and to ask for justification of the presuppositions of the conversations” (13). For Benhabib, a “disaggregated citizenship” enables the individuals to form multiple allegiances and networks in nation-state boundaries. It is imperative, however, that the individual form an allegiance to civil institutions.

### **1.2.b German National Identity and Minorities**

In Germany, the situation of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers has been one of the most controversial topics in the last decades of the twentieth century. As Bade succinctly states, “More than in any other Western industrial state during the second half of this century, the population, economy, and society in West Germany have been characterized by mass migration movements” (*Migration Past* x). While Germany received the greatest number of immigrants from Turkey, who initially came as guest workers, it also became the recipient of a large number of German and non-German asylum-seekers and refugees from the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Russia. Despite this fact, however, the post-war governments did not consider Germany a country of immigration for nearly three decades and did not transform the citizenship law of

1913 based on “*jus sanguinis*” until the year 2000<sup>6</sup>. According to Brett Klopp, “confusion, waffling, and an emphasis on short-term over long-term policies have characterized the German government’s handling of the foreigner issue during the postwar decades.” (39). While the ethnic German immigrants, categorized as “*Aussiedler*”, were directly granted citizenship, immigrants from Muslim countries like Turkey have constantly encountered political, social, and cultural barriers. Because of the negative stereotypes toward these immigrants, they have been criticized for not assimilating enough to the German *Leitkultur*. As a result, immigration dilemmas turned into a “Muslim Problem” in Germany.

Accordingly, it is important to question why Muslim heritage immigrants especially have been approached with fear and prejudices in post-war Germany. I contend that these problematic issues cannot be thought separate from the ambiguities in the conceptualization process of German national identity. A critical historical outlook to contemporary German national history and citizenship laws becomes necessary. While it would be wrong to consider the current stereotypes against Turkish- and Arab-Germans as a threatening repetition of history, it still becomes imperative to analyze them in tandem with German society’s anxieties about its own national identity and history. In Bade’s words, “A necessary condition for acquiring the capacity to tolerate the foreign is a positive relationship to one’s own since feelings of positive collective social identity . . . offer a sense of security. Therefore, in Germany, the historical relationship to one’s own, scarred by the darkest chapter of German history, is itself a burden” (*Migration Past* 8). In a similar way, Rita Chin contends, “And on the most fundamental level, the struggle over what it means to be German is precisely what the guest worker question was always about” (265).

By taking Bade’s and Chin’s arguments as a framework, I would like to offer in this part a

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<sup>6</sup> “By facilitating the preservation of citizenship by *Auslandsdeutsche*, the 1913 law severed citizenship from residence and defined the citizenry more consistently as a community of descent” (Brubaker 115). The citizenship law was one of the most restrictive in Europe.

synopsis of the formation and development of German national consciousness after the post-war period in relation to the changing attitudes to non-German minorities in the country.

The origins of the Turkish presence in Germany can be traced back to the 1961 labor recruitment treaty which was supposed to outsource the lacking manpower in postwar Germany.<sup>7</sup> While Germany signed treaties with Italy (1955), Spain (1960), Greece (1960), Morocco (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965) and Yugoslavia (1968), it was the Turkish immigrants who exceeded the other communities in number and stayed permanently in Germany. When the treaties were first signed, it was expected that guest workers come according to a rotation principle and return to their home countries after a one-year stay. Their presence was imagined outside the confines of the German nation and society, since they were considered only as a source of cheap labor. In time, the number of Turkish guest workers who stayed permanently and reunited with their families outnumbered the other workers, which was connected to the economic and political turmoil in Turkey<sup>8</sup>. By 1973, when Germany introduced a ban to the recruitment because of the oil-shock and the resulting high unemployment rates, Turkish immigrants formed one-quarter of the non-German labor force.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the term “guest worker” began to be interchangeably used with Turks. In a contradictory way, the ban resulted in the long-term residency of Turkish immigrants, who, rather than returning to Turkey, invited their family members to Germany.

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<sup>7</sup> The postwar German economy witnessed an economic miracle from the early 1950s until the early 1970s. In the flourishing industries there was a dire need for more laborers as a consequence of low birthrate in the war and the post-war years, in addition to Germany's predilection for white-collar jobs and longer education. Especially after the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, there grew a higher demand for labor, since no refugees from East Germany could be accepted anymore. This instigated the admission of guest workers from eight Mediterranean Countries. The guest workers were employed as unskilled and semiskilled laborers in industry. They were mostly employed for positions which were not desired by the German citizens.

<sup>8</sup> Turkey witnessed three military coups in 1960, 1971, and 1980.

<sup>9</sup> While in 1961 the Turkish minority with 6700 individuals formed 1% of the non-German population of 686,200, in 1970 this increased to 249,400 forming a percentage of 16.5%. In 1987 the number rose to 1,453,700. (Statistische Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland)

Interestingly, in the late 1960s and 1970s, subsequent governments were reluctant to consider Turks as lawful immigrants. Until 1965, the social and legal status of foreigners was regulated by the Nazi-enacted 1938 law “which was based on the assumption that foreigners working in Germany were contract labour without freedom of movement or residency rights” (Kolinsky 87). The *Ausländergesetz* of 1965 did not offer great improvements to the residency rights of immigrants since it visualized non-Germans’ residence as temporary and dependant on German interests.<sup>10</sup> The issue became rather controversial, since the extreme right conceived foreigners as a threat to German national identity and culture and opted for their exclusion. The left, however, considered their presence as enrichment to the multicultural and democratic environment in Germany. In June 1978 significant changes were made in the second legislation in *Ausländergesetz*. From that time on, an immigrant could get an unlimited residence permit after five years. It was also during this period that the first Federal Commission for the Integration of Workers and their Families was established.

The 1980s were a turbulent period, especially for the Turkish minority, as a result of increasing anti-foreigner sentiments and economic turmoil. While in the 1970s the non-German immigrant debates revolved more on “economic considerations”, in the 1980s the political debates were based on an exclusionist ethno- cultural rhetoric (Inthorn 66). Furthermore, immigration problems were seen as similar to asylum problems. Due to the country’s lenient asylum laws<sup>11</sup> and turbulence in the Middle East and Turkey, a great number of refugees of Arabic and Turkish origin fled to Germany. The negative and exaggerated media images instilled fear and suspicion within the population. The situation in Germany deteriorated with the

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<sup>10</sup> “Paragraph 2(1) of the Foreigner Law stipulated: ‘A residence permit may be issued if the presence of the foreigner does not harm the interests of the Federal Republic of Germany.’” (Joppke 66). However, what the interests of the Federal Republic might be were not defined.

<sup>11</sup> Before the amendment, the principal source of German refugee law was Article 16(2) of the Constitution. It provided that “persons persecuted on political grounds shall enjoy the right of asylum” (Piotrowicz and Blay 196).

publication of the racist Heidelberg Manifesto on March 4 1982, resurrecting ghosts of the Nazi past. Written by Helmut Schröcke<sup>12</sup> and signed by other fourteen professors, the manifesto pleaded for the return of the foreigners to their native lands, since they tainted the purity of the German national identity and culture. Alarmed by these racist occurrences, it became inevitable for the government to consider Turkish immigrants as permanent residents and debate extensively about immigration. In 1984 the Kohl government made *Ausländerpolitik* one of its four priorities, and the naturalization of foreigners was made as a long-term political goal.<sup>13</sup> During this time the German public also began to show more interest in the issues of immigration and multiculturalism. In March 1984, over a 100 German and foreigner groups and Christian organizations began a week of activities devoted to immigrants. On the Day of the Foreign Fellow Citizens, the term multiculturalism was utilized for the first time. Chin asserts that one early effect of the multicultural discourse on the migrant community was “the emergence of what we might call identity politics” (205), since people understood that not all immigrants from Turkey shared the same ethnic root or believed in the same religious sect. Discussions during this time mainly focused on the ultimate difference of Turkish and Islamic values from German ones. The question of women’s rights became a litmus test for the compatibility of Turkish culture with German values.

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<sup>12</sup> He was a physicist and mineralogist at the University of Munich.

<sup>13</sup> Despite these slow changes in outlook, no transformative changes were made in the citizenship policies.

The era of German Unification in 1990 resulted in increasing hostility and attacks against foreigners. The extreme right-wing parties also gained popularity during this time<sup>14</sup>. This was one of the most complex periods in German history, since the former East German population was in the process of adapting to a new unified Germany. Furthermore, thousands of German and non-German immigrants and refugees entered Germany as a result of the fall of the Iron Curtain. “By 1990, well over 5,000,000 migrants claimed permanent resident status, making West Germany home to the largest foreign population in Europe” (Chin 3). Unfortunately, these transformative changes resulted in the negative reception of non-German immigrants and asylum seekers. Right-wing extremist groups from West and former East Germany attacked foreigners in Hoyerswerda, Rostock-Lichtenhagen, Hünxe, Mölln and Solingen. On March 24 and 25, 1994 a synagogue was burnt down and letter bomb attacks were perpetrated by Austrian neo-Nazis until mid-1995 (Bade 27). The responses of the government and political parties were rather ambivalent concerning these attacks. At first, Chancellor Kohl called these attacks “acts of barbarism” and insisted that Germany was not xenophobic” (Kanstroom 156). Ironically, in November 1992, three months after the Rostock attacks, Kohl called for a state of emergency caused by the “flood of refugees” (Bideleux 162). Rather than problematizing the growing racism in the country, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) politicians saw these attacks as a result of the liberal asylum policies. Consequently, the government pledged to tighten the asylum law.

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<sup>14</sup> In each of the *Land* elections in Bremen in September 1991 and in Baden-Württemberg and Schleswig-Holstein in April 1992, either the German’s Peoples’ Union (Deutsche Volksunion) or the Republikaner scored over 5 per cent. (Green 84)

The German public sphere during this time also clung to negative images of immigrants and asylum seekers. There was a reluctance to discuss the mounting racist attitudes in the country due to their associations with the Nazi period. Instead, the term *Ausländerfeindlichkeit* was commonly used to denote hostility or enmity towards minorities. Chin argues, “On the whole, German newspaper coverage of the antforeigner attacks relayed the details of specific episodes rather than offering commentary on the broader meaning of violence” (258). Furthermore in the media, images of invasion, threat and flood were utilized which worsened the fear of the citizens. As a result of the government’s inability to handle immigration and asylum issues, sixty German scholars issued *Das Manifest der 60* in November 1993. The manifesto interpreted the xenophobic and violent attitudes against foreigners during the unification process (in the early 1990s) as “. . . rather avoidable results of the lack of political structuring of these processes” and “an aggressive responses to the lack of migration policies” (Bade 30). During this period two important law changes came into force. The first one was the new *Ausländergesetz*, which came into force on January 1, 1991<sup>15</sup>. Another new asylum law came into effect on July 1, 1993.<sup>16</sup>

With the defeat of chancellor Kohl in the 1998 federal election, a new period in immigration debates opened up. One of the most important changes in this period was the January 1, 2000 reformation of the Citizenship Law, which transformed the *ius sanguinis*

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<sup>15</sup> The new law secured residence permits and the main elements of family reunification. It took account that the previous naturalization policy of 1977 failed to promote inclusion.

<sup>16</sup> The law made it difficult for the asylum seekers to come to Germany since if they came from safe countries or safe third countries, their application would be automatically rejected.

principle.<sup>17</sup> During this time another controversial issue became CDU's proposal of *Leitkultur* as the basis for immigration integration. The concept included the acquisition of the German language, loyalty to the German state, and acceptance of Germany's legal and political institutions. However, what made the statement embrace an ethno-cultural understanding of nationalism was its supposition of a holistic German culture in clash with the cultural values of the immigrants. The beginning declaration was as follows:

An immigration policy and integration policy can only succeed if we are certain of our national and cultural identity. . . . We Germans have developed our national identity and culture on the foundation of European civilization in the course of history, which finds expression in our language and in arts, in our moral and customs, and in our understanding of law and democracy, of freedom and civic duty. (Klusmeyer and Papademetriou 232)

Interestingly, the declaration denied the Islamic heritage of Europe while highlighting the influence of ancient philosophy, Christianity, Judaism and Enlightenment in the formation stage of German culture. Furthermore, it perpetuated the clash of civilizations hypothesis by forming a hierarchical outlook of different cultures. It implied that minorities of Islamic heritage could never become a part of the German nation and European civilization as a whole, unless they assimilated. Surprisingly, on January 1, 2005 a new immigration law came into effect. The new law regulated immigration procedures and depicted skilled professionals and scientists as welcomed into the country.

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<sup>17</sup> According to this law, citizenship is acquired by birth if one parent has lived in Germany for at least 8 years and has the corresponding residence permit to match. Dual citizenship is allowed until the person is 23 years old. After this period, the person has to choose citizenship. Although a gap of nearly 50 years belatedness informed the transformations in the citizenship policy, at last a step was made forward to the modernization of the immigration policy.



Unfortunately, with the recent economic crisis a negative mindset arose again regarding the situation of residents of Middle Eastern heritage in Germany. This became obvious once more in the highly controversial book of the German SPD politician Thilo Sarrazin, *Deutschland Schafft sich ab* (2010). In the book, which has sold over 1,000.000 copies and sparked intense debates, Sarrazin attacks the Muslim minorities in the country for exploiting the social welfare of the state and dragging Germany to destruction. Basing his conclusions on the supposed results of a scientific study, Sarrazin claims that Turks and Arabs have difficulty in integration into the German society<sup>18</sup> and threaten the German future with their high birth rates. While many politicians and intellectuals were highly critical of the book, what seemed problematic was that some sections of the population approved of his ideas. In the same year, the premier of Bavaria, Horst Seehofer, called for a halt to Turkish and Arabic immigration. The German chancellor, Angela Merkel, also depicted a bleak picture when she asserted that Germany had failed to create a multicultural society. These grave political remarks have revealed once more that since the admission of foreign workers to Germany in the 1960s the rhetoric of German nationalism has not transformed enough. Many German politicians still consider the superiority of the German leading culture, which leaves no room for immigrants and asylum seekers to assert their identities. While it is taboo to discuss racial discrimination as a result of the atrocities in Nazi Germany, racial discrimination seems to have transformed itself into a new form of cultural racism.

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<sup>18</sup> For instance Sarrazin states, “Viele Muslimische Migranten tun sich besonders schwer damit, sich aus der frommen Tyranie der Tradition zu lösen und die kulturelle Fremdheit in der neuen Umgebung zu überwinden” (369)

### 1.3. The Literature of German Writers of Middle Eastern Heritage

When Middle-Eastern heritage German writers started publishing their works mainly in the 1970s and 1980s, scholarly research focused mainly on their ethnic, cultural, and identity differences. These literary works have been examined through the lenses of integration, assimilation, alienation. They were considered authentic examples depicting the clash of two opposing worlds, which became apparent in the categorization of these works. From the 1960s until the mid-1990s, the literary works of Middle-Eastern heritage German writers were labeled as *Gastarbeiterliteratur*, *Ausländerliteratur*, *Literatur der MigrentInnen*, and *Interkulturelle Literatur*. Only from the mid-1990s on, under the influence of American scholarship, have *Multikulturelle Literatur*, *Minderheitsliteratur* and other hyphenated forms been utilized to designate this literature. Tom Cheesman rightfully states that to be seen as a Turkish writer is “to carry a ‘burden of representation’” (475), which supposes that you represent and speak for the entire ethnic or national group. For many literary critics in the in the 1980s and 1990s, reading Turkish-German literature helped Germans understand immigrant culture better. This became also apparent in the anthologies published in the 1980s, where the individual approaches of the writers were disregarded, categorized under common themes. The expectations created through writing competitions and supported by publishing houses also shaped Middle Eastern heritage German writers’ choice of themes at the beginning of their careers.

One of the first associations that encouraged the creation and publication of works by immigrants was *Polynationaler Literatur- und Kunstverein* (PoliKunst), founded in 1980 by the writers Franco Biondi (Italian heritage), Rafik Schami (Syrian heritage), Jusuf Naoum (Lebanese heritage) and Suleman Taufiq (Born in Beirut and grew up in Syria) in 1980. The main ideal of

the group as defined by Suhr was to “help a multinational culture ‘attain liberation’, and thus create tolerance and understanding among ethnic groups in all areas of their life” (80). Any minority writer who was segregated could become a part of the group and publish in the series called *Südwind Gastarbeiterdeutsch*. Polikunst did not support categorizing works of immigrant authors under the banner of *Gastarbeiterliteratur*. The term pointed to the provisional status of these authors and limited the literature to a narrow topic. However, in order to underline the imprisoning ideologies behind the term, the group utilized the same term in a transgressive way.

In their article “Literatur der Betroffenheit” (1981), Polikunst highlighted the main function of *Gastarbeiterliteratur* as political. This literature had the potential to transcend the segregating policies of the Federal Republic and depict the lack of initiative of governmental initiative in finding long-term solutions to immigrants’ problems. While the reading of *Gastarbeiterliteratur* would lead to a self-questioning of German identity, it would also create a new transnational consciousness, especially among the workers. In order to help attain this transnational consciousness, immigrant writers had to publish in German. The ideals of Polikunst could not be realized in the longer run: the *Südwind Gastarbeiterdeutsch* was renamed *Südwind Literatur* in 1983 and the *Poli-Kunstverein* dissolved in 1987. One of the main reasons for the dissolution of the group was, in Suhr’s words, its lack of “clear direction, strategy and goal” (81). There were ambivalent attitudes regarding the identity of the writers and the aim of their literature. Mainly, workers were expected to publish in the series; however, not all of the writers were guest workers. Moreover, how cultural resistance was to be attained was not clearly defined, and its relationship to German integration was rather contradictory. Since the series were topic-centered and their political value and the authenticity of the narrated experiences were more important than their aesthetic value, they lacked originality and innovation.

During the same period, Yüksel Pazarkaya (1940), one of the most established Turkish-German writers, and Ahmet Doğan, the founder of Ararat Publishing House, were approaching immigrant literature differently. Pazarkaya was convinced of literature's cosmopolitan potential, which would help in the establishment of a common humanism. As a matter of fact, he dismissed different categorizations of literature (such as guest worker literature or immigration literature) created by German writers of Turkish origin. He wrote, “. . . But whoever thinks in global terms, and believes in human history [Menschheitsgeschichte] and human culture [Menschheitskultur] as a unity out of variety and difference, can expect great new syntheses to come from the pens of the ‘immigrant’ Turkish authors in Germany, whether in Turkish, or in German” (Teraoka 86). For Pazarkaya the main reason for cultural clashes between immigrant populations and Germans was the absence of cultural information which led to misunderstandings. In his words, “Wäre die deutsche Bevölkerung beispielsweise über die Kultur und Geistesgeschichte, über die türkische Gesellschaft ausreichend informiert worden, hätte die Türkenfeindlichkeit einen weniger ergiebigen Nährboden” (11). As a matter of fact, Ararat Publishing House and Pazarkaya published modern Turkish literary classics including the works of the well-known Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet.

It is also important to discuss the underlying ideologies behind the promotion, marketing, and sponsoring of Turkish-German works by *the Institute for German as a Foreign Language* (DaF) in the 1980s. While through the 1970s grassroots organizations helped in the publication of works in literary journals, newspapers, and through small publishers, Chin asserts that “the parameters, goals, and audiences of minority literary production remained relatively fluid and open” (88). No group presided over the field nor did any single approach shape the interpretation and publication process of these works. However, DaF became the ultimate authority in shaping

the contours of *Ausländerliteratur* (they used this term to label works written by non-German writers) after its establishment in 1978 at the University of Munich. The vision of DaF was that *Ausländerliteratur* would improve foreigner's linguistic skills and initiate their integration.<sup>19</sup> Irmgard Ackermann and Harald Weinrich, two of the most important academics involved with non-German heritage authors at the Institute, edited three volumes of literature and organized literary contests. In these literary contests, writing in German was the only requirement and people from different nations and backgrounds could participate.

According to Arlene Teraoka, Ackermann and Weinrich set newer power dynamics in the creation and dissemination of this literature, by managing, controlling, and administrating it. (94) Weinrich's speech on the some of the literary works embraces a hierarchical and colonialist power dynamic when he asserts the reasons behind the incomprehensibility of some minority works: "The foreigners, especially those from the Balkans and from the Orient, still have a much more primitive [ursprünglicheres] relationship to narration, even to oral narration, and while we attempt to distill knowledge and learning by argumentation, they find practical wisdom [Lebensklugheit] in stories rich in experience . . ." (Teraoka 98). Chin rightfully claims that until about 1985, almost all the perceptions of minority literature were limited by a binary logic based on the differences between German self and migrant other. She says: "They advocated intercultural exchange, cultural synthesis, and cooperation among ethnicities in ways that complicated and stretched, but nonetheless remained within, a binary framework" (124).

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<sup>19</sup> Chin points out that DaF's conception of minority literature coincided with the creation of the Commissioner for Foreigner's Affairs (*Ausländerbeauftragter*) in Helmut Schmit's government which "represented the first official acknowledgment of the long-term presence of migrants and signaled an increasing engagement with their social well-being" (88).

Nevertheless, the publication of minority writings in well-known journals resulted in their wider dissemination among different publics.

From the 1980s on, numerous German writers of Turkish heritage joined the literary scene. This time the term *Migrationsliteratur* gained favor among academics. Not only prominent women writers such as Aysel Özakin, Zehra Çırak, and Alev Tekinay joined the scene, but also exile authors who escaped the Turkish military coup. Second generation writers of Turkish heritage who were born in Germany started publishing works as well. While it is difficult to form a generational categorization of Turkish transnational literature, which reduces the multiplicity of the writers' engagements to holistic categorizations, I find Tom Cheesman's proposal to group these works thematically, rather than chronologically, more useful. In this study I also have a thematic approach to the literary works I analyze. Cheesman maintains that German writers of Turkish origin carry the "burden of representation" (471), since they are expected to represent and perpetuate the incommensurable Turkish figure. In order to challenge this expectation, different writers have adopted various strategies. Cheesman depicts four main thematic strategies which are in fact interlinked: axialism, refusal, parodic ethnicisation, and glocalism. The axialist writers mainly engage with the topics of migration, diaspora, exile, and minority experience. For Cheesman, "One of the intentions and one of the effects of the writing is to help (for example) Germans, Turks, and German Turks or Turkish Germans to understand one another better (478). Cheesman considers Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Aras Ören, Zafer Şenocak as axialist writers. While some other writers such as Akif Pirincçi refuse to thematize topics connected to immigration, writers such as Feridun Zaimoğlu form ethnic caricatures of characters in order to criticize the prejudices and stereotypes in Germany. Finally, glocal writers, such as Kemal Kurt, whose topics overlap with the axialists engage heavily with the questions of

memory, forgetting, transnational dislocations, and travel through a more global perspective. These writers form cosmopolitan connections to other exile or immigrant writers around the world, and draw intertextual references to world literature. Glocalism according to Cheesman designates a writer's refusal to write as an ethnic writer and his attempt to transcend ascribed identities. Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany, and Soudah's exilic narratives also can be considered as axial and glocal. The topics of identity, memory, and history are the major preoccupations of these writers, who also form intertextual references to important popular writers in the world. While they wish to transform the discourses of history and nationalism both in Germany and their countries of origin, they also want to integrate their discussions within the global field. It becomes important for them to form imaginative dialogues with transnational and bilingual authors all around the world.

Most of the Arab heritage writers in Germany are of Middle Eastern origin. While a large number of Moroccan and Tunisian guest workers came to Germany in the 1960s, not many of them pursued a literature career. Most of the current Arab heritage writers came to Germany as students and asylum seekers in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>20</sup> The first literary work attributed to an Arab-German writer in the twentieth century<sup>21</sup> is written by the Mustapha El-Hajaj and it is called *Vom Affen, der ein Visum Suchte und andere Gastarbeitergeschichten* (1969). The pioneers of Arab-German writers in the FRG can be considered Jusuf Naoum (Lebanese heritage), Suleman Taufiq (Syrian heritage) and Rafik Schami (Syria heritage) who started

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<sup>20</sup> In Berman's words "in the late 1950s and early 1960s Arabs alone made up more than one-fourth of the international student body and were mostly of economically and socially privileged backgrounds" (*German Literature on the Middle East* 199).

<sup>21</sup> According to Manar Omar, Emily Ruete, whose real name was Prinzess Salme von Oman und Sansibar (1844-1924) can be considered the first immigrant Arab-German writer in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (122). After marrying the merchant Heinrich Ruete, she moved to Germany and published *Memoiren einer Arabischen Prinzessin* (the current title *Leben im Sultanpalast*) in 1886.

publishing in the early 1980s. In the GDR Adel Karasholi (Syrian-Kurdish origin) was the most prominent Arab-German writer and he published more than sixty poetry collections. Naoum and Schami (along with Biondi) were also the founders of Polikunst and in their initial works they focused on guest worker dilemmas. In their later works they began to focus on the life in the Middle East and used Arabic story-telling techniques. Schami can be considered as the most famous and well-known German speaking-Arabic writer. Some of his best selling fictions include *Erzähler der Nacht* (1989), *Die Dunkle Seite der Liebe* (2004), and *Das Geheimnis des Kalligraphen* (2011). Schami mainly focuses on the experiences of Syrian-Christians in small villages. His novels lay bare the male protagonists' experiences of social, sexual, and cultural discrimination in Syria, while they also try to foreground the richness and heterogeneity of cultures and religions in the country. Schami is famous for his integration of Arabic oral story-telling techniques and his fictions carry allusions to *Arabian Nights*. He has been given many awards such as the *Adelbert-von-Chamisso Preis* (1993) and *Hermann Hesse-Preis* (1994). Jusuf Naoum utilizes another Middle-Eastern narrative tradition that is based on the oral story-telling technique of coffeehouse storytellers. For instance, his fictions *Karakus und andere Orientalische Märchen* (1987) and *Die Kaffeehausgeschichten des Abu al Abed* (1988) embody this tradition. Naoum has also thematized the traumatic experiences of the Lebanese Civil War and Lebanese women's confrontations with sexism both in Lebanon and Germany. For instance, one of his latest novels, *Nura* (1996), negotiates the experiences of Lebanese heritage female protagonists in Germany. As for Karasholi, his work according to Berman, "emphasizes individual aspects of belonging; in that he situates himself locally rather than within larger collectivities, such as nations, religions, or ethnic groups. . . . Accordingly, Karasholi's poetry engages with philosophical and existentialist themes without avoiding the topic of biculturality"



(*German Literature on the Middle East* 231). During the end of the 1980s and 1990s more German-speaking Arab writers such as Salim Alafenisch (Palestinian heritage), Wadi Soudah (Palestinian heritage), Ghazi Abdel-Qadir (Palestinian origin) and Huda al-Hilali (Iraqi origin and female) joined the literary scene.

Unlike German writers of Turkish heritage, Arab heritage writers have not received much interest among German intellectuals. While for some critics the exotic and Orientalist motifs in Arab heritage German writers' literary undertakings became interesting, their critical attitude to sexual, racist, ethnic and religious discrimination in the Middle East and Germany has not been discussed in detail until very recently. However, innovative scholars such as Nina Berman, Manar Omar, Uta Aifan, and Iman O. Khalil have attempted to transcend the clichés against German writers of Arab heritage by introducing to the audience the multidimensional engagements in these writers' fictions. In opposition to the category of immigration literature Berman<sup>22</sup> and Omar proposed to consider this literature as *Germanophone*. Aifan, on the other hand, chose to designate it as *Grenzgängerliteratur*.<sup>23</sup>

#### 1.4 Exile and Literature

In my analysis of the works of Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany, and Soudah, I prefer to designate them as exilic or transnational narratives. We encounter in all of these literary texts characters who either had to flee or voluntarily left their homelands because of political and

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<sup>22</sup> Berman states, "The term germanophone not only permits the inclusion of writers from diverse backgrounds, it also requires the critic to consider the importance of different cultural settings for the literary text" ("German and Middle East Literary Traditions" 271).

<sup>23</sup> By developing on Barbara Frismuth's concept of *Grenzgängerliteratur*, Aifan attempts to transcend the categorization of *Migrantenliteratur*. In her words, "Autoren anderer Muttersprache sind bei Frismuth nicht 'von Natur aus Grenzgänger', sondern weil es ihnen gelingt, den 'alten Blickwinkel' zu vergessen und sich nicht zu einer einfachen und leichten Identität verleiten zu lassen" (41). In *Grenzgängerliteratur*, the authors choose German voluntarily as their literary language and they usually negotiate the experiences of living in two or more cultures and speaking two or more languages.

cultural crisis. For instance, Alwan in *Der Marschländer* leaves Iraq illegally in the 1980s since he does not want to fight in the Iran-Iraq War and is critical of the Baath Party's policies. After two years of residency in Lebanon, he first illegally enters East Germany and later West Germany. In Wadi Soudah's stories, the narrator is Palestinian and feels the agony of the invasion of the Palestinian territory by Israeli forces. In *Unerwarteter Besuch*, we barely have information about the past of the anonymous poet-narrator, who originally comes from Istanbul. However, because of his allusive reference to the military coup in Turkey in the 1980s and his active role in leftist military groups in Berlin, I contend that he either had to flee the coup or became disillusioned with the fascist tendencies in the government. In *Alman Terbiyesi*, Salih voluntarily leaves the Ottoman Empire and settles in Germany as a result of the political and cultural crisis. However, while Salih resides in Berlin, the Ottoman Empire loses Salih's home city Monastir to the Serbians during the Balkan Wars, inflicting interminable sense of loss in him. As a result, exile (either forced or willed) becomes the overarching experience of these protagonists.

Exile, which means enforced removal or self-imposed absence from one's country, stems from the Latin word *exilium*, which means "banished, living abroad, homeless". While the prefix *ex* means "out", the root *solum* signifies "ground, land, or soil". *Exilium* might also have another probable etymology, *ex salire*, that "expresses a sense of "leaping out" toward something or somewhere, implying a matter of will" (Israel 1). These two meanings, in fact, underscore the contradictory notions of exile which can either be interpreted as a painstaking separation and loss, or the beginning of a new life with an enriched vision. In *The Anatomy of Exile*, Paul Tabori, who focuses on the psychological, historical, and ideological definitions of exile, indicates the difficulty of defining exile and differentiating it from other concepts of displacement. Tabori defines an exile as a "person who is compelled to leave his homeland — though the forces that

send him on his way may be political, economic, or purely psychological” (37). For Tabori, it does not make an essential difference whether that person is expelled by force or he willingly decides to leave, which also harkens back to the two contradictory meanings of exile I mentioned above. What I find also important is Tabori’s remark about the dynamic status of exile. He says, “The status of exile, both materially and psychologically, is a dynamic one — it changes from exile to emigrant or emigrant to exile. These changes can be the results both of circumstances altering him in his homeland and of the assimilation process in his new country” (37).

Furthermore, Tabori underscores the contradictory approaches of an exile, who might be determined to integrate into his new society and find enrichment in the new social and cultural practices. He might also prefer to hold on to his original national and cultural identity and keep a critical distance from his new country of residence. Interestingly, Tabori believes that however much the exile wants to be assimilated, he will “always retain an often subconscious interest and affection for his homeland” (38). I contend that these complex and at times contradictory experiences of an exile as promulgated by Tabori are also reflected in the works of Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany, and Soudah.

In his “Reflections on Exile,” Edward Said also develops a “contrapuntal” understanding of exile. He says, “Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions. . .” (186). Said implies that although the exile is excluded from the present time-frame of his original nation, he still forms attachments to its collective memory discourse. An exile’s present experiences in his country of residence might affect his understanding of his nation’s past or his memories might have an impact on his present consciousness. For Said, “There is a unique pleasure in this sort of apprehension, especially if the

exile is conscious of other contrapuntal juxtapositions that diminish orthodox judgment and elevate appreciative sympathy” (186). While Salih seems to celebrate the multidirectional vision of the exile, later on he also foregrounds the pain and suffering that this state involves. In his words, “the habit of dissimulation is both wearying and nerve-racking. Exile is never the state of being satisfied, placid, or secure. Exile, in the words of Wallace Stevens, is ‘a mind if winter’ in which the pathos of summer and autumn as much as the potential of spring are nearby but unobtainable” (186).

One of the most important contradictions in Said’s article is his juxtaposition of the contemporary state of refugees with the modernist exiles. Said seems to be unable to resolve these contradictory notions of exile. While Tabori presents “refugees” as a legal concept, he does not dwell much on it. Said on the other hand believes that in our contemporary age, the discussions about exile cannot turn a blind eye to the situation of the refugees. According to Said, exile is a historical as well as a secular concept:

On the twentieth-century scale, exile is neither aesthetically nor humanistically comprehensible: at most the literature about exile objectifies an anguish and a predicament most people rarely experience first hand; but to think of the exile informing this literature as beneficially humanistic is to banalize its mutilations, the losses it inflicts on those who suffer them, the muteness with which it responds to any attempt to understand it as ‘good for us’” (174).

Said forms a materialistic critique of a modernist conception of exile associated with artistic creativity. By emphasizing the dilemmas of contemporary refugees, he tries to develop a collectivist understanding of exile. He says, “To reflect on exiled Muslims from India, or Haitians in America, or Bikinians in Oceania . . . means that you must leave the modest refuge provided by subjectivity and resort instead to the abstractions of mass politics” (176). However, for Said, a negative outcome of the painful state of exile is the individual’s predilection for a triumphant notion of the nationalism. In his words, “Exile is a jealous state. What you achieve is

precisely what you have no wish to share, and it is in the drawing of lines around you and your compatriots that the least attractive aspects of being in exile emerge: an exaggerated sense of group solidarity, and a passionate hostility to outsiders, even those who may in fact be in the same predicament as you” (178). In this rather narrow definition of exile, Said seems to foreground the complex experience of the Palestinians. Later on, Said feels the need to make a distinction between refugees, émigrés and exiles. While refugees signify “large herds of innocent and bewildered people”, exiles carry “a touch of solitude and spirituality” (181). In the later parts of his essay, it is more difficult for Said to resolve the tension between a modernist understanding of exile and the exile associated with refugees. He wonders if exile is so extreme and private that its instrumental use is a trivialization: “Much of the contemporary interest in exile can be traced to the somewhat pallied notion that non-exiles can share in the benefits of exile as a redemptive motif. There is, admittedly, a certain plausibility and truth to this idea. . . . And naturally “we” concentrate on that enlightening aspect of “their” presence among us, not on their misery or their demands” (183).

Towards the end of his article, Said seems to favor a more mediated understanding of exile, which involves a new oppositional form of consciousness. He says, “Necessarily, then, I speak of exile not as a privilege, but as an *alternative* to the mass institutions that dominate modern life. Exile is not, after all, a matter of choice: you are born into it, or it happens to you” (184). He goes on, “But, provided that the exile refuses to sit on the sidelines nursing a wound, there are things to be learned: he or she must cultivate a scrupulous . . . subjectivity” (184). Theodor Adorno, who formed a critical distance to home and language, becomes an exemplary figure of the exile for Said. It is interesting that through Adorno’s and later Erich Auerbach’s examples, Said seems to perpetuate the image of exile as an ideal inspirational force for writers

and the artists. Exile, as a matter of fact, is both worldly and aesthetic for Said. It marks both a painstaking loss, but also a creative imaginative force. Caren Kaplan interprets Said's contradictions as a "map of Euro-American criticism in the midst of profound changes, linking traditions and practices" (122). Moreover, she states, "While Said's writing can be said to articulate cosmopolitan sensibility, among other things, the reception of this designation is shifting rapidly as Euro-American cultural criticism comes to grips with material histories of displacement and a pressing interest in dismantling Eurocentric discourses" (122).

Indeed, the contradictory visions of exile as solitary creativity or suffering that Said develops in his article are also exemplified in the narratives of Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany, and Soudah. For instance, in *Der Marschländer* Alwan is not offered any chance to transform his critical exilic consciousness to a creative force as a poor asylum seeker in Germany in the 1980s. Denied any opportunities to develop his language, start working, or even leave the borders of the city of his residence (Hilter), Alwan's exilic consciousness become a burden to him. Worst of all, Alwan cannot find discussion partners either in the German community or among the fellow Iraqi minorities. While the German individuals he meets have a prejudiced attitude against Alwan because of his ethnic, national, and religious affiliations, his fellow Iraqi friends' exile has resulted in their blind attachment to an ethno-culturalist form of nationalism. In Soudah's stories, the exiled Palestinian narrator still cherishes his affiliations to Palestine and supports its national independence. His exile results in pain, sorrow, and nostalgia. On the other hand, his attachment does not prevent him from affiliating with the German nation either. The narrator strides to integrate himself to the society. The narrator's exile also imbues him with a creative writing spirit. In *Alman Terbiyesi*, Salih can be considered the prototype of a bourgeoisie exilic individual, who has the time and luxury to heal his wounded consciousness through writing a memoir. However,

through his writing he encounters a crisis: it becomes difficult to narrate a successful story of his individual experiences which intersects with the traumas of collective memory. In *Unerwarteter Besuch*, while the exilic and self-critical poet-narrator develops his career as a poet, writing at times cannot offer him self-realization, since language falls short of the power it represents. All of these narratives develop multifaceted visions of exilic experience, which cannot be pinned down in easy categories. They also depict a crisis in a modernist notion of exile—a state of celebratory detachment and imaginative force.

In my analysis of the multiple displacements and exilic experiences in these narratives, my overarching aim is to offer a historical and materialist analysis. I would like to underscore that in these works, the displacement of the characters does not result in an empowered hybrid status bereft of national, ethnic, or class affiliations as has been championed by some postmodern thinkers. Neither can their experiences be interpreted solely through the framework of a modernist conception of displacement and exile, which is individualistic, solitary, and an inspirational force for artistic creativity. A more nuanced and complex understanding of displacement and exile has been proposed by thinkers such as Caren Kaplan and Sophia McClennen, whose arguments were inspirational for my study. Kaplan is critical of Euro-American critical practices that turn a blind eye to the material conditions of displacement. As travel and displacement are experienced more and more by people around the world, it becomes important for her to politically and historically analyze the different forms of displacement and travel and the multifaceted reasons for it. In her study, Kaplan analyses the historical development stage of the concept of “displacement” which has been associated with leisure travel, exploration, expatriation, exile, homelessness, and immigration. She tries to link the metaphors of displacement to the production of colonial discourses. She states:

All displacements are not the same. Yet the occidental ethnographer, the modernist expatriate poet, the writer of popular travel accounts, and the tourist may all participate in the mythologized narrativizations of displacement without questioning the cultural, political, and economic grounds of their different professions, privileges, means, and limitations. Immigrants, refugees, exiles, nomads, and the homeless also move in and out of these discourses as metaphors, tropes, and symbols but rarely as historically recognized producers of critical discourses themselves. Euro-American discourses of displacement tend to absorb difference and create ahistorical amalgams. . . (2)

Kaplan does not want to consider the rootless traveler the prototype of displacement; she wants to understand why the metaphors and symbols designating “displacement” have underscored individual elite circumstances. She says, “In literary criticism, the model for the author or critic is the solitary exile who is either voluntarily expatriated or involuntarily displaced. . . . Few of these writers . . . are referred as immigrants or refugees. Their dislocation is expressed in singular rather than collective terms, as purely psychological or aesthetic situations . . .” (4).

While Kaplan does not propagate immigration as a universal experience, it still becomes a powerful tool for her to question the supremacy of modernist myths of travel and deconstruct the opposition between the political and the aesthetic. Returning to the concept of exile, she delineates that in the Euro-American modernist discourse exile has usually been conceived as a melancholic and nostalgic state about an irreparable loss and separation from the familiar. In her words: “. . . unlike particular individuals in exile who may experience all or some or none of these qualities, the *formation* of modernist exile seems to have best served those who would voluntarily experience estrangement and separation in order to produce the experimental cultures of modernism” (28). The critical force of Kaplan’s work also lies in her depiction of the continuities and negotiations between the modernist and poststructuralist theories of travel and displacement, and her implication that postmodern approaches might be complicit with the discourses of Orientalism and colonization.



While Kaplan's project is not solely dedicated to a historical and material analysis of the condition of exile - since she focuses on different experiences of displacement in the Euro-American modernist and postmodernist discourses—McClennen focuses on the utilization of the concept of exile in contemporary Western discourse. McClennen interprets exile in dialectical terms, which becomes extremely useful in my analysis of Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany and Soudah's exilic narratives. In a similar spirit to Kaplan, McClennen is critical of exile's use as "a metaphor for a new phase of social alienation" by postmodern theorists such as Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Homi Bhabha and its reception "as a state free of repressive state of national identity". She states:

There are two flaws to this line of thinking. First, even if it were possible to experience a purely transnational existence, most of us recognize that globalization does not lead to a power-free, liberated, multicultural state of being. Second, the exile's material existence in a world that requires visas, passports, and so on, in a world, that is, where the exile is forbidden to cross particular geographical boundaries, cannot be understood as existence free of the repressive nature of nationalism. I found that in many scholarly works the term "exile", having lost its reference to a painful state of being, was empty of history and an association with material reality. (1)

McClennen is reluctant to regard exile as an abstract symbol of the liberated condition of an "outsider" or as a representation of linguistic difference that enables narrative imagination. For the exiled writer, "questions of language, problems with publication and audience, and the social context of the exile as outsider and outcast makes transcendence unattainable" (32). On the other hand, McClennen also partially rejects the depiction of exile as a state of entrapment in restrictive nostalgia. All exiles cannot be imagined as cut off from the present time and space of the new countries they inhabit. McClennen locates these binary tensions (celebration of exile as idealized detachment versus sorrows of separation) in the writings of Claudio Guillén, Michael Seidel and Edward Said, whose works imply the dialectical nature of exile. While opposing the concept of exile as an abstract idea, a predetermined essence, or a series of material facts,

McClennen proposes to conceptualize exile writings in a dialectical framework. As pointed by Frederick Engels,<sup>24</sup> dialectics signifies “change, process, and flux”, and any theory based on dialectics “should be malleable to the concrete, material cases it addresses” (30). A dialectical approach to exile can foreground the tensions and anxieties in exile writing. McClennen states, “. . . the condition of exile is depicted as physical and mental; exile is a state that both liberates and confines the writer; writing is both the cause of exile and the way to supersede it; exile is both spiritual/ abstract and material; exile is personal/individual and political/collective” (30). Furthermore, “exile writing recuperates the past and re-imagines it; exiles write about the past and also about the future; the experience of exile is both unique and universal; exile improves and also restricts the writer’s work” (30). Imagining the coexistence and innerconnection of multiple contradictory concepts in exile prevents our understanding of it solely under the binary tensions of nationalism, and globalization. Rather, we need to also consider counter-nationalism, alternative nationalism, anti-nationalism and transnationalism as constitutive elements of exile. Furthermore, it is important to consider the state of exile not only as a local or global dynamic but also as regional, gendered, sexual, political, temporal, linguistic and social dynamic.

In German Studies, the discussions on the works of German writers of Middle Eastern origin have not focused enough on the concepts of exile or exilic identity. This might be related to the overarching presence of Turkish immigrants in Germany, who came as guest workers from

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<sup>24</sup> McClennen quotes from “The Science of Dialectics”: “The whole world, natural, historical, intellectual is represented as a process—i.e., as in constant motion, change, transformation, development; and the attempt is made to trace out the internal connection that makes a continuous whole of all this movement and development” (30). Furthermore, in her analysis McClennen prefers to apply the first key element (the interpenetration (unity) of opposites) of Hegel’s dialectic to the exile writing, since she believes that this category provides the richest source. She says, “The interpenetration of opposites explains the ways that exile texts include conflicts and oppositions” (30).

the 1960s on. Although numerous Turkish citizens and intellectuals also came as exiles to Germany because of the three military coups in Turkey, they mostly remained invisible. As a result, when German writers of Turkish heritage began publishing works mainly in the 1980s and 1990s, their and their characters' identities were mostly aligned with the concept of immigrant. Although numerous writers from the Arab countries came to Germany as refugees, many commentaries about their works focused merely on exotic images and the Arabian storytelling techniques in their works. In this section, however, I would like to discuss the innovative inspirational arguments of Azade Seyhan and Leslie Adelson in conjunction with McClennen's theory on the dialectics of exile.

Azade Seyhan was the first important German scholar in the American field, who undertook a comparative study of the bilingual and bicultural works of writers from the United States and Germany by focusing on their characters' experiences of exile. However, I would also like to note that Seyhan stressed the voluntary aspect of exile, rather than the forced one. In a similar approach to McClennen, Seyhan underscores the importance of forming a historical and political analysis of works written by bilingual and exile writers, rather than merely celebrating them as prototypes of hybridity. She states. "The idea of hybridity as a constant of all modes of cultural expression and as the 'third space' that enables the emergence of multiple positions, for example, forgoes an analysis of actual social spaces where cultures interact and literature as an institution of cultural memory intervenes" (5). In her analysis, Seyhan dedicates more importance to the losses incurred by multiple displacements, and how the writer invests herself in a "labor of remembrance" by reclaiming and remapping lost experiences. For many dislocated

writers, memories<sup>25</sup> of an actual or imagined past play an important role in the perception of the present, since they experience “impoverishment of communal life and shared cultural histories” (15). Although in the management of public memory, the specificity of gender, class, ethnicity etc. might be erased or forgotten, they regain their voices in transnational literature. According to Seyhan, through remembering, writers lend “coherence and integrity to history interrupted, divided, or compromised by instances of loss” (4). By employing different literary techniques they “may be able to redress forcibly forgotten experiences, allow the silences to come to word, and imagine alternative scripts for the past” (4). For Seyhan, the popular literary genres of our age like autobiographies, testimonies, and memoirs become intersecting grounds of personal recollections and historical accounts, in which memory “intimates the virtual existence of a longer narrative of nation” (17). These narratives, however, need not comply with the dominant structures of national memory. Through irony, parody, and allegory, a self-consciousness critical attitude informs their vision of the past. In her designation of literature produced on border crossing, Seyhan prefers to utilize the terms “diasporic”, “exilic”, and “transnational”. Following Appadurai’s usage of transnational, she describes transnational literature as “a genre of writing that operates outside the national canon, addresses issues facing deterritorialized cultures, and speaks for those ‘paranational communities’”(10)<sup>26</sup>

While the innovation of Seyhan’s work lies in her attempt to foreground the multilayered experiences of the characters in German exilic writers’ works, depicting their multidirectional

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<sup>25</sup> Seyhan delineates that diaspora situation is intimately connected to cultural memory. Cultural memory is the intentional remembering by actual records or experiences of a community with a common culture. However, as culture changes, memory also takes a different turn.

<sup>26</sup>The term “migrant literature” implies for Seyhan a transitory tradition, whereas ethnic literature emphasizes that it is not a natural part of that literature.

approach to national, cultural, and historical discourses of their country of origin (which has not been depicted thoroughly in critical research), she still falls short of supporting a dialectical approach to exile as McClennen does. Seyhan focuses on exilic writers' negotiations with the past national time of their country of origin. She seems to imply more the past's dominance in the exile's outlook to the present. By focusing more on the loss and anguish caused by exile, she does not highlight enough how the exile might form multidirectional approaches to the present and past of his or her new nation. While it is important for me in this dissertation to depict on one hand how Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany and Soudah remap and rearticulate their private and collective memories and form critical relationship with the discourses of their nation (as Seyhan foregrounds), I am also interested in seeing their negotiations with the present time and nationalist imagination of Germany and their relationship to the discourse of German collective memory.

One of the other inspirational theorists for my study is Leslie Adelson, who developed a different approach to the works of German writers of Turkish heritage. In her study, she does not focus on the exilic experiences of German writers of Turkish origin; she is more invested in seeing their works under the rubric of "literature of migration". In her groundbreaking book, *The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature*, Adelson critiques "the rhetorical conceit" that portrays immigrants "stuck between two worlds" since as an analytic paradigm it "is effectively incapable of accounting for cultures of migration as historical formations" (3). This exclusionist outlook foregrounds the ethno-nationalist biases in the comprehension of German culture, which also reverberates in the biased outlook towards German literature. Adelson posits the question: "If the still emergent literature of Turkish migration functions as a technology of localization in Germany today, what could it mean, beyond simplistic appeals for inclusion, to say that this

literature incorporates itself into the historical culture of Germany, a country undergoing rapid change?” (9). It is especially pivotal for Adelson to question how Turkish-German literature challenges the homogenous ethno-cultural imagination of German history, culture, and the nation which leads to “an epochal sense of disorientation.”<sup>27</sup> Immigrants writers do not necessarily recuperate from losses, but through a new imaginative language they rework “cultural matter from which historical narrative is fashioned and forged.” (14). Adelson introduces the concept of “touching tales” in order to address Turkish-German literary texts. Touching tales “denote literary narratives that commingle cultural developments and historical references generally not thought to belong together in any proper sense” (20). Through her detailed analysis of the works of Zafer Şenocak, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Feridun Zaimoğlu, and others, she portrays how these tales might reflect German guilt, shame, or resentment about German fears of migration, Turkish fears of victimization, national taboos in both countries, and Turkish perceptions of German fantasies. Only through these critical confrontations and interrogations can meaningful dialogues unfold, historical resentments be forgotten, and perhaps a post-national future brought about. Although Adelson’s theoretical approach significantly transformed German studies (which is vital for my dissertation, since before the publication of her book not much emphasis was given to how exilic or diasporic characters might form critical relationships to the German present), she does not involve herself with a dialectical perception of exilic identities. She foregrounds mainly the impact of the present time in an exilic individual’s consciousness and his/her critical contribution to the German future. All in all, by drawing on the arguments of Adelson,

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<sup>27</sup> She wonders, “How are we to read the literature of migration if familiar points of reference . . . are unsettled by the disorienting web of cultural narratives in which they serve *as* points of reference for interpretive and historical orientation alike?” (20).

McClennen, and Seyhan, I depict in these following chapters how the exilic outlook of the protagonists and other characters in Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany and Soudah's works influences their understanding of time, space, nation, identity, and language.

## CHAPTER 2

### Aras Ören's *Unerwarteter Besuch: Auf der Suche nach der Gegenwärtigen Zeit VI*.

#### 2.1 Introduction

The prominent Turkish-German writer Aras Ören in his 1986 Chamisso Prize Acceptance Speech stated: “Our awareness, shaped by immigration, disunity, the loss of our old identity, and the search for a new one are not merely characteristic of those affected by immigration . . . . They are simultaneously determining factors of the new consciousness, the new identity, which Europe and all highly industrialized nations have been searching for in the last two decades . . . .” (*Germany in Transit* 393). Delivering his speech in a period when the works of Middle-Eastern heritage German writers were interpreted through an essentialist framework, Ören became one of the pioneer writers who strongly pleaded for a transformed reception of their identities and works. Rather than being labeled as a Turkish guest worker writer, Ören insisted upon his status as a European writer who contributed to a transformation of the European consciousness. Ören’s attempts to debunk homogeneous imagination of identity, culture, and history became pronounced in his novelistic series *Auf der Suche nach der Gegenwärtigen Zeit*. (*In Search of the Present*). Comprised of six Turkish novels created in the time periods between 1985-1995, the series became an intersecting ground of private and collective memories of German, Turkish, and Turkish-German characters. In this chapter, I examine Ören’s 1995 novel *Unerwarteter Besuch* (*Unexpected Visit*), which is the last book of the series. I analyze the ways Ören problematizes and transcends uniform conceptualizations of German nation, history, and identity by engaging multidirectionally with German and German-Turkish collective and private memories. One of the important ways Ören forms these multidirectional engagements is through the motif of travel.



The characters' movements between East and West Berlin, between the different districts of Berlin, or within their own districts result in alternative perception of space and time. The places they visit conjure up fragments of memories from the collective past intermixing with their private memories. Through these complex encounters with the past, the characters' perception of the present is also constantly transformed.

Ören can be considered as one of the most established and well-known Turkish-German writers, having been awarded many literary prizes throughout his career as a poet, novelist, and essayist. Born in Bebek, Istanbul in 1939, Ören started his career as a poet in 1957. Later on, he began to focus on prose. Between the years 1959 and 1969, he dedicated his attention to theater and experimental plays. 1969 marked a turning point in Ören's life: he moved to West Germany and became a member of the art group *Rote Nelke*. While he acted in various films, he earned his living by writing scripts. Since 1974 Ören became the editor of *Sender Freies Berlin*, where he established the Turkish editorial department. In 1999, he took over the poetic lectureship at the University of Tübingen. During his career as a writer, Ören was awarded *Förderpreis des Bundesverbandes der Deutschen Industrie* in 1980, *Auszeichnung durch die Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste* in 1983 and the *Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Preis* in 1985. His poetic trilogy *Was Will Niyazi in Naunynstraße: Ein Poem* (1973), *Der Kurze Traum aus Kağıthane: Ein Poem* (1974), and *Die Fremde ist auch ein Haus: Berlin-Poem* (1980) received important critical acclaim. The trilogy takes place in Kreuzberg, and integrates the multiple erased and silenced voices of its minority inhabitants such as the Turkish guest workers and the German working classes. According to Azade Seyhan, "Ören neither praises nor condemns his characters but rather sees them as individuals robbed of agency in the shuffle of history" ("From Istanbul to Berlin" 157). Most importantly, he forms "touching tales" between the traumatic experiences and

memory discourses of the multi-ethnic inhabitants of Kreuzberg, which had not been undertaken by other writers during that time. In this way, he attempts to reconfigure and rewrite German national history from a subaltern perspective.

Indeed, in his Lecture series “Privatexil Ein Programm?” Ören defines one of the strengths of literature as providing writers an opportunity to take vengeance from history. For him, literary creations are interlinked to the present historical reality of their authors. He says, “Auch wenn wir von der Wahrheit ausgehen, kommen wir beim Schreiben in der Vorstellung an. Und umgekehrt schreiten wir von der Vorstellung zur Wirklichkeit voran. Es gelingt uns jedoch nicht, den Begriff der Zeit zu überspringen. . . . Der Schriftsteller mischt sich immer in die reine Vorstellung ein. Er interveniert” (*Privatexil* 5-6). According to Ören, the written word is not an imitation of reality; rather it transforms and recreates reality. As a long-time Berlin resident, for Ören it became pivotal to engage himself in and remap the multifaceted historical legacies of Berlin from an exilic point of view. He says, “Ich mußte Berlin, in das ich zugezogen war, durch das Schreiben zu meinem eigenen Ort machen. Ich mußte die Stadt zu einem nicht zu trennenden Teil meines Lebens eintwickeln, sie quasi für mich neu erschaffen” (*Privatexil* 37). In his literary recreation process of Berlin, Ören insisted on using Turkish, but he defined his language as “Berliner Turkish” (*Privatexil* 53). For him, both his Turkish and German through their constant interaction, were enriched, transformed and became new languages of their own. He states,

Ich habe als Jemand, der daran gewöhnt ist, mit verschiedenen Zeitlichkeiten umzugehen, in Berlin viele Reichtümer gefunden. Ich habe hier die Zeitlichkeit der Türken gefunden, die sie aus ihrem Land mitgebracht haben; ich habe hier die Zeitlichkeit der Pappfiguren gefunden; ich lernte die sozialistische Zeitlichkeit hier kennen. . . ich fand hier die künstliche Zeitlichkeit von West-Berlin. Ich habe diese Zeitlichkeiten miterlebt, sie für mich gewonnen und habe mich mit ihnen bereichert. . . . Meine ganze Umwelt, meinen zeitlichen Raum habe ich täglich ins

Türkische übersetzt. . . . und dann, wenn es angebracht war, die Zeitlichkeit der Türkei wieder ins Türkische, in meine eigens Türkisch. (53)

Through this new transformed language, Ören wants to transcend homogeneous and narrow conceptualizations of Berlin's culture and history. His mission has been to depict Berlin as a multicultural global metropolis that is not only the home of Germans but the German Turks the German Jews, and also many other minorities.

Ören's novelistic series *Auf der Suche nach der Gegenwärtigen Zeit* (1985-1995), marked another turning point in his career. Carrying postmodern traits such as intertextual allusions, metafictional remarks, and intersecting narrative voices in a non-linear style, the novels became an experimental ground of language where truth and fiction intermesh. As it is apparent in the title, through the ten-year writing process of the novels, Ören tried to comprehend and chart the Turkish-German present (1980s through 1990s), a highly difficult enterprise. These years, in fact, mark a complex period in West Germany's and Turkey's negotiations with collective national consciousness. In the Federal Republic of the 1980s, there was a competitive approach to the memory culture of the Holocaust and the Germans who suffered during the WWII. For instance, the telecast of the miniseries *Heimat* by Edgar Reitz in 1984, which was watched by millions of Germans, created controversy because of Reitz's main focus on the experiences of a rural German family of three generations in Hunsrück from 1919-1980. The suffering of the German-Jews was not depicted in the series, which was criticized by some intellectuals. The tensions deepened with the Bitburg Controversy (1985) and the Historians Dispute (1986-1989). A fearful and negative public attitude against the increasing number of Turkish guest workers became apparent, which worsened with the publication of the racist Heidelberg Manifesto (1982). Turkey, on the other hand, witnessed its third military coup on September 12, 1980 which claimed to end the brutal social conflicts between left- and right-oriented political groups. The

coup resulted in the imprisonment, torture, and execution of thousands. As for the 1990s, the German Unification became a watershed in German history which, however, was followed by horrendous attacks against foreigners. An ethno-cultural understanding of the German national imagination became a highly contested terrain of discussion. In order to understand the complex dilemmas in the present, Ören undertook alternative historical journeys into the past in which he questioned narrow conceptualizations of Germanness and Turkishness. It seems that Ören does not want to grasp the present as a uni-linear and teleological outcome of a unified national past which is built on erasures and silences. In the series, the narrators and protagonists are haunted by the fragmentary quality of their private and collective memories which disturb their sense of identity and their relationship to the nation. Not only the characters but also the narrators are disoriented because of their inability to impose authority and order in their narrative frame.

In *Unerwarteter Besuch* (1995), Ören attempts to understand the post-unification national crisis in Germany by revisiting the past and enlivening fragmented and erased memories that attest to the multicultural heritage of Germany. Employing stream-of consciousness technique and comprising various layers of memory discourses, the main plot of the novel focuses on the Turkish heritage poet-narrator's confrontation with his daughter in Germany of the 1990s. The first person accounts of the poet-narrator, whose memories and dream images introduce alternative stories and time frames, are intersected by the first-person narrative accounts of other West-, East-, and Turkish-German characters. The polyfonious memory accounts, in which fact and fiction intermesh, present an extended panorama of German national history which spans the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ören, a Berlin resident since 1969, chose the city as an ideal background for the novel's performative structure. Indeed, no other city has embraced the complexities and ambiguities of German history as much as Berlin with its socially and

culturally fluid structure. In the nineteenth century, Berlin was considered the center of Enlightenment with its cosmopolitan structure and religious tolerance. In the 1920s, the city became the center of Europe and was highly influenced by American culture. During the Third Reich, however, the regime attempted to purify the multicultural heritage of the city by denouncing it as a center of decadence and internationalism. In the post-war period, especially after the establishment of GDR and the construction of the wall, the city became once more the focal point of interest and a touchstone of East-West relations. Berlin also became an attractive residence ground for immigrants and foreign inhabitants, who currently make up 12 percent of the city's population. Described by Azade Seyhan as "a colossal screen, where so many of its transient, temporary, long-term, and permanent residents project the fears, desires, and memories they carry around on the real streets" ("From Istanbul to Berlin" 152), Berlin emerges as "a ghost whose corporeal absence becomes the presence of the past" (153). In a different formulation, Ruth Mandel designates Berlin's time as a "chronotope" which is "continually stretched, pulled between an unbearable memory and contested vision of its future—contested precisely because of its troubling memory" (35). For Mandel, it is impossible to escape Berlin's palimpsestic multiple temporalities when imagining its future. In *Unerwarteter Besuch*, the characters, by travelling within the different districts of Berlin and traversing into East Berlin, awaken traumatic stories hidden beneath ruins and empty spaces. I argue that what becomes especially innovative is Ören's formation of touching tales (Adelson) between the memory accounts of German proletariat, German-Jews, East- and West-Germans and non-German minorities in East and West Germany, which results in a multidirectional memory discourse.

Before I offer a detailed analysis of the novel I would like to offer a brief synopsis. The first scene begins when a stranger, who claims to be the poet-narrator's daughter, knocks on his

door. This encounter forms a turning point in the narrator's life and triggers intermixed images from the past taking him on a historical journey. Consequently, the entire novel takes place during the poet's short encounter with his daughter. This historical journey comprised of intermixed memories from the 1960s through 1990s, is interspersed with the inner voices and memory images of other characters implicated in the poet-narrator's life, poems, newspaper and novel excerpts. The protagonist leaves the reader in suspense regarding his poet identity since he claims that he had to pretend to be a poet because of his complicity in the secret plans of his Turkish friend Ali Bayrak. It seems that in time, the poet-narrator feels comfortable in his new identity. Ali Bayrak, on the other hand, is a guest worker in Germany. He works for the rich businessman Heinz Lambert, who secretly smuggles East Germans to West Germany. This business brings a lot of profit for him, since as compensation he takes over the ownership of the East Germans' houses in the West. Heinz is haunted day by day by the possibility that the East German secret service might discover his illegal business and kidnap him. As a result, he hires Ali Bayrak, who is supposed to find another person who will unknowingly take secret codes to East Berlin. Ali enters the secret codes into one of the poetry books of the famous Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet and by intrigue convinces the poet-narrator to take them to the East German couple Dorothea and Herbert's house. The poet-narrator naively believes that Ali wants to introduce him to his beautiful but lonely East German friend, Dorothea. Ali advises the poet-narrator to act like a poet in order to attract Dorothea. While the poet-narrator recites Dorothea poems during their various visits, he falls in love with her. In the end the poet learns about Ali's secrets and afterwards the relationship between Dorothea and him fails. The novel ends with the continuation of the prologue scene (named both as prologue and epilogue) in which the poet awakens from his recollections and confronts his daughter. His daughter, who sees the poet's torn

poems on the floor, decides not to give him his last note for Dorothea (written years ago), since on the back of it there is his last poem. She is afraid that he will destroy this last existing poem. The novel ends with the only existing poem of the poet-narrator entitled “Verbannung in Renaissance.”

## **2.2 Language, Representation, and History: The Poet’s Crisis**

In its attempt to debunk holistic notions of identities and dominant master narratives such as history and nationalism, *Unerwarteter Besuch* is riddled with tensions of narrative representation. The novel questions the ability of language to truthfully represent a reality that exists outside our consciousness. The poet-narrator and the characters are perplexed and disoriented by their inability to impose order to and discern the truth value of their sensations, experiences, and memories in an objective way. Rather, the novel reflects that meanings are not inherent in events, but are constructed through different sign system, which refer back and forth to each other. In this postmodern outlook, it is impossible to differentiate historical fact and fiction. The novel suggests that knowing our past might involve tremendous effort in choosing and juxtaposing contradictory memories and experiences that attest to different truth values and world views. Still, this interpretation is perhaps subjective and partial. A further outcome of the narrative tension in the novel is the depiction of our identities in flux, involving contradictions. The reader is constantly challenged by a narrative performativity that is informed by meta-narrative questioning, intertextual references, pastiche, an intermixture of genres, and constantly shifting voices. Contrary to their expectations, the reader cannot find easy definition of Turkish and German identity, culture, history, and transnational literature.

In his preface to postmodern fiction, Bran Nicol succinctly presents the most important features of postmodern texts as follows: “(1) a self-reflexive acknowledgement of a text’s own status as constructed, aesthetic artifact, (2) an implicit (or sometimes explicit) critique of realist approaches both to narrative and to representing a fictional ‘world’, and finally (3) a tendency to draw the readers’ attention to his/her own process of interpretation as he/she reads the text (13)” (xvi). In respect to these characteristics, *Unerwarteter Besuch* can be categorized as a postmodern text which problematizes language, truth, and representation. The reader is constantly reminded about the fictionality of the novel and the dilemmas that inform its creation. In various parts of the novel, the linear narrative is disturbed by the meta-fictional comments of the poet-narrator for whom meaning escapes in constant deferral. The poet-narrator does not believe in the existence of a pure authentic reality that can be represented by language; however he is also not convinced by the idealist account that knowledge is solely of mental nature. He states, “ (Das erste Wort, das erste Bild, die erste Erzählung—der erste Betrug. Alles bis zum heutigen Tag ausgesprochenen Wörter sind Träger von Betrug. Oder etwa nicht? . . .” (106). Disbelieving that meaning is inherent in signs, and that signs carry ultimate truth values, the poet-narrator becomes critical of the logocentric world view. This is reflected in the poem “Verbannung in die Renaissance”, which appears in the last part of the novel:

Verbannung in die Renaissance

Alles Lüge—die ganze Geschichte,  
 Der ganze begabte Mensch:  
 Volkommen, zu allem fähig,  
 Die ganze Renaissance.  
 Der Dichter in Konkurrenz zu Gott:  
 Deine Worte sind Lügen! Denn du  
 warst nie, wie du sein wolltest.  
 Sag es, los, gib es zu!  
 Ihr, die ihr euch mit Worten verewigt:  
 Was seid ihr doch für armselige Geschöpfe!



.....  
 Wer soll die Wahrheit sagen,  
 Wenn die Lügen so weit zurückgehen? (380)  
 .....

The poet-narrator seems to harshly critique the birth of modern subjectivity in the early modern period, during which the idea of a logocentric world developed. As Jacques Derrida repeatedly emphasized “the Logos” which stood for “the Word” became the basic principle of Western Metaphysics by shifting into different metaphors and metonyms. In his words, “all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the center have always designated an invariable presence . . . (essence, existence, substance, subject) alethia, transcendentality, consciousness, God, man, and so forth” (*Writing and Difference* 279-80). Logocentric thought emphasized the possibility of “origin that might dwell and emanate from the subject” (Marshall 25). Humanist thought, which propagated the logocentric view-point, created the image of the Western male as presence, and a unified self, with a central core of identity, motivated by reason. Rene Descartes (1596-1650) became the pioneer in the emergence of the Western subject with his famous dictum “I think, therefore I am”. In the realm of literature, the image of the author also became coterminous with the autonomous male subject. The author was supposed to have control over the narrative sequence and reflect the unity of the writing. As Roland Barthes in “Death of the Author” rightfully argues, the author is “always conceived of as the past of his own book: book and author stand automatically on a single line divided into a *before* and an *after*. The author is thought to nourish the book, which is to say that he exists before it, thinks, suffers, lives for it, is in the same relation of antecedence to his work as a father to his child” (168). Nevertheless, Barthes emphasizes that texts cannot be considered as a line of words that point to a single-theological meaning: the “author-God.” Rather, a text is “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash” (168).

The poet-narrator in *Unerwarteter Besuch*, by considering the belief in the existence of pure and original signs (in which the signifier and signified are one) as deceit and calling the poets who regard themselves as “author-God” liars, seems to concur with the outlook of Derrida and Barthes. By emphasizing that reality is always created anew by different configurations of words, the poet-narrator points to the constructed nature of meanings. Indeed, many postmodern novels which are informed by poststructuralist tenets highlight the arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signified. Rather than carrying an inherent meaning and truth value, the sign gains meaning in its relationship to other signs in the system. Jacques Derrida introduced the concept of “differance”<sup>28</sup>, (based on difference and deferral) to designate the relationship between signifier and signified. For Derrida, meaning is not additionally present in the sign, but it is based on the ever-moving play of difference from signifier to signifier. In this slippage, each word carries traces of the other words. As a result, meaning always escapes one’s grasp because it is not inherent in the word, but continuously suspended. The poet-narrator is also afflicted by this dilemma since he cannot impose authority, meaning, and presence onto his texts. As a result of his fear of forgetfulness, the poet tries to write down everything that he experiences. When he later reads those texts, they do not seem to belong to him anymore. Writing becomes the source of “unheilbarer Schmerz” and feels like “in ein bodenloses Loch fallen” (20). During one of his inner monologues the poet-narrator says, “Ich kenne dich nicht, du, der du das alles geschrieben hast! . . . Schreib du deine eigenen Worte und lies sie selbst!” (17). In the subsequent parts of the novel, the poet doubts more and more the truth accounts of his writings: “Wie waren mir all diese Bilder in den Sinn gekommen? Hatte ich sie selbst aus Gelesenem und Gehörtem

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<sup>28</sup> In *Speech and Phenomena* Derrida states, “Difference is what makes the movement of signification possible only if each so-called ‘present’ element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of a past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element. . .” (Royle 72)

gesammelt und in meinem Gedächtnis, diesem unendlichen Speicher, abgelegt? Oder lag der Quell von alledem in den unzähligen Bildern, die ich in meinem Leben gesehen hatte . . .” (39).

The poet-narrator’s dilemma of creating original meaning is also reflected in the theories of Michael Bakhtin. For Bakhtin language is not a neutral medium that passes easily to the private property of the speaker’s and writer’s intentions. He rightfully states: “Language lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in a language is half someone else’s. . . . The word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language . . . but it rather exists in other people’s mouths, in other people’s contexts, serving other people’s intentions. . . .” (77).

In *Unerwarteter Besuch*, this crisis of realist representation and the poet-narrator’s loss of autonomy as a meaning-producing subject causes dilemmas in the depiction of private and collective memory. The poet-narrator experiences a crisis when he realizes that the past is a mere articulation or a re-presentation of the experienced event. He thinks that its signifying structure cannot be differentiated from fiction, because parts of it are selected, ordered, erased, and changed. As the poet states: “Wenn der Mensch sein Leben erzählt, dann stellt er es sich vor, verwandelt die Vorstellungen in Fiktionen und konstruiert auf diese Weise eine Fälschung seines eigenen Lebens. Mit jeder Erzählung wird der Mensch in gewisser Weise zum Betrüger an sich selbst” (66). The poet-narrator implies that the past events can never be known in their actual state and they are constantly retransformed in remembrance. This becomes apparent when the poet-narrator’s remembrance of a certain event is suddenly intersected by achronological arbitrary flashbacks, dream images, fantasies, newspaper, and excerpts from books, which induce further flashbacks and dreams. He says: “Ich rief mir unaufhörlich neue Bilder mit jeweils unterschiedlichen Geschichten vor Augen. Daher gelang es mir nicht, die Idee dieser Allegorie, die ich für großartig hielt, als eine abgeschlossene Geschichte zu entwickeln” (115). Not only the

poet-narrator but also the other characters experience this dilemma in the novel. All in all, it is rather difficult for the characters to trace or to remember the first event that triggered the recollection of other memories.

In the last chapter of the novel entitled “The Secret of the Text”, the reader encounters once more the poet-narrator immersed in an artistic dramatic monologue. While he reads his last writing, which may well be considered a masterpiece, he feels neither joy nor contentment. He thinks that publishing this work would be a deception to his self and even an erasure of his very self. As a result, he resolves to destroy all his writings, which brings him the ultimate relief. However, in the epilogue of the novel, it is revealed that he was unsuccessful in that mission. His daughter still has his last poem “Banishment in Renaissance”, which she keeps for herself. The novel ends with this poem whose ultimate two lines reflect the never-ending dilemma of the writer:

Das Wort reißt jede von ihm selbst erbaute Zuflucht  
ein. Und dennoch flüchten wir uns ins Wort. (380)

I contend that while *Unerwarteter Besuch* points to these ambiguities and contradictions in language’s representational capacity of reality and truth, it still depicts writing as a worthwhile experience. Unlike some postmodern texts there is a closure in *Unerwarteter Besuch*, since we know that its main plot (that forms the prologue and epilogue) is the unexpected visit of the poet’s daughter. Without confronting the reader with utter meaninglessness, the novel implies that writing should, in a meta-narrative way, make the reader aware of the existence of multilayered realities and interpretations of the world and give the reader a chance to construct his/her own realities.

## 2.3 Nation, Space, Time, and Identity

### 2.3.a The Poet Traversing East and West Berlin

In *Unerwarteter Besuch*, the anonymous male poet-narrator can be considered the main character whose recollection of the past unfolds in the novel. His confrontation with his daughter in the 1990s, which becomes the main plot in the novel (only lasting a few minutes), enlivens his private and collective memories from Berlin in the 1970s and 1980s. In these recollections the poet appears as a mysterious character never revealing his name, origins, family circumstances, or actual profession. Only his dialogue with a Greek acquaintance forms a touching reference to his previous home city, Istanbul. Furthermore, his interior monologue reveals that he is an adherent of left-wing ideology and a proponent of workers' rights. The poet's becoming friends with the mysterious Turkish man Ali Bayrak, about whose life the poet does not have much information, forms a turning point in his life. Before meeting Ali, the poet does not have a particular aim in life and lazily spends his days in cafes and bars. He sleeps with several different women and enjoys drinking. Nevertheless, Ali convinces him to act out as a poet and impress the beautiful East-German Dorothea, with whom the poet falls in love. Day by day, the poet feels more comfortable with his pretended poet identity and in the end it becomes an inseparable part of himself.

While the poet-narrator's performance as a poet triggers his alternative conceptualization of reality, his frequent travels between East and West Berlin transform his perception of the historical and spacial topographies of Berlin. Through his careful observational skills and critical questioning attitude as a non-German resident, the poet discerns the artificiality of the truth claims of the dominant political ideologies in East and West Berlin that are propagated through paroles, images, and the media. Furthermore, his train ride becomes an important chronotope in

which the places and people he sees conjure up images and stories from the subaltern German pasts. It can be claimed that, the poet's mind changes into a transmitter of fragmented and non-linear collective and private memories, about which he read in history books, newspapers, autobiographies, and novels. I argue that what is especially important in this process is the poet's juxtaposition of memory discourses that normally do not seem to belong together, such as the negative experiences of German proletariat and the Turkish guest workers, or the traumas of the Berliner Jews. However, these memories are not contrasted and compared to each other in a linear-narrative sequence with a cause-effect relationship. Rather, they "touch each other" (Adelson) and invite the reader to form multidirectional attachments to the German collective memory discourse.

During his encounter with his daughter, one of the important recollections of the poet belongs to the 1970s when he first met Ali Bayrak, his deceitful friend. While the poet tries to remember the exact year of their first encounter, which might be 1972, a panoramic picture of the important historical events of that era unfolds. One of the important events in German national history during that era was the "Grundlagenvertrag" which was signed between GDR and FRG on December 21, 1972. As a result, both states agreed on respecting each other's territorial integrity and not representing each other in international summits. This collective memory account is intersected by the poet's impressions about the changing structure of West German society, which is teeming with unemployed young people walking lazily on the streets and listening to music. Most importantly, the poet remembers the booming media images which announced the arrival of the Turks as guest workers such as "Die Türken Kommen" (80). The poet feels rather alarmed by these images since they are informed by "geringschätzigte Ablehnung" rather than signaling "Vorfreude" (91). His concern foreshadows the problematic trajectory of Turkish-

German relations. Later on, the poet-narrator intermixes his private memories with the fleeting images of German collective memory, and also makes references to a global memory culture by mentioning the leftist movements in the world. However, in order to refrain from insisting upon the truth content of his remembrance, the poet makes suppositions, indicated by the word “vielleicht”:

Vielleicht war es den ganzen Tag bewölkt gewesen und hatte leicht geregnet, . . . vielleicht war es auch ein wolkenloser sonniger Tag gewesen, er hatte Bier in einer Kneipe getrunken oder in einem Straßencafé gesessen und die Passanten beobachtet, möglicherweise hatte er sich beim Friseur rasieren lassen, lief auf der Straße herum, pißte gegen eine Wand, langweilte sich, ging durch den Park, suchte jemanden zum Reden, . . . rief auf einer Demonstration: ‘Es lebe die internationale Solidarität!’, verging vor Gram über Vietnam, ärgerte sich über den Militärputsch in der Türkei, faselte von der Herrschaft des Proletariats, . . . versuchte, Gedichte zu schreiben, sagte ‘Revolution,’ . . . haßte die Konservativen, jammerte ständig über Geldmangel, träumte. . . (91)

By forming fleeting analogies between chaotic historical events in different countries, the poet underscores the global effects of the Cold War, which led to problematic confrontations between left- and right-oriented political groups. Turkey in the 1970s witnessed chaos when tension between Islamist, ultra-nationalist, and leftist student groups escalated leading to bomb attacks, kidnapping, and constant strikes. The military coup on March 12, 1971, which claimed to intervene in the chaotic situation of the country, resulted in the violent suppression of leftist groups. Germany, on the other hand, also witnessed a turbulent period with the establishment of the Red Army Faction in 1970. The ensuing assassinations and kidnappings undertaken by the group resulted in a national crisis in 1977 known as “German Autumn”. In the United States, there was also a massive increase in student protests in the United States that demanded an end to the Vietnam War. Especially as a result of Nixon’s “Cambodian Invasion” on May 8 1970, hundreds thousands of students turned their anger to military facilities. In the face of these transformative changes, the poet also experiences an identity crisis. His close friendship with Ali,

however, will help him avert his attention from these grim political realities and enable him to have a transformed apprehension of reality.

One of the important events that changes the poet's perception of the historical and spacial topographies of Berlin and Germany is his constant commute between West and East Berlin to see his lover, Dorothea. Interestingly, it is on the day of the German Unification that the poet remembers Dorothea once more, which immediately conjures up images of his first journey to East Berlin with Ali Bayrak. He says, “. . . wäre mir nie in den Sinn gekommen, daß ich nun wieder an diese Person denken würde, in diesem Moment, wo die Geschichte ihr erstaunliches, großzügiges Spiel spielte, das die Vorstellungskraft verwirrte, sämtliche Vorhersagen über den Haufen warf und für irrig erklärte” (117). Unlike the poet, the important question for me becomes, why the image of Dorothea immediately triggers his memories of his first train journey between East and West Berlin. It is rather symbolic that the poet not only remembers the physical details of this train journey, which he took from *Zoologischer Garten*, but also this journey's impression on him. I argue that this train journey becomes an important “chronotope”<sup>29</sup> in which the places the poet conceives take him to a historical journey into the landmarks of German collective memory. The old dilapidated train stations on the way, which bear signboards (like archives) with their old gothic inscriptions, seem to be expecting the arrival of passengers from a distant past. Although the poet just sits across Ali Bayrak on the train, he feels distanced from him since he believes to be experiencing another dimension. The poet-narrator no longer

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<sup>29</sup> Bakhtin defines the chronotope as the “intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spacial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature”. In the novel, “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” (84).



perceives the rattling of the wheels or the wooden seats. It becomes rather difficult for the poet to pin down these experiences in words:

Mein Gedächtnis ist aufgepeitscht; während die S-Bahn langsam aus dem Bahnhof ausfährt und ich durchs Fenster hinausblicke, eröffnen sich vor mir Räume, die mir von früher vertraut sind, die jedoch nicht hierher gehören; ich nehme sie bewußt wahr und betrachte sie. Diese Räume ziehen mich in sich hinein. Könnte das die Unendlichkeit sein? Wäre das die Idée der Unendlichkeit? Ja, ich erlebe diese Idee. Ich sehe Personen, die es nicht gibt, die in meinem Gedächtnis existieren und die ich mit mir trage. Ich kann mich ihrer großen Zahl gar nicht genug rühmen. Sie alle sind Buchseiten entwichen, schwer entzifferbaren Handschriften, Geschichten, in die sie eingesperrt waren, wahren Begebnissen, Gedichten, Romanen, und tanzen vor mir eine seltsame, unbeschreiblich aufregende Revue. Diese wundersame Revue kann ich nach meinem Belieben dirigieren, das alles ist leicht in Worte zu fassen, aber wie kann ich ihm sonst Ausdruck geben? (131)

The poet's remembrance of fragmented images from the national collective past does not reflect his desire to enliven the past in its truthfulness. Unlike a national historian, who would weave together factual information under a common theme and impose a logical order with a clear cause and effect relationship, the poet's remembering process lacks this imposed order. Fleeting subaltern images from the past, woven like a pastiche, come one after each other. The voices of real and fictional characters intermix, and the poet is no longer sure about the sources of his recollections. The poet-narrator feels that he plays the role of the poet for the first time since this journey enables him to weave and (re)map scattered, forgotten, and erased stories from the past into new imaginary topographies. However, this remapping does not impose a finalized order to the voices, but will be translated and reimagined again by different readers.

Another interesting historical image that the poet-narrator conjures up during the journey is based on the Ottoman-German relationship of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The poet visualizes pictures which might belong to an old newspaper or history book. The first picture belongs to 1910 when the Ottoman finance minister Cavid Bey (1875-1926) signed the second protocol

related to the obligations of the Baghdad Railway,<sup>30</sup> to be constructed by the German Empire. Cavit Bey seems “zweifellos nervös, er macht keinen Hehl daraus, rückt mit der rechten Hand immer wieder seinen Panamahut gerade, spielt mit den Knöpfen an seinem Gehrock, knöpft sie auf und zu. . .” (128). Next to him sits Arthur V. Gwinner (1856-1931), Spokesman of the Board of Managing Directors of Deutsche Bank and Supervisory Board Chairman of the Baghdad Railway. The poet imagines them walking from *Fasanerie-Allee* to *Großen Stern* arguing vehemently with each other. He does not know the reason for the argument, but for him the scene looks comical and even ironic when Gwinner “zieht seine Taschenuhr an der Goldkette hervor und wirft einen kurzen Blick darauf, als hätte das nichts mit der Situation zu tun. . .” (128). It seems that both of these men are not much interested in further discussing common Turkish and German goals, but just want to be finished with the formalities. This fleeting scene introduces the reader to the longstanding Turkish–German relationship which intensified after German Unification in the nineteenth century. The railroad stands for the conflicting power interests especially between England and the German Empire in the end of the nineteenth century. As is claimed by different historical accounts, Germany’s eagerness to build the railway and its support for the Pan-Islamist ideology were motivated by the idea of forming a bulwark against England. The underlying causes for the pretended friendship between Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid and Kaiser Wilhelm, who showed keen interest in Islam and the Turks, are claimed to be Germany’s desire to gain control of the oil fields in Iraq and the Port of Basra. The poet’s foregrounding of this image of insincerity and pretention between these men might be attributed

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<sup>30</sup> The Baghdad Railway was to extend from Haydarpasa Train Station in Istanbul until the Persian Gulf. The Deutsche Bank with its financial support was awarded the concessions to build the railway in its initial stage. This was later transferred to Anatolian Railway Company whose majority of shares was held by the Deutsche Bank. The construction of the railway resulted in ongoing disputes among Europe’s great powers. The construction reached to Konya in 1896. In March 1903, Deutsche Bank signed the Baghdad Concession which allowed the continuation of the construction of railway from Konya until Basra. As a result of WWI and the problematic situation of the Ottoman Empire the project could not be completed.

to these underlying power interests. This image also foreshadows for the defeat of Ottoman Empire and the German Empire in WWI, causing traumatic consequences in the historical trajectory of these countries.

The poet's memory images of the German Empire and Ottoman Empires are followed by further subaltern images related to the chaotic period in Weimar Germany and the complex situation of the communists and proletariat. He not only confronts important historical figures such as Karl Radek, Gustav Noske, and Rosa Luxemburg, but also characters from Ören's other fictions such as Gustav and Elizabeth Kutzer from his poetic work *Was will Niyazi in der Naunynstraße* (1973). In his remembrance, the poet first confronts an old dismissed soldier who seems to be fighting against the actions of the Bolsheviks. He asks the people around him as to the whereabouts of Karl Radek (1885- 1939) who is a communist politician and journalist. Radek, who became an international communist leader after the revolution, was famous for his activities in the German and Polish workers movements before WWI. Being a former member of the Social Democratic Party between 1907-1913, he organized the communist movement between 1918-1920. The image of Radek is followed by that of the proletariat Gustav Kutzer. We encounter Kutzer on his way to the communist party meeting. Radek delivers an emotional speech about the sorrows of the Russian proletariat and the importance of the revolution for the German proletariat, which impresses the audience and Kutzer alike: "Mitgerissen von Radeks Worten, versunken in die Grenzlosigkeit seiner Träume, er rührt sich nicht von der Stelle" (129). Another important figure that we encounter is the controversial defense minister Gustav Noske<sup>31</sup>,

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<sup>31</sup> In 1892, Noske became the Brandenburg chairman of SPD. In 1906, he entered the Reichstag. He was a controversial figure, since he supported German imperialism and Germany's participation in WWI. Between 1919 and 1920, he served as the Minister of Defence of Germany. When the SPD government panicked because of the Communist uprisings, Noske (on behalf of Ebert-Scheidemann cabinet) called individual commanders to organize military formations known as Freikorps. After the *Kapp Putsch*, Noske was forced to resign and later he served as the president of the Russian province of Hannover. The Gestapo arrested Noske in 1944, since they suspected that he was involved in the July 20 Plot against Hitler. He was freed by the allied troops.

(1868-1946) who signed the *Schießbefehl* on January 17, 1919, thus enabling German police and the guards to use weapons. The shooting order depicts the chaotic situation in Germany after its defeat in WWI, which resulted in economic and social problems.

One of the greatest controversies during this time occurred between the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), founded by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, and the government. When the KPD initialized the Spartakus uprising in January 1919, Noske raised the volunteer military units known as “Freikorps”<sup>32</sup> to suppress it in a bloody way. Later on, these incidents led to the secret assassination of Luxemburg and Liebknecht<sup>33</sup>. The poet conjures up images of the guilt-ridden Jäger Runge, the man who was ordered to shoot Rosa Luxemburg.<sup>34</sup> Runge refuses to shoot her, but in the end makes her unconscious her by hitting her with the butt of his rifle on 15 January 1919. A short while later, a stenographer writes down his description of the event. The poet says: “Der Jäger Runge ahnt auf einmal die Wichtigkeit der Worte, die da schriftlich festgehalten werden; er verspürt erstmals Unruhe darüber; daß sein Name von nun an eine bestimmte Bedeutung haben wird” (129). In the end Jäger Runge throws Luxemburg’s corpse into the *Landwehrkanal*, which consumes him with guilt. The narrator comments: “Soviel Zeit

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<sup>32</sup> During the early months of the German Republic the *Freikorps* violently suppressed some of left-wing uprisings. The first major action within Germany took place in Berlin, in January 1919. These units were also used “to crush the short-lived ‘Soviet Republic’ in Munich . . . and were also deployed in the eastern borders of the Reich in skirmishes with Polish, Lithuanian and Latvian forces” (Woodley 122). The Freikorps leaders gravitated towards the The National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP).

<sup>33</sup> In her essay dedicated to Rosa Luxemburg, Hannah Arendt states, “The Bonn government . . . let it be known that it as thanks to the Freikorps that Moscow had failed to incorporate all of Germany into a red Empire after the First World War and that the murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg was entirely legal ‘an execution in accordance with martial law’”(35).

<sup>34</sup> Luxemburg developed her ideas regarding communism and Marxism in Russia, Poland, and Germany. Inspired by the mass activism in the Russian Revolution of 1905, she struggled to form the same consciousness in Germany which resulted in her harsh critique of the German bureaucracy. “Luxemburg argued that not party directives, but the spontaneous actions of workers, culminating in mass strikes and revolution, would serve as the means of political transformation”(Weitz 79). Her celebration of mass activism on the streets, which was propagated by her pamphlet “The Mass Strike”, “shaded into anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist strands of politics”(79). Her controversial stance related to issues of revolution, the concept of democracy, and socialism also affected the ideological stance of KPD. Having established the Spartacus Program, where she proposed that only workers and soldiers would have suffrage rights in the election process of councils, she also refused to cooperate with the SPD Scheidemann-Ebert by declaring this a betrayal to the principles of socialism.

ist vergangen, aber das Taftkleid der Leiche, die aus dem Kanal gezogen wurde, ist immer noch naß, noch immer Kränze auf Trauerfeiern/ noch immer Fragen ohne Antwort. . .” (130). The murder of Rosa Luxemburg became ingrained in the memory of the German communists, by being commemorated in rituals in the GDR. This event marked an important turning point in the history of communism in Germany, resulting in festivals which started just after the assassination on January 15, 1919. Ten days later, one of the biggest mass demonstrations took place when the crowds walked to Friedrichsfelde to bury Liebknecht and Luxemburg in an empty coffin. The commemorations were formalized by the KDP, which after Lenin’s death were called LLL (Lenin-Liebknecht- Luxemburg) festivals.

While the poet tries to enliven the erased or suppressed images of German communists and proletariat in West Germany, he also tries to form analogies between their stories and the current subaltern experiences of Turkish immigrants. As a result, he conjures up the image of the fictional couple, the Kutzers, from Ören’s poetical work *Was will Niyazi in der Naunynstraße*. He says, “Plötzlich sehe ich auf einem blumenlosen Balkon, von dessen Mauern der Putz abblättert, regunglos wie eine Büste Frau Kutzer stehen, eins mit den Leiden dieser Stadt und mit ihrer Vergangenheit, sowohl der eigenen als auch der von Fremden. (Richtiger: Ich erinnere mich an sie.) . . . vielleicht wartet sie . . . im melancholischen Abendlicht auf ihren Mann Gustav Kutzer” (136). This sorrowful image of Mrs. Kutzer might either belong to the initial stage of her marriage life, when her husband would often go to the KPD party meetings or to the postwar period when she lost her only son in 1946 and later her husband. Leading a life of poverty and disillusionment, Mrs. Kutzer finds solace in her dreams and memories. The poet states: “. . . sie wartet auf einen Traum, ohne zu wissen, weshalb sie wartet, sie wartet nur, ohne zu wissen, daß dieser Traum die grenzen ihrer Phantasie übersteigt” (136). Ören’s *Was will Niyazi in der*

*Naunynstraße*, which can be considered a synthesis of epic, lyrical, and dramatic elements, explores the interrelated stories of Turkish guest workers and the German proletariat who live in the historical Naunynstraße. Located in the Kreuzberg district, which for decades has been inhabited by lower class and minority populations, the street became popular among the marginalized Turkish guest workers. In his attempt to underscore the palimpsestic structure of Kreuzberg, Ören utilizes multiple plot lines and focuses on the interaction of heterogeneous characters. While there is no central protagonist, multiple characters appear with interfering voices and life stories. In Ören's *Naunynstraße*, Mrs. Kutzer is depicted as an old, lonely, and poor woman who tries to sleep in her cold, small apartment. The Turkish guest worker protagonist Niyazi Gümüşkaya is another important character who also lives in meager conditions. Despite the fact that they are neighbors, these characters are oblivious to each other's lives. Ören criticizes the failed multicultural consciousness in a district in which people from different cultures are not involved in each other's lives. The poem not only informs us about the present situation of the characters and the hardships they encounter, but it is also a journey into their past in which the history of German socialism unfolds. The reader learns about the immigrant heritage of Mrs. Kutzer's family that moved to Berlin from East Prussia and also about her father who was a member of the petit bourgeoisie. With Germany's defeat in WWI and the following depression, the family's economic situation deteriorates. As a result, Mrs. Kutzer marries the proletarian Mr. Kutzer and works as a cleaning lady yearning for a prosperous life. While her husband is politically committed in the KPD meetings and is an admirer of Rosa Luxemburg, she does not show much interest in the party meetings. When the National Socialists come to power, Mr. Kutzer must give up his communist aspirations, and a little while after his son's death, he also dies. Consequently, Mrs. Kutzer finds herself in economic hardship and is

plunged into sorrow. In a similar way, Niyazi, who belongs to a lower class family, can no longer endure the economic problems of Turkey and moves to Germany. There he also becomes ideologically engaged with the proletarian cause and suffers from the stereotypes against the Turkish immigrants. Through forming touching tales between the past and present experiences of these different German and Turkish characters, Ören attempts to form a common space of understanding. He implies that ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural differences should not stand in the way of common action. The poet-narrator of the present novel, having read Ören's poem, also seems also to support this ideas.

The layers of subaltern memory that the poet unfolds during his short train journey also awaken ghostly voices of German-Jews who were leading fearful, traumatized lives during the Third Reich. The poet remembers the courageous Germans who helped their German-Jewish peers. First of all, a 1940 interview with an anonymous German-Jewish man enlivens in the poet's mind. In a voice of desperation the man exclaims: "In diesem eisigen Winter ist sich keiner seiner Kohlen sicher, denn das Brennmaterial der Juden kann jederzeit beschlagnahmt werden. Wie bekommen auch keine Kleiderkarten. . . wir haben nur ein Recht auf vier Rollen Garn pro Jahr, um die zerrissenen Kleider zu flicken. . ." (130). The man is thankful that some courageous Germans did not leave them alone in desperation and shared all they had with them. His voice is interrupted by a German woman who describes Berlin as hell. She is shocked that German Jews are not allowed to buy food before midnight. They also cannot go out after eight o'clock at night. She lets the interviewer know that on November 9, many Jews had been arrested and alludes to the "Kristallnacht Pogrom" (1938), which happened two years ago. For the poet, it becomes soothing to meet people like her who did their utmost to rebel against Jewish segregation in the country.

While the train journey enables an alternative re-mapping of German national history, it also triggers the poet to discover some unnoticed characteristics and details of the present spatial configuration of Berlin. Most important of all, the poet reconceptualizes the Berlin Wall, whose presence he took for granted. The traumatic history of the division of Germany comes to life, when the poet notices the barbed wires, the guard towers, and the old buildings around the wall carrying traces of bullet holes. He says:

In der S-Bahn . . . wird mir klar, daß wir einen Wechsel vollziehen zwischen zwei nebeneinander liegenden Räumen, die zwar ineinander übergehen, aber doch völlig gegensätzlich und weit von einander entfernt sind; ja, ich merke, daß wir in einen farblosen Raum eintreten, in dem die stehende Zeit mit nicht dagewesener Geschwindigkeit verfliegt und die vergehende Zeit den Eindruck von Stillstand erweckt—ein Bild aus seelenlosen Formen. (135-136)

The division of the city space into two countries with opposing ideologies has an impact on the poet's perception of space and time. The metaphor of the "frozen time" might indicate the imprisonment of the GDR citizens under a corrupted ideology to whose unchanging principles they have to show commitment. Since an environment of fear arises under the panoptic gaze of the GDR state system, it seems to the poet that the people on the streets are careful to go unnoticed. The poet feels uncomfortable by the presence of soldiers at the train station, who do not forgive any breach of the regulations. His discomfort escalates when he walks down the stairs and is overcome by a strong smell of disinfectant. In an interesting way, the poet defines this smell as a wall which stops the bacteria and germs of crossing the boundaries of the eastern capital. As they walk farther down the narrow corridors, the poet notices the existence of posters, brochures, leaflets, and statistics which perpetuate propaganda against the FRG and praise Lenin and the communist system in the GDR. A desire awakens in the author to conceptualize a world created only by these abstract numbers and the information in the leaflets and books.

Nevertheless, this proves a difficult undertaking: "Gegenüber der Echtheit der wahrgenommenen



Bilder zeichnen die Texte und Zahlen in der menschlichen Phantasie eine unechte, abstrakte Welt” (146). The everyday experiences of the poet and also citizens in the GDR fall short of the idealized pictures created by the government. They have to pretend or make themselves believe in the clichés of this artificial world in which time seems to stand still. All in all, for the poet, the ideological propaganda in both East and West Berlin creates estranged and disoriented subjects. While for an East German woman the portraits of Marx, Engels, and Lenin might seem meaningless, the lower class Frau Kutzer might feel the same when she looks at the Coca Cola posters, television journals, or a commercial for living room furniture. For the poet, both women are copies of each other, printed forms of the same photograph. They lead disillusioned and wasted lives.

### **2.3.b Heinz Lambert’s Visit to Kreuzberg**

While for the poet-narrator his short journey from West to East Berlin becomes a reminder of the subaltern, erased, and fictional memories of the German past, for one of the other main characters, Heinz Lambert, it is his arrival to Kreuzberg which triggers this process. Leading a prosperous life as an upper class businessman in West Berlin, Heinz climbed the social ladder quickly as a result of his illegal business of smuggling East-German citizens to the West. Having spent the last decades of his life in the upper-class neighborhoods and rich circles in Berlin, Kreuzberg is unknown to him. When Heinz goes to a Kreuzberg Turkish Restaurant, to meet Ali Bayrak (who helps him in his ventures), as a stranger he feels threatened. Confronting so many Turkish-Germans all together in the same space causes uneasiness in him. In his anxious period of waiting, the Turkish restaurant becomes a projection ground of Heinz’s haunting private memories which forms another alternative palimpsestic picture of German national

memory. What is important for me in this scene is understanding the reasons behind Heinz's alienation in Kreuzberg, what kind of memories his presence in Kreuzberg triggers, and how it affects his conceptualization of the past.

Prior to German Unification, Kreuzberg was considered to be at the geographic, social, and cultural periphery of West Berlin. Ruth Mandel describes it as an insulated space "beyond the pale" (141), and an "island within an island" (141). Indeed, a quick historical glimpse of Kreuzberg's history will reveal that it had always been marked as a space of marked alterity. It had been the preferred abode of the marginalia such as Huguenot refugees, 19<sup>th</sup> century landless immigrants from Silesia, Pomerania, and Eastern Prussia, and the industrial proletariat.<sup>35</sup> Over the course of 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s Kreuzberg, also known as "little Istanbul," was a popular residence for the Turkish-Germans, hippies, and alternative groups. While for the left-wing intellectuals Kreuzberg, with its multicultural and alternative lifestyle, became a space for transgressive politics, for the conservative members of the bourgeoisie (like Heinz), it was an unwanted Turkish ghetto and a territory of chaos and criminality. For the bourgeoisie populations, like Heinz, who were blind to the existence of Kreuzberg, it was a space denoting incommensurable difference. As a result, when Heinz arrives there for the first time, he feels rather disoriented. He thinks: "Hier kann einem alles mögliche zustoßen . . . diese finsternen Gesellen mit ihren falschen Blicken und ihrem hinterlistigen Ausdruck, Türen, die auf Hinterhöfe und zwielichtige Geheimgänge führen, und dazu noch diese dubiose Sprache, diese unverständlichen langen a-, ö- und ü- Laute . . ." (155). For Heinz, the Turkish residents of

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<sup>35</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century the district served as home to industrial workshops and small factories, as well as to the workers employed in these shops.

Kreuzberg with their dark complexion and obscure language create a threatening and mysterious space. Heinz's approach to Kreuzberg creates of it "a boundary zone" which, according to Mandel, is "a liminal site between the licit and the illicit, violating German rules of exclusion while simultaneously reinforcing them." (Mandel 142). Being unable to comprehend and organize Kreuzberg according to his taken-for-granted standards, Heinz feels vulnerable and alienated there.

One of the ways for Heinz to feel less threatened in Kreuzberg is to conceptualize it as a fictional space. The narrator states, ". . . Kreuzberg, an diesem befremdlichen Ort, der so viele Geheimnisse barg und Zeuge unverständlicher Ereignisse war, wo man in einer anderen Zeit lebte als in der Welt draußen, wo ganz andere Gesetze galten, . . . an diesem Ort voller Magie und exotischer Empfindungen, der die Phantasie unaufhörlich aufpeitschte" (167). According to Mandel, Kreuzberg is imagined by many Germans as the space of the medieval fairs and carnivals, "occupying a demonized but extra-territorial but idealized place in the social imaginary" (142). The basis of many of these fantasies is rooted in the reification of the Turkish "other" for Mandel. In the case of Heinz, Kreuzberg triggers images from the film *Casablanca*<sup>36</sup> that he watched years ago. After watching the film, Heinz associated mysterious rooms always with Chinese restaurants or Oriental clubs where "An den Tischen saßen Männer mit Fes oder Turban, meist mit Vollbart . . . rauchten Opiumpfeifen und tranken bunte Getränke aus kleinen Gläschen, während unter bogenförmigen Türen halbnackte, in Tüll gehüllte Bauchtänzerinnen hervortraten und tanzten . . ." (191). In these scenes Heinz envisions himself as a western hero who saves the world from these intriguing bad-natured men. The Orient for him is the silent, exotic background where he can gain self-understanding. While the restaurant in Kreuzberg does not carry any similarity to those images, Heinz feels an unconscious threat and fear here which is

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<sup>36</sup> *Casablanca* is an American romantic drama film made in 1942. It was set during WWII

indeed connected to his dreams. For Heinz, the Turkish men become the stereotypes of evil trouble makers. For a moment he thinks that he is misjudging the Turks since they have always been “gefügig, gehorsam, und verlässlich” (156), which are attributes that still essentialize Turkish immigrants. It seems like Heinz can only visualize Turkish-Germans in collective attributes such as the aggressive culprits or passive good-natured subjects.

Not only does the novel depict Heinz’s prejudices toward Kreuzberg and the Turks but it also forms analogies to his prejudiced perception of the GDR and East Germans. Although in the West German collective imagery, East German citizens were considered Germans, for Heinz they only designate abstract numbers for profit. Because of his illegal business Heinz does not support German Unification and is not interested in the problems of East Germans. He wants to proceed with his business for two more years and profit more. Consequently, when Walter Ulbricht (1893-1973), who was the East German leader from 1950 to 1971, withdraws from the presidency, Heinz feels anxiety. However, he feels relieved when Erich Honecker (1912-1994) becomes the new leader. In the novel we do not see Heinz traversing boundaries between East and West Germany, since he is terrified that he will be arrested by Stasi agents. His feeling of threat at the Turkish restaurant triggers traumatic dreams in which he imagines being abducted by the Stasi agents. The narrator claims:

So fand sich Heinz Lambert auf einmal im Osten, mitten in der stehengebliebenen Zeit, auf den menschenleeren Straßen und (entgegen allen seinen Erwartungen) machte ihm das nichts aus; er fühlte nur, wie ihn Unlust und Schläfrigkeit überkamen; ohnehin hatte er sich diese Stadt schon immer menschenleer vorgestellt. Verlassen. . . . Die begeisterten Feiern an diesem Ort, die er aus den Fernsehen kannte, die Militärparaden, die harten Gesichter, die Plakate. . . . die Parolen, Spruchbänder und Fähnchen. . . . den Klassenfeind verfluchenden. . . . (246)

Heinz likens this scene to a film and imagines himself as an outsider who observes the environment: “Er sieht die Häuserblocks mit zerschossenen Fassaden, . . . die Ruinenfelder

zwischen den Blocks, die verkrüpelten, staubigen Bäume, . . . die leeren Miethäuser mit kaputten Fenstern, . . . er sieht die Farblosigkeit oder vielmehr das unendliche Grau. All das kann allenfalls eine Sinnestäuschung sein, denkt er. . . ” (248). For Heinz, these images could very well be connected to the destroyed Berlin of the 1950s and projected into the imagination of East Berlin. It becomes inconceivable for Heinz to visualize the existence of the GDR as an independent and developed country. Heinz’s aversion to leftist ideology is also reflected when he reads the international news related to the disruption of government business in Washington D. C. by anti-war militants which results in the arrest of 12,000 demonstrators. Heinz feels consequently lucky to be a resident of West Germany. In the narrator’s words, “. . . er hatte die größten Schwierigkeiten durchgestanden und in dieser unerbittlichen Phase der Geschichte nur zu einer Seite gehalten, und zwar nicht aus eigener Wahl, sondern weil das Schicksal ihn nun einmal auf die richtige Seite der Mauer gestellt hatte, in den *Westen*, an die Grenzwache der Freiheit . . . ” (173). Heinz does not feel guilty because of his illegal acts and political opinion. Judging from his prejudiced and condescending outlook toward Turkish-German minorities and the lower class, however, it seems that Heinz is not interested in the claims of democratic equality and respect which became the foundation of the Western liberal constitution. Rather, he supports the capitalist freedom because it enables him to perpetuate his illegal business without being caught by the authorities.

Heinz’s non-interest in human rights discourses, the rights of minorities, and Germany’s past mistakes become once more pronounced with his remembrance of another symbolic event in German national history: the Warsaw Genuflection. On 7 December, 1970, when the social democrat Chancellor Willy Brandt (1913-1992) of the FRG was visiting the Warsaw Memorial, he fell to his knees and remained still for a minute, much to the onlookers’ surprise. The Warsaw

Memorial, which was erected in 1948 at the actual site of the Warsaw ghetto, commemorated the 1943 Jewish uprising against Nazis.<sup>37</sup> Constructed by the Polish-Jewish sculptor Nathan Rappaport, this double-sided monument depicts a stark contrast between the heroization and victimization of the Jews: a statue of bronze figures emerges from one side representing Jewish fighters, while the bas-relief represents figures taken to death by the barely visible Nazi soldiers. This incident opened up a new phase in Germans' confrontation with their Nazi past and allowed for novel forms of collective remembering. After all, it was the first time that a West German chancellor, who was a victim of the Nazis, had acknowledged and expressed remorse and atonement for German guilt. There were controversial responses in the country regarding the event. Compared to the international press which hailed the event as a major historical moment, the German newspapers were more reserved.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, a new phase of self-questioning began in German society. In the novel, although Heinz remembers the image of the event vividly, the interpretation of the event is presented to us through the voices of an anonymous journalist and the poet who confront us with two different interpretative dimensions of the same event. The interpreter, who trusts the capability of his analytic reasoning, utilizes an objective language in his description of the event: "Dies ist ein Bild der Entschuldigung vor der Geschichte, im Namen des deutschen Volkes, das Willy Brandt repräsentiert, wie in seinem eigenen Namen als einer

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<sup>37</sup>After Nazis entered Warsaw in October 1939, they erected an eight-foot wall around the Jewish section and ordered all Jews of Warsaw to move there from July 2 1942 on. While initially there were around 360.000 Jewish inhabitants in the city, two years after the invasion only around 40, 000 were left. The survivors formed the Jewish fighters' organization. The first attack started on January 18 1943 and lasted until April 19. Although in the end only around 80 Jewish fighters were successful to escape, the uprising marked an important event in the history of Jews. (Epstein 128- 129)

<sup>38</sup> The survey of the popular magazin Bild laid bare that only forty one percent of the participants thought that Brandt's gesture was appropriate.

dieses Volkes . . .” (176). On the other hand, the poet narrates the events in emotional language by highlighting his and the audience’s feelings at the gathering:

Mein ganzer Körper war versteinert. Ich war geradezu Teil der steinernen Masse vor mir. . . . Plötzlich begann sich der Stein vor mir zu bewegen und Menschen traten daraus hervor. Das Ensetzen, das im letzten Moment des Leidens auf ihren Gesichtern festgefroren war, wurde nun lebendig. Wer weiß, welches nicht beschreibbare Unglück, welche Katastrophe sie erlebt hatten. Sie waren viele und doch einzeln. Sie wollten sich dem Stein entwinden, zu mir kommen und mir etwas sagen. Ich hörte ihre Stimme, aber ihre Worte blieben unverständlich. . . . und in diesem Moment vernahm ich klar und deutlich jede einzelne Stimme in dem Raunen Tausender. Nein, sie beschuldigten keinen, aber sie hatten eine Beschwerde vorzutragen. . . . (175)

When Heinz looks at the pictures and reads the texts, he is convinced that it is time for a new beginning, but he also feels betrayed. When he reads another newspaper headline which designates Brandt as a *Verräter*, he feels relieved. He tells his friends that a German chancellor should not have knelt down, since this is a humiliating incident. Later on, it will become clear that Heinz’ aversion to the chancellor is related more to his *Ostpolitik* rather than his desire for a self-critical national confrontation with the Holocaust. He contemplates: “Du fürchtest im Grunde, daß der schwarze Mann deiner Vorstellung dich verrät, daß er dich verläßt. Los, gib es zu, daß du deinen Wohlstand und deine Bequemlichkeit ihm, jenem schwarzen Mann, verdankst.” (177).<sup>39</sup>

Another flashback of Heinz’s, while he sits in the Turkish restaurant, is of the romantic ship tour he took with his family on the river Rhine which is imbued with historical and cultural symbolism. This fleeting private memory, which is pierced through by the voices of the narrator, the tour guide, and his daughter, can also be considered another important metaphorical journey

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<sup>39</sup> The allusion to the *Schwarzer Mann* reminds us readers the children’s game which is called *Wer hat Angst vorm schwarzen Mann?* In the game, all the players shout out *niemand* and hide from the black man, the *Fänger*, who tries to find their location. The game might metaphorically be interpreted as a trial which helps the players cope with their fears in a controlled way regarding the black man, who is a stranger. In Heinz’s case the black man stands for the East Germans.

in the novel into German collective memory, which is related to the rise of German nationalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This fragmented memory becomes highly symbolic when we consider the context in which it is remembered: the district of Kreuzberg. While Heinz remembers a lukewarm June day spent with his wife at home, he concentrates on the cuckoo clock in their living room that strikes three o'clock. The clock leads him to another memory image: the River Rhine where he took a tour with his family during an Easter vacation. Interestingly, the first images that come up in his mind are not related to his actual impressions during the journey, but belong to a romantic world of dreams. This world is teeming with the protagonists of ancient legends such as the noble ladies and chivalric knights:

. . . Von Schlössern, legendären Königen, Burgruinen, Rittern aus vergangenen Zeiten umgeben, von großen, blonden, athletisch gebauten, sagenhaften Recken and wunderschönen Jundfrauen, die ihren mutigen Geliebten voll Dankbarkeit umschlangen “wie das schmiegsame Efeu sich um die knorrige Eiche schlingt und seine rauhe Rinde in schimmernden Samt verwandelt”, so, im Gefolge von Siegfried, Dietleib, Isolde, Brünhilde und der unglücklichen Agnes waren sie durch diese Märchengefilde gefahren. . . (178)

This memory reminds us of the discourse of the German romantics in the nineteenth century. The ruins the romantics saw became embodiments of a harmonious and sacred world which they yearned for. For the romantics, nature gained important symbolic power; it became the sacred eternal space where the historical memories of the glory of the Germans became alive. It seems that Heinz is also strongly under the impression of this period, since all he can remember is the magical ambience of the River Rhine that mesmerized him. However, this image is interrupted by the dry and factual voice of the tour guide, who in three languages offers short descriptions of the important sights in the area such as the *Zollturm*, *Niederwald-Denkmal* and *Loreley-Felsen*. He mentions how the *Zollturm*, which was built in the thirteenth century, was first renovated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is used now as a hotel. In his introduction of the *Niederwald-Denkmal*, the



guide emphasizes the massiveness of the Germania statue whose construction began in 1877. Heinz does not seem to be satisfied with the information provided by the guide and reads the book *Eine Romantische Rhein-Reise mit den allerschönsten Sagen*, which contains legendary stories related to the region. It seems that he is not actually interested in the history of these monuments and scenes, but wants to revive a magical world like the romantics. While his attention is distracted by the *Niederwald-Denkmal*, which he wants to see in its entirety from his window- but seems to be impossible- his daughter wants to see the Loreley Rocks and listen to the *Loreley Sage*. The entire journey complicates the family's understanding of the German past since they cannot imagine German romanticism without also thinking about their guilt. The narrator comments: "Während der gesamten Reise hatten sie über die Deutschen und deren Sehnsucht nach Romantik geredet, auch von ihren Schuldgefühlen und der ständigen Bestrafungsangst, die auf ihren Seelen lagen, dann hatten sie wieder mit utopischer Begeisterung etwas aus den Heldensagen erzählt . . ." (179). However, at the dinner table a conservative attitude is displayed by the tour group when they complain that Germans alienated themselves from their traditions and became materialistic, egoistic, and jealous. Heinz finalizes the tour by reciting romantic poetry, and describing the night and the silvery moon in a romantic language.

This short fleeting memory, which makes Heinz think critically about the past, also invites the reader to problematize the course German nationalism took beginning in the nineteenth century. The Rhineland carries historical and social significance in the German national imagination. In the nineteenth century as a result of the constant disputes with France, German nationalist consciousness became stronger. In 1840 a crisis developed when France claimed the Rhineland as a natural frontier. This resulted in the ascending symbolical significance of the

Rheinland leading to nationalist writings praising German national spirit.<sup>40</sup> The Rhine and its landscape began to influence German literature, music, culture, and important literary figures such as Clemens Brentano and Achim von Arnim.<sup>41</sup> *Rheiner Romanticism* developed as a result of the glorification of the region's aesthetic beauty, which was equated with the spirit of the nation. Many romantic writers who were inspired by Herder's idea of *Volksgeist* reconstructed legends and myths about natural sites, ruins and castles, emphasizing the eternal German spirit embracing them. A cultural sense of nationalism foregrounding common ancestry, shared history, and culture developed. In the novel, a prime example of this is the *Lorely Felsen* which is a rock soaring high above the waterline on the eastern bank of the Rhine. In the nineteenth century the rocks first became famous through the poem "Zu Bacharach am Rheine" (1800) by Clemens Brentano, and "Die Lore-Ley"<sup>42</sup> (1827) by Heinrich Heine. Furthermore, ancient ruins and buildings like the Zollturm were renovated in order to revive the Volkspirit surrounding them. This restoration cannot be understood without looking at German state agencies' (mostly Prussian) and civil associations' (student associations and veteran societies) contribution to this imagination, which resulted in the creation of myriads of monuments and public festivals. Through these public rituals, national sacred spaces were created that lead to "the politicization of aesthetics." (Mosse)

In the nineteenth century, national monuments became imbued with ideological power representing the spirit of the nation rather than standing for the power of dynasty. National

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<sup>40</sup> On September 18 1840, Nikolas Becker, who was an unknown assistant clerk of the court, wrote a poem about the Rhine. The poem's effect was sensational and it was printed in every newspaper. It was followed by other nationalist compositions.

<sup>41</sup> In their work *Das Knaben Wunderhorn*, Brentano and Arnim claimed to have discovered the spirit of the Middle Ages embodied in the Rhine's ruins. The Heidelberg scholar Görres, for example, collected popular legends and myths from the area and claimed that he represented German authentic voice. In 1813, Ernst Moritz Arndt claimed that the Rhine was Germany's river flowing through the body of the fatherland.

<sup>42</sup> Heinrich Heine's (1799-1856) poem became a folk song, which was firstly published in the *Buch der Lieder* in 1827. The music was composed by Friedrich Schiller (1789-1860).

monuments were shaped by “certain iconographical traditions, including myths of origin in time and space, myths of liberation depicting how a national community freed itself from bondage or attack, and myths of a golden age in which the best features of the national community were defined and elaborated” (Koshar 35). For example the *Niederwald-Denkmal*, another cornerstone in the trip, is a good example of this transformation. The monument<sup>43</sup>, which was designed by Johannes Schilling, was to celebrate German unity and commemorate Bismarck’s victory in 1870-71. It was composed of a huge statue of Germania<sup>44</sup>, who in her right hand held the imperial crown and in her left a sword. In *The Nationalization of the Masses*, Mosse claims that through the way it was financed and sponsored, the Niederwald- Denkmal “marked a still closer bond between the national cult and the national monument” (62)<sup>45</sup>. The monuments, which depicted the Greek ideal of beauty mixed with the Roman tradition of the coliseums, formed one facet of the politicization of aesthetics. For Mosse, the urge towards the monumental portrayed the need to represent the national grandeur and the eternal spirit of the German. It “was to be visible from a vast distance and dominate the natural environment which surrounded it” (31). Indeed, for Koshar and Mosse, the function of movements and the rituals surrounding them became a secular religion.<sup>46</sup> This new politics, which nationalized and organized the masses, was manipulated by the Nazi regime.

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<sup>43</sup> It was constructed between 1874 and 1885 on the Middle Rhein near Rudesheim.

<sup>44</sup> The monuments in the nineteenth century assumed a male-point of view. The representation of women was relegated to traditional roles such as mythological in the case of Germania. However, this stood for male heroism. The male biases are reflected in Bismarck’s dislike of the Niederwald-Denkmal who claimed that it was an unacceptable adoration of the nation.

<sup>45</sup> The monument was financed by the *Kriegervereine*, which were formed after the wars of Frederick the Great in the eighteenth century. The group increased in number and importance as a conservative force in German politics during the nineteenth century. (Mosse, *The Nationalization of Masses* 62)

<sup>46</sup> For Koshar, the 19<sup>th</sup> century monuments like the Corpus Christi became the sacrament of the nation. The substances were the “heroism, either of mythic figures or of historical personalities” which circulated and became available to the people who also took active role by participation in the ritual (50). Mosse names the monuments, which united the mystical and elemental functioning as a sacred temple, as national cults by citing the ideas of famous architects like Wilhelm Kreis and Theodor Fischer,.

For the postwar generations it became difficult to discuss the merits of this romantic conceptualization of the nation without referring to the Nazi period. Either a silenced attitude was taken or the Holocaust was regarded as an anomaly in the history of the German nation. However, in the discourses of the right-wing intelligentsia against the minorities, an ethno-cultural and romantic visualization of the nation was still propagated, especially in the late 1970s and 1980s. I contend that although Heinz seems unable to perceive the dangers of an ethno-cultural conceptualization of the nation regarding the situation of minorities in the country, Ören expects the reader to form critical relationships with this discourse. Kreuzberg becomes the space of liminality, in which Heinz has to confront the ghosts of both his private and collective history. His movement from the rich bourgeois neighborhood to Kreuzberg becomes a ground of self-confrontation. While this confrontation does not result in a cosmopolitan consciousness, it still causes uneasiness and anxiety in Heinz since he has to reconcile his selfish, coldblooded and condescending acts against his family and society. This confrontation results in paranoia, since Heinz believes that he will be abducted, imprisoned, and murdered by the Stasi agents.

### **2.3.c Kadir's Imprisonment in Kreuzberg**

The dialogic structure of *Unerwarteter Besuch* not only allows us to see the prejudiced reception of Turkish minorities in Germany, which becomes apparent in the attitudes of Heinz, but also how these stereotypes are internalized and acted out by the Turkish-German characters. This becomes apparent in the behavior of the German-Turkish waiter Kadir, who works at a Turkish restaurant in Kreuzberg. Firstly labeled by the narrator as *der Kellnerjunge*, the narrator later decides to name him Kadir when he occurs frequently in the novel. As a result, we are introduced to Kadir's inner feelings and perceptions. However, it becomes difficult to form a fully-developed character of Kadir, since he feels trapped by his ethnic label: the Turk.

We first encounter Kadir in the Turkish restaurant where Heinz is impatiently waiting for Ali Bayrak. Through the eyes of Heinz we conceive him as an illiterate, lower class waiter. This stereotype attested to Turkish men, however, seems to be internalized by Kadir as well. The narrator states:

Ob er wollte oder nicht, Kadir würde immer ein Türke sein, so wie ihn die Deutschen sahen, oder im Gegenteil, so wie sie ihn nicht sahen. Sein Verhalten, seine Worte und seine Bewegungen wurden stets an diesem zugeschusterten "Türkischsein" gemessen. Kadir fühlte sich dem Ersticken nahe und rebellierte, aber konnte sich doch nicht davor retten, Gefangener dieser Maßstäbe zu sein. In seinem täglichen Leben, privat, bei der Arbeit oder bei Unternehmungen mit Freunden, an den unpassendsten Orten, . . . sogar zu Hause wurden ihm ständig prüfende, verurteilende, drohende oder zurechtweisende Worte an den Kopf geworfen. Aussprüche, die stets sofort wiederkehrende Klischeebilder vor seinen Augen entstehen ließen. . . . Ja, diese Wortee verfolgten ihn mit unendlicher Hartnäckigkeit, sie zerquetschen seine Seele, bis sie krumm und schief war. . . . Am meisten fühlte er sich durch den Satz "Was bist denn du für ein Türke" in die Ecke gedrängt. Immer wenn er diesen Satz hörte, erwachte in ihm das Verlangen, in den Spiegel zu sehen. . . (164)

While Kadir desperately yearns to break loose of this image, he becomes unsuccessful many times. When he looks at the mirror he can see nothing but failure and entrapment. Kadir's crisis points to the dilemmas of the subaltern minorities in our contemporary globalized world that resist being seen as emancipated fully-developed individuals. Kadir's Turkish roots confine him to the idea of an eternal other in German society, which prevent his equal integration to society. This results in Kadir's masquerading his ethnicity, highlighted in the above phrase: "ob er wollte or nicht" (164). For the narrator, Kadir's situation lays bare the ultimate anomaly of the Enlightenment logic Europe claims to have embraced. He says: "Die große Utopie des Abendlandes seit der Renaissance, jener unveränderliche Traum, einzigartig und unvergleichlich zu sein, verwandelt sich in ein bedeutungsloses, hohles Wortgeklingel, wenn es um Kadir geht" (165). Kadir's masquerading of his Turkishness can be considered a form of "coercive mimeticism", a useful term implemented by Rey Chow. Chow claims that in the realm of

postcolonial cultural politics (which can also be applied to the dilemmas of the immigrant subjects) mimeticism becomes perhaps the most important and controversial issue in cross-ethnic representation, since it has not only a representational, but also an existential dimension. Like texts, which are imagined to imitate reality, there are also human beings who mimic others in order to “exist as themselves.” Chow claims, “In addition to the question of what is being imitated is now the question of who is imitating whom and how agency should be imagined. Does the agency lie with the originator or with the mimic? What kind of agency?” (103). For Chow, in this context three levels of mimeticism are detected which overlap with each other. The first level of mimeticism is the one created by the logic of Western imperialism and colonialism which supposed the superiority of the white colonizer, his language, and culture (the colonized or the subaltern esd supposed to imitate western culture). The second level (developed by Homi Bhabba following up on Franz Fanon’s studies) complicates the first level of mimeticism in that Bhabba assumes that the mimicking of the white man is never a perfect imitation because fissures and gaps are created (with the ambiguous feelings of wanting to be like the white man but also hating him), which allow for resilience and uprising. In other words, the split, ambiguous subject offers a new form of plurality and difference within the colonialist logic. This, however, for Chow perpetuates the discourse of the superiority of the colonizer since the white man is seen as the original. The third level of mimeticism, which Chow names as “coercive mimeticism” is the level at which “the ethnic person is expected to come to resemble what is recognizably ethnic” (107). In this case, it is not the white man to be imitated as an original, but the image of the stereotype of the ethnic such as Turkishness.

Coercive mimetism forms an important problem in the areas of postcolonial studies and multicultural literature since it covers its underlying ideological ramifications. Chow wants to

understand in what ways such an act is internalized or incorporated by the subjects, or how becomes an important mechanism in multicultural or postcolonial literature. She draws on Slavoj Žižek's argument on interpellation and states, "From this, it follows that identity . . . is the result not exactly only of an imposition of rules from the outside or only a resistance against such an imposition; it is but also the result of a kind of *unconscious automatization, impersonation, or mimicking*, in behavior as much as in psychology, of certain beliefs, practices, and rituals" (110). This kind of automatization lends a sense of legitimacy and security to identity and may create a sense of potentiality. Chow interprets the ethnic identity in multicultural Western society through an irrational process of being interpellated. She wants to know if the ethnic has a choice of not responding to this "forced liminality". For Chow, the ethnic "must both be seen to own her ethnicity and to exhibit it repeatedly," (112) and this constant repetition takes the "form of confession or self-mimicry" (112). As a result of this expectation, there is a rising interest or boom in the publication of confession narratives like memoirs, biographies, and letters in the realm of transnational and postcolonial literature. The obsession with confessions lies in the belief of their representational authenticity and truth without the intermediation of a third-party western observer. However, does this form of narrative really evade the pitfalls of representation and lead to the emancipation and freedom of the subaltern subject? Chow, like Foucault, believes that this form can create false illusions, and the relationship between the radical and power has to be taken into consideration. She claims, "Such as of confession may now be further described as socially endorsed, coercive mimeticism, which stipulates that the thing to imitate, resemble, and become is none other than the ethnic or sexual minority herself" (115). While the minority population might think that by referring to themselves they are liberating their very

selves, they might allow the subordinating power to “to work in the most intimate fashion” (115).

The contradictions within the concepts of representation and mimicry in the realm of transnational literature are also thematized in a metanarrative way by the narrator. It is rather difficult for him to represent Kadir, since he falls back to stereotypical images and ethnic trappings. He says: “(Tun wir mit den Worten, die wir nun in Schrift umsetzen, nicht genau das gleiche? Denkt ihr denn, daß diese Worte immer in sich unabhängig bleiben werden? Daß sie niemanden auf etwas festlegen werden? Dann sage ich euch, ihr kennt das Geheimnis der Schrift nicht)” (165). How to represent Kadir without portraying him as a member of the Turkish collective or the exotic other, and how to assess agency and individuality to him through giving him a voice becomes the constant preoccupation of the writer. Kadir is also imprisoned by this problem of self-representation. He imagines that his life could also become the plot of a novel and he the protagonist: “Ein aufgedonnerter Fotoroman, in dem er selbst die Hauptrolle spielte, . . . mit einem so unglaublichen Happy-End, das es selbst die Wirklichkeit zur Eifersucht treiben könnte” (344). While this imagination causes unease since Kadir has become used to his existence in periphery, he realizes that this would indicate a new course for his identity. Kadir starts imagining and finds himself in utter confusion over what kind of person he wants to be. Old Turkish words, mixed with English appear in his imagination, which for the narrator would surprise the reader since they would not associate those words with Kadir. This also points to the Turkish readers’ prejudices toward the immigrants in Germany, whom they suppose to be speaking a rural dialect intermixed with German, an inferior form compared to Istanbul Turkish.

While Kadir wants to forsake his traditional roles, he does not know where and how to start. It seems as if he spent his entire life in the same boring place, Kreuzberg, which made his



imagination dull: “In Kreuzberg . . . ging er eine Straße entlang. In Kreuzberg ging er in eine Kneipe. In Kreuzberg überquerte er einen Hinterhof und schloß eine Wohnungstür auf. In Kreuzberg verursachte ihm eine Parkanlage, die einer Mülhalde glich, Beengung . . .” (347). From the very start Kadir considers the possibility of defeat: “Wie sollte er sein Leben als Fotoroman gestalten? Mit welchem Bild sollte er beginnen? Seine Hoffnungslosigkeit wuchs” (348). The impossibility of finding a beginning is highly symbolic in Kadir’s case. Edward Said claims that in the idea of beginning we can trace an intention of some form which depicts a self-conscious purpose in the production of meaning. He asserts that beginning inaugurates a deliberately other production of meaning which is a “gentile” one: “It is “other” because, in writing, this gentile production claims a status *alongside* the other works: it is *another* work, rather than one in a line of descent from X or Y.” (13). A beginning is a marker of authority for the text since it signifies the establishment of implicit and explicit rules of pertinence. The project of a beginning for a writer presupposes the intention of forming meaning and a contingent authority. There is an appetite or desire on the part of the writer to impose changes upon reality and become an author, a creator, an inventor. Could it be assumed that by missing the beginning picture, Kadir cannot even see himself in the role of a contingent authority or force? Perhaps, he might be unable to visualize himself in the subject position, if he were given the chance. In the context of a Eurocentric universe, Kadir has no chances of narrating his own story since he is the marginalized other, seen off-center. He is the eternal Turk either standing for the guest workers or the valiant Turkish warriors of the past. Kadir’s final imagination, which he believes could be the beginning picture also lays bare this logic:

...da tauchte mitten im Hof ein schwarzer Rappe auf, ob er aus den Wolken fiel, die über den Dächern hingen, oder aus den guten alten Zeiten oder aus Sagen oder Märchen oder Romanen, war nicht zu ergründen. Kadir sprang mit der Behendigkeit eines meisterhaften reiters auf, straffte die Zügel. . . ja, er flog

geradezu durch die Straßen Kreuzbergs mit ihrem Uringestank und entschwand den Blicken. Wie eine leuchtende Erscheinung floß er dahin, und die ihn sahen, stießen sich gegenseitig an: "Schau, das ist ein Türke" flüsteren sie sich gegenseitig ins Ohr, "ein echter Türke"! (350)

I contend that Kadir's hybridity does not automatically result in a refined cosmopolitan consciousness. The essentialized reception of his identity by the Germans and Turkish-Germans in the community has prevented the development of his identity as a free self-conscious individual. It is also interesting to see that we never encounter Kadir evoking pictures of his private memories intermixed with German collective memory. It almost seems that he is stuck in the ahistorical frozen time of Kreuzberg whose invisible borders he cannot escape. Kadir's situation can be interpreted as the outcome of the thick national barriers which prevent his becoming an equal member of the nation. It can also be interpreted from the viewpoint of the dilemmas of the Turkish- and also Arab-heritage German writers who encounter difficulties in representing their identities in the literary undertakings. All in all, I contend that in *Unerwarteter Besuch* Ören becomes successful in creating alternative realities of the German present of the 1970s and 1980s in which the trajectories of the Turkish-German and German collective memory discourses overlap. Through double-voiced discourse and heteroglossia, Ören interweaves the experiences and memories of German and Turkish-German characters, which transforms the unilateral discourse of the German present.

## CHAPTER 3

### *Zafer Şenocak's Alman Terbiyesi*

#### 3.1 Introduction

In an essay entitled “The Poet and the Deserter” dedicated to Salman Rushdi, the renowned German-Turkish writer Zafer Şenocak rightfully remarks: “More and more, the language of those who cross the borders blurs the boundaries between Europe and the Orient, between Enlightenment and myth. These border violations give rise to a new language that ruptures the images of both cultures and binds them together. To a certain extent this language remains unintelligible in both cultures” (*Atlas of Tropical Germany* 39). For Şenocak, in the light of centuries-long conflict between the Orient and Occident, in which “cultures have begun to fall into formation like armies in battle” (37), the poets (worthy of this designation) have become deserters. Their skeptic attitudes have often resulted in their castigation and exclusion from their community along with the censorship of their works. Rushdi, whose *Satanic Verses* caused a tumultuous controversy in Europe and the Middle East, can also be considered one of these deserter poets according to Şenocak. Şenocak says, “Rushdie’s text destroys literary identities that formed their own boundaries and aesthetic taste by preserving images, metaphors, and *topoi*. . . . Someone who crosses borders between language and cultures, like Salman Rushdi, violates and unsettles commonplaces all the more because he operates at a greater distance from them” (40-41). Indeed, Şenocak can also be considered one of these deserter writers, who, by bringing into contact and intermixing elements of Islam, Anatolian mysticism, and Turkish and German

cultures and histories, unsettles religious, cultural, and national intolerance in his writings. Şenocak invites German and Turkish readers to question their taken-for-granted notions of master narratives and confronts them with their unconscious fears, feelings of shame, and prejudices by “touching” the seemingly disparate tales of the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide, stories of Turkish immigration to Germany and German-Jewish and Spanish-Jewish exile into Turkey, Ottoman-German relations during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and Nazi German-Turkish relations during WWII. He says, “Now, when one often speaks of the new world order, it seems appropriate to look more closely at the old world order. Otherwise danger threatens. This danger would arise if what is new proved to be a bad surprise, that is, the return of the old, of that which has failed, of that which is condemned again and again to fail.

Şenocak, who considers himself as a “Zwischengeneration” author<sup>47</sup> is one of the well-established German writers and public intellectuals whom Adelson describes as “Germany’s first public intellectual of note from the field of Turkish migration . . .” (*The Turkish Turn* 105).

Having spent his childhood in Ankara and Istanbul, Şenocak moved with his parents to Munich in 1970 when he was only nine years old. Raised bilingually, Şenocak studied German literature, political science, and philosophy in Munich and became an independent writer, journalist, and editor. Şenocak published his first book of poetry, *Elektrisches Blau*, in 1983, which was followed by several literary translations from Turkish into German that included writers such as Yunus Emre, Pir Sultan Abdal, and Aras Ören<sup>48</sup>. In 1988 Şenocak was awarded the Adelbert-von-Chamisso newcomer prize by the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts, and in the same year he

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<sup>47</sup> In his interview with Tom Cheesman Şenocak states, “Also ich bin natürlich nicht wie die 30-jährigen jetzt, die 78er, wiederum auch kein Endvierziger, der noch die 68er Bewegung als Wellenschlag mitbekommen hat. Ich bin dazwischen. . . . Ich habe relative früh angefangen zu schreiben, deswegen passe ich auch nirgendwo rein” (*Zafer Şenocak* 20).

<sup>48</sup> Şenocak translated Ören’s *The Rise of the Gündoğdus*, which was a part of his novelistic series *Auf der Suche nach der gegenwärtigen Zeit*.

co-founded and co-edited the multilingual literary journal *Sirene*. During these years his poems began to appear regularly in German literary periodicals, and he often appeared on German television and radio. Şenocak moved to Berlin in 1990 and started publishing political essays about the situation of Turkish immigrants in Germany, while also contributing regularly to *die Tageszeitung*. In 1992, he published his compilation of essays *Atlas des tropischen Deutschland*, in which he critically engaged with the situation of Turkish-heritage immigrants and German citizens in Post-Unification Germany. His second volume of essays entitled *War Hitler Araber? IrreFührungen an den Rand Europas* were published in 1994, in which he focused on the reception process of the Orient in Europe. Şenocak wrote the first part of his essayistic novel tetralogy *Der Mann im Unterhemd* in 1994, followed by *Die Prärie* (1997), *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft* (1998) and *Der Erottomane: Ein Findelbuch* (1999). In the following years Şenocak became a writer in residence at Oxford University, Ohio, at the Villa Aurora, Los Angeles and finally at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He also collaborated with the Munich artist Berkan Karpat in 1998 producing five-lyrical dramatic titles in the next ten years.<sup>49</sup> In 2000, a selection of Şenocak's essays, translated by Leslie A. Adelson, was published in the United States. Şenocak published his first Turkish novel in 2007, *Alman Terbiyesi (German Education)*, which I analyze in this chapter, followed by *Yolculuk Nereye (Where are you Travelling?, 2007)*, *Köşk (The Pavilion, 2008)*, and *Dünyanın İki Ucu (Two Ends of the Earth, 2011)*.

Şenocak's 1998 German novel *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft* was highly acclaimed among German Studies circles in the USA. The male protagonist of the novel, Sascha Muhteşem, who

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<sup>49</sup> These works comprise *Nazim Hikmet auf dem Schiff zum Mars* (1998), *Tanzende der Elektrik* (1999), *Wie den vater nicht Töten- ein Sprechlabyrinth* (2000), *Futuristenepilog – Poeme* (2008), and *Landstimmung – Neue Gedichte* (2008).

appeared as an elusive and unrepresentable character in the other three novels of the tetralogy, is more fully represented in *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft*. Written in a fragmented style, in which fact and fiction intermesh, the novel focuses on Sascha's problematic experiences with the nationalist imagination especially after German Reunification (1990), and also portrays his difficult confrontations with his paternal grandfather's past through the inheritance of his diaries. Born to a Turkish father and Jewish-German mother, Sascha grows up in a monolingual and isolated environment in Munich. His parents do not share their traumatic family histories with him and Sascha resists any form of identity categorization<sup>50</sup>. While the novel depicts Sascha's frustrations with the Germans' increasing desire to represent him as a writer of the Turkish community, it also lays bare his discovery of his family's silenced history, which involves his maternal grandfather's years of exile in Turkey, the murder of his Jewish-German relatives, his paternal grandfather's role in the Armenian deportation, and his subsequent suicide during the Berlin Olympics. According to Leslie Adelson, the novel becomes important in that "the rhetorical figure of migration appears in tandem with other Turkish, German, Jewish, and Armenian figures drawn from twentieth-century history of genocide . . ." (*The Turkish Turn* 105). Andreas Huyssen also praises the novel in that it initiates the discussion on how Turkish-Germans can intervene in the German collective memory discourse and transform it. He states, "With great literary subtlety and narrative skill, Şenocak raises the question of how Turkish-Germans or second-generation Turks can migrate into German history, while at the same time having a rather uprooted relationship to the history of their own parents and grandparents which

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<sup>50</sup> In his interview with Tom Cheesman, Şenocak portrays Sascha Muhtesem as follows: "Und er ist eigentlich so ein Zwischengenerationstyp, er passt nirgendwo rein. Ist eigentlich kein politischer Mensch und doch immer wieder in politischen Dingen tätig oder eingefangen. . . . Man kann ihn schwer einstufen, einkasteln oder eingrenzen" ( Zafer Şenocak 21).

is often shrouded in mystery” (“Diaspora and Nation” 158). While Şenocak’s evocation and “touching” of diverse traumatic memories in different historical and geographical contexts is also riddled by complexities<sup>51</sup>, which is implied in the title of the novel, I also contend that it makes a crucial contribution to the creation of a multidirectional memory discourse in Germany.

Nearly a decade later, Şenocak published his first Turkish historical novel *Alman Terbiyesi* which, in a similar spirit to *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft*, touches on the forgotten and silenced memories of the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and German Empire in the early twentieth Century, the Ottoman-German alliance in WWI, and the complex relationship between Nazi Germany and Turkey during WWII. While *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft* focuses on Sascha’s attempts to decipher the diaries (1916-1939) of his paternal grandfather, an Ottoman soldier, and ends with Sascha’s fictionalized account of his grandfather’s suicide, in *Alman Terbiyesi* we confront the memoir-writing process of the sixty-year-old Turkish-German man Salih Süvari in 1942 Istanbul. A veteran of the Prussian army, Salih spent forty years in Germany before he finally settled down in Istanbul in 1939. The implied unreliability of the grandfather’s diaries in *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft* and Sasha’s doubtfulness toward mastering historical narratives are mirrored through the disorienting writing process of Salih, who intermixes fact and fiction in his memoir. While *Alman Terbiyesi* partially unveils some of the silences and taboos of Sasha’s grandfathers’ generation, it also repudiates the idea that this is a truthful portrayal of national and personal history. Like in *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft*, this is achieved through the dialogic double-discourse of the novel, which in a performative way switches back and forth between the third-person narration and the first-person memoir of Salih.

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<sup>51</sup> Margaret Littler, for instance, has a more critical approach to the novel’s engagement with genocide and traumatic memories. She argues that “the novel both narrates too little (in its allusive treatment of Armenian history) and too much (by integrating this traumatic history into a sentimental plot)” (358). While Littler still thinks that the novel’s provocation needs to be taken seriously, it places “high expectations on those readers to fill the gaps and recognize the complexities which it elides” (369).

In what follows, I will depict the ways *Alman Terbiyesi* tries to remap and rewrite the interrelated histories of the German Reich, Ottoman Empire, and also the Weimar Republic, Nazi Germany, and the Turkish Republic, primarily through the personal experiences of Salih Süvari and the other characters around him. I argue that the novel, through its fragmented and performative structure and its thematization of the protagonist's memoir-writing practice, portrays the complexities of collective and personal history writing as a theme. I will discuss in what ways the novel forms exilic interventions in the truth claims of collective memory while also depicting the tenuous relationship between exilic and national memory, which is not always mutually antagonistic. This raises the important point that exilic personal memories are not always liberating, or more reliable than collective national memory accounts. In order to depict the complex relationship between exile and the nation, I will analyze Salih Süvari's experiences in Istanbul and Berlin at the beginning of the twentieth century until 1943.

Switching between third-person narrative form and the protagonist's first-person narrative account and intersected by factual accounts involving newspaper reports and articles, *Alman Terbiyesi* comprises the tumultuous time periods of the late nineteenth century until 1943, when the German army was defeated at Stalingrad. The three important geographical spaces in the novel are Monastir (Bitola), Berlin, and Istanbul, which share a multicultural, cosmopolitan background. The present time frame of the novel focuses on Salih's memoir-writing from the summer of 1942 until January 1943. Traumatized by the atrocities of the war and the early death of his German wife Annette, which confronts with his own fear of death, Salih decides to write a memoir. Salih hopes that through the writing process, he can impose order and control upon his present trauma, by writing about his successful, happy days in Wilhelmina and Weimar Germany. Furthermore, he wants to create an example for future generations by writing about his



correspondence with important Turkish politicians and soldiers. Salih is born in Monastır (Bitola) in 1881 and studies at the military high school there (*Manastır Askeri Mekteb-Idadisi*). After graduation, he moves to Istanbul and studies at the Military Academy (*Erkân- Harbiye Mektebi*), during which time the Ottoman Empire experiences a national crisis. Salih develops a keen interest in Turkish nationalism and becomes a secret member of Young Turks, a secret group demanding constitutional revolution. It is also during this time that Salih becomes an admirer of the German Empire as a result of the close military partnership between the two empires. Accordingly, Salih is sent to military training to Berlin after 1903, where he becomes fascinated by German culture and politics. Unlike his peers, Salih decides to settle down in Germany and marries a German woman, Annette, who is the daughter of Colonel Trenker. During WWI, Salih fights on the Gallipoli Front for four years as a German soldier. In the face of the disorienting defeat of the German Empire during WWI, Salih decides to resign and shun his fellow soldiers, since he cannot bare the shame. He establishes himself as a successful businessman and trades tobacco and nuts. Meanwhile, after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey is invaded by foreign forces and the Independence War (1919-1923) is waged by Turkish nationalists under the leadership of Atatürk.

After the Turks emerge victorious, Atatürk establishes the Republic of Turkey on October 29, 1923, introducing Western reforms to the country. While Salih takes pride in the establishment of the Republic and the nationalist reforms, he also feels distanced from the Turkish population. Salih also becomes disillusioned with the Weimar Republic and yearns for the “harmonious” days of the German Empire. Salih is alarmed when Hitler becomes the leader, but falls short of predicting his dangerous policies. His wife Annette, despises the regime, and convinces Salih to move back to Istanbul in the summer of 1939. For Salih, who has estranged

himself from Turkish culture and politics, his sojourn in Istanbul becomes rather depressing and disorienting. As a result of his support for the Pan-Turan ideal, which propagates the establishment of a Turkic Federation, Salih works as a secret German informant in Istanbul. He carries the news about the Russian Front, Russian war strategies, and the situation of Turkish minorities in Russia to the German Embassy. After meeting the cold-blooded, racist members of the Nazi Party in Istanbul and learning about their secret collaborations with ultra nationalist Turkish groups, Salih begins to question his position as an informant and develops a guilt complex. Day by day, he gets more alienated from his surroundings, which suspicion among the members of the Nazi Party.

Missing the love and affection of his wife and the emotional support of a good friend, Salih immerses himself more and more in the past, which he attempts to bring to life through his memoir. The writing process, however, results in a crisis since it becomes impossible for Salih to represent the past in its truthfulness and portray his identity in a holistic picture. Sharing the double guilt of not having joined the Turkish Independence War, and having left Germany in the chaotic era of the Third Reich, Salih is no longer sure where he belongs. A turning point occurs in Salih's life when his Jewish ex-girlfriend Karla escapes from Germany and stays with him for a few days before she goes to Jerusalem. After his long discussions with Karla, Salih forsakes his blindness about Hitler and regrets having worked as an informant. When the German secret service is informed about their meeting, Salih is ex-naturalized and he also finds out that his beloved neighbor is a Turkish spy informing on him. The novel ends in Salih's determination to start a new life in Istanbul, as the radio announces Germany's defeat in Stalingrad.

### 3.2 Exile, Language, History, and Representation

While *Alman Terbiyesi* attempts to depict a panoramic picture of the formation and evolution of Turkish nationalism from the early to mid-twentieth century (including partial references to German history), it also problematizes simplistic representation of the collective and personal past in its double-voiced and performative form. On the one hand, the third person narrator, who focuses on Salih's life in Istanbul between the years 1942-1943, cannot achieve narrative mastery and control since his voice is intersected by fragments of Salih's memoir and letters from Salih's wife and his ex-girlfriend. Furthermore, the prologue of the novel that comprises four different fragments from newspapers, history books, and Salih's notes also forms interventions into the narrator's voice. I argue that *Alman Terbiyesi* problematizes the coherent, continuous, and unified narrative of national histories and their truth claims, yet this does not result in its celebration of the superiority and truthfulness of private memory accounts. This is underscored through the problematic writing process of Salih's memoir: his failure to remember the events in their truthfulness results in his intermixing fact and fiction. As a result, one can state that in the novel, the gaps and fissures in national history can only be filled with partial and fragmentary accounts, which resist a dominating narrative plot.

One of the most important topics in *Alman Terbiyesi* is the problematic relationship between memory and history, which is revealed by Salih's turbulent memoir writing process. Salih has a rather negative approach to the discipline of history and is suspicious of historians' accounts. The narrator states:

. . . It was impossible to remember the past by looking at documents. Individuals and events were always a figment of the imagination. Only if one believed in this

premise, would they become real. How right he was in not showing interest in the science of history and the points of views of historians. The person who believes in history loses his identity, becomes blind to the events and persons he witnessed, and alienates himself from a community” (31).<sup>52</sup>

Having experienced the manipulation of historical accounts by Nazi and Turkish nationalists, for Salih the discipline of history cannot depict events in their truthfulness. Salih believes that historical documents and artifacts do not consist of an authentic and truthful meaning. Only if the researcher compares them to the events and peoples of his or her present time can they become meaningful. In other words, historical events and personages can only be meaningful if a narrative framework and an appropriate genre is imposed upon them that will create a unitary and coherent story out of them. Salih’s approach to the methodology of history resembles the discourse of postmodern historians, like the influential Hayden White, who deny that the past in itself has an inherent meaningful pattern. In *Tropics of Discourse*, White states, “But in general there has been a reluctance to consider historical narratives as what they most manifestly are: verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much *invented* as *found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences” (82). According to White, it is the emplotment of historical events into narrative and the choice of a meaningful genre such as romance, tragedy, or comedy that attributes meaning to them. As a result, White refuses to elide the distinction between the past and its representation. Rather, he proposes to imagine historical narrative as an “extended metaphor, that “tells us in what direction to think about the events and charges our thought about the events with different emotional valences” (91). According to White, our consciousness of the fictive quality of history will put us on guard against the ideological distortions of historians, who in the name of objectivity and

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<sup>52</sup> The translations from Turkish to English are mine: “. . . Vesikalara bakarak bir şeyleri hatırlamak mümkün değildi. Şahıs ve hadiseler her zaman bir hayal mahsulü idiler. Ancak buradan yola çıkılarak gerçeklik kazanabilirlerdi. Tarih ilmine ve tarihçilerin birbirlerine nakseden görüşlerine itibar etmemekle ne kadar haklıydı. Tarihe inanan kimliğini kaybeder, şahit olduğu hadise ve kişilere karşı körleşir, kendini bir cemaat icinde yalnızlığa terk eder.”

science make us blind to its alternative interpretations. In a similar line but in a more radical outlook, Roland Barthes also voices his suspicion against the truth claims of historical facts. He states, “As we can see, simply from looking at its structure and without having to invoke the substance of its content, historical discourse is in its essence a form of . . . an *imaginary* elaboration, if we can take the imaginary to be the language though which the utterer of a discourse . . . ‘fills out’ the place of the subject of the utterance. . .” (121). For Barthes, reality cannot be realistically represented in the form of a story, but rather a “realistic effect” (122) can be created. The historian is “not so much a collector of facts as a collector and relater of signifiers” and “he organizes them with the purpose of establishing positive meaning and filling the vacuum of pure, meaningless series” (121). Salih, who looks at the documents, pictures, and maps he brought from Germany, feels rather disoriented when he realizes that they cannot represent the past in its authenticity: “Which of these documents are records that carry the news of the past events? Could he make use of them during the writing stage of his memoir? Salih Bey did not trust the maps anymore, which he collected all his life long with the meticulousness of a collector” (30).<sup>53</sup> As a result, Salih will slowly realize that even in the narration of his personal history, which is entangled in the collective memory, he has to impose a narrative framework and fill in the gaps of his memory with fiction. Only in this way can the documents become meaningful.

Despite his suspicion of history as a discipline, Salih seems to believe that he can provide a truthful portrayal of his life in Germany at the initial stage of his writing process. One of the main catalysys of Salih’s writing is his fear of forgetfulness and death. Leading an estranged and lonely life in Istanbul during WWII, and agonized by the early death of his beloved wife, Salih

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<sup>53</sup> “Bu evrakların hangisi vesika değerinde, olup bitenlerin habercisi? Onlardan faydalanabilir miydi hatıralarını yazarken? Ömür boyu bir koleksiyoncu titizliğiyle biriktirdiği haritalara bile güveni kalmamıştı Salih Bey’in.”

experiences depression and anxiety. Lacking the company of trustworthy friends and traumatized by the escalating atrocities of WWII, day by day Salih becomes disillusioned with the present time (1942-1943) in Istanbul. His terror intensifies when German nationalism gets dangerous and beings to inspire ultra-nationalist Turks. The single-party period of Turkey and the dominance of the Nazi Party in Germany trigger Salih's internal feelings of exile. Day by day Salih feels nostalgic for his years in Germany during the last years of the German Empire and Weimar Germany. He writes:

In these days when the German army has been swiftly moving forward on the Ukrainian planes, I cannot help thinking about the past. Upon immersing myself into them, I wished to bring to life those blurred photographs that allowed me to forget my present time and place, enabling them a voice. . . . I am not sure, if I will be successful or not. Will my life be enough for it? . . . Her (Annette's) absence is like a stimulus which directs me to the old days. . . . Untidy pictures which are disconnected from each other and some of them indistinct . . . I am so lonely in the gaps of my memory. (9)<sup>54</sup>

Salih, who feels useless and unsuccessful in Istanbul, is terrified of losing mastery over his life. While his residency in Istanbul reminds him of his failure to have taken part in the Turkish Independence War, he also feels guilty for having left Germany. Furthermore, in Istanbul he feels alienated from the German community which is dominated by members of the Nazi Party, and he feels guilty as a secret informant. In his trauma, writing seems to offer a possibility for heightened self-esteem. Although at first Salih is not quite sure why he started writing, it seems that through providing a coherent and unified story of his public personality, he hopes to regain self-confidence. This portrayal will not only involve his brave deeds as a Prussian soldier on the

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<sup>54</sup> “Alman ordularının Ukrayna ovalarında süratle ilerledikleri şu günlerde, maziyi düşünmeden edemiyorum. İçine daldığımda bana yaşadığım zaman ve mekanı unutturan o buğulu resimleri konuşTURUP canlandırmak istedim. Muvaffak olup olmayacağını bilmiyorum. Ömrüm yeter mi? . . . Onun yokluğu beni eski günlere iten bir dürtü gibi içimde. . . . Birbirinden kopuk, kimi silikleşmiş, savruk resimler . . . Hafızamdaki boşluklarda ise yapayalnızım.”

Gallipoli Front and his successful role as a businessman, but also his correspondence with important Turkish politicians, businessmen, and lieutenants like Enver Pasha and Talât Pasha<sup>55</sup>.

One of Salih's motives for writing his memoir is to set an example for future generations. In his words, "A memoir should be written for the future, rather than the past. It should reflect to the curious and lively minds what might possibly happen rather than what happened. It should attract the attention of the new generations" (36).<sup>56</sup> Since Salih is an ardent supporter of Pan-Turkism and believes in Nazi Germany's support of this ideal, it seems that by portraying the historical friendship of Turks and Germans in his memoir, he wants to prove that a future Turkish-German collaboration in WWII will be beneficial.<sup>57</sup> However, this ideological process of writing will involve a careful selection and elimination of Salih's memories, an imposition of a proper narrative framework and utilization of a special language proper for public reception. Salih has to fill in the missing gaps of his memories and create a "truth effect", which will not be utterly different from national history discourses.

Salih's ideological goal in his memoir reaches the point of delusion at certain moments in his writing stage since he forms dangerous analogies between the fate of German and the Turkish nations. At one point in his memoir, he points out that both Turks and Germans, surrounded by enemies, wage a war of life and death, their national game. He writes: "As long as they do not play this game, they cannot recover; they lead their lives always in a vigilant, tense and

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<sup>55</sup> Enver and Talât Pashas were the most prominent members of the CUP, who controlled the disintegrating Ottoman Empire from 1908 to 1918.

<sup>56</sup> "Bir hatırat, geçmiş için değil gelecek için yazılmalıydı. Olmuş bitmiş değil, olabilecekleri aksettirmeliydi diri ve meraklı dimağlara. Genç nesillerin ilgisini çekmeliydi."

<sup>57</sup> Or maybe, he also wants to prove to himself the ethical importance of his act as a secret informant, since at the end he will contribute to the formation of a Pan-Turkish federation. This highlights the therapeutic quality of writing.

unrecognizable state” (24)<sup>58</sup>. Ultimately, Salih underscores that if Turkish and German blood intermix, a new powerful force will evolve. In another part of his diary, Salih points to the melancholy and pessimism of his generation, those who have experienced the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. For years these people cherished the hope and imagination of a new spiritual leader. In Turkey this hope was realized with the War of Independence (1919-1923), when the new leader Atatürk<sup>59</sup> brought a new vision to the people. He says: “This hero, who expected absolute obedience and erased suspicious attitudes, enlivened the masses that were following him like a prince kissing the sleeping beauty of the fairy tales or like a messiah resuscitating a corpse.” (42).<sup>60</sup> When Salih later reads these statements in his memoir, he decides to leave these abstract statements out. He is not sure if these sentences pertain only to Turks, but also to Germans. The narrator states, “ If the historical destiny and state of mind of two nations are so much similar and if this is the observation of a confused person who feels himself a member of two nations, events and people can be mixed up and similarities can come to the foreground obscuring the differences” (42-43)<sup>61</sup>. I contend that Salih is right in erasing those sentences which designate the similarity of Germany and Turkey. Focusing too much on the similarities of the Turkish and German nations might lead to the erasure of the historical, social, and political differences between these countries. This might be manipulated by ultra-nationalist groups. It is important to highlight that only in evaluating his memoir can Salih gain a more critical outlook toward his perception of reality and his biases.

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<sup>58</sup> “Bu oyunu oynamadıkça kendilerini bulamaz, hep tetikte, gergin ve tanınmaz bir halde hayat sürerler.”

<sup>59</sup> Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938) was the founder of the Turkish Republic and the first president of Turkey. He led the Turkish National Independence Movement (1919-1923).

<sup>60</sup> “Kendine karşı mutlak itaati şart koşan, şüpheli tavırları silip süpüren bir kahraman, masallar diyarının asırlardır uyuyan güzelini öpen prens ya da bir cesede can veren bir mesih gibi canlandırmıştı peşinden sürüklediği kitleyi.”

<sup>61</sup> “İki millet tarih içindeki mukadderatı ve haletiruhiyesiyle birbirine bu kadar benzerse ve mülâhaza kendini her iki milletin de mensubu olarak hissedebilen bir saşkına ait ise, vak’alar ve kişiler karıştırılabilir, benzerlikler öne çıkıp farkların üstünü örtebilir.”



During his writing process Salih despairs more and more over his ability to turn his memories and historical documents into a representation that can approximate reality. While at times he utilizes emotional language that he feels does not reflect his serious and stern soldier 's personality, at other times he inserts ambiguous questions. Furthermore, he has difficulties remembering his memories with clarity and detail. As a result, his past seems to be irretrievably removed from the present and it becomes difficult for Salih to recapture his fragmented and hazy images into a straightforward, coherent story of success. Because he feels alienated from his past self, Salih experiences self-doubt and unconfidence, and cannot seek future salvation. He is afraid to depict his life as a fictional story and he is no longer sure how reality can be represented.

The narrator comments:

Does life involve vacillations between the past and the future? He felt desolate. Like a traveller who –incapable of living in the moment – being tossed around between his memories and the unknown future. Like a stranger wherever he arrived but also wherever he left for. A desolate, who at night time resigned onto the embrace of those whom he vaguely remembered, instead of easing into a sleep. These poetic feelings did not fit him well. The Salih who took his life into consideration with the mindset of a geometry scholar- in the same way that a patriotic soldier and a successful merchant would do- disappeared. Instead this anonymous and sensitive individual took up his place. The Salih who was writing down his memories and this Salih who experienced those memories were different. (29)<sup>62</sup>

Salih's memoir refutes what James Olney labels as "creative achievement of individual man", focusing on the "the isolate uniqueness" of the writer (*Metaphors of Self* 20-21). While he aims to portray a successful public personality of himself, the "narrating I" becomes more emotional and forms a different picture of him. For Andreas Huyssen, this estranged confrontation is

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<sup>62</sup> "Hayat, mazi ile ati arasında bocalamaktan mı ibaret? Gününü gün edemeyen, hatıraları ile geleceğin belirsiz ufku arasında başıboş bir yolcu, geldiği ve gideceği yerin yabancı, her gece yatağına uzandığında kendisi uyku yerine hayal meyal hatırladığı kişilerin kollarına terk eden bir gariban gibi hissediyordu. Böyle şairane hisler ona hiç yakışmıyordu. Vatanperver bir asker, başarılı bir tüccar gibi hayatını bir hendese âliminin kafasıyla hesaplayan Salih yok olmuş, yerine bu adı sam belirsiz hassas şahıs gelmişti. Hatıralarımı yazan Salih ile bu hatıralarımı yaşayan Salih farklıydı."

unavoidable since there always remains “the fissure that opens up between experiencing an event and remembering it in representation” (*Twilight Memories* 3). Rather than avoiding or grieving for this split “it should be understood as a powerful stimulant for cultural and artistic creativity” (3). In a similar way, Olney describes this event as “the reflexive, retrospective gathering up of that past-in-becoming into this present-as-being” (“Some Version of Memory” 241). Thus, the autobiographer imagines another person and another world into existence. For Salih, however, this writing process feels like a betrayal to the truth content of past events, which he naively expects to revise in his memoir.

In further stages of his writing, however, Salih changes his mind about the role of the memoir. In order to finish it on time, he recognizes that he should not insist on its truth content. In one important moment he writes: “Towards the end of his life, writing down his memories; not only those that he remembered, but also the ones that he did not. Even if they (the unremembered) are not written down, they exist in the mind and they affect the written text” (26).<sup>63</sup> In another passage, the narrator comments, “Wasn’t there an imaginative component in the foggy images of the past, which disappeared and appeared again in the memory? The important thing was that this imagination complied with reality. Imagination was also a part of life just like ideas. As a matter of fact, they complemented each other. He realized this by writing” (139).<sup>64</sup> It seems that, while there are many gaps in Salih’s memory, writing fiction has a glue-like effect, forming a meaningful whole from his fragmented recollections. This process can also be imagined as a performance, which Johnnie Gratton succinctly states as follows, “The non-existence of my life story also makes it necessary for me to produce ‘fiction’ in a good

<sup>63</sup> “Ömrünün sonunda hatıralarını yazan, yalnız hatırladıklarını değil hatırlayamadıklarını da yazar bir biçimde. Bunlar kağıda geçirilmese de kafanın içinde vardır ve yazılara tesir eder.”

<sup>64</sup> “Hafızamda bir belirip, bir kaybolan geçmişin buğulu görüntüsünde hayal payı yok muydu sanki? Önemli olan bu hayal payının gerçeğe uymasıydı. Hayaller de fikirler gibi hayatın bir parçasıydı. Esasen bunlar bir bütün teşkil ediyordu. Yazarak anlamıştı bu gerçeği.”

sense: fiction as making and not just making up; fiction as the corollary of imagination, fantasy and desire; fiction as the supplement of memory. . . ” (253). It is this act-value, the constant negotiation between the autobiographical and fictional aspects of the writing process, which opens up the possibility for critical reevaluation.

I contend that Salih’s initial confidence in his memory and his changing consciousness during the writing of his memoir can be interpreted in light of the recent controversies among historians in their approach to history and memory. Historians such as Pierre Nora underscored the superiority of memory over history because of its continual presence and unaltered form. In its individuality and uniqueness, memory seemed to resist integration into an institutional and cultural narrative. However, the fundamental dichotomy between history and memory has also been challenged especially by poststructuralist thinkers such as Jacques Derrida. In his *Dissemination*, Derrida criticizes Plato’s privileging of memory, which Plato considers as the “real”. In his words, “The outside is already within the work of memory. . . . A limitless memory would in any event be not memory but infinite self-presence. Memory always . . . already needs signs in order to recall the non-present with which it is necessarily in relation” (109). For Plato, writing is threatening since it can weaken the internal capacity of the thinker to remember. However, for Derrida writing is already inside since memory is also a process of signification. As seen in Salih’s writing process, it becomes impossible for him to depict an unaltered and truthful picture of past events. Through his imposition of a narrative framework upon his memories, which is based on the construction of himself as a successful public personality, Salih selects and reformulates his memories. Despite the novel’s critical stance against the truth claims of narratives that comprise memory accounts such as memoirs, testimonies, and autobiographies, I still argue that the characters’ alternative private memory accounts of the past form an

important challenge to the truth claims of national histories. Salih's unwritten memory accounts, depicted through the third-person narrator and his Jewish ex-girlfriend's fragmented memories of the Holocaust create fissures and gaps in the linear national narrative. However, what is important in this process is to emphasize the partial, fragmented, and interrupted nature of these memories and refrain from imposing a totalizing framework upon them.

*Alman Terbiyesi* does not only construct a multilayered and partial approach to history through Salih's memoir, his wife's and ex-girlfriend's letters, and its self-reflexive narrative structure but also through the fragmented structure of its prologue. In the prologue the author juxtaposes a newspaper clipping, a passage from a history book, and two fragments of Salih's notes written during WWI and WWII. The reader first encounters a fragmented italicized newspaper article from *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* dated June 19, 1941<sup>65</sup>. The clipping announces the Treaty of Friendship and Non-Aggression<sup>66</sup> between Turkey and the Third Reich, signed between the Turkish minister of foreign affairs Şükrü Saraçoğlu<sup>67</sup> and German ambassador Franz von Papen<sup>68</sup>. The newspaper considers this treaty a success for Turkey and Germany, which lays bare its ideological narrative framework. This fragment is followed by Şükrü Saraçoğlu's June 26 Speech at the Turkish National Assembly, which might have been taken from a history book or written by the narrator. Saraçoğlu delivers the speech during the treaty's ratification. In the beginning of his speech, Saraçoğlu mentions how Hitler's letter addressed to the Turkish

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<sup>65</sup> An important German language Swiss newspaper which was first published in January 12 1780 by Salomon Gessner.

<sup>66</sup> This treaty, proposed by Franz von Papen, was a consequence of Germany's stronger positioning by the late spring on the Balkans. The treaty aimed to further the economic relations between Germany and Turkey. Both countries expected that the press and the radio underscore the spirit of friendship between these countries.

<sup>67</sup> Şükrü Saraçoğlu (1887-1953) became the sixth prime minister of Turkey in 1946.

<sup>68</sup> Franz von Papen (1879- 1969) served as the chancellor of Germany in 1932 and became vice-chancellor (1933-1934) under Adolf Hitler. From 1939-1944 he was the German ambassador in Turkey.

president Ismet İnönü<sup>69</sup> made a strong impression on authorities. He refers back to Hitler's May 4 speech<sup>70</sup> where Hitler extolled Turkey's first leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. He also emphasizes that "truth and honesty" became leading principles during the negotiations and that "their English friends" were informed about the content of these negotiations. As it becomes apparent, in order to gain the approval of the congress, Saraçoğlu depicts Hitler as a respectful and friendly political leader, who respects the political leadership and independence of Turkey. His labeling of the English and Germans as "friends" shows the intermediate position of Turkey during the war that strove to remain neutral against all odds.

On the second page of the prologue, we encounter a fragment of Salih's note written on August 21 and 22, 1915, which lays bare Salih's Pan-Turanic idealism<sup>71</sup>. He believes that Turanic people such as the Turks and Japanese should fight against Western colonial interests. I will offer a detailed analysis of the note in the following section<sup>72</sup>. The second note, on the other hand, is a philosophical piece about the relationship between the past, present, and future, which Salih wrote in Istanbul on the first day of WW2. This piece, I believe, foreshadows the novel's multi-layered negotiations of historical understanding. On the eve of the war, Salih seems to be obsessed with the perception of time:

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<sup>69</sup> Ismet İnönü (1884-1973) was the Turkish Army General, Prime Minister, and the second president of Turkey.

<sup>70</sup> Hitler exclaimed, "The great, ingenious creator of young Turkey was the first to set a wonderful example for the uplifting of those allies who had been forsaken by fortune and had suffered a terrible fate." (*Hitler Speeches and Proclamations* 2417).

<sup>71</sup> Pan-Turanism is an ideology which supports the unification of the Turanic race (Uralo-Altaic).

<sup>72</sup> Read pages 137-138.

The past: the illegimate space to be invaded by the future.  
 The past? Yes the Past! Ink! A lot of pages full of ink.  
 To return to past: To be lost in the present. To be lost for the present?  
 The present: to return from the past. To be in the present. To forget the past?  
 Tomorrow: the opposite face of past, which exists within it. . . .(6)<sup>73</sup>

In his philosophical rumination on the perception of time, Salih presents an interrelated conceptualization of past, present, and future<sup>74</sup>. We encounter alternative conceptualizations of the past in that Salih represents it as “a place” and also as “writing.” First of all, by designating the past as inscription, as pages full of ink, Salih implies that the past can only be known or come to life through narration. Secondly, Salih denies perceiving the past and present as separate entities by highlighting the two-way movement between them. He emphasizes the dominance of our present experiences when we think about the past as well as the impact of the past in our conceptualization of the present by utilizing the verb *dönmek*, ‘return.’ The return to the past might be triggered by a crisis in the present time, which will affect the reception process of the past. Learning about the past, however, might also change our perception of the present. The questioning of the past from the point of view of the present has been propagated by 20<sup>th</sup> century historians such as Henri Lefebvre and Marc Bloch. Lefebvre, in depicting Marx as the primary propagator of a presentist approach, stated: “Marx has clearly indicated the way historical thought proceeds. The historian starts from the present . . . at first he moves backward, from the present to the past. Afterward he comes back toward the present . . .” (Le Goff 18). Bloch, in a similar way, underscored the double movement in historical method by stating,

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<sup>73</sup> Mazi: Geleceğin işgal edeceği gayri meşru yer.  
 Mazi? İşte Mazi! Mürekkep! Sayfalar dolusu mürekkep!  
 Maziye dönmek: Bugün içinde kaybolmak. Bugün için kaybolmak mı?  
 Bugün: maziden geri dönmek. Bugün için olmak. Maziyi unutmak mı?  
 Yarın: mazinin kendi içinde var olan ters yüzü. . .

<sup>74</sup> St Augustine was one of the earliest thinkers, who in his formulation of the perception and segmentation of time, underscored the existence of three temporal viewpoints: “the present of the past things, the present of the present things, and the present of future things” (Le Goff 3).

“Incomprehension of the present is the inevitable result of ignorance of the past. But it is perhaps just as fruitless to struggle to understand the past if one knows nothing about the present” (Le Goff 18). Furthermore, he added “It would indeed be a serious error to believe that the order adopted by historians in their investigations should necessarily be modeled on that of events.” (Le Goff 19). Hayden White also pointed out the dominance of the historians’ present perceptions in their interpretations of the past. The employment of the historical events in a narrative structure foregrounds a presentist approach to the past.

Salih also highlights the intricate relationship between the past and future in his notes. When Salih designates the past as an illegitimate space to be invaded by the future, he is perhaps implying that history is constantly being constructed and reinterpreted from the vantage point of the present and with an outlook to the future. The illegitimacy of the past might also be propagated by religious or materialist historians, who subordinate the past to an end goal in the future. They perceive this end goal as the past’s culmination and revelation point. Salih’s designation of tomorrow as the opposite face of the past harkens back to Paul Valéry’s remark that “we go into the future facing backward” (Le Goff 19) and also to Walter Benjamin’s “angel of history”, which is propelled toward the future while facing the past. Eric Hobsbawm also underscores the internal relationship between past and future when he says, “At all events the shape of the future is discerned by searching the process of past development for clues, so that paradoxically, the more we expect innovation, the more history becomes essential to discover what it will be like” (12). Even though there might be different approaches to the future, it is impossible to consider it without the past: “This procedure may range from the very naïve—the view of the future as a bigger and better present, or a bigger and worse present so characteristic

of technological extrapolations or pessimistic social anti-utopias— to the intellectually very complex and high-powered; but essentially history remains the basis of both” (12).

Salih’s approach to the past and national history in his memoir is also reflected in his notes. Salih’s urge to write a memoir is triggered by his present crisis: Germany and Turkey might face destruction if they make a wrong move. By trying to convince himself and future readers that Pan-Turanic nationalism is the best path to salvation for the future of Turkey, Salih creates an enthusiastic and dedicated portrayal of the formation of Turkish nationalism. He highlights the crisis of the Ottoman Empire, the colonialist interests at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the importance of awakening the Turkish nationalist consciousness. However, this requires a biased representation of the Armenian genocide and a favorable picture of Enver Pasha and Talat Pasha. Salih also depicts a favorable picture of the friendship of the German Empire and Ottomans to demonstrate Germany’s genuine interest in Turkey. Salih is perhaps hoping that through this partial and biased representation of the past, he and the reader can be convinced of the importance of a German-Turkish partnership in the near future, possibly also relieving his guilt.

The structure of *Alman Terbiyesi* also depicts an interrelated picture of past, present, and future in a performative way. It challenges the reader to understand the crisis of Turkish nationalism, the prominence of ultra-nationalist Turkish groups, and the partial support for Nazi activism during WWII through a critical understanding of history. In order to highlight the effect of our present impressions and experiences in our construction of the past, and depict the ideological character of personal and public history writing, the novel eschews a linear narrative structure and omnipotent narrator. While the present framework focuses on Salih’s experiences between the summer of 1942 and winter of 1943 in Istanbul, the reader encounters fragmented



and partial accounts of Turkish and German history through the randomly inserted memoir accounts of Salih and the third-person narrator. This back and forth movement between the present and the past also lays bare how Salih's impressions in the present effect his memoir writing and how, on the other hand, through his writing he gains a different understanding of the present and the future. Overall, the novel underscores the constructed discursive structure of history and portrays how meaning is attributed to events through a selective and organizational signifying system. Şenocak attempts to disprove the truth claims of national histories by forming gaps and fissures in the linear narrative. This is realized through the voices of the characters who offer alternative interpretations of the events. None of the voices can attest to what the truth is, since they are provisional and partial. Their strength lies in their transformative value of the national discourse, whose homogeneity they resist. This also becomes an important ethical necessity in the novel.

### **3.3 Exile and Identity: Salih's Crisis**

In *Alman Terbiyesi*, literal and metaphorical exile is one of the overarching experiences of the protagonist and the characters. A new world order was taking shape in Europe and the Middle East at the beginning of the twentieth century with the disintegration of empires and formation of nation states. This tumultuous period also resulted in the devastating world wars that led to millions of deaths. Maps were constantly transforming, and with immigration and dislocation rampant across the continents, one was no longer sure what home and belonging meant. While Salih voluntarily leaves the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century, after the loss of his home city Monastir (Bitola) to the Serbians in the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), Salih's exile deepens. Additionally, with the disintegration of the Ottoman and German Empires after WWI, Salih experiences an identity crisis. Considering himself as a man

of the old world order, Salih finds it difficult to acclimate to the regimes in Weimar Germany and also the Turkish Republic. After he moves to Istanbul with his wife due to the ascension of the Nazi Party, Salih suffers intensely once more because of his separation from Berlin. This results in his alienation from Istanbul, the society, and Turkish political life. Towards the end of the novel, when Salih is stripped of his German citizenship because of his correspondence with his Jewish ex-girlfriend, he experiences a new kind of exile. This time, however, he is determined to get over his isolation and disappointment, and start a new life in Istanbul, his second awakening.

Salih's exilic identity in *Alman Terbiyesi* cannot be dealt with without considering the attachments, detachments, and reattachments he forms to and from the Turkish and German nations. The novel refrains from depicting exile as a free-floating and liberated state and rather underscores the dialectic relationship between exile and the nation. As Edward Said rightfully states "Indeed, the interplay between nationalism and exile is like Hegel's dialectic of servant and master, opposites informing and constituting each other. All nationalisms in their early stages develop from a condition of estrangement" ("Reflections on Exile" 177). Said later on points to the dangers that lurk behind nationalism, which can become a powerful force of discrimination and destruction. He asks, "How, then, does one surmount the loneliness of exile without falling into the encompassing and thumping language of national pride, collective sentiments, group passions?" (177). The very same question becomes important in the analyses of Salih's character. In the negotiation of his exilic identity, how does Salih imagine the Ottoman, German, and Turkish nation and his relationship to it? Does his exilic state result in his avoidance of the narratives of national pride and collective sentiment and provide him with an objective and critical outlook? Since Salih grows up in a period when Europe and the Middle

East witnessed an awakening of nationalist movements, I contend that it is impossible for him to imagine his identity bereft of nationalist attachments. While he becomes an ardent supporter of Turkish nationalism during the Ottoman Empire, later on, with the influence of his German teachers, he also develops an admiration for the German nation. His decision to live in Germany, to fight as a German soldier, and his marriage to a German woman are also a reflection of willingness to become a member of the German Empire. In an interesting way, however, Salih's attachment to the nation becomes regional, since he foregrounds his Prussian identity at this stage. Salih is convinced that forming attachments to a nation not only involves the strong will of the spirit and readiness to learn the language, but also the discipline of the body. He develops an interest in the gymnastic movements<sup>75</sup> of Turnvater Jahn and repeats these movements every morning while listening to Beethoven. As opposed to Jahn, Salih does not believe that ethnic identity is a barrier to becoming a member of the German nation. Salih's aversion to Wagner's music and his avoidance of the German crowds also underscore his distance from an ethnocentric form of nationalism.

Interestingly, Salih's successful integration in Germany does not weaken his attachments to Turkish nationalism. Especially after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, Salih also considers himself a member of the Turkish nation. He states his double-consciousness as follows: "Although I feel like a Prussian officer and a faithful member of the German nation, I have never lost my sensitivity on issues concerning Turkey. I can even say that I have become more sensitive. . . . A non-healable wound opens up in a person's soul, who has left his

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<sup>75</sup> These movements had ritualistic-nationalist aspects which aimed at reviving the deeds of the ancestors. After 1918 the original gymnasts of the *Deutsche Turnerbund* accentuated the militarism in their tradition by their anti-republican activities and by collecting signatures against the peace of Versailles. Later on the federation was dominated by Nazi control.

homeland” (133).<sup>76</sup> Indeed, while he at first feels cheerful and optimistic to start a new life in Germany, Salih considers himself traitorous when he does not fight in the Balkan Wars. When the Ottoman Empire loses most of its western territory, including Salih’s home city, Salih feels disoriented and melancholic. His guilt intensifies when he does not fight in the Turkish Independence War. The fluctuations in Salih’s character are underscored when he remembers a saying that left a strong impression on him: “You can leave your birthplace; however, you should never betray it. You can feel attached to the place you are settled down; nevertheless, do not forget that you were not born there” (120-121).<sup>77</sup> In another important moment the narrator states, “He felt himself equally responsible for Turkey and Germany. What if the interests of these two countries collided with each other? What would he do and which side would he support? A person could not be divided into two like a watermelon. Could two hearts take shelter in a body or two tongues (languages) in a mouth?” (90).<sup>78</sup> Despite feelings of exile, Salih seems unable to imagine the simultaneous existence of multiple national attachments. This might also be related to the Orientalist outlook during his period, which made polar opposites of Christian-German and Turkish-Muslim cultures.

The crisis of Salih’s multiple-consciousness is also reflected in his memoir. Through his writing, Salih realizes that he cannot describe his identity in clear-cut holistic terms, nor can he simply insist on the dominance of his Prussian–German identity. His choice to write his memoir in Turkish depicts the empowering strength of his Turkish attachments during WWII. This can

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<sup>76</sup> “Kendimi ne kadar bir Prusya zabiti ve Alman milletinin sadık bir azası olarak hissetsem de, Türkiye ile ilgili meselelerde hassasiyetimi hiç kaybetmedim. Hatta gitgide hassaslaştım diyebilirim. . . . Memleketini terk eden insanın içinde hiçbir zaman kapanmayacak bir yara açılıyor.”

<sup>77</sup> “Doğduğun yeri terk edebilirsin; ama ona asla ihanet etmemelisin. Yerleştiğin yer senin olabilir; ama orada doğmadığını da asla unutmamalısın.”

<sup>78</sup> “Kendini Almanya’ya ve Türkiye’ye karşı aynı derecede sorumlu hissediyordu. Ya bu iki memleketin menfaatleri birbiriyle çelişirse, ne yapacak, hangi tarafı tutacaktı? İnsan karpuz gibi ikiye bölünmezdi ki. Bir vücutta iki yürek, bir ağızda iki dil barınabilir miydi?”

partly be related to Salih's disillusionment with the National Socialist regime and his awakened hope for the formation of a Pan-Turanic Federation. For Salih, writing in Turkish signifies getting closer to his very self, and he believes that language, rather than territory, leads the individual to his or her roots. It is interesting that in this metaphorical journey to his inner self, Salih refrains from using Ottoman words, but tries to choose authentic Turkish words. His language choice shows his desire to foreground the ethnic component of his identity and support the language reform in Turkey, supported by Atatürk's reforms.

Even the metaphors that the narrator uses to portray Salih's exilic identity make allusions to the nation. In order to depict Salih's complex relationship to the nation, the narrator utilizes the wolf and eagle metaphors:

He was a lone wolf, which had lost his pack and was running at full speed on the vast steppes. He was hungry and thirsty. The road was the bread and the wind was the water. . . . The more he ran the bigger became the cloud. Whoever was against him was perishing. The wolf cloud took off with his white mane. His tongue froze and turned into a hooked eagle beak in the cold countries. . . . The wolf was now an eagle. He could traverse the seas. Maybe the talon of an eagle grabbed him from the ground. . . . He was flying around the world without perching. He persistently was looking for his homeland. (43-44)<sup>79</sup>

Throughout the centuries, wolves have been represented in contradictory images such as nurturers in Roman and Turkish legends or evil predators in European fairy tales. In the history of ancient Turks, the wolf plays a central role: a grey wolf is believed to have led the Turkish people out of the Central Asian steppes to their present home. Furthermore in the "Legend of Asena", Turks are represented as descendants of an old she-wolf named Asena. In modern Turkey, extreme nationalist groups were inspired by this legend, and one of the ultra-nationalist,

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<sup>79</sup> "Yalnız bir kurttu o, sürüsünü yitirmiş, uçsuz bucaksız steplerde doludizgin koşuyordu. Aç ve susuzdu. Yol ekmek, rüzgâr suydı. . . . Koştukça büyüyordu bulut. Ona karşı duran yok oluyordu. Boz yelesiyle havalandı masal diyarından kurt bulut. Dili dönüp, çengel bir kartal gagasına dönüştü. . . . Kartaldı artık kurt. Denizleri aşabilirdi. Belki de bir kartalın pençesi yerden kapmıştı onu. Hiçbir yere konmadan dolanıyordu yeryüzünü. Bıkıp usanmadan arıyordu yurdunu."

neo-fascist youth organizations was named “Grey Wolf”. In light of the evolving image of the wolf in Turkish history, I would like to offer two interpretations of the wolf metaphor in the novel. On one hand, Salih’s loneliness as a wolf might be connected to his decision to live in Germany and his failure to fight in the Turkish Independence War. Because of his faltering loyalty to the wolf pack, which might represent the nation, he loses its emotional support and protection. On the other hand, the wolf pack might also stand for nationalist groups, some of which went in extremist directions. In the face of the ideological blindness of ultra-Turkish nationalists and Nazis, and their close negotiations during WWII, Salih feels bifurcated and disillusioned. Although Salih is also a Turkish nationalist and dreams of the possibility of a Turkish Federation, he does not support the racist and destructive ideologies of extreme nationalists. He avoids the hierarchical structures of these groups and the non-questioning obedience of the members. As a result, he might be avoiding the rigid social structure of the metaphorical wolf packs, where extreme loyalty and devotion is expected from the lower-ranking wolves. By leaving his wolf pack (in either case), Salih rejects the safety it offers, which involves territorial sovereignty and ease in hunting. On the other hand, he also gains qualities advantageous for survival, such as sharp observation skills, self-reliance, the accumulation of wisdom, and a free spirit, which become embodiments of his exilic identity. Salih’s metamorphosis into an eagle, an animal symbolizing self-determination and self-sufficiency, is not coincidental since Salih also embodies these characteristics. The emphasis on flying rather than running on the ground might be related to Salih’s reluctance to ground his identity in a territorial affiliation, reinforced by the eagle’s reluctance to perch. However, the eagle still indefatigably searches for his homeland, which might never be found. This metaphor reflects Salih’s identity dilemma and the dialectics of his exilic identity.

In addition to the animal imagery, the narrator also forms touching tales of Salih's and Stefan George's life (1868-1933) in order to explore his exilic identity. This time the focus is more on an inner exile as a result of the destruction of the old world system. Immersed in nostalgia for the German Empire, Salih takes solace in his old German books in Istanbul. In his loneliness, reading the poems of the German poet Stefan George (1868-1933), with whom Salih seems to share some similarities, soothes him. He remembers the times when he and his wife Annette used to recite George's poems to each other. For Salih, George depicts the secret of old Germany whose death in 1933 (when Hitler came to power) might either be coincidence or harbinger of the end of an epoch, never to be experienced again. Interestingly, Salih begins to translate George's poetic lines into Turkish in his head, when he is reading them aloud in German. This is a difficult enterprise, since George's language seems untranslatable. Salih is not sure why he has taken on this habit. It might be the case that the longer he stays in Istanbul, the more the Turkish language gets a hold of him. One day, Salih remembers two lines from George's famous poem "Geheimes Deutschland" ("Secret Germany", 1922). This remembrance makes him think about the different qualities of German and Turkish:

Kim, siz kardeşlerden hanginiz  
Endişelenir, korkmaz ihtarlı sözden (99)<sup>80</sup>

These two lines can be interpreted as George's warning to his fellow countrymen, who value and cherish rank and as a result experience suffering and death. Why does Salih remember these specific lines from the poem? "Geheimes Deutschland", which belongs to George's last poem

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<sup>80</sup> These two lines above are the introductory lines of the stanza below.

Wer denn wer von euch brüdern  
Zweifelt schrickt nicht beim mahnwort  
Dass was meist ihr emporhebt  
Dass was meist heut euch wert dünkt  
Fauls laub ist im herbstwind  
Endes- und todesbereich: (66-67)

cycle *Das Neue Reich* (1928),<sup>81</sup> is considered the latest of George's poems that reflects his perspective on life. When George wrote this poem, he was the same age as Salih, dedicating it to Berthold Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg<sup>82</sup>, who in 1944 attempted to assassinate Hitler. The poem's title also stands for the inner circle of George's followers. Written in the style of a classical ode, the poem announces the creation of a new spiritual Germany. In the first part, the picture of a chaotic and ruthless world, and the eve of its destruction is depicted. Human greed and technology have caused destruction, which has transformed the world. In this world, the order of nature has been transformed by darker, heavenly forces. This world might stand for Germany after WWI. The poet, who once was in the southern regions, is summoned back to his homeland where primordial soil and dark regions await for him. The next part of the poem announces the arrival of a god-like Maximin, whom George adored. According to Metzger, the poet's discovery of new Germany amidst such chaos signalizes "the capacity of certain of the poet's contemporaries . . . to feel and live with the mythic immediacy, on an experiential level that is supposed to have long disappeared." (186). After all, George's "Geheimes Deutschland" will survive when selfishness is abolished and society is ready to respect the nobility of other's minds.

I contend that the poem appeals to Salih firstly as a work of art, reflecting his inner turmoil and resentment that resulted from events of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Having grown up and lived in an era devastated by war, Salih experienced the demolition of the old world order. Like Stefan George, he detests the Versailles Treaty, which led Germany to the brink of destruction. Although he does not openly oppose the current Nazi regime, he becomes more and more

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<sup>81</sup> This was George's last book of poems. It comprises the period from 1908, when he wrote *Goethes letzte Nacht in Italien*, until after WWI. It is difficult to understand if the Reich is connected to a utopic realm or kingdom /empire.

<sup>82</sup> Berthold Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg (1907-1944) was a German aristocrat and lawyer. He became assistant professor of international law in 1927. He was a member of George's circle along with his brothers, and in 1939 he joined the German Navy as a staff judge.



disillusioned with the avarice and racism of Hitler and the other Nazi officers. Furthermore, he disfavors the dictatorial tendencies Turkey's current government. As a consequence of his experiences with the corrupt and bad-natured Nazi bureaucrats, Turkish racists, and people who benefit personally from the war, he feels disappointed in their hollow ideals. Such feelings might have caused him to recall those two lines of George's poem. Salih, in the same spirit as George, feels suffocated in the present and seeks spiritual awakening. In fact, he becomes hopeful for a future Turkic-Federation that would inspire such as awakening in the Turks. One might wonder, if Salih's translation of the poem into Turkish also shows his unconscious wish for the creation of a "Geheimes Turkey." However, later Salih refutes this attempt by stating that those two languages are utterly different. This statement might not only refer to a grammatical or functional difference, but in the impossibility of the translation of ideas and experiences.

### **3.4 Exile and the Nation**

#### **3.4. a Salih's Experiences with Turkish Nationalism and German Culture**

In this section I would like to explore the ways *Alman Terbiyesi* portrays the formation and evolution of Turkish nationalism through the experiences of Salih Suvari. Salih's memoir is a key point in this analysis since it forms a personal interpretation of the turbulent history of the Ottomans, Turkey, and Germany in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Having been born in one of the Ottoman Empire's most chaotic periods, Salih's life story becomes a metaphorical ground in which Turkey's national history evolves. The different stages of Salih's life not only mark watersheds of Turkish history such as the Independence War and Second World War, but also carry parallels to the life of Atatürk, who is the founder of the Turkish Republic. Both Salih and Atatürk were born in 1881 in the cities of Monastir and Thessaloniki respectively, in the

Rumeli<sup>83</sup> province of the Ottoman Empire. They both attended Monastir Military High School and the Ottoman Military Academy in Istanbul, Atatürk being one year ahead of Salih. While they both served in the Ottoman Army, their lives overlapped again during WWI, when they fought on the Galipoli front against the Entente. After the war, however, they pursued different paths, which changed Atatürk's life forever. After the victory in the Turkish Independence War in 1922, Atatürk established the Turkish Republic (October 29, 1923) and become the first president of Turkey. Salih, on the other hand, became as a successful businessman in Berlin and formed trade relations with Turkey.

In his childhood and adolescence years, Salih witnessed one of the most chaotic periods of the Ottoman Empire, during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid between the years 1876 and 1909<sup>84</sup>. The Empire, devastated by the loss of territory and prestige because of the Serbian and Greek nationalist independence movements in the early nineteenth century, grappled with the the rebellion of its Albanian and Macedonian subjects in the late nineteenth century. While the constitutional reforms in the Tanzimat Era (1839-1876) modernized the military and granted equality to non-Muslims and non-Turks, they could not prevent the rapid decline of the Ottoman Empire. During Abdülhamid's Era, most of the Balkan territories were lost as a result of the defeat in the Turco-Russian War (1877-78). Not only did the principalities of Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro become independent, but the Principality of Bulgaria was also established. Furthermore, as a result of the Berlin Congress, Bosnia and Herzegovina was occupied by Austrian-Hungary and Cyprus by the United Kingdom. The Empire suffered further losses in the upcoming Balkan Wars during the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) period. In the face

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<sup>83</sup> The Ottomans called their European territories *Rumeli*.

<sup>84</sup> Abdülhamid (1842- 1918) was the last sultan (34<sup>th</sup>) to reign with absolute power. He was the son of Sultan Abdülmecid I and Valide Sultan Tiji Müjgan. As a result of the Young Turk revolution, Abdülhamid was deposed and succeeded by Mehmed V.

of the ethnic nationalist movements, the imagination of Ottoman identity became more and more problematic in the late nineteenth century. Thousands of people faced exile and disillusionment as a result of losing their home cities.

*Alman Terbiyesi* reflects this traumatic period through the fragmented memories of Salih, who was born in Monastir<sup>85</sup> - a multicultural city in the southwestern part of the present Republic of Macedonia. In his memoir, Salih does not write about his life in Monastir, because he believes that his Ottoman past has become a stranger to him. The narrator states, “Maybe because of his immigration from one place to another, he grew apart from his past. The lovely Balkan city, where he spent his childhood and adolescence years, was located in a foreign country now. It seemed as if that place was also sharing Salih’s fate” (164).<sup>86</sup> I contend that Salih’s estrangement from his past might be a suppression mechanism against the imminent pain of the loss of his home city. He is perhaps afraid that writing about Monastir will expose his emotional and vulnerable personality. Salih’s decision to stay in Germany might also be related to his resolution to forget about the failure of the Turkish nation. It is only after Salih is finished with his memoir and decides to stay permanently in Istanbul that a fragmented childhood memory of Monastir comes to mind. During this time, Salih’s German citizenship is taken away, Germany is on the

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<sup>85</sup> The city is at present called Bitola, which is believed to be derived from old Slavic. The city’s previous name Monastiri or Manastir derived from the Greek, which signified monastery. Sharing Hellenistic and Roman traces, the city was settled by Slavic tribes in the sixth and seventh centuries. Bitola became a part of First Bulgarian Empire from eighth to early eleventh century and was an important military, political, and cultural center. During this time Christianity spread to the city and a wide range of monasteries and churches were built in it. At the end of the thirteenth century the city was conquered by Byzantium, which was followed by Serbia in the first half of fourteenth century. Bitola became a part of the Ottoman Empire from 1382 to 1912 and was located in the Rumelia Province. In the nineteenth century, Bitola was the second important military, administrative, and political center of the Ottomans in the Balkan Region. Bitola was also known as the city of Councils and housed important schools including one military academy. Ataturk also attended this military school. The inhabitants of the city belonged to different ethnic and religious heritage such as the Greeks, Bulgarians, Turks, Albanians, Vlachs and Roma. Furthermore, there was also a big Jewish community in Bitola whose ancestors came to the city after the Spanish Expulsion in 1492. Most of these Jews were murdered during the Holocaust.

<sup>86</sup> “Kim bilir belki de hayatı boyunca oradan oraya göç ederek yabancılaşmıştı kökenine. çocukluğunu ve gençlik yıllarını geçirdiği şirin Balkan şehri şimdi yabancı bir memleketteydi. O mekân da Salih’in kaderini paylaşıyordu sanki.”

brink of defeat, and Salih has no genuine friends. It seems to me that only when he has nothing to hold on to, Salih is ready to confront his childhood trauma. He recalls his dialogue with an old and well-respected Albanian man, who lived in a dilapidated house in his neighborhood. One day, he calls upon Salih and advises him to leave the city as soon as possible:

This city will be destroyed in the near future. Do not stay in it anymore. If you grow up and have sufficient strength leave this place. It is your fate to go to distant places. . . . Earthquakes happen and houses are destroyed, but newer ones are built. People die, but nobody touches the ones who stay behind. But now they will mess up with the ones who stay behind. The destroyed houses will not be rebuilt again. Maybe the people who decide to leave will be saved supposing that they do not perish on the way. (164-165)<sup>87</sup>

After this incident, Salih locks up himself in his room and cries in a paroxysm of agony. He cannot bear the idea of leaving his lovely city behind to foreign forces. The old man's warning can be considered a foreshadowing for the city's complex history in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, Monastir was at the forefront of nationalist struggles and became the stronghold of the Ilinden Uprisings, which was instigated in 1903 by the Internal Macedonian Organization<sup>88</sup> in Thessaloniki. During the First Balkan War (1912-1913),<sup>89</sup> Monastir was invaded by Serbians, whereas during WWI the Bulgarians invaded the city, which was followed by the occupation of the Allied forces. Being on the Thessaloniki front line, Bitola was utterly destroyed during the war. After WWI, the city became a part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and was occupied once more by German and Bulgarian armies during WWII. At the end of the war, Monastir was

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<sup>87</sup> “Yakında yok olacak bu belde. Sen durma, aklın erdi mi, gücün yetti mi çek git buralardan. Senin alnında yazılı uzaklar . . . Zelzele olur, evler yıkılır, ama yerine yapılır yeniden; ölen ölür ama kalana dokunmaz kimse. Şimdi dokunacaklar kalana da; yapılmayacak yıkılan ev bir daha. Kaçan kurtulacak belki, telef olmazsa yollarda.”

<sup>88</sup> The Internal Macedonian Organization was a revolutionary national liberation movement, which became prominent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was founded in 1893 at Resana. The motto of the group was “Macedonia for Macedonians”. On 2 August 1903 the group revolted against the Turks and declared Macedonian Independence. The Ilinden Uprising was crushed by the Ottoman forces.

<sup>89</sup> The war took place between the Ottoman forces and the Balkan League, which comprised Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro. The Balkan War ended with the Treaty of London on May 30, 1913. With the signing of the treaty the Ottoman Empire lost almost all of its remaining European territories, with the exception of Albania.

included in the Republic of Macedonia. After his military training in Germany, Salih could never again set foot in his beloved home city.

Salih's military education at Monastir Military High School, and at the Ottoman Military Academy in Istanbul incite an important transformation in his personality. Because there are a significant number of German military instructors at school, Salih starts admiring German military discipline and nationalist consciousness. Hiring these instructors was an outcome of the friendly relations between the German Empire and the Ottoman Empire during Hamidian Era. Afflicted by the bankruptcy of the economy and the technological backwardness of the army, Sultan Abdülhamid sought Western support. The new unified German Reich, with its rapid industrial and military progress, became an inspirational force for Abdülhamid. He believed that the German Empire had no designs on Ottoman territories and wanted to protect Ottomans from the British and Russian threat. As a result, he supported binding military and economic agreements between the two empires.<sup>90</sup> While Chancellor Bismarck had a more cautious approach<sup>91</sup> toward Germany's involvement with the Ottoman Empire, Kaiser Wilhelm II fully supported it.<sup>92</sup> The Kaiser developed a personal relationship with Abdülhamid II, visiting him in

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<sup>90</sup> According to Jonathan McMurray, King Frederick II's efforts to convince "Catharine to draw Turkey into the Russo-Prussian alliance" (33) against Austria in 1761 (though unsuccessful) opened the door to further Ottoman-Prussian interactions. A few decades later, Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) invited a Prussian delegation of military advisors in 1883, to help improve the weak and poorly trained army. Helmuth von Moltke led the group in 1835. However, after the defeat of the Ottoman army by Russia in June 1839, the Prussian delegation was blamed for their poor techniques and they had to leave the empire. Although it lasted for a short time and resulted in negative consequences, "... the Moltke mission nevertheless demonstrated Prussian loyalty to the Porte and kept open the lines of communication between Prussia and the Ottoman Empire" (McMurray 16). To learn more about this period read: Jehuda Wallach, *Anatomie einer Militärhilfe: Die preußisch-deutsche Militärmissionen in der Türkei, 1835-1919*. Also, *Essays, Speeches and Memoirs of Field-Marshal Count Helmuth von Moltke*.

<sup>91</sup> "Bismarck refused to sponsor any private undertakings in the Ottoman Empire. He notified entrepreneurs that they would have to pursue their ventures without any securities of the German government. (McMurray 27). As a result of Bismarck's intensifying disagreement with Wilhelm II, he resigned in 1890.

<sup>92</sup> Wilhelm II and other members in the government, who discussed the potential of Pan-Islamism to promote revolts in the colonized countries, intensified the relationship with the Ottomans. Donald McKale summarizes Kaiser's enthusiasm for the Orient as follows: Firstly since Germany arrived late to the Middle East, the Orient seemed for the Germans an academic, even romantic phenomenon. The Kaiser considered the Muslims in monolithic terms as subjects of the sultan-caliph. The Ottoman Empire also served as a vehicle by which the German Empire could

1889 and 1898. As a result, intensive military and trade relations were established, which reached their culmination with the construction of the Berlin-Baghdad Railway.<sup>93</sup> In his memoir, Salih writes extensively on Wilhelm II's 1898 visit to Istanbul,<sup>94</sup> during which time he was given the provisional concession for the continuation of the railway project.<sup>95</sup> Salih is 17 years old at that time, and he is in the ceremonial unit welcoming Wilhelm II. The troop stands on the Asian shore of Bosphorus in front of the Haydarpaşa train station, constructed by the Germans in neoclassical style. Indeed, it is no coincidence that the ceremony is organized at Haydarpaşa, since it was an important link in the Berlin-Baghdad railway project, which was funded by German banks and companies. The project, whose preliminary concession was signed in 1899, ushered in a new era of Turkish-German relations. The establishment of these friendly relations also alters Salih's disillusioned attitude. He remembers Wilhelm II's arrival day as sunny and lovely, which turns the city into a fairy tale. Salih can never forget that morning, since he was very excited:

We were filled with curiosity about Germany. Some of us were open admirers of Germans. . . . Kaiser's milk white Hohenzollern yacht, which sparkled in sun

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oppose other rivals and develop its foreign trade. Willhelm II's visit served the ends of cultivating the sultan as an ally. This visit inspired a myth among some Muslims that there existed a long standing or natural German-Muslim friendship (8- 10).

<sup>93</sup> There are different historical interpretations of the reasons behind the construction of the Baghdad Railway. Historians such as Edwin Meade Earle and Bekir Sitki have represented the railway as an important tool of German imperialism and a way to enslave the Ottoman Empire. For them, the construction stage became a catalyst for the WWI. Jonathan S. McMurray's innovative book *Distant Ties Germany, The Ottoman Empire, and the Construction of the Baghdad Railway* introduces a novel argument. By forming a detailed analysis of the cultural ramifications of the railway's construction, it depicts how both Ottomans and Germans benefited from the project. The railway became a bridge between Europe and Asia, Occident and Orient.

<sup>94</sup> According to Carter V. Findley, for Wilhelm II's visit new pavilions were built in the Yıldız Palace to honor the *Kaiser* and the Empress and they were given precious gifts. "After Istanbul the imperial couple went to Haifa, Jerusalem and Damascus where the Kaiser announced that he was 'the best friend' of the world's three hundred million Muslims" (n.p)

<sup>95</sup> The Deutsche Bank signed an agreement with the French controlled Imperial Ottoman Bank to fund the Baghdad Railway in May 1899. In December 1899 the preliminary railway concession was granted to the Anatolian Railway Company, headed by Siemens and Kaulla.

light, approached the harbor. . . . If I was not subjected to military discipline, I would at once jump to the yacht and set out to sea. (28- 29)<sup>96</sup>

As is evident from his hopeful and cheerful attitude, Salih is convinced that Germany promises hope for the dissolving Empire. Educated by German military instructors, Salih has developed a special admiration for German discipline, which he sees as an intrinsic quality of the nation. He feels enthusiastic about the idea that the Ottoman soldiers, who will get military training in Germany, will have to wear Prussian Uniforms: “Discipline can only take place if the outward appearance, manners, and ideas are in harmony with each other. . . . German national uniqueness depends on this idea. As a matter of fact German order and regulation carried peculiar significance for the Ottomans that were composed of seventy two and a half nations”(28).<sup>97</sup> It seems that Salih has developed a predilection for a militaristic form of nationalism, which was reinforced by German military instructors during his education period.

In 1882, the first group of German officers, under the leadership of Major General Otto Kähler, were employed in fixed term contracts in the army. After Kähler’s death in 1883 Major von der Goltz assumed leadership of the group and became the inspector of Ottoman military schools until 1895. Goltz not only modernized the Ottoman military<sup>98</sup>, but also introduced German military ideals, which were embraced passionately by his students at the War College. According to Handan Nezir Akmeşe, Goltz’s world view was “shaped by militarism, nationalism and Social Darwinism” and he firmly believed that “the future would bring an ‘age of people’s war’” (*The Birth of Modern Turkey* 22). He perceived that in the contemporary age wars had

<sup>96</sup> “İçimiz Almanya’ya karşı merakla doluydu. Kimimiz alenen Alman hayranıydık. . . Kayzer’in güneş ışığında parıldayan süt beyaz Hohenzollern yata limana yanaştı. . . Askeri disipline tabi olmasam kendimi bir çırpıda yata atar, denize açıldım” (29).

<sup>97</sup> “Disiplin ancak tavır ve tasavvur, kılık kıyafet uyum içinde olursa olur. . . . Alman milli vahdeti bu efkâr üzerine inşa edilmiştir. Esasen cümle âleme ibret olacak Alman nizam ve intizamı bilhassa yetmiş iki buçuk milletten müteşekkil Osmanlı için hususi bir mana celp etmekteydi.”

<sup>98</sup> For Goltz one of the greatest obstacles in the army was the lack of practical experience.

become a struggle for a nation's very existence, and as a result he advocated for the militarization of society.<sup>99</sup> Goltz underscored the development of the population's moral and martial qualities and was impressed by Turkish martial character "formed by religious conviction, imperial pride, patriarchal social relations, and a hard, rural way of life" (Akmeşe 27)<sup>100</sup>. He contrasted these qualities of the Turks and Asians to the waning martial spirit of the Europeans and Germans. Predicting a war in the near future between the central European powers for colonial domination, Goltz supported the idea of a German-Ottoman alliance against Great Britain. Akmeşe states that "The years 1883 to 1895 consequently saw the emergence of a generation of Ottoman officers whose political and social outlook was heavily influenced by Goltz's ideas" (24). This new generation attained prestigious political and military positions after the Constitutional Revolution of 1908. Furthermore, many of Goltz's pupils were sent to German regiments for training, during which time they were introduced to German military ethics and familiarized with a Western world view. Even after his return to Germany in August of 1895, Goltz retained avid interest in Ottoman political and military affairs. Placing the faith in the Turkish youth, he believed that the empire would be saved.<sup>101</sup> Goltz not only had transformed the ideology of the Ottoman officers, but he also aided in the development of trade relations. In McMurray's words "Rearming the Ottoman army with German-made weapons, Goltz served the interests of both countries and helped establish the foundation for further bilateral trade" (27).

Salih also gets involved in the Young Turk Movement during his military school years and he is introduced to the Enlightenment ideals of patriotism and freedom through the

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<sup>99</sup> In his famous book *The Nation in Arms*, Goltz states: "The fact is that wars have become wholly an affair of nations. . . . Only nations that are constantly prepared to defend their independence sword in hand enjoy true security. . . . At the point where we are now, the problem lies in combining military life closely with national life in such a way that the former impedes the latter as little as possible, while exploiting the totality of its resources" (808).

<sup>100</sup> Goltz' influential book *The Nation in Arms* was also translated into Turkish in 1885.

<sup>101</sup> In his memoirs Goltz wrote extensively about his ten years of residence in Istanbul.



organization's secret discussions. His experiences in these schools can be considered a reflection of the internal political and social strife during the Abdülhamid Era, mainly caused by the clash between modernity and tradition. While the Young Turks, a secret group advocating constitutional and parliamentary democracy in the Ottoman Empire, succeeded in obtaining Sultan Abdülhamid's consent for the establishment of a Constitutional Monarchy on November 23, 1876, the Sultan suspended the parliament on February 13, 1878. Moreover, through his extensive spy network he tried to prevent the formation of new rebellious groups. The secret discussions of the Young Turks gave Salih hope and inspiration. Salih writes in his memoir:

An innovative wind was blowing from the Balkans. It was forcing the doors of the narrow abode, where the sultan withdrew in the loneliness of absolutism. Young Turks in Paris perpetuated their opposing activities. After I entered the military school I developed an interest in politics. With some friends we were corresponding with Paris. During the discussions, which continued through whispers until late hours at night in the dark dormitory, we tried to find solutions for the dissolved empire. We also made propaganda of the people and groups we set our hopes on. We had to be very careful about these activities. . . . We were afraid of being expelled from school and languishing in Arabian dessert or in the distant and miserable towns in Anatolia. (27)<sup>102</sup>

Salih's memoir reveals the politicization of the military schools, which, in fact, was an outcome of Abdülhamid's military reforms. As a result of the expansion of the network of military schools, the increase in the number of schooled officers, and the introduction of German instructors into the army and navy, more and more staff officers showed support for a modern, progressive, and liberal Ottomanism. The new generation of officers was disillusioned with the strict centralization policies of Abdulhamid and his emphasis on personal royalty. Abdülhamid's

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<sup>102</sup> Balkanlar'dan yenilikçi bir rüzgâr esiyor, padişahın mutlakıyetçi bir yalnızlıkla içine kapandığı dar mekânın kapılarını zorluyordu. Paris'teki Jön Türk Cemiyeti muhalif faaliyetlerini sürdürmekte idi. Harbiye'ye girdikten sonra siyasetle ilgilenmeye başlamıştım. Bazı arkadaşlarla beraber Paris'le muhabere içindeydik. Karanlık yatakhane gecenin geç saatlerine kadar fısıldaşarak sürdürülen tartışmalarda dağılmakta olan imparatorluk için kurtuluş yolları arıyor, ümit bağladığımız kişi ve fırkaların propagandasını yapıyorduk. Bütün bu faaliyetlere azami dikkat sarf etmemiz gerekliydi. . . . Mektepten sürülme, Arabistan çöllerinde veya Anadolu'nun sefil ve ücra bir kasabasında çürüyüp gitmek korkusuyla yaşıyorduk.

support of a Pan-Islamist Ideology for the Empire's resuscitation and his presentation of himself as "high Islamic Caliphate" became problematic for these men.<sup>103</sup> The intelligentsia considered Hamidian Ottomanism as a reversal of the secularized Ottoman identity, set into motion during the Tanzimat Era (1839-1976),<sup>104</sup> During this period, the Young Turk Movement became the ultimate critical force against the Empire, which is designated as an "innovative wind" by Salih. The origins of this movement can be related to the secret "Ottoman Union Society", founded by students at the Royal Medical Academy in 1889. One of the main goals of the group was to restore the Constitution of 1876, as well as the Parliament. While the members were inspired by the works of Namık Kemal (1840-1888), the famous writer who defended patriotism and constitutionalism, they were also influenced by "contemporary European doctrines of biological materialism, positivism, and Social Darwinism to develop a broader critique of Ottoman society" (Akmeşe 33). In time, the group's ideas gained prominence in the military, and civil, and medical high schools in Istanbul and the group members formed contact with the émigrés in Europe. One of the important émigrés was Ahmed Rıza, who went into exile in Paris and later became one of the intellectual leaders of the opposition.

In time the Young Turk movement became stronger and transformed itself into a movement of military opposition. The Committee of Union and Progress became an organizational umbrella for the Young Turks (1894). One year later, Ali Rıza started to publish

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<sup>103</sup> In accordance with the Pan-Islamist ideology, Muslim Albanians, Arabs, and Kurds were in the highest position of bureaucracy and court (Hanioglu 7). This formed resentment in the Turkish heritage citizens of the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>104</sup> The Reformation Era, known as Tanzimat Era, instigated path breaking changes in the Ottoman Empire. For the first time, intellectuals could voice their criticism of culture and society and discuss the reasons behind the stagnation of the Empire. While many reforms were undertaken, inspired by Western modernity and technology, one of the most important changes took place in the understanding of Ottoman citizenship. All Ottoman citizens from different religious and ethnic backgrounds gained legal equality. Hanioglu considers this as a revolutionary change: "The attempts of the Tanzimat to reform the religious communities from within tipped the internal balance of power in favor of a new layman at the expense of the old clerical establishment" (5). Eventually this transformation "ended up cementing a bond between ethnicity and religion, thereby reinforcing the very centrifugal ethnonationalist forces it was meant to suppress" (5).

CUP's newspaper entitled *Meşveret* (Consultation). When the senior officers' plan for a military coup was revealed in August 1896, many of them were arrested or sent into exile, and CUP adherents were expelled from military schools. According to Akmeşe “despite its failure as an active revolutionary organization, the émigré CUP was to exercise a continuing intellectual influence on a younger generation of educated dissidents, particularly, . . . in the Empire's military schools” (34). Salih also gets involved in the secret activities of CUP in the late 1890s. In time, the Turkish members of the CUP increased and after the promulgation of the second Constitution in 1908, bolstering Turkish nationalism as the most important agenda. During the CUP's control of the Ottoman Empire from 1913 to 1918, the Turkish nationalist ideology accreted racist characteristics as seen by the horrific acts of Enver Pasha and Talat Pasha.

During his education, Salih also embraces the ideals of ethno-cultural nationalism and becomes an ardent supporter of Turkism and a Pan-Turanist ideology. While at first the Young Turk Movement included Ottoman subjects of different ethnicities and religions and supported ‘Ottomanism’ (equality of Ottoman subjects),<sup>105</sup> in time the CUP gained more Turkish adherents and embraced Turkish nationalism as an ideal. The main reason for the awakening of Turkish nationalist consciousness as summarized by Hanioglu was firstly the relegation of the movement to the fringes of the empire in the Balkans. With the rising revolts of the non-Turkish, non-Muslim and Muslim subjects in the region, and the loss of territory in wars, Turkism became a viable alternative for the awakening of the nation. Secondly, especially after the Russian Revolution, many Turkic origin intellectuals (such as Azeri and Tatar) joined the CUP and

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<sup>105</sup> It is important to point out that in its early formation process “Turkism” was not the foremost ideology of the group. The major minorities of the Ottoman Empire such as the Kurds, Circassians, and Albanians all took part in the movement whose common aim was “to defeat European schemes aimed at detaching their lands from the common fatherland in the interests of Balkan and Anatolian Christians” (Hanioglu 8). None of the founders of the group, İbrahim Temo, Abdullah Cevdet, İshak Sükuti and Ali Hüseyinzade were Turkish origin. The movement propagated the ideal of “New Ottomanism”, which was based on the equality of all Ottoman citizens of different ethnicities and races.

published journals and newspapers supporting a Pan-Turkist ideal. Thirdly, the Japanese Victory over Russia in the war of 1904-5 encouraged the spread of popular race theories. Furthermore, many exiled members of the CUP in Paris were inspired by the resurgence of French nationalism after the defeat in 1871, propagated by thinkers such as Albert Sorel and Emile Boutmy. Lastly, with the rise of leaders of Turkish descent to positions of prominence in the CUP, Turkish nationalism became an important goal of the group members. (9-10). The idea of Turkism, however, was interpreted differently by various CUP members. While some members, inspired by the era's racial theories, conceived Turks as a superior race, others believed that Turks should lead others in the path of progress. Furthermore, more and more members of the CUP who emigrated from Russia propagated Pan-Turkism<sup>106</sup> which involved the union of Turkic peoples all over the world. In this period, Salih becomes an avid reader of the journal *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish Homeland). The journal, published by Yusuf Akçura<sup>107</sup> and Ağaoğlu Bey in 1911, played an important role in the dissemination of a Pan-Turkist ideology. Some of the important principles of the journal were to use a simple and understandable language and style, to promote ideals acceptable to all Turks, and to cover subjects contributing to mutual Turkish awareness. Furthermore, priority was given to events which aroused feelings of fraternity (Arai 49-50). The journal convinced Salih of the possibility of a Pan-Turkish union. The leading personality of the journal, Akçura, famous for his seminal work *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset (Three Kinds of Policies 1904)*,

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<sup>106</sup> While Turkism was regarded as the nationalist movement of the Ottoman Turks, later on it was used interchangeably with Pan-Turkism. Pan-Turkism firstly became prominent among the Turkic people living in the borders of Russia. During the twentieth century Ottoman intellectuals also became interested in this ideology as a result of the immigration of Turkic intellectuals. Turkism and Pan-Turkism began to be used interchangeably. Moiz Cohen/pseudonym Tekinalp (1883-1961), who is considered one of the leading ideologues of Pan-Turkism, is also held responsible for this confusion. His booklet *What Can the Turks Win in this Struggle*, which is considered the first detailed study of Pan-Turkism, discusses how meaningful Turkism cannot be differentiated from Pan-Turkism.

<sup>107</sup> Yusuf Akçura (1876-1935) is considered one of the leading Turkish nationalists during the era. He belonged to a Kazan Tatar family that moved to Istanbul in 1881 after his father's death. He attended the military academy and was sent to exile because of his political/nationalist activities. Later on Akçura went to Paris and Russia and produced some of his important works there.

believed that rather than Ottomanism or pan-Islamism, pan-Turkism would prevent the Ottoman Empire's disintegration. Being an ardent supporter of German and Italian nationalism, Akçura criticized the Tanzimat Era Paschas who were inspired by French civic nationalism. Akçura's support of Turkish nationalism had a Pan-Turkist vision. In *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* he argued:

But the main service of such a policy would be to unify all the Turks who, being spread over a great portion of Asia and over the Eastern parts of Europe, belong to the same language groups, the same ethnicity and mostly the same religion. Thus there would be created a greater national political unity among the other great nations. In this greater national unity the Ottoman state as the most powerful, the most progressive and civilized of all Turkish societies, would naturally play an important role. (n.p.)

During this era Salih also forms attachments to the Pan-Turanic ideal. He says, "Especially in the Balkan Wars<sup>108</sup> of 1912/13, after almost all of the territories of Ottomans in Europe were lost, the focus was turned to Caucasus and Central Asia. . . . A homeland was imagined that sheltered all the Turkish clans and excluded other nations" (51).<sup>109</sup>

Another important member of the Türk Yurdu was Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924), who is considered the father of Turkish nationalism. Gökalp was a member of the CUP in Salonica from 1908 to 1918, became and later an ardent supporter of Mustafa Kemal and his reforms. Initially Gökalp became popular for his nationalist poems such as "Kızıl Elma" ("Red Apple") and "Turan". He also published numerous articles about nationalism and culture and was active in the "Yeni Lisan (New Language) Movement" of the journal *Genç Kalemler*. His most important

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<sup>108</sup> The territorial losses in the Balkan Wars were disastrous for the Empire. Almost all of the European territories were lost and these areas (Macedonia, Albania, Thrace) had key economic and cultural significance for the Ottomans for over 500 years. The defeat in the First Balkan War had a transformative effect in the Turkish nationalist consciousness. "All the magazines and newspapers of the period were full of articles, poems, and memoirs concerning the defeat in the Balkans and its related sorrows. . . . The defeats at the hands of the Balkan nations . . . destroyed the 'fraternite' aspect of the 1908 revolution and the fundamental concept of Ottomanism . . ." (Köroğlu 49).

<sup>109</sup> "Özellikle 1912/13 senesindeki Balkan Savaşları'nda Osmanlı'nın Avrupa'daki topraklarının hemen hepsi elden çıktıktan sonra, gözler Kafkaslar'a ve Orta Asya'ya çevrilmiş(ti). . . . Bütün Türk boylarını barındıracak, Türk'ten başka milletin yaşamadığı bir memleket düşünüyordu."

work was *The Principles of Turkish Nationalism* (1923), which had an important effect on future generations. Gökbalp perceived nationalism as a regenerative life force which developed in stages: “A people without a national character is comparable to the seed before it becomes a living organism. . . . Nations, too, need to pass through the stages of germination and growth. . . . nations with ideals, on the other hand, are destined for resurrection even if they are politically dead” (Köroğlu 56). Gökbalp embraced a cultural understanding of nationalism, which he described as follows: “. . . A nation is not a racial or ethnic or geographic or political or volitional group but one composed of individuals who share a common language, religion, morality and aesthetics, that is to say, who have received the same education” (*The Principles* 15). For Gökbalp, Turkism could be categorized in three different levels: Turkeyism (the unity of Turks in the Republic of Turkey), Oghuzism (the unity of Turkmens of Azerbaijan, Iran, and Khwarizm) and lastly Turanism ( the unity of more distant Turkic-speaking peoples such as Yakuts and Kirghiz). While Gökbalp supported pan-Turanic ideals before the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, later he developed an interest in Turkeyism, which overlapped with the Kemalist ideology of nationalism. He implied that the ideal of Oghuzism might be possible in the future, while Turanism remained for the distant future. Along the same lines with Gökbalp, Salih is convinced that without a nationalist consciousness people cannot form a civilization. The narrator states, “The members of the people, who lacked national conscience and understanding, were deprived of the notion of freedom. It was not expected from these people to establish a productive and future oriented civilization.” (54).<sup>110</sup> For Salih the civic spirit of the state, which introduces reformations, will not be enough to bond the people. It is rather the spiritual force which paves the way to national progress.

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<sup>110</sup> “Aslında milli vicdan ve şuur sahibi olmayan kavimlerin fertleri de hürriyet mefhumundan mahrumdular ve böyle kavimlerin verimli, ileriye dönük bir medeniyet tesis etmeleri düşünülemezdi.”

In the awakening of Turkish nationalism and Pan-Turkism, the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905 also served as an important force of inspiration. In his 1915 notes Salih writes as follows:

Asia is not a vagrant continent to be discovered by the Europeans. We Turks and Japanese foremost, who are big Turanic tribes, will not share the fate of Native Americans. We will not be forcefully deported from our land and we will support our rights. The Turks, who have been invaders throughout history and whose glorious armies are famous, are in the position to defend themselves. (6)<sup>111</sup>

The date of the note can be considered a symbolic moment for Ottoman Empire. Mustafa Kemal, commander of the 19<sup>th</sup> division, won the Second Anafartalar victory at the Gallipoli front in WWI, which stymied the British forces from taking control of the region. Salih, who was called back from the Gallipoli Front and stationed in Germany, must have been inspired by this victory, which triggered him to write this anti-colonial piece, heavily influenced by the CUP'S propagated discourse of Turkish nationalism. Especially after 1908, the Japanese victory was thematized and analysed by numerous military publications in the Ottoman Empire. Staff officers Major Osman Senai and Captain Ali Fuad pioneered this analysis, publishing a five-volume study entitled *The Russo-Japanese Campaign of 1904-1905*. The military officers were fascinated by the recognition of a non-European country as a Great Power in the West, as well as by the physical and moral endurance of their army. What was especially inspirational was Japan's middle path in the process of Westernization. While the nation and army cherished and retained the traditional moral and martial values based of Confucianism, they also emulated western technology. Most importantly, this victory proved that the army could embrace a leading role in the resuscitation of national spirit and transformations in society. Akmeşe in her article

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<sup>111</sup>“Asya, Avrupalılar tarafından keşfedilmeyi bekleyen basıboş bir kıta değildir. Biz Türkler ve Japonlar başta olmak üzere, büyük Turan kavimleri, Amerika'nın yerlilerinin kaderini paylaşmayacağız, topraklarımızdan sürülmeyeceğiz, hakkımızı ve hukukumuzu savunacağız. Tarih boyunca istilacı olmuş olan şanlı ordularıyla yeri ve göğü titreten Türk milleti artık kendini savunma durumundadır.”

“The Japanese Nation in Arms: A Role Model for Militarist Nationalism in the Ottoman Army, 1905-1914” states, “An awareness that the army itself had been a preponderantly Turkish institution, and that the bulk of the conscriptable population had always been formed by the Turks of Anatolia, led the military critics to put emphasis on the Turkish element in society” (69). Writing became an important means in disseminating militarist-reformist ideas. Especially after 1908, the enthusiasm for the Japanese victory, not only reflected the officers’ disillusionment with the sultan’s passivity, but also emphasized the strengthening of the ideal of a militarist and ethno-culturalist nationalism. Colonel Pertev, one of Goltz’s former students and military plenipotentiaries in Japan, wrote also a book about this victory. He asserted: “If we, like the Japanese, starting from the primary school, teach our children “love of fatherland” and “martial spirit”, and if, in the army, we train them as heroes who are ready to die for the Sultan, fatherland, and nation, then the Ottoman Army will fear no-one in the world except Almighty God” (Akmeşe, *The Birth of Modern Turkey* 77).

One of the other important personalities that shaped Turkish nationalism during the early twentieth century was Enver Pasha (1881-1922), who served as a military attaché to Berlin between the years 1909 and 1911. Enver became the most influential member of the CUP and an ardent supporter of Pan-Turkism in the early twentieth century. Salih meets Enver before he becomes one of the most powerful and well-known politicians in Ottoman Turkey—the ambitious war minister and son-in-law of the Sultan<sup>112</sup>. In his memoir Salih, writes in detail about their short encounter in the *Berlin Tiergarten* (1909), where they take a horse ride. Salih serves as a Prussian soldier during this time and prefers to define his mentality as German. In his

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<sup>112</sup> Enver became the most importance force in CUP and Ottoman Turkey, as a result of his success in the 1908 revolution, his prominence in the Tripoli campaign of 1912, and his victory in the II. Balkan War in Adrianople. Eventually he became the Minister of War in 1914.



memoir, Salih underscores his and Enver's identity crisis as Ottoman subjects and expands upon Enver's support of Turkish nationalism in the Ottoman Empire. However, Enver does not only express his hopes to awaken a Turkish nationalist spirit within the Empire, but also outside its borders. He ardently supports Pan-Turkish nationalism and, as a result, opposes the nationalist policies of Russia. Furthermore, German nationalism becomes inspirational to Enver, which Salih states as follows:

He is hopeful of the young Ottoman soldiers who are trained in Germany. While they are distanced from the tumultuous situation of the country, they will be educated in the bosom of Germans that are a strong nation. These young people will construct the Turkey of the future. He says that the Turkey of the future should belong to Turks and that we should get rid of the non-Muslims, who are destroying us. Later on, we should embrace our brothers in Central Asia. (34)<sup>113</sup>

Salih does not write about his response to Enver's statement. It seems that he prefers cautiously listening to Enver's statements. Although they both share the same ideal of Turkish nationalism, Salih's seems to feel distanced towards Enver, maybe because of his ethno-culturalist approach to nationalism. Salih prefers not to write about his mixed feelings in the memoir, but later on the narrator states, "Salih Bey did not feel himself close to this straightforward soldier who was hyper, emotional, and unfocused and whose behavior indicated his egomaniac personality. If he wasn't occupying this (political) position, he might be in the lunatic asylum" (88).<sup>114</sup> Salih thinks that Enver's adoration of Germans and his Turkish nationalist ideals are exaggerated. As much as Salih appreciates the close military and political partnership of the Ottoman Empire and German Empire, his inner voice tells him that the Turkish army cannot be an extension of the

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<sup>113</sup> "Almanya'da talim eden gençlerden ümitli. Onlar vatanın derbeder halinden uzakta, sağlam bir millet olan Almanların kucagından yetişip geleceğin Türkiyesi'ni inşaa edecekler. Geleceğin Türkiye'si Türklerin olmalı, bizi kemiren gayri Müslimlerden kurtulmalıyız diyor. Sonra Orta Asya'daki kardaşlarımızla kucaklaşmalıyız . . ."

<sup>114</sup> "Yerinde duramayan, heyecanlı, dikkati çabuk dağılan, her halinden egoman olduğu ve eğer işgal ettiği mevkilerde olmasa, belki de tımarhanede olması gereken bu zıpkın askere hiç yakın hissetmemişti kendini Salih Bey"

German army, and a supporter of German interests in the Middle East. The Ottoman Empire cannot be treated as a colonized country.

Salih's inner feelings also lay bare his own internal contradictions within himself. While Salih strongly believes that Turks should develop a self-confident identity and act only for their own interests, he does not know how this identity formation should take place. This becomes apparent in his later discussion with Enver. After Enver boasts about the intensification of German economic and cultural activities in Turkey, he becomes critical of the Turkish clubs in Germany that are isolated from everyday life: "They (Germans) think that we are an uncivilized nation not informed about science and art. But, we should introduce ourselves in a better way. We shouldn't hide behind our magnificent history." (35).<sup>115</sup> Salih, on the other hand, provides a pessimistic answer to Enver's suggestion. He is not quite sure how Turks should introduce themselves to Germans, considering that they still have doubts about their own identity. By considering Goethe and Schiller as the personifications of a German literary identity, he wonders who the Turkish Goethe might be.<sup>116</sup> During their discussion about culture and civilization, Enver seems distressed and cannot provide a meaningful answer. Salih thinks that he is a man of action rather than thought. In the following years, Enver's shortsighted views about Pan-Turkish nationalism and his confident support for Germany brought the empire to an impasse.

Overall, Salih's interpretation of this encounter with Enver, combined with the third-person narrator's remark, are important clues regarding the nationalist imagination of the

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<sup>115</sup> "Almanlar onların varlıklarından bile habersiz. Bizim ilim ve sanat irfanından habersiz, gayri medeni bir millet olduğumuzu zannediyorlar. Oysa kendimizi daha iyi tanıtmalıyız. İhtişamlı tarihimizin arkasına saklanmamalıyız."

<sup>116</sup> Their discussion, in fact, lays bare the nationalist crisis of Turkish intelligentsia in Ottoman Empire and later on in the Turkish Republic. While some thinkers propagated the emulation of Western civilization and technology, some others supported the foregrounding of the Central Asian roots and traditions of Turkish ancestors. In the new founded Turkish Republic the idea of a healthy synthesis was propagated in that Western technology became a guiding principle. However, there was also a revival in research about ancient Turkish history, culture, language and literature. This led to a repression of the Ottoman-Islamic past.

Ottoman soldiers on the eve of WWI, Enver's role during this period, and how it affected the Turkish–German relationship. The Western-educated soldiers experienced a quandary of identity. While they confronted the technological and military superiority of Germany and Europe, many embraced Turkish nationalism as a solution to this impasse. During the reign of the CUP Turkish nationalism grew stronger than ever. The newer interpretations of Turkish history and culture engendered pride and confidence among the nationalist intelligentsia that forfended against western (English, French, Russian) dominance. Salih indeed embodies these contradictions when he speaks to Enver. When we analyze Salih's portrayal of Enver in his memoir, he is convinced, like many historians of Enver's adoration of German culture<sup>117</sup> and history, and his exaggerated sense of nationalism. In fact, the Ottoman Empire's defeat in WWI was attributed by some historians to Enver's exaggerated Pan-Turkish idealism and his blind adoration of the German culture. According to Jacob M. Landau during the reign of the CUP, Enver had "the most definite ideas in favor of Pan-Turkism and its crucial future role" (51). It is also believed that he set up the *Teşkilât-i Mahsusa*<sup>118</sup> (special organization), a secret service whose agents spread Pan-Turkist propaganda beyond the frontiers until the end of WWI. (52) Enver's ardent Turkish nationalism, along with Talat Pasha has also been seen as a destructive force leading to the much disputed Armenian Genocide in 1915. After the war, Enver would go on propagating Pan-Turkish ideals in Russia until his death. It cannot be denied that Enver's ideal for a Pan-Turkic federation became an inspirational force for some ardent Turkish nationalists during WWII.

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<sup>117</sup> When Enver became the war minister he reorganized the army. A military mission of seventy officers led by General Liman Sanders was given the task of reforming the army. A German officer, Bronsart von Schellendorf was appointed chief of general staff directly under Enver.

<sup>118</sup> *Teşkilât-i Mahsusa* was formalized in 1914 and put under the control of Enver. During the WWI it also played a role in the suppression of separatist movements such as the Arabs and in the terror campaigns against Greek businesses. It is also believed that it played an important role in the Armenian genocide.

### 3.4.b Salih's Experiences during WWII in Istanbul

After Salih finishes writing about his memories of his encounter with Enver Pasha, he keeps thinking about Enver's statement regarding the common Turkish-German destiny. While the realization of this destiny was shattered with the defeat of German and Ottoman Empires during the WWI, which led to a standstill in Turkish-German relations, Salih is hopeful that in the present time (WWII) it will be realized again. Turkey, which was neutral until February 23, 1945, played an important strategic role for both the Axis powers and the Allies. Both England and Germany tried to tempt Turkey into taking part in the war and Istanbul became a playground for a lot of spy networks. However, President Ismet İnönü stalwartly resisted Turkey's entrance into the war until the very end. On the other hand, the German ambassador to Turkey, Franz von Pappen, relentlessly disseminated fascist, racist ideals among ultra-nationalist Turkish groups, German embassy and consular officials were also involved in activities to win public sympathy. The contribution of German and Austrian residents of Istanbul (more than 1,000 residents) to Nazi propaganda should also not be underestimated. The expatriate German community was known as the *Deutsche Kolonie* and it "socialized in organizations like the Protestant Parish Istanbul (founded in 1843), the Teutonia Club (1847), the Society of German Women in Constantinople (1856), the German Hospital (1877), and the German School (1868)" (Konuk 103). The existence of these diverse historical, cultural, religious, and political groups oriented the German community, which had existed in Istanbul since the mid-nineteenth century. However, during the course of the 1930s and 1940s, these groups fell under the control of the Nazi Party, which opened its first office in the Teutonia Club. Konuk states:

As in Nazi Germany, young Germans in Istanbul were organized in the Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth) and the Bund Deutscher Mädchen (League of German Girls). *Türkische Post* became the official mouthpiece of the Nazi Party in Turkey, stipulating the role that expatriate Germans might play in disseminating

Nazi beliefs. And, in no time at all, it published excerpts from Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and introduced topics like "racial hygiene" to Istanbul's German readers. . . . As early as 1935, German consul Toepke bragged that more than a quarter of the city's German residents had enrolled in the Nazi Party: of the 950 citizens of the German Reich in Istanbul, as many as 225 had become official party members. (104)

Although Turkish authorities were cautious about Nazi activists, they did not close down the headquarters of these various groups. This also perhaps reflects Turkey's fear of developing a hostile relationship with Nazi Germany. Indeed, Turkey's middle-way diplomacy resulted in its signing of the Non-Aggression pact on June 18, 1941 with Germany (as discussed in the novel's prologue), followed by a trade agreement in September 1941.

The increase in Nazi propaganda also had an important effect on the ideologies of ultra-nationalist Turkish groups. More and more Pan-Turkist associations appeared that were influenced by German cultural and social propaganda. Although Pan-Turkist/Pan-Turanist nationalism was discarded during the presidency of Atatürk,<sup>119</sup> it regained force during WWII as a bulwark against Soviet expansion. During this time, Turkish and German foreign offices, as well as Pan-Turkist leaders, and supporters of German-Turkish collaboration tried to revitalize the idea of unifying Turkic people around the world. In Selim Deringil's words, "As the German forces began conquering areas of the Soviet Union inhabited by Turkic people, the idea was born of using these as a bargaining counter against Turkey" (130). The official policy of the Turkish government was to refute these claims. Franz von Papen also supported this ideal by forming diplomatic negotiations and even offering financial support to some of the nationalist groups. During this time Salih is also blinded by the Pan-Turanist ideal. He naively believes that if

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<sup>119</sup> During the Turkish War of Independence Atatürk supported an Anatolian based Turkish nationalism rather than propagating the Pan-Turkish ideal. In his Eskişehir (1921) speech he declared "Neither Islamic union nor Turanism may constitute a doctrine, or logical policy for us. Henceforth the government policy of the new Turkey is to consist in living independently, relying on Turkey's own sovereignty within her national frontiers" (Landau 55).

Germany should win the war, the dream of a Turkish Federation under the leadership of Turkey and Germany would be realized. As a matter of fact, he decides to carry secret information about the status of the Russian front and the situation of the Turkic people in Russia to the German embassy. The narrator comments about Salih's feelings as follows:

Multinational countries certainly could not exist for a long time. It would be against the nature of things. There was hope from Tatars and Chechens. These heroic nations could not get used to captivity, and they waited like a fuse to be sparked. The armies of the Führer sparked the fuse. . . . Yes, history has never been fair. . . . But from time to time a nation could handle the course of history and determine its own destiny. What happened in Turkey during the Independence War, was now taking place in Germany. (20)<sup>120</sup>

While Salih considers nationalist ideology the binding force of the people, he is blind to its overlaps with racist, ethnocentric, and sexist discourses. As a result, for a long time he fails to see the atrocities committed in Germany. Having witnessed the occupation of Ottoman Turkey by the allied forces after WWI, he is convinced that the friends of Turkey can only be other Turkic people and Germans who shared a similar fate. The number of people who shared similar ideals like Salih increased in Turkey during WWII. However, some of the people went to extremes and developed an interest in a racist form of nationalism, which Salih does not propagate. According to Landau, the Pan-Turkist periodicals during this epoch fought against the state ideology and embraced a more racist ideology: "Their tone was more pronouncedly aggressive, foreshadowing the military style which would characterize them in the later years of and following the Second World War. In addition the content became increasingly politicized. . . ." (93). During this period, certain youth organizations made use of fascist, racial, and romantic nationalist symbols. They showed a predilection for the pre-historical Turkish symbols like the

<sup>120</sup> "Çokuluslu devletler elbette uzun süre yaşayamazlardı. Eşyanın tabiatına aykırı olurdu bu. Tatarlardan ve Ceçenlerden ümit vardı. Bu kahraman milletler esarete alışmamışlar; ateşlenmeye hazır bir fitil gibi beklemekteydiler. Führer'in orduları bu fitili ateşlemişti. . . . Evet tarih hiçbir zaman adil olmamıştı. . . . Ama bir millet zaman zaman tarihin seyrini ve bununla beraber talihini de kendi eline alabiliyordu. İstiklal Harbi'nde Türkiye'de olup bitenler şimdi de Almanya'da gerçekleşiyordu. . . ."

grey wolf, or tried to reawaken the heroism of ancient Turkish leaders such as Attila the Hun.<sup>121</sup> These groups were hostile against the minorities in Turkey such as Jews, Gypsies, and Greeks, and were against using foreign languages in public. Also during this period also anti-Semitic propaganda<sup>122</sup> intensified which was disseminated by journals such as *Milli Inkilap* (National Revolution) and intellectuals like the historian Şemseddin Günaltay<sup>123</sup> and Nihal Atsız<sup>124</sup>. Especially after the German attack on Russia in 1941, the idea that Turkey should join WWII became prominent among the ultra-nationalist groups. With the changing course of the war, however, the government showed hostility to Pan-Turkist propaganda. Numerous Pan-Turkist leaders were arrested and trials took place in which 23 individuals were accused of spreading racist doctrines.

Salih's social environment in Turkey lays bare the dangerous proximity between German and Turkish nationalist groups. Salih loses his nationalist fervor when he attends one of the meetings of Teutonia<sup>125</sup>, a cultural and political propaganda group of the Third Reich in Turkey. The narrator comments, "Germans discovered quickly the importance of cultural activities in the

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<sup>121</sup> Hostler summarizes some of the Pan-Turkist organizations during this time. The first was a secret society formed by Zeki Velidi Togan. His aim was to unite the Turks after German defeat, overthrow the Turkish government, and replace it with a nationalist and racist government. Togan's lieutenant Reha Oğuz Türkkan formed a separate secret society and published the journal *Bozkurt* in 1939 where he claimed the racial superiority of the Turkish blood. A third circle was led by Dr. Rıza Nur after whose death the group was led by Nihal Atsız. They published magazines like *Tanrıdağ* and *Orhun*. (181-183).

<sup>122</sup> To learn more about the history of Turkish Jews read Stanford J. Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic* and Marc David Baer, *The Dönme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks*.

<sup>123</sup> In his lecture titled "The Homeland of the Turks and the Question of Their Race", Günaltay refuted the thesis that Turks were yellow race and that their homeland was Mongolia. According to Kader Konuk, what was interesting in the lecture was Günaltay's utilization of anti-Semitic trope in order to depict the superiority and whiteness of the Turks. She says, "Günaltay seized on Reşidüddin, the thirteenth-century Jewish born Persian historian, whom he criticized for equating Turks with Mongols. . . . Günaltay reminded his audience of Reşidüddin's Jewish heritage and invoked the figure of the Jewish imposter" (85).

<sup>124</sup> Atsız, who was a young school teacher and an ardent Turkish nationalis, published a journal entitled *Orhun* (1933), which included anti-Semitic statements. "For instance, on March 21, 1934, Atsız labeled the Jews and communists as the Turks' two enemies" (Cagaaptay 142).

<sup>125</sup> This was the first association founded by Bohemian Germans in 1847. In 1933 the association got under the control of National Socialists and became a center of propaganda. In 1933 the Deutsche Bank head of Istanbul became the director. In 1954 the association changed its name to *Deutscher Klub*.

implantation process of German sympathy. . . .Germany should not only compete with its eternal enemies in the field of commerce and battle, but also in the vast horizons of culture and art.”(60)<sup>126</sup> Although Salih is not a member of the Nazi Party, he cannot decline an invitation from the German Consulate in honor of the Gestapo soldier Büttner. During the gathering Salih feels imprisoned and becomes introverted and silent. The racist and anti-Semitic arguments of the Gestapo soldiers, the managers of the German banks, and members of the Turkish groups disgust him. One of the people he despises is the Turkish history teacher Şerafeddin Bey who teaches at the German High School<sup>127</sup>. Şerafeddin Bey is a member of the National Socialist Party and propagates racist nationalism. Wearing a swastika he becomes a mimic man of the Nazi Party members. Şerafeddin believes in the ideological power of history to change the consciousness of the people. As a result, he does not utilize the Turkish history books that depict Germany as the ultimate cause of the Ottoman defeat in WWI.<sup>128</sup> He teaches history as a militaristic discipline and foregrounds the success stories of Germany. For Şerafeddin one of the greatest failures of the Ottoman Empire was its support of its multi-ethnic heritage:

One should deal with the Gypsy problem in Turkey. In fact, because we have been too tolerant throughout history, we have always been cheated. During the reign of Sultan Bayazid II in 1492 for no reason at all we accepted the Jews. These people were driven away from Spain. Why would it concern us? I don't

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<sup>126</sup> “Almanya sevgisini aşlamak için kültürel çalışmaların önemi Almanlar tarafından çabuk keşfedilmişti. . . . Almanya, ezeli düşmanlarıyla sadece muharebe alanlarında ve ticari sahada değil, kültürün ve sanatın engin ufkunda da rekabet halinde olmalıydı.”

<sup>127</sup> Glasneck states that one of the important areas for the propaganda was the German schools in Turkey. He claims, “Die deutschen kulturellen Einrichtungen in der Türkei, die zum teil schon in der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts entstanden waren, nutzten die faschistischen deutschen Imperialisten dazu aus, die maßgebenden Schichten in der Türkei für ihre Politik und Ideologie zu gewinnen. Die im Jahre 1868 in Istanbul gegründete Deutsche Schule . . . sahen sie z.B. als ‘Werbungsfaktor für Deutschland’ an” (21). Indeed, eighteen out of twenty German teachers at the school were members of Nazi organizations during the war.

<sup>128</sup> Glasneck asserts that until 1941 German diplomats criticized Turkish history books which did not depict a friendly picture of the German generals during the WWI. In his words, “Über das Geschichtsbuch für Mittelschulen heißt es 1941 über die Zeit des 1. Weltkriegs: ‘Von einer deutsch-türkischen Waffenbrüderschaft oder gar von der deutsch-türkischen Waffenbrüderschaft oder gar von der deutschen Führung bei den harten Kämpfen auf Gallipoli ist nirgends die Rede . . .’” (23). There was pressure applied to the Turkish teachers to teach these lessons according to German interests.



think that there is another nation in history that made the mistake of embracing foreigners. Europeans behaved in a hostile way to the natives even in distant countries and did not allow them to live. We, on the other hand, bring the people who are different from us and let them settle down. . . . This weird habit makes us weak. Probably in this matter there is a lesson to be learned from our German friends. However, the headlessness of Bayezid still goes on today; our government provides a living for those pretended scientists, who were banished from Germany. . . We can't leave the Turkish youth in the hands of these men. (61)<sup>129</sup>

Indeed, many ultra-nationalist Turkish individuals like Şerafeddin were prejudiced against the Jewish-German émigré intellectuals in Turkey. While these professors made a significant contribution to Turkish universities and founded departments, they had to confront the prejudiced attitudes of some of their colleagues, Turkish nationalists, and the German community. Old professors who were dismissed because of university reforms, or had a lesser income, were especially critical of the positions attained by new émigrés.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, the émigrés were under the close scrutiny of German bureaucrats and members of the Nazi Party in Turkey; their activities were reported regularly to Germany.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> “Türkiye’de Çingenelerin de bir icabına bakılması gerekiyor. Esasen tarihinde fazla hoşgörülü olduğu için hep kazık yemiş bir milletiz biz. 1492’de Sultan Beyazid devrinde de durup dururken Yahudileri içimize aldık. Adamlar İspanya’dan kovulmuş. Bizi ne alakadar eder? Tarihte yabancılara kucak açma gafletine düşen başka bir millet olduğunu zannetmiyorum. Avrupalılar gittikleri uzak memleketlerde bile yerlilere düşmanca davranmış, onlara hayat hakkı tanımamışlardır. Biz ise, bizden farklı insanları getirip içimize yerleştiriyoruz. . . Bizi zayıf kılan bu garip huyumuzdur. Bu mealde herhalde siz Alman dostlarımızdan alınacak pek çok ders vardır. Ama Sultan Bayezid’ in gafleti bugün de devam ediyor, hükümetimiz Führer’in kovduğu sözde Alman ilim adamlarına iş ve aş sağlamıştır. . . . Türk gençliği bu adamlara teslim edilemez.”

<sup>130</sup> For further information read Arnold Reisman, *Turkey’s Modernization: Refuges from Nazism and Atatürk’s Vision* and Stanford J. Shaw, *Turkey and the Holocaust*.

<sup>131</sup> The Turkish government also had a cautious approach regarding the discussions about the émigrés. The parallels that Şerafeddin forms between the stories of the arrival of the Sephardic Jews to Istanbul in 1492 and the Jewish-German émigrés during the WWII is rather symbolic because the Turkish government during that time resisted linking these two events. On the contrary, the Turkish minister of education Reşit Galip formed an alternative historical analogy in that he interpreted the hiring of Jewish-German scholars as a compensation for the Byzantine Scholars who fled Istanbul after its invasion by the Ottomans in 1453. According to Kader Konuk drawing attention to the émigrés Jewishness would have meant underscoring their expulsion and their denial of full rights as German citizens. (90). She asserts, “At a time when Turkey was preoccupied with its own questions about assimilation and religious minorities, highlighting the general failure of mimetic and assimilationist projects must have seemed like a topic that was too hot to handle” (90).

Salih's one of the greatest disillusionments during this time is his realization that he has underestimated the threat posed by the Nazi Party. He discovers that Nazi Germany has no genuine interest in supporting a Turkic Federation and feels betrayed. Salih, in fact, should have known better about the racial policies of the Nazi Party, but was blinded by his Turkish nationalist fervor. It is indeed his meeting with an arrogant and insolent German spy that makes him aware of the truth. The spy tries to convince Salih that the Turks in Russia should form an alliance with the Germans: "We are fighting against a bastard nation which has been Jewified. We need heroes of pure Turkish blood" (46).<sup>132</sup> Salih in his naïveté complains to the spy that the German soldiers treat the Turkish-Russian minorities badly, and that as soon as possible a Turkish government should be established there. The spy brazenly states that Germany will never allow the establishment of a Turkish Federation, since they are not pure Aryans. He thinks that instead of supporting Turkish autonomy in Crimea, Germans should be allocated there. He adds, "We like Turks, they are a soldier nation; however, we are also aware that they are not Aryans. When we establish a new world government, everyone will have a certain responsibility and status" (47).<sup>133</sup> The spy's curiosity about Nuri Pasha (Enver's Brother), who went to Germany to negotiate the future of the Turkic people in Russia, is also symbolic. I contend that the novel implies that the Turkish government also did not rule out the idea of a utopian Turkish Federation. Although the Turkish government did not officially favor Pan-Turkism and did not want to be a part of the plans proposed by Germany, it is believed that unofficial meetings took place. Deringil states that a committee of experts on Turanian affairs had been formed that included Şükrü Yenibahçe, Nuri Paşa (Enver Paşa's brother), Professor Zeki Velidi Togan, and Memduh Şevket Esenal. However, regarding İnönü's experience in WWI, it must have been

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<sup>132</sup> "Yahudileşmiş piç bir milletle savaşıyoruz. Damarlarında saf Türk kanı olan yiğitlere ihtiyacımız var ..."

<sup>133</sup> "Biz Türkleri severiz, asker millettir; ama Aryan bir ırk olmadıklarının da farkındayız. Bizim kuracağımız dünyada herkesin belli bir yeri, bir vazifesi olacak."

unlikely that Nuri Paşa was given status as an official, since he was also exiled during Atatürk's period due to his Turanian activities. According to Koçak, these unofficial visits merely signified a “contingency plan in the event of clear German victory. This is not out of keeping with Turkish foreign policy which typically sought to cover all options” (Deringil 132).

Like many nationalists during that era, Salih underestimates the power of Hitler and his racist policies. Salih, unlike the German national socialists and ultra-Turkists, does not favor racism. For him, language, culture, and common attitudes play an important role in the consciousness of nations—otherwise how would he consider himself German? However, this does not make him innocent since he does not publicly criticize the party in their meetings. He even tries to convince himself that he serves Turkish interests in Russia rather than helping Germany. He is unable to see how the discourses of ultra-nationalism and racism that might lead to genocide overlap. Salih vacillates between the positive and negative qualities of the Nazi regime. At one instance, he is amazed at how the Germans adore Hitler like a prophet, and he feels satisfied with the country's fast economic development. At other times, however, he considers Hitler greedy and dangerous, but is convinced that he will be stopped by the Prussian army. While Annette is worried about the future of Germany and criticizes the anti-Semitic policies of the government, Salih does not understand the gravity of the problem. He believes that since most of the Jews have left the country, there is no need to worry.

### **3.4.c Salih's Confrontation with Karla: Jewish-Turkish-German Encounters**

*Alman Terbiyesi* not only treats the histories of Turks and Germans in the early twentieth century, but also integrates the traumatized voices of the German-Jews. One of the key characters in the novel is the German woman Karla, who will change Salih's opinion about the

national socialist regime. Karla is an important woman in Salih's life with whom he had a brief affair. Although Salih's wife Annette knows about their affair, she keeps her silence for a long time. However, before her death, she sends a letter to Karla advising her to escape Germany as soon as possible and live with Salih together in Istanbul. As a result, towards the end of 1942, Karla leaves Germany secretly and after a rather perilous journey arrives in Istanbul. Salih is at first shocked to see Karla worn-out and devastated. Salih can hardly believe how the sharp-tongued and strong-minded Karla looks suddenly so absent-minded, fragile, and fearful. After Karla starts talking about her difficult conditions of escape, all of a sudden she tries to portray the suffering of Jews in Germany. It becomes very difficult for her to describe the events in detail.

They don't allow anybody (the Jews) to leave Germany anymore. They gather them together and take them to unknown places. Whoever goes to these places never returns. Salih, they take these people from their homes and kill them! They have firstly denied our Germanness and then our humanity. We even do not have the worth of a fly. Believe me horrendous things are happening in Germany. Words stick in my throat. (112)<sup>134</sup>

During her stay, Karla feels guilty, since she is spending a safe time in Istanbul while most of the Jewish-Germans are suffering in inhuman conditions. She is absent-minded most of the time and falls into silence. In the face of her suffering, Salih also decides to keep silent and starts thinking about the nature of traumatic memories: "I should leave her in her own world. Immense sorrows cannot be shared easily. Especially they cannot be passed over lightly by talking. We should not deny the existence of sorrows and we should keep them in our memories" (118).<sup>135</sup> Confronting Karla's trauma and disorientation, Salih also undergoes an important transformation. He feels

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<sup>134</sup> "Almanya'dan kimseyi dışarı bırakmıyorlar artık. İnsanları toplayıp meçhul yerlere götürüyorlar. Bir giden bir daha geri dönmüyor. İnsanları evlerinden alıp ölüme götürüyorlar. Bizim ilk önce Almanlığımızı sonra da insanlığımızı reddettiler. Bir sinek kadar bile değerimiz yok artık. İnan bana, korkunç şeyler oluyor Almanya'da. Dilim varmıyor anlatmaya."

<sup>135</sup> "Onu bir süre kendi dünyasına bırakmalıyım. Büyük acılar öyle kolay paylaşılmaz. Hele lafla hiç geçiştirilemez. Onların varlığını reddetmemek, onlara içimizde تنها bir yer ayırmak zorundayız" (118).

betrayed by Germany— a country for which he was ready to die. This encounter makes Salih ponder his irresponsible complicity with the German circles and his blind attitude to the greed and inhumanity of Hitler’s groups. While engaging with the situation of the Turkish war prisoners in Germany, he has never thought about what was really happening to the German-Jews. Salih feels relieved that he does not work for the Germans anymore, but he also ironically realizes that he was forced by the Germans to quit his spy mission.

One of the questions that Karla repeatedly asks herself during her temporary residency in Istanbul is how she failed to see the Holocaust as the culmination of German anti-Semitism. While she always underscored her German and European identity and had a prejudiced attitude against the Eastern Jews and the philosophy of Martin Buber, she realizes that she was living in a world of illusion:

I don’t trust anybody. In the past, I did not believe in the concepts of homeland and nation. They did not mean anything to me. The world was my homeland and all the people were my family. Hitler’s brutality has wounded the innermost of my soul, but it has also opened up my eyes. Is he only guilty? All of Europe is guilty. You are also guilty. Whoever witnessed the events without intervening is guilty. All of Europe is replete with two-faced people. (120)<sup>136</sup>

While Karla established a cosmopolitan identity in Germany and firmly believed in the values of Enlightenment and humanism, the Holocaust has transformed her personality. After her negative experiences, she puts her trust in Zionism and cherishes a cultural and territorial form of nationalism, which she believes will be realized in Palestine. As a result, she rejects Salih’s offer to stay with him in Istanbul. She says: “At least the place where I will go is filled with the history of my ancestors and almighty grandfathers. It carries their traces in its stones and soil. . . . By

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<sup>136</sup> “Benim kimseye güvenim kalmadı. Eskiden vatan millet gibi kavramalara hiç inanmazdım. Benim için hiçbir şey ifade etmezlerdi. Yeryüzüydü benim vatanım, bütün insanlardı ailem. Hitler’in vahşeti ruhumun derinliklerine kadar yaraladı beni, ama gözlerimi de açtı. Sanki yalnız o mu? Bütün Avrupa suçlu. Sizler de suçlusunuz. Kımıldamadan seyreden herkes suçlu . . .”

looking after the traces, nurturing and watering them, maybe in the future we will also have a homeland. It is a small, but favourite corner of the world, where we can live in peace and not be despised and collected from our homes at night to be murdered” (119).<sup>137</sup> Although Salih is not really convinced of the Zionist ideal and warns Karla that the Arabs will create difficulties for them, she believes that people will be safer and happier in their own nations. She thinks that Salih is naïve to consider himself German since Germany will never consider Turks as an integral member of their culture:

You Turks are badly mistaken to believe that you are Europeans. The Europeans have not accepted us. Will they now accept you Turks wearing turbans? The image of the turban will not disappear from European imagination even if you do not wear them anymore. It exists in all those pictures in the old albums. Is it possible to erase it from the pictures and from the memory which has been formed by those pictures? . . . The boundary of Europe goes from the Balkans. Half of the Balkan nations are alienated from Europe. The border was drawn when you were expelled from the Balkans. . . . It is against you. We have lived for a thousand years in Europe. We have always been considered as Orientals and strangers. Yes, one might consider that we have laid the foundation stones of the European civilization, but they told us that there is no empty space in the constructed building. (121)<sup>138</sup>

There are two important implications in Karla’s argument. First of all, she interprets Europeans’ visualization of Turks and the Balkan nations in Orientalist terms. Karla implies that a European self-identity was created and shaped in opposition to the Ottoman-Islamic identity. Indeed, especially after the Ottoman Sultan Fatih Sultan Mehmet’s conquest of Constantinople in 1453

<sup>137</sup> “Gideceğim yerde hiç olmazsa atalarımın, ulu dedelerimin tarihi var. Taşında toprağında izleri var onların. O izlere bakarak onları sulayıp besleyip geliştirerek bizim de bir vatanımız olabilir belki gelecekte. Hor görülmediğimiz, geceleri evlerimizden toplanıp ölüme götürülmediğimiz, huzur içinde yaşayabildiğimiz ufak ama gözde bir köşesi yeryüzünün.”

<sup>138</sup> “Siz Türkler fena halde yanılıyorsunuz, Avrupalı olduğunuzu zannederek. Avrupalılar bizleri kabul etmediler. Simdi siz sarıklıları mı kabul edecekler? Sarık kafadan atılmakla yok olmaz ki. Bütün eski albümlerdeki resimlerde duruyor. Onu o resimlerden ve o resimlerin şekillendirdiği hafızadan silmek mümkün mü? . . . Avrupa’nın sınırı Balkanlar’dan geçer. Siz Türkleri Balkanlar’dan atarken çizilmiş bir sınırdır bu. Bak biz bin yıldır Avrupa’da yaşadık. . . . Hep şarklı olduk, hep yabancı kaldık. Evet, Avrupa medeniyetinin temel taşlarını biz koyduk sayılır, ama inşaatı tamamlanan binada size yer yok dediler.”

followed by Ottoman advance to Europe in the following two centuries,<sup>139</sup> the Ottoman Turk became the embodiment of Islamic East<sup>140</sup>. Ottomans were depicted in rather negative and stereotypical images in plays and art and they were approached in a fearful attitude. The images pertaining to the Turks weren't easily erased in the following centuries although the Ottoman Empire and later Turkish Republic witnessed important historical changes. Indeed, in his path breaking work *Orientalism*, Edward Said criticized Europe's unchanging prejudiced view of the Orient, which he depicted through his analysis of the literary works of mainly English and French writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. He coined the term "Orientalism," which designated 'a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the orient' and 'the occident' (2). According to Said, in Western discourse, the East (Middle East) was a construction rather than a reality. Furthermore, this body of knowledge produced by the West, in a self-referential way, endlessly asserts its power. For Said, through the citationary nature of Orientalism, the texts about the Orient became a follow-up of each other that neglected Oriental sources. He claims: "Every writer on the Orient assumes some Oriental precedent some previous knowledge of the Orient, to which he refers and on which he relies" (20).

Karla also connects this Orientalist imagery with the depiction of Jews in Europe, and forms continuities between the prejudices against the Turks (Muslims) and Jews. While Said did

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<sup>139</sup> Ottomans captured Athens in 1458 and Bosnia in 1464. In 1474 a peace treaty was signed between the Ottoman Empire and Venice. As a result, Negroponte and much of the Adriatic Coastline were gained. Furthermore, in 1480 Ottomans conquered and held the Italian city of Otranto. The city was kept for a year. With the accession of Suleyman the Magnificent to the throne (1520), Belgrade (1521) and Rhodes (1522) capitulated to the Turks. Vienna was besieged for the first in 1520, but the mission was unsuccessful. These Ottoman advances caused panic in the European population.

<sup>140</sup> Kalmar and Penslar suggest a periodization of orientalism and delineate four important periods in Europe's relationship with Islam and the Middle East. The first one is the "Saracen Period", when the Islamic enemy was referred as the Saracen. The "Turkish Period" lasted from the late fourteenth until the late eighteenth century. The prototypical Muslim was considered the Turk during this era. The third is the "Arab Period," which started in the late eighteenth century and lasted until the 1960s. This period was followed by the "Postcolonial Period" (xxiii).

not focus on the historical depiction of European Jews, Ivan Davidson Kalmar and Derek J. Penslar, in their edited volume *Orientalism and the Jews* (2005), portray how throughout European history the Western perception of the Muslim Orient has been formed in conjunction with the Western perception of Jewish people. They indicate the urgency of forming connections between Jewish history and Orientalism; however, this also necessitates a broader imagination of Orientalism beyond its relationship to colonization.<sup>141</sup> The lack of interest in “Jewish Orientalism” can be connected to the twentieth century image of the Israeli Jews as Western colonizers in the Middle East. While the connections between Zionism and colonialism cannot be denied<sup>142</sup>, Kalmar and Penslar also argue that one of the main reasons for the emergence of Zionism was the racist and cultural discrimination of Jews in Europe. As a result, it is important for them to trace the connections and possible overlaps between the prejudiced, Orientalist images of Arabs and Jews in Europe. For Kalmar and Penslar, Jews in Europe have at times been perceived as both occidental and oriental. The perception of Jews as ancient Israelites and as the former residents of biblical lands resulted in their orientalist imagination. While this image can be traced back to the Medieval Ages, it became more common with the prominence of Orientalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries- the period when imperialism and anti-Semitism were born. Especially by the end of the eighteenth century, scientific and linguistic studies tried to prove the superiority of the Aryan race. In these studies: “The Christian West was the domain of the Indo-European races, while the Semitic “Arabians” inhabited the Muslim

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<sup>141</sup> Kalmar and Penslar point out that in the twenty first century many studies have been conducted to broaden the definition of Said’s Orientalism. “Many writers have defined Orientalism not by its formal content as a set of Western representations of the Orient, but in functionalist terms as a discourse of western domination. The tendency has been to minimize differences and maximize similarities and historical connections between examples of Western domination over various parts of the world” (xvii). Considering Orientalism not only in connection to colonial and imperial interests but in a broader question of Europe’s relationship to the “other” can open up the discussion about Jewish Orientalism. Furthermore, the Christian foundations and undertones in the discourse of Orientalism which created “an other” of Islam and Judaism should also be taken into account.

<sup>142</sup> Edward Said in his book *The Question of Palestine* lays bare the similarities between the European colonialist project and Zionism. Read chapter two: “Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims.”



Orient. The Jews, the Asiatics of Europe, straddled both worlds but were understood by everyone to stem from ‘oriental stock’” (Kalmar and Pennslar xxix). The response of the European Jews (from the late eighteenth century until the early twentieth century) to Orientalism can be grouped into three different ways. Some categorically rejected it, which was common among the Liberal and Orthodox Jews. A second response was to view themselves as representatives of an ideal, romanticized Orient<sup>143</sup>. Thirdly, some supported the idea of traditional Jews as Oriental, whereas modernized Jews represented Europeans<sup>144</sup>. German anti-Semitism often utilized the image of the Oriental Jew, especially in the nineteenth century. The very term anti-Semitism, coined by Wilhelm Marr in 1879, underscored the Oriental origin of Jews. For instance, the historian von Treitschke attacked the Jewish-German historian Heinrich Graetz as “an oriental who neither does nor wants to understand our people” (Kalmar, “Jewish Orientalism” 313). The Berlin lawyer Karl W.F. Grattenauer exclaimed in his widely-read pamphlet “Wider die Juden” (1803), that the cultured Jews “may talk about Goethe, Schiller, and Schlegel all they please; they nonetheless remain an alien Asiatic people” (Mendes- Flohr 81).

While Karla considers Jews and Turks victims of these stereotypical representations, in Jerusalem she feels like the roles have changed. She gets disillusioned when the Jewish settlers treat Arabs with a condescending, superior attitude like western colonizers. In her letter to Salih tha he never receives, there is a mood of disillusionment and resentment toward Zionist policies. She says:

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<sup>143</sup> Indeed, the idea of the noble Jew can also be connected to the idea of the Oriental Jew. In literature many noble Jews were depicted as Orientals by actual residence or their dresses. (Kalmar “Jewish Orientalism” 309). The noble Jew and the noble Oriental were both Enlightenment characters preaching the same views. However, the noble oriental was a ruler whereas the noble Jews was a banker. The first positive evaluation of the Jewish Oriental was in *Nathan der Weise*.

<sup>144</sup> The perception of Western Ashkenazic Jews of the Eastern Jews as Orientals might also be seen as a Jew-toward-Jew Orientalism as pointed by Kalmar and Pennslar.

These places also have their owners and it would be wrong to claim that we treat them in a good way. We look down on them and because of their shabby look we disparage them. We buy their lands for meager amount of money. Is this supposed to be idealism and civilization? We shouldn't have become the toys of the greedy Western world in the Arabian dessert. I wish the people here would not be so lazy and illiterate. (147)<sup>145</sup>

For Karla, the Zionist ideology in Palestine can be considered a new form of colonization. The rights of the Palestinians to the land are disregarded and they are treated as the unwanted natives. While she likens herself to the Western colonizer in the American-Indian movies, she also is unable to transcend her Orientalist imagination of Palestinians as lazy and illiterate. Edward Said, in his article "Zionism in the Standpoint of its Victims," underscores the continuities between the ideology of Western imperialism, colonization, and Zionism. One of the overarching constituents of this ideology is either the invisibility or the negative characteristics of the Palestinians, while the Jews are depicted as propagators of civilization and agricultural and technological progress in the region. Said states, "Zionism essentially saw Palestine as the European imperialist did, as an empty territory paradoxically "filled" with ignoble or perhaps even dispensable natives. . . . Zionism . . . banked on the fact that Palestine was actually peopled not by an advanced but by a backward people, over which it ought to be dominant" (81-82).

While Karla is alienated by the ultra-nationalist policies of the Jewish settlers, she develops an interest in Martin Buber's (1878-1965) teachings. Karla supports Buber's ideas of a peaceful Jewish nationalism in the region and wants to become a member of his party. Indeed, Buber supported the idea of Zionism, but rejected the idea of a militaristic Jewish state. Rather, he opted for a bi-national Palestine. Buber worked all his life to defend the rights of Israeli

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<sup>145</sup> "Buraların da sahipleri var. Ve bizim onlara çok iyi davradığımız söylenemez. Tepeden bakıyoruz onlara, o pejmürde hallerine bakıp hor görüyoruz onları. . . . Medenilik, idealistlik bu mu? Tamahkar Garp aleminin Arap çöllerine uzanan kirli parmağı olmamalıydık halbuki. . . . Buranın insanları da bu kadar tembel ve cahil olmasalardı keşke."

Arabs, and urged for a genuine dialogue. At the Twelfth Zionist Congress, he invited the people to regard the moral and spiritual integrity of Zionism, and take into consideration the present realities such as the Arab population's opposition to Zionism. For him, there were two kinds of nationalism: the modern one was oriented toward forming a "powerful and mechanized" state apparatus, rather than forming a new creative order. For Buber modern nationalism's "challenging will-to-power" represented "group-egoism" and "evil hysteria" (50). Buber understood the awakening of nationalism as a response to a fundamental lack of unity, freedom, and territorial security. However, if this idea transgresses its lawful limits and does more than overcome deficiency," it commits hubris and becomes presumptuous" (52). He claims, "National ideology, or spirit of nationalism, is fruitful just so long as it does not make the nation an end in itself; just so long it remembers its part in the building of a greater structure" (54). Otherwise, this nationalism will annul itself, grow sterile, and prevent the formation of supra-national ethnical demands. Karla becomes hopeful when Buber establishes a new party in Israel. Every Saturday she goes to the German synagogue with her friends to listen to his talks, which are followed by Buber's house gatherings. Karla lives out her life in Jerusalem apprehensively, working twelve hours a day in the fields. The future does not promise hope in the midst of Arab-Israeli conflict and the orthodoxy of her Jewish compatriots. However, Karla is determined to stay in Israel and do her best to change the mind of the people.

Overall, I contend that Salih undergoes a transformation towards the end of the novel. At the beginning, his attachment to the German nation and Pan-Turkish nationalism make him blind to the suffering and segregation of the Jewish population. Although at a certain moment in the novel Salih states that he has always been on the side of the repressed, his acts contradict his statement. It can be stated that in Salih's case, his exilic situation does not result in his defense of

minority rights. He still thinks in concentric circles and can only affiliate himself with the causes of the people who are closer to him in culture, blood, or mindset. Although Salih disaffiliates himself from a territorial or racial form of nationalism, he cherishes the idea of a cultural and linguistic nationalism, which is based on the common will of the people and the sharing of traditions, customs, and language. This belief does allow for a civic form of nation where different minorities can exist together with their differences. As a result, Salih tries to assimilate himself to German society with body and soul by following ritualized practices and minimizing the impact of his Turkish identity. In the end, however, he confronts the bitter reality that to the Nazi regime he is just an outsider. It is through his wife Annette and his ex-lover Karla, strong women acting with resolution, and also through his writing process that Salih becomes aware of the illusionary world he embraced. He can not nostalgically yearn for the past anymore or follow a utopic dream in his hiding place. He has to face the inhuman, brutal reality of the atrocities of WWII and chose a new course of life and a new identity. Salih's final resolution is to lead a new life in Istanbul and try become a member of its cosmopolitan population.

## CHAPTER 4

### Hussain Al-Mozany's *Der Marschländer: Bagdad, Beirut, Berlin*

#### 4.1 Introduction

Hussain Al-Mozany, who in his literary works negotiates the exilic experiences of Iraqi heritage minorities in the Middle East and Germany, can be considered as one of the most important German-language authors of Middle Eastern origin. Inspired by the works of Germany's influential writers such as Kafka, Rilke, and Musil, one of Al-Mozany's overarching aims has been to awaken a self-questioning spirit in his readers. In an online essay entitled "Literat im Sinne der Spitzhacke", Al-Mozany succinctly delineates his mission as a writer: "Während sich die Politiker dadurch auszeichnen, Grenzen zwischen Ländern und Nationen zu ziehen, bemüht sich der Literat, gerade diese Grenzen zu sprengen. Ich bin Literat im Sinne der Spitzhacke, die die Hinterlassenschaft der Politik rücksichtslos zertrümmert. Ich will Freiräume schaffen, ich will Brücken schlagen, keine Barrieren, keine Verständnislosigkeit" (n.p.). In his writings, Al-Mozany not only strives to transcend the prejudices against ethnic, religious, gender, and national affiliations in the Middle East and Germany, but he also challenges the narrow aesthetic and political categorizations of non-German heritage writers in Germany. For Al-Mozany, national, geographical, and linguistic affiliations should not be criteria upon which to judge a writer's success. He says, "Dass ich als Iraker, Araber, Muslim, Schiit geboren bin, habe ich nicht bestimmt, aber ein deutscher Schriftsteller zu sein, ohne den deutschen Nationalstolz zu hegen, das wollte ich allemal" (*Parallelwelten* 88). By designating himself as a German writer, Al-Mozany emphasizes his intimate connection to the family of influential German thinkers and

writers who formed a transformation in German and European consciousness. I argue that one of Al-Mozany's important missions is to create a productive and open-ended dialogue within and between German, European, and Middle Eastern cultural spheres. Al-Mozany has published three successful German novels so far, which portray the traumatic experiences of the Iraqi minorities in the Middle East and Germany in the 1980s and 1990s. In this chapter I offer a close analysis of Al-Mozany's first German novel *Der Marschländer* (*The Marsh-Dweller* 1999). By focusing on the experiences of the Iraqi heritage protagonist, Alwan, in Iraq, Lebanon, and Germany, I will depict the ways Al-Mozany forms aesthetic and cultural interventions to the German and Iraqi nationalist imagination and collective memory. Furthermore, I will analyse how the protagonist portrays his exilic consciousness, whether his perception of exile changes over time, and how this affects his outlook on the nation.

Having encountered political, social, and cultural barriers in Iraq in the turbulent period of the 1970s, Hussain Al-Mozany embraced his writing career as a way to transcend imprisoning categorizations and beliefs. Born in Amarah, Southern Iraq (The Iraqi Marshland) to a Shiite family,<sup>146</sup> Al-Mozany grew up in Baghdad, where he developed an interest in Marxism. After leaving Iraq in 1978 as a result of political turbulence, Al-Mozany worked for two years as a journalist in Beirut and read all the literary works censored in Iraq, which opened up new horizons for him<sup>147</sup>. During this time, Al-Mozany began to publish his first literary works in Palestinian-Lebanese newspapers and magazines. Nevertheless, because of the mounting

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<sup>146</sup> In an article entitled "Wasserwiege der Zivilisationen" Al-Mozany describes in detail the rich cultural, historical, and religious heritage of the Iraqi Marshland and also mourns the draining of the marshes during Saddam's regime. This process resulted in the destruction of the eco system, and also triggered the immigration of the Marsh Arabs, who were robbed of the livelihood. (*Parallelwelten* 43-54)

<sup>147</sup> Not only did Al-Mozany read the works of the famous Syrian poet Adonis and the Iraqi exile poet Mudaffar an-Nu'ab in Beirut, but also the translations of the works of Henry Miller, Arthur Rimbaud, Jean-Paul Sartre, Marcel Proust, Hermann Hesse, and Thomas Mann.

atrocities of the Lebanese Civil War, Al-Mozany decided to leave Lebanon.<sup>148</sup> After arriving to Germany in 1980, Al-Mozany's foremost goal became the mastery of German, which process he defines as a "sacrifice of his mother tongue."<sup>149</sup> Al-Mozany studied Arabic Studies, Islamic Studies, Germanic Studies, and journalism at the University of Münster. He would go on to teach at the same university and at other language institutes between the years 1993 and 1998. While he published essays and literary pieces in Arabic at the beginning of his career,<sup>150</sup> Al-Mozany also translated the important literary works of Grass, Musil, and Rilke into Arabic.<sup>151</sup>

Al-Mozany's years of exile in Germany transformed both his writing career and his outlook on life. In Al-Mozany's words, "In Deutschland angekommen, erfuhr auch das Schreiben eine Wendung, und was einst eine Art Vision begonnen hatte, wurde nun zu einer alltäglichen Berufung. Das Schreiben als Stütze und Beschützer vor der Fremde und der Vereinsamung" (*Parallelwelten* 135). The threatening cultural and linguistic alienation that he experienced in his initial years in Germany began slowly to fade away. Not only did he improve his skills in critical self-reflection, but he also became a dedicated fighter for his ideals.<sup>152</sup> Disregarding the importance of ethnic, religious, and national attachments, Al-Mozany formed cosmopolitan affiliations with German-heritage writers and philosophers who fostered in him a

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<sup>148</sup> In Al-Mozany's words, "Plötzlich erschien uns unser bisheriges Leben lediglich als Vorspiel für das, was wir nun im Exil erlebten. Zerstreut, jeder unter einem fremden Stern, . . . standen wir schutzlos da, jeglicher Art von Verdächtigung, Anfeindung und Bedürftigkeit ausgesetzt, sogar der physischen Liquidierung durch den irakischen Geheimdienst oder durch radikale arabische Organisationen" (*Parallelwelten* 78).

<sup>149</sup> Al-Mozany's states, "Immer mehr ergriff nun die fremde Sprache von mir Besitz und verdrängte meine alte Sprache, Stück für Stück, ein eigenartiger Vorgang sinnlich-ästhetischer Verschmelzung fremder und einheimischer Synästhesien" (*Parallelwelten* 15).

<sup>150</sup> In 1996, Al-Mozany's first collection of Arabic stories, whose German title is *Herbst der Städte*, was published by Al-Kamel-Verlag. In 2004, Al-Mozany's second collection of Arabic stories entitled *Wächter des Verborgenen Imams* was published.

<sup>151</sup> Some of the important German works that Al-Mozany translated into Arabic are Nicolas Born's *Die Fälschung*, Günter Grass' *Die Blechtrommel*, Robert Musil's *Drei Frauen* and Rainer Maria Rilke's *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*.

<sup>152</sup> He his words: "In Deutschland habe ich gelernt, die Gegenstände, die Erlebnisse immer gegeneinander zu stellen, um sie klarer nachzuvollziehen. . . . Der Lernprozess ist meiner Überzeugung nach immer eine Gegenüberstellung, im Kern ein Vergleich; dann entsteht die Komposition" (*Parallelwelten* 80).

self-questioning spirit. In his article “Heimat aus Wörtern” Al-Mozany states, “Ich bin kein Mensch, der seine Moral aus Paragraphen bezieht, sondern ein in jeder Hinsicht überzeugter Demokrat, der sein Demokratieverständnis in den Dialogen und lyrischen Grundsätzen Nietzsches, Thomas Manns, Musils, Rilkes und Kafkas reflektiert sieht” (*Parallelwelten* 87).<sup>153</sup>

In 1999, Al-Mozany published his first German novel, *Der Marschländer*. In 2003 he was awarded the prestigious Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Preis for his second novel, *Mansur oder der Duft des Abendlandes* (2002) in which he parodies the ethno-cultural understanding of the German citizenship law prior to the year 2000. In the novel, Al-Mozany focuses on the life of Mansur, an Iraqi man in Germany and portrays his tragicomic application for German citizenship. His third novel, *Das Geständnis des Fleischhauers* followed in 2007, in which he thematized the Iraqi-German protagonist’s unsuccessful return Sirhan from Germany to Egypt, where he is interrogated and tortured by the Egyptian secret service. When Sirhan, the protagonist, returns to Germany, he becomes a cold-blooded murderer and kills his German boss. Al-Mozany’s German novels share thematic and structural similarities in that they focus on the identity dilemmas of exilic Iraqi males in their home country, the Middle East, and Germany as a result of their social, cultural, and religious discrimination. Cultural hybridity does not always empower the protagonists and Al-Mozany interrogates this idea in his novels.

Narrated from a third person-perspective with a narrow focus on the inner world of the Southern Iraqi, male protagonist Alwan, *Der Marschländer* is based on his quest for self-understanding as an exile. The novel comprises the time period from the late 1950s to the beginning of the 1990s and focuses on Alwan’s movements from the Southern Iraqi Marshlands

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<sup>153</sup> According to Al-Mozany none of the hunted and exiled German writers emphasized their primary identity as Christians, Jews, or Atheists. Rather, they considered themselves as German speaking writers and artists, who shared a common cultural heritage.



to Baghdad, Beirut, East Berlin, and finally Hilter, West Germany. While the first six chapters focus on Alwan's initial experiences in East Berlin and Hilter as an asylum seeker, in the next thirteen chapters the narrator engages with Alwan's childhood, adolescence, and adult experiences in Iraq and Lebanon. The remaining chapters deal with Alwan's residency period in Hilter until his suicide. Born in 1958 to Shiite parents, who are members of one of the Marsh Arab tribes, Alwan not only witnesses their agonizing minority status in Iraq, but also the constant strife between the Sunni and Shiite sects of Islam. His alienation intensifies with his family's immigration to Baghdad, where he faces segregation and stereotyping because of his southern accent and poverty. In his adolescence, Alwan develops an interest in Marxism and becomes a member of the Iraqi Communist Party. However, as a result of the Iraqi Communist Party's partnership with the Baath party and the torture and murder of his friends and acquaintances, Alwan loses his faith in nationalism and Marxist ideals. When the Iran-Iraq War starts, Alwan leaves the country illegally in 1980, since he does not want to fight as a soldier. Alwan decides to stay for some time in Beirut, which has been utterly destroyed in the Lebanese Civil War. In Beirut, Alwan first searches for his missing friend Muhammad Karim in the headquarters of various leftist groups quarters and starts working involuntarily as an editor of a journal published by "The Democratic Front for the Freedom of Palestine". In the light of the mass murders during the civil war, Alwan's depression and melancholia intensifies. Finally, he decides to start a new life in East Germany and enters the country with a fake Yemeni passport in 1982.

After his arrival in East Berlin as an asylum seeker, Alwan becomes quickly disillusioned with the society and decides to move to West Germany. One of the important factors in Alwan's disappointment is the reluctance of the East Germans and his socialist compatriots to help him.

After his temporary residency in an asylum center in the Federal Republic, Alwan is transferred to the small town of Hilter in the Teutoburg Forest. There Alwan suffers physical and spiritual imprisonment since he is not allowed to work or leave the town. Notwithstanding his political and cultural discrimination in the Federal Republic, Alwan is determined to master the language and gain a critical understanding of German historical, national, and cultural heritage. Alwan's unsuccessful communication attempts with the Hilterian community, his encounter with Germans in the nearby big city who either assume him to be either Jewish or anti-Semitic, and his discussions with his lonely and disillusioned countrymen result in his complex engagements with romantic nationalism and the memory of the Holocaust. In the next five years of his residence, Alwan develops a traumatic psychological disorder because of the unfriendliness of the society and the difficult circumstances of his asylum status. The condescension and ridicule of his German girlfriend and her family also contribute to his loss of self-esteem. In his spiritual loneliness, his traumatic memories of Iraq and Lebanon overburden Alwan day by day, leading to his guilt. When Germany is reunified, Alwan cannot share the happiness of the crowds since he feels spiritually empty. In the end, Alwan commits suicide and is buried in Germany. Ironically, only Alwan's death body attracts the attention of his acquaintances who all come to the funeral.

## **4.2 Exile and Identity**

In this chapter, I will focus how the novel portrays Alwan's exilic consciousness and his relationship to language. One of the novel's important qualities is the shifting and performative use of language in portraying Alwan's exilic identity. With every new experience, travel and movement, Alwan's perception of both his identity and language transforms itself. Furthermore, in order to make Alwan's exilic experiences more approachable to German audiences, Al-

Mozany establishes an aesthetic and cultural open-ended dialogue with Kafka and his fragmented novel *Der Prozess*—one of the most enigmatic and renowned works of the modernist period. Being familiar with Kafka's works, Alwan feels especially connected to the fate of the protagonist, Joseph K., and attempts to learn German through translating this book, which also indicates his introduction to the German language through Kafka.

In *Der Marschländer*, the third person narrator, who becomes the mouthpiece for Alwan's thoughts and feelings, cannot name and describe him in fixed language. It seems that the narrator's language mirrors Alwan's fluctuating inner world. Alwan resists national, religious, and ethnic affiliations, but can also not survive as a free-floating individual bereft of affiliations. Alwan even refrains from using his real name Abbas, which means "lion" in Arabic, because it reminds him of one of the most tragic events in Islamic history. His name was given to him by the Sheik of his tribe, because it forms an association to Imam Hussein's<sup>154</sup> valiant half brother Abbas, killed during the Battle of Karbala (680). The war was a watershed in Islamic history since Muslims divided into two sects: Sunnis and Shiites. Among the Marsh Arab tribes, Abbas especially was considered one of the most valiant figures in Shiite history. Alwan is reluctant to mirror the identity of a valiant Shiite warrior, since he considers religions as false ideologies that breed turmoil and hatred among people. This is also reflected by the absence of Alwan's father's name in the novel, which depicts his denial to inherit the patriarchal, masculine codes of his society. While during his illegal escape from Iraq Alwan uses the name Hassan, later on he prefers to use the code name Alwan. Depending on its spelling and pronunciation, the name Hassan might have two contradictory meanings. The more common spelling Hasan means "the good" and "handsome"; on the other hand Hassān means "doer of good". I assume that

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<sup>154</sup> Hussein was the grandson of Prophet Muhammad and the son of the last Caliph Ali.

because Al-Mozany utilizes the double “s” he means to imply the second meaning of the word, which also reflects Alwan’s mentality. The name Alwan might also have two meanings depending on its spelling and pronunciation. Alwan may be understood as “color”, but if it is written as ‘Alwan, it might point to a person who is higher than others in rank, social status or manners. What is also interesting, however, is the Teutonic meaning of the name: “noble friend”. As a result, I contend that while the second meaning of the name might signify Alwan’s unconscious wish to have a higher social status in life, its Teutonic meaning indicates Alwan’s trustworthiness as a friend. Alwan’s relentless search for his missing friend in Lebanon signifies this quality in him. Moreover, the name might also underscore Alwan’s humanistic and cosmopolitan values, which the people around him fail to perceive.

In his dialogues with Germans and his fellow countrymen, Alwan foregrounds his attachments to the Southern Marshlands rather than solely defining himself as an Iraqi citizen, also preferring to say that he comes from Mesopotamia by mentioning the region’s multi-ethnic and –religious heritage. His shifting understanding of his exilic identity becomes apparent in the language of the narrator, who calls him “Südmesopotamier nomadischer Abstammung” (3), “der Orientale” (4), “der Sumpfländer” (8), “ein heimgesuchter Niemand” (26), “der Flüchtling” (112), “Fremder” (112, 184), and “besiegter Araber” (184). Alwan, on the other hand, feels like a “Marschbewohner” (4), Romantiker” (50) “Verletzter Vogel” (90), “glühende, alles verbrennende Haßkugel” (91), “gelähmter Taugenichts” (112), as well as a “fremde Krüppel” (148). Some of these identity attributes are also the result of Alwan’s internalization of the projection of others. As opposed to his multivalent and shifting understanding of his identity and attachments, the insistence of those with whom Alwan holds conversations to categorize him becomes imprisoning and suffocating. For the Iraqi government he is a threatening Shiite and

Communist, for the Lebanese, an Iraqi foreigner; and in West Germany he is a Muslim Arab asylum seeker. In the face of these prejudices, Alwan's positive view of his exilic experiences transforms to desperation and anxiety, which is signaled by the choice of words that describe his inner self. Alwan feels "traurig" (5), "verloren" (5), "einsam" (8), "fremd" (112), "müde" (119), "beängstigende Leere" (151), and "niedergeschlagen, verloren" (184). He has a tendency "zur Melancholie und zur unerklärlichen Einsamkeit" (29) and is troubled by "das starke Gefühl der Unzufriedenheit und inneren Unruhe" (42). While his exilic outlook makes Alwan stronger, enabling him question the truth claims of nationalist discourses, in complicity with racism, ethno-centricism and religious fundamentalism, he also becomes hopeless when he cannot fight against stereotypes.

For Alwan, exile becomes a perpetual "mind of winter" (Said, "Reflections on Exile" 186). People neither want to understand his reality from a multi-dimensional perspective, nor are his political rights recognized in Germany. Being denied the basic right to find a decent job, and prohibited from leaving the town, Alwan feels useless and imprisoned. While in the beginning, Germany promised hope for a second *Heimat* it slowly becomes ". . . eine sonderbare Zwischenwelt, in der man für das unerträgliche Nichts-tun bezahlt wurde, auch wenn man sich gelegentlich wie ein gelähmter Taugenichts fühlte . Er hatte sich schon oft fremd gefühlt, aber hier verstärkte sich dieses Gefühl noch. . ." (112). In his loneliness Alwan begins to think more about the war in Iraq, his mother, and his traumatic past, which overburdens him. When his girlfriend's family treats him with condescension and prejudice, and finally his girlfriend leaves him, Alwan experiences psychological trauma. He despairs more and more each day: "Ein Eindringling bist du, Alwan, Eindringling . . . ein Heimatloser, ein wesenloser Marschländer, der aus dem Nichts gekommen ist und schnurstracks ins an Nichts zurücksteuert . . ." (173).

Another symbolic moment in the novel occurs when Alwan connects his exilic consciousness to the experiences of Joseph K. in Kafka's *Der Prozess* (*The Trial*). Having immersed himself in the works of influential German thinkers in Iraq, one of Alwan's first aims in the Federal Republic is to learn German and expand his reading knowledge. After all, it is not the prospect of finding a well-paid job and having a luxurious life that led Alwan to the Federal Republic, but his yearning for knowledge and education: "Dies und nichts anderes war es, was ihn hierher getrieben hatte. Bildung! Ein geschliffener Geist! Ein neues Bewußtsein! Nicht kämpfen wollte er in Wirklichkeit, sondern sprechen . . ." (17). As a result, after he receives his meager weekly payment from the local authorities, one of the very first places Alwan visits in Hilter is a bookstore. In one of the corners of the bookstore, he comes across a small table filled with books by Kafka. Being familiar with Kafka's works, Alwan picks up one of the novels, whose cover picture attracts his attention: "Das Titelbild zeigte einen langen hageren Mann, schwarzgekleidet, mit einem kleinen Buckel, der seinen Kopf auf einen Tisch gelegt hatte und ihn dabei verzweifelt mit seinen Händen festhielt" (16). This gloomy picture of the desperate man, attired in black, whose hunchback might metaphorically depict his psychological burden, leaves a strong impression on Alwan. Trying to ascertain which work this might be, Alwan judges the book by its weight. In this moment of desperation Alwan hopes that a miracle would happen, a smaller version of the "Babylonian Sprachverwirrung" (17) in that he can understand the novel clearly. Determined to read the book in German through translation, Alwan also decides to steal a dictionary since he does not have enough money to buy both of the books. Alwan thinks, "Es ist wohl legitim . . . für einen guten Zweck etwas Unmoralisches getan zu haben," (18). Back in his room, after translating the beginning sentence word by word,<sup>155</sup> Alwan

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<sup>155</sup> The beginning of the novel is as follows: "Jemand musste mußte Josef K. verleumdet haben, denn ohne daß er Böses getan hätte, wurde er eines Morgens verhaftet" (Kafka, *Der Prozess* 18),

finds out that the book is Kafka's *Der Prozess*. This initial sentence enlivens Alwan's memories of the first time he read the novel. *Der Prozess* focuses on the protagonist Joseph K.'s unending quest to learn the reasons behind his arrest and his numerous unsuccessful attempts to find insiders from the court system, which leads to his ultimate execution.

Alwan's interpretation of the novel is based on a scrupulous and uncontrollable force, embodied by the court, which causes the death of Joseph K.: "Verhaftet wurde der arme Josef K. von der unsichtbaren Übermacht des durcheinandergewürfelten Systems. Damals schon kannte man die Schuldlosigkeit; aber man wollte sie nicht wahrhaben, es halfen auch nicht die verzweifelten Hilfsrufe" (18). Alwan knows that it would be naïve to insist upon Joseph K.'s innocence since human beings cannot be perfect; however the protagonist does not deserve death for his offence. Alwan seems to feel a strong connection to the protagonist because he believes that there are overlaps between their experiences. Having been haunted by the dictatorial Baathist Regime and the military groups in Iraq and Lebanon, Alwan has experienced constant fear and alienation. He thinks: "Du wirst weggejagt, vertrieben, ausgehungert, du wirst verhaftet, gekränkt, erhängt, du wirst erschlagen, für dumm verkauft, klein zerhackt, ohn zu wissen, warum, und wenn du es weißt, um so schlimmer, denn dies bedeutet, du hast es verdient" (18). While Alwan had freedom of movement in his country, he always had to be careful about discussing his ideas in public. The government, through its invisible spy network, caused fear and alienation.

Alwan's political interpretation of the novel carries similarities to some of the Arab intellectuals who were involved with Kafka's works. Hussain Al-Mozany in his interview with Mona Naggari also highlights that in Kafka's reception the political instability of the Middle East plays an important role: "Diese gespenstische Situation der Araber, die Unsicherheit und Unfreiheit, die ständige Angst vor der unsichtbaren Macht der Behörden, vor den

Sicherheitsorganen der arabischen Staaten— das alles beherrscht die arabische Szene seit Jahrzehnten. Durch diese Atmosphäre fühlen sich die Menschen durch Kafka verstanden” (“War Goethe Muslim?” n.p). Indeed, this is also highlighted by Atef Botros, who in his innovative book *Kafka: Ein Jüdischer Schriftsteller aus Arabischer Sicht*, portrays in detail the reception of Kafka among Arab intellectuals from the early to the late twentieth century. Botros delineates three important phases in the reception of Kafka. The first phase started among the francophone elite in Egypt, the most famous of whom is Georges Henein, who published numerous articles on Kafka between 1939 and 1963. Later, Tāhā Husain’s essays in 1946/47 on Kafka resulted in a far-reaching circulation of Kafka’s works. In Kafka’s early reception phase, his individual works such as das “Der Landarzt” (1947), and *die Verwandlung* (1957) were translated from an already translated version. A second phase in Kafka’s reception started with the literary scholar Nabīna Ibrāhīm’s 1959 translation of excerpts from “Das Urteil” from German into Arabic. The distinguished translator during this period was the Egyptian Germanist Mustafa Maher, who translated *Der Prozess* (1968) and *Das Schloß* (1971) from German. It was during this second phase (1959-1971) that interest in Kafka’s works skyrocketed. Many writers who wanted to distance themselves from socialist realism became inspired by Kafka’s works. Botros states,

Geschichtlich entspricht dieser Linie einer Zeit des Umbruchs in der arabischen Welt, in der die Intellektuellen nach dem Dekolonisierungsprozess unter ihren eigenen repressive Regimen in eine neue Krise geraten. Diese Erfahrung kulminiert im Moment der Niederlage von 1967 und manifestiert sich in der literarischen Bewegung der Sechziger. Vor diesem Hintergrund rückt die Literatur der ‘Entfremdung’ sowie des ‘Absurden’ ins Zentrum des Interesses. Die arabischen Intellektuellen entdecken in Sartre, Camus und Kafka Möglichkeiten und Formen des literarischen Ausdrucks, die ihnen helfen, ihre Komplexe Situation zum Ausdruck zu bringen. (227).

In the seventies, however, Arabic writers politicized Kafka’s reception, and mainly discussed if Kafka was a Zionist author. The first dispute about Kafka’s Zionism was initiated by the article



“War Kafka ein Zionist?”, written by the Iraqi author Anwar al-Ghassāni. He was critical of Arab intellectuals who did not pay attention to Kafka’s Jewish roots or his diaries. As a result, two intellectual camps emerged that tried to prove either Kafka’s anti-Zionism or his support for the Zionists. These intellectuals channeled their interests toward Kafka’s biography, personal writings, and also his story “Schakale und Araber.”

One of the earlier important Kafka critics was the Egyptian writer and pioneer of the Surrealist movement, Georges Henein, whose interpretation of the novel overlaps with Alwan. Henein published two important articles about the works of Kafka. The first one was published in the second and last volume of the journal *Clé* in 1939 and was called “Franz Kafka, *Le Château*”. In this article Henein formed analogies between the novels *Der Prozess* and *Das Schloß*. The second article of Henein was published in 1963 in the journal *Jeune Afrique* and was entitled “Kafka oder der Schwarze Wegweiser”. In his first article, Henein underscores that the travels of the protagonists both in *Der Prozess* and *Das Schloß* have no productive outcome and their search has no definite purpose. Henein portrays the protagonists of *Der Prozess* and *Das Schloß* as weak individuals, who decide to fight against an arbitrary and unknown source of power, ultimately destroying them. In his analysis of Joseph K. he states, “Umso mehr er kämpfte, umso starker wird ihm die Nichtigkeit seines Kampfes bewusst” (Botros 76). While the secret that Joseph K. is searching for implies the self-evidence of his guilt, which he recognizes without knowing what it could be, he also realizes that this secret is irreplaceable. For Henein, the power or rather the justice system against which Joseph K. fights is “so hoch, dass es nie möglich sein wird, sie zu treffen” (Botros 76). Henein names this system as a “große Mechanik” which is “taub gegenüber jeglichem menschlichen Verstand, dieser riesige Verwaltungsapparat einer einzelnen und verzehrenden Laune” (Botros 76). As a result, for Henein, Joseph K. does

not really fail morally. In his second article, Henein depicts Kafka's texts as foreshadowing for the catastrophic consequences of modernity, which found their culmination in the Holocaust and the bombing of Hiroshima. Henein designates Kafka as an exodus writer and "schwarze Reiseführer der Gesellschaft" (Botros 87), believing that his works were "verfluchte Komödie unserer Zeit" (230). He states, "Der Mensch ist unbeweglich kaltgestellt in der Verderbtheit und korrumpiert in seiner Substanz. . . . Es gibt kein Heil. Der Himmel ist geschlossen, die Meister bewahren ihre Geheimnisse. Vielleicht heucheln sie nur, ein Geheimnis zu haben" (Botros 89).

Alwan's interpretation of the novel also carries similarities with thinkers such as Milan Kundera. For Milan Kundera, there are facets of modern history that produce Kafkan (Kafkaesque) in broad social dimension: "the progressive concentration of power, tending to deify itself; the bureaucratization of social activity that turns all institutions into boundless labyrinths; and the resulting depersonalization of the individual" (93). According to him, totalitarian states that embrace these qualities have formed a close relationship between Kafka's novels and real life. Although Kundera is not convinced about the apparent political interests of Kafka, he wonders why Kafka's works are banned in a large part of the world. The answer is Kafka's great vision in depicting the psychological, micro-social practices regulating private life, which are indivisible from the regulatory principles of political totalitarianism. Kundera asserts that by seeing through the mechanisms, in his novels Kafka performed the "the hypnotic eye of power, the desperate search for one's offence, exclusion and the anguish of being excluded, the condemnation to conformism, the phantasmatic nature of reality and the magical reality of the file, the perpetual rape of the private life" (99).

I contend that *Der Marschländer*, which is riddled by gloom, entrapment, and ambiguity, also carries traces of a Kafkan world as skillfully posited by Henein and Kundera. *Der*

*Marschländer* contributes to an additional interpretation of *Der Prozess* from the perspective of the contemporary dilemmas of the asylum seekers in the Middle East and Europe, while also leading to a universal existentialist questioning of human nature. Like the unfruitful and desperate attempts of Joseph K. to prove his innocence and locate the center of the court, Alwan desperately seeks the reasons for inequality, segregation, and wars and tries to negotiate his feelings of guilt. While Alwan escapes a possible trial in Iraq because of his resistance to fight against the Iran-Iraq War, his movements are also monitored in Lebanon by the police forces and also the revolutionary fighters. He is interrogated on numerous occasions in Lebanon and he is suspected because of his Iraqi citizenship. In Germany, Alwan is also interrogated many times because of his asylum seeker status and his travel within Germany. Because of his illegal travel to the nearby German city one day, he is randomly interrogated by the police and his case is taken to court. In his world of entrapment in Germany, Alwan can neither lead a normal life, nor can he go back to Iraq, since he will be sentenced to death. Wherever Alwan goes, he faces corruption and apathy and he can see through the weaknesses of human beings. His desperate quest to find a meaningful existence shatters in the end and Alwan is overridden by guilt and emotional trauma. However, unlike the execution of Joseph K. by the invisible court, Alwan takes his own life.

### **4.3 Exile and Language**

Alwan's perception of languages is shaped by but also shapes his exilic consciousness. When Alwan comes to Germany, he can only speak broken English. However, he is determined to fluently speak German and immerse himself in the culture. Alwan remembers the advice of one Iraqi friend, who underscored that learning a language creates a new personality. The friend used a traditional saying for his purpose: "Eine Sprache. . . ist immer wie ein Mann, zwei

Sprachen wie zwei Männer, drei Sprachen sind mehr als drei Männer” (16). The saying implies that in acquiring a new language, we tend to perceive the world differently maybe because of utilizing new hermeneutic coordinates. While this does not imply the forsaking of the mother tongue, it introduces the idea of the simultaneous existence of different world views and their mutual interaction with each other. On the other hand, the friend also warns that when one begins to learn a language, one cannot learn the concepts that are foreign in one’s language horizon: “Am Anfang lernt man nicht mehr als das, was man in seiner eigenen Sprache kennt” (16). He points to the fact that the native language world (*Sprachwelt*), operates as a directory for achieving semantic coordination in the new language world. The friend’s remark becomes apparent when at the beginning of his residency in Hilter Alwan feels as if the people around him all of a sudden began speaking Arabic: “. . . ein deutschliches, klar artikuliertes Arabisch und zwar in feinsten umgangssprachlicher Form. ‚Hans‘, das klang ähnlich wie das arabische ‚Hanna‘, Sehnsucht, hörte er deutlich heraus. Große Sehnsucht, aber wonach?” (12). Alwan becomes rather surprised by this incident: “Wie konnte es den nur sein, daß die fremden Worte einander so ähnelten und ihre Bedeutung gegenseitig aufhoben, fragte sich Alwan.” Furthermore, the narrator states, “Wahrscheinlich so began er zu ergründen ist das Arabische an und für sich ein fürchterliches gutturals Durcheinander, und wenn die Stimmen und Laute irgendeiner ungewöhnlichen Sprache sich vermischen, klingen sie unweigerlich arabisch” (12). While Alwan’s analogy between the seemingly similar sounding words Hans and Hanna might at first designate an arbitrary mistake of the language learner, I contend that through this analogy Al-Mozany challenges the reader to question the ideology of monolingualism and the theories about the purity of the mother tongue. If we research the etymological roots of the words Hans and Hanna, there is more than an arbitrary similarity of their sounds. Both of these names, in fact,

share Hebrew origins and carry religious symbolism. Hanna, for instance, which is mostly used as a male name in Arabic, derives from the Hebrew name Channah and means “favor” and “full of grace”. Hans, like Hanna, is Hebrew origin since it is a short form of the name Johannes. Johannes, which is a Latin form of the name John, is a variant of the Greek name Ioannes. Ioannes, in turn, derives from the Hebrew name Yehochanan meaning "Yahweh (God) is gracious". The common origins of these words and their overlapping meanings, in fact, not only lay bare the interactions between Indo–European and Semitic languages, but also the lively dialogue between Judaic, Islamic and Christian cultures, whose culmination was seen in the Al-Andalus. These productive interrelations point to the impossibility of imagining languages as pure and uncontaminated and highlight their dialogic and hybrid qualities.

Another important moment in Alwan’s perception of language interaction can be seen when he forms an analogy between a virus and the grammar, style, conjugation, and declination of the German language. For Alwan learning the peculiar features of German is like torture, since these above mentioned constituents of language are “keine normale Viren” (110). It is interesting to see why Alwan, who shows such an eagerness to learn the German language, utilizes a commonly negatively-imagined metaphor to talk about it. In Latin the word virus meant “slime”, particularly one that is foul and poisonous; its origin can be traced back to the Sanskrit word visham, which again means poison. In the sixteenth century, virus was a synonym for venom and the meaning of virus as “an agent that causes infectious disease” was first recorded in 1728. Despite the negative associations of virus, I contend that the analogy of the writer points to the underlying double meaning of the virus which might denote both poison, but also heal. Like Derrida, who underscored the ambivalent meaning of *pharmakon* of writing as both poison and cure, I contend that Al-Mozany, through the virus metaphor, also invites the

reader to conceptualize the effect of the second language on the learner's body in these opposing terms. This, however, necessitates a closer scrutiny of a virus's relationship to the organism and its survival tactics. One of the first important facts about a virus is its urge to multiply and replicate which can only be realized if two organisms interact. A language, in the same way, can only be learned thoroughly and its rules internalized if a person communicates with the other speakers. Secondly, the human-virus, or human-language relationship can be imagined as symbiotic. Viruses are not self-sufficient in themselves, since they need the cells of an organism to copy and multiply themselves. Their penetration of the cells, however, will cause disturbing symptoms and disease in the organism that tries to fight against their presence. At this stage, both the organism and the virus might mutate, which would enable the formation of new qualities in them.

In a similar way, when a person learns a second language, his mind might create extreme barriers to the internalization of foreign language rules. The learner might feel anguished, stressed, and helpless at the beginning of his confrontation, since he or she does not have control over the structure of the new language. For instance, Alwan underscores this stage as "folter" (110). What becomes important during this stage, however, is also the unique relationship the person forms to the new language. In his or her use of the language, the learner might transform some of the rules or create hybrid formations of the words. For example, while the German compound names create difficulties for Alwan, he realizes that he tends to switch the constituent words of these compound nouns with words that make more sense to him. *Hubschrauber* becomes *Hochschrauber*, *Schiedsrichter*, changes to *Schießrichter* and *Staubsauger* to *Staubsauber* (110). While the novel does not provide information about the people's reactions to Alwan's usage of these words, to me they designate novel hybrid formations. Eventually, the

new language might cause important changes in the learner's world view and personality, like a virus, which will create mutation in the organism. The narrator also seems to perpetuate the image of the virus-language metaphor<sup>156</sup> when he says, "Sie [Die Sprache] nahm ihn einfach mit sich fort, verzauberte, fesselte und befreite in einem— die neue Sprache als Kampfinstrumentarium" (110). The "Kampf" can be seen as Alwan's struggle to form a new *Heimat* in Germany and his attempt to be recognized by society. During this struggle, his infection by the German language virus will eventually cause mutations in him and intensify his strength. Alwan's hope that German will eventually become a cure to his suffering soul is highlighted in the Hilter scene when he imagines, ". . . aber das Innere reinigt nur die deutsche Sprache! Nichts anderes als dies! Wie warm war dieser Gedanke !" (16).

#### 4.4 Exile and the Nation

##### 4.4.a Alwan's Traumas in Iraq and Lebanon

While *Der Marschländer* mainly focuses on Alwan's exilic experiences in the Federal Republic in the 1980s, it also depicts how his private memories of Iraq and Lebanon have an influence on his understanding of German nationalism and society. By focusing on Alwan's identity dilemmas not only in Germany, but also in Iraq and Lebanon as a minority, Al-Mozany confronts the reader with "touching stories" (Adelson). The reader is invited to form critical analogies between the seemingly disparate nationalist, cultural, and identity discourses in the Middle East and Europe that imprison the individual. In this section, by focusing on Alwan's childhood and adult years in Iraq and Lebanon, I would like to explore the ways he negotiates his

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<sup>156</sup> In the field of biolinguistics the virus-language metaphor has been commonly utilized. For Reinier Salverda the virus-metaphor "entails a very different perspective on language, as a bridge between humans and their environment, and leads to a natural focus of inquiry on the social-interactive and sign-giving activities of the language-using subject" (202). Furthermore, he asserts, "It follows that the underlying faculty of language must have a much more open-ended, dialogic and constructive character than the rival orga-view allows for" (202).

exilic identity and portray his shifting approach to the concepts of the nation, religion, and culture.

In *Der Marschländer* there is a performative, creative tension between personal and national identity and also private and collective memory. The collective memory of the Iraqi nation becomes projected, disturbed, and rewritten by the private memories of the protagonist Alwan, whose identity escapes clear cut definitions. Since Alwan's birth coincides with the holy mourning days of the Shiites<sup>157</sup> and just right after his birth, the July 14 Revolution takes place in Iraq, his private history is inextricably connected to his community's (Marsh Arabs) and nation's history. Alwan's inner isolation, melancholy, and torture foreshadow the traumas that the Shiite tribes and Iraqi society would witness in the following decades. Indeed, the July 14 Revolution, which involved the overthrow of King Faissal II (1939-58) and the president Nuri al-Said (1888-1958)<sup>158</sup> by a military coup<sup>159</sup> became a symbolic moment in Iraq's history, since it signified the end of the dominance of the Hashemite Monarchy<sup>160</sup>. After this incident, a republic was established in Iraq which was led by a tripartite council with Abd al-Karim as prime minister. The narrator describes the period in unfavorable terms since it presages the brutality and turmoil Iraq would experience during Karim's leadership: "Es lag damals etwas unbegreiflich Grausames in der Luft, etwas Stickiges, Bedrückendes, Verheerendes, und niemand wußte, was

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<sup>157</sup> Known as the Mourning of Muharram (taking place in the first month of the Islamic Calendar), in these holy days the Shiite commemorate the brutal events in the Battle of Karbala in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. This event, which is remembered through rituals and oral stories among different communities in the Middle East, carries an important symbolical force in the formation of Shiite Islamic identity. In this battle, Imam Ali's sons Hassan and Hussein were murdered by Yazid, who was the son of the head of the Muslim State. This battle increased the tension between those Muslims who believed that Ali was the logical successor of Prophet Muhammad and those who agreed with the succession of Abu Bakr. As a result, Muslims were divided between the main branches of Shiites and Sunnis.

<sup>158</sup> Nuri al-Said was first appointed prime minister during the British Mandate in 1930. Because of his pro-British tendencies, he was widely criticized and after the Revolution he was captured and killed.

<sup>159</sup> The Iraqi monarchy was abolished because of the military coup organized by the "Free Officers" (headed by Kassem and Abdul Salaam Aref). Consequently, Abdul Karim Qasim was appointed prime minister. The coup will always be remembered as one of the brutal events in Iraqi history.

<sup>160</sup> The Hashemite kingdom was established in August 1921 with the coronation of King Faisal I.



es eigentlich war. Es roch nach zu früh verdorbener Revolution. . . . Der Iraq wurde Republik, und niemand hatte etwas dadurch gewonnen . . .” (39). The horrendous death of the regent crown prince Abdullah depicts the self-perpetuating violence in the country, which the young Alwan visualizes through the stories he hears: “Drei Tage blieb die Leiche des unbeliebten Prinzen an der Stoßstange hängen, bis die Leute befriedigt waren und endlich dann Lynchen satt hatten” (39).<sup>161</sup> This revolution was later followed by the 1964 and 1968 coups, which resulted in the dominance of the Ba’ath Party and finally Saddam Hussein’s long dictatorship (1979-2003). During the rule of the Ba’ath Party thousands of innocent people were murdered and tortured because of their different religious, political, and cultural affiliations.

While Alwan’s birth becomes the marker of death and violence—perpetuating itself in different historical disguises—for his father and the tribe elders it signals hope. Since among the Iraqi Marsh Arabs, Hussein’s half brother Abbas was the most venerable figure, admired for his courage and chivalry, the Sheiyk names Alwan “Abbas” first.<sup>162</sup> Ironically, Alwan, who decides to use his present name, after his escape from Iraq, will resist the role of warrior masculinity as embraced by Abbas and the future military and political leaders of Iraq. After witnessing the bloody Shiite rituals and burial ceremonies in Najaf, Alwan’s true name becomes a reminder of

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<sup>161</sup> Feisal and many of his supporters, men and women, were shot dead and the corpse of the pro-British former regent Abdul Illah was dragged through the streets. The prime minister “was first buried in a shallow grave but later the body was dug up and repeatedly run over by municipal buses . . .” (Simons and Benn 218).

<sup>162</sup> Iraqi Marsh Arabs, who led a nomadic life style in the nineteenth century, valued the qualities of bravery, courage, honor and when they became sedentary in the twentieth century, they still held on to those values. The emissaries who propagated Shiism among the tribes in Iraq portrayed the imams as possessing the Arab attributes of ideal manhood (*muruwwa*). Attempting to appeal to tribesmen who appreciated values like masculinity, courage, pride, honor, and chivalry, the emissaries dramatized the heroic stand of Hussein during the Battle of Karbala and highlighted ‘Ali’s courage, his eloquence of speech, honesty, and simple way of life” (Nakash 175). The Marsh Arabs developed a cult of saints and believed that they possessed superior knowledge. Among their daily interactions, an oath to a saint played an important role. Nakash states that an oath “in the name of Abbas, whose figure became the focus of the tribesmen’s admiration, carried more weight among them than one in the name of the Prophet or the Imams” (178). The Marsh Arabs believed that a calamity would befall them if they did not keep their oath in the name of Abbas. For Nakkash, the Marsh Arabs’ preoccupation with Abbas was a result of the breaking down of tribal order and the decline in moral and political authority of the tribe leader, the shaykh: “The cult of ‘Abbas demonstrated the search of the tribesmen for new father figure who would articulate authority and leadership” (179).

inhuman butchery perpetrated in the name of religion. The Southern region of Iraq plays an important role in Shiite history since Imam Ali, the fourth caliph of Muslims and first Imam of the Shiites, was buried in Najaf<sup>163</sup>, whereas his son Hussein was martyred and buried in Karbala along with his heroic brother Abbas. During Muharram, the holy month of the Shiite, many rituals take place in the city such as the mock enactment of the Battle of Karbala and mourning rituals such as breast-beating and chain-flagellation. It is not uncommon that the actors who play Husain's enemies be lynched or that the flagellators cause deadly wounds to themselves. These bloody events which are a reenactment of the collective Shiite trauma disturb the integrity of the five-year-old Alwan:

Er konnte es kaum glauben, daß man fähig gewesen war, den besten, freimütigen und gerechten Imam so kaltblütig und grausam umzubringen. . . .Wie hatte so etwas nur im Namen Gottes und des Islams geschehen können? Diese Zweifel waren dafür verantwortlich, dass Alwan schon als kleiner Junge zuweilen das Vertrauen in die Menschen, und zwar alle Menschen, und in seine eigene Religion verlor. Manchmal vergingen nach den Prozessionen Tage und Wochen, bis er sein inneres Gleichgewicht wiedergefunden hatte, zumeist, nachdem sein langes Trauergewand Löcher bekommen hatte. (31)

In the face of the monstrous brutality of religious and political groups, Alwan develops a trauma. His psychological situation deteriorates when he moves to Baghdad together with his family. Yet, after Alwan's father dies as a result of the poor working conditions in a cotton factory, Alwan has to support his mother financially by selling lottery tickets after school. One of the strongest barriers he encounters in the Baghdadi society is prejudice against Southern Iraqi immigrants. Although Shiite formed over fifty percent of Iraq's population, they were

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<sup>163</sup> According to Fuller and Francke by the eleventh century Najaf became a principal site of scholarship, and the university also dates back from that time. The lax control of late Ottoman Empire and the relative tolerance of the monarchy allowed the Shiites in the south to build mosques and schools. They also had the opportunity to celebrate Shiite festivals and perform collective religious rituals. (91)

discriminated against during the Ba'ath Party regime, whose members were of Sunni origin.<sup>164</sup> In the novel, since Baghdad is inhabited by middle-class Sunni bureaucrats and businessmen who have prosperous and well-off lives, Alwan feels like an outsider. He encounters prejudiced comments because of his thick southern accent: “Von Passanten oder Kaffeehausgästen mußte er oft spaßige, provokative, manchmal auch anzügliche oder böse Kommentare ertragen.” (35). At school, where the children of wealthy bureaucrats attend, Alwan also feels alienated because of his ragged old clothes. The ultra-nationalist teacher Adnan Bey whom the narrator describes as “grausam and furchteinflößend” (40) also behaves in an aggressive manner towards Alwan and hits him badly one day. Alwan's school years turn into a nightmare when his Christian friend Rofa, a member of the Nestorian church,<sup>165</sup> disappears from school after his soldier brother escapes to Israel on an Iraqi war plane. After many years Alwan finds out about the torture of Rofa from another school friend: “Der Vater wurde verhaftet, das Haus seiner Eltern von der Armee Tag und Nacht überwacht. Die restliche Familie wurde von der Polizei mehrere Male

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<sup>164</sup> The discrimination became apparent when Shiite Muslims faced mass expulsions in the 1980s because of the Iran- Iraq War.

<sup>165</sup> Nestorians who are also known as Assyrian Christians are considered to be one of the oldest Christian communities, who are members of the Assyrian Church of the East and speak Eastern Aramaic. The Assyrians trace back their origin to the ancient Assyrians who formed a Semitic Akkadian Kingdom centered upon Upper Tigris River Northern Mesopotamia (early twenty-fourth century BC to 608 BC). While the Assyrian community embraced Christianity in the fourth century, “it was the personality of Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, that provided the national Assyrians with the *raison d’être*, or perhaps excuse, for a national church. His views on the human nature of Christ elicited condemnation at the Council of Ephesus in 431, and it was this decision that in effect gave birth to the new Nestorian church in Mesopotamia” (Nisan 182). In the sixteenth Century a separate Chaldean Catholic Church was established among the community, which became a rival to the Nestorian Church. The Assyrian communities lived as minorities in Iraq, north-east Syria, north-west Iran and southwest Turkey. Before the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, there were nearly a million Christians in Iraq (the largest group were the Chaldean Catholics). During Britain's occupation of Iraq, Assyrian Levies were formed under British officers (1919), who ensured internal security in Iraq. After the termination of British mandate in Iraq in 1932, the nationalist Iraqi leaders denied local autonomy to the Assyrian community. In 1933 a massacre took place in Iraq and according to the Assyrian sources the death figure reached 3000. The Ba'thist coup in 1963 forced many Christians to flee to North Iraq and the situation of Assyrians deteriorated immensely during Saddam's regime. According to Nisan, “Assyrians were in fact denied basic communal rights . . . Ba'thist party policy had denied them Christian schools and work opportunities. Cultural repression expressed an Arabization campaign that defined Assyrians as ‘Arabs’ in the Iraqi government census . . .” (190). During the Iran-Iraq War large numbers of Assyrian soldiers were conscripted and “as some forty thousand of these unwilling recruits were killed, wounded, imprisoned in Iran, or missing in action” (Nisan 191). For more information read *Minorities in the Middle East* by Mordechai Nisan and *Who are the Christians in the Middle East ?* by Betty Jane Bailey and J. Martin Bailey.

vernommen, un der kleine Rofa ist nun ein Krüppel auf Krücken und verrückt geworden . . . .”

(41). This incident exposes the Ba’ath Party’s horrendous ultra-nationalist policies, which resulted in the torture and extermination of the religious and ethnic minorities except for the dominant Sunni-Arab faction in the government. In the wake of the torture and death of his acquaintances and people’s prejudices towards him, Alwan feels entrapped and alienated. As a consequence of these traumatic confrontations, Alwan loses his belief in nationalism and imagines himself as a nomad whose home is the Marshland and Mesopotamia. He highlights the multiethnic and religious heritage of Mesopotamia and resists naming it as an Arab and Muslim region.

In light of the political turmoil, the poverty of his Marsh Arab community, and his spiritual emptiness, the young Alwan gets interested in Marxist ideology and the activities of the Iraqi Communist Party for a short period. When he is only 17 years old, Alwan starts discussing the texts of Darwin, Nietzsche, Karl Marx, aiming to finish *Das Kapital*. While Alwan becomes an official member of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP)<sup>166</sup>, he also takes part in the discussions of the elder members. In fact, Alwan’s predilection for socialist principles reflects the ideological tendencies of Shiite youth during the time who became affiliated with the Communist

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<sup>166</sup> The Iraqi Communist Party was founded in Baghdad on March 8, 1935, under the name of the “Anti-Imperialist Association”. After the coup d’état on July 1968 backed by the armed forces and Baath Party, president Abdel Rahman Aref was forced into exile. The Baath party sought for the support of the ICP-Central Committee during this time by freeing certain political prisoners and offering the party ministerial posts. Despite the fluctuating relationship between these parties, their relationship improved in the fall of 1961 when Iraq Petroleum Company was nationalized and there was an alliance between Baghdad and Moscow. In July 1973 the ICP entered the National Progressive Front which legalized the party and its newspaper. Salucci states that “In February 1974, the ICP closed all its independent (necessarily illegal) workplace organizations. It supported the actions of the Baathists, including the bloody war perpetrated against the Kurdish people in 1974-75” (62). However, when Baathists did not needed anymore the support of ICP from 1978 on, they started attacking the Communists. For instance, a law passed on May 1978 stated that any non-Baathist political activity by a member or former member of the armed force was punishable by death. This was followed by the arbitrary arrest, torture, and killing of numerous leftist oriented people. In April 1979 relations between ICP and the Baathists were terminated. “It is estimated that between twenty thousand and thirty thousand people were arrested in the period 1979-81, . . . while hundreds ‘disappeared’ or were killed” (Salucci 64). For more information read *A People’s History of Iraq* by Ilario Salucci.

Party.<sup>167</sup> Alwan's unquestioning naïve adherence to the party's principles and his delusional self-confident attitude has disastrous consequences for his life. Without thinking about the grim consequences of his actions, he informs on some of the party members who are critical of the party's principles. However, when these members slowly disappear, and the Communist Party forms a coalition with the Baath Party, Alwan regrets the consequences of his action.

Auf einmal hatten sie, die vom Tod wiedererwachten Jungnationalisten, harte Währung und Macht genug, um die tiefschlummernden pseudo-arabischen Träume zum ersten Mal zu verwirklichen. . . . Inzwischen hatte man den inneren Feind besiegt und bereitete sich eifrig auf den langersehnten Krieg, der sich gegen alle Erzfeinde richten sollte, gegen die Juden, die Perser, die Schiiten, die Kommunisten, die Islamisten, Die Verwestlichten und die Verweichlichten. (48-49)<sup>168</sup>

Betrayed by the CIP, Alwan decides to leave the country just after Iraq invades Iran ( September 22, 1980), which resulted in the eight-year-long Iran-Iraq war. Fighting as a patriotic Iraqi soldier and killing innocent people is abhorrent to Alwan. As a result, Alwan hides in an empty coffin, which is taken to the Syrian border. From Syria, Alwan escapes to Lebanon, a country ravaged by another meaningless war.

It is during the time of the Lebanese Civil War when Alwan arrives to Beirut. In an interesting way, Alwan's first descriptions of the country contradict the presence of war, since he focuses on a romantic description of nature. The narrator comments:

Es war ein trockener, milder Herbsttag. Vor dem hohen Schufgebirge lag die ersehnte, ruhmreiche Stadt, in einen weißen, durchsichtigen Schleier gehüllt. . . . Auf der einen Seite war das weite, graublauem Mittelmeer, auf der anderen waren dichte Fichten- und Eichenwälder zu sehen oder auch nur zu ahnen, hinter denen

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<sup>167</sup> Fuller and Francke claim that in the 1950s and 1960s, the Shiites formed the bulk of Iraqi Communist Party to such an extent that Iraqi communism became identified with them. (96)

<sup>168</sup> Sandra Mackey points to the *Jihaz Haneen*, a security force established by Saddam, which created fear among the population: "Its members, like menacing messengers, began to move from individual to individual, through group after group, spreading the word that the Baath regime would tolerate no challenge to its rule" (201).

sich flache, breite Felder erstreckten. Auf dem hohen Drusenberg waren die Häuser in willkürlicher, zum Teil bemerkenswerter Weise aneinandergereiht. Sie waren von blühenden Obstbäumen und großen Birkenpalisaden umgeben, sorgsam gepflegte Häuser, . . . Dabei vergaß er den langwährenden, mörderischen Bürgerkrieg, die Trümmerhaufen, die zerbombten Hochhäuser. . . (49-50)

Alwan feels guilty for his avoidance of seeing the destruction imposed on the landscape during the war: “Er fühlte sich wie ein aus der Art geschlagener Romantiker, weil er nicht zuerst an das menschliche Elend und das Leid der Tausenden, der Hunderttausenden gedacht hatte, vielmehr widmete er sich ohne Nachzudenken den offenen Armen des Meeres wie ein sehnsüchtiger Liebender, als sei das Meer für seinesgleichen geschaffen . . .” (50). When Alwan comes to Al-Damour<sup>169</sup> to visit the leftist militia groups to inquire as to the whereabouts of his missing friend Muhammad Karim, he is again overcome by romantic idealism:

Damur oder richtiger al-Damur war ein Name, der vom Klang her wie entfremdetes Französisch anmutete, tatsächlich aber in leicht verstelltem Arabisch etwa der „Zerstörer“ bedeutete. Das war eine höchst unpassende und macabre Bezeichnung, für ein einstmal kleines, irdisches Paradies, das durch prunkvolle Entfaltung seiner Schönheit die Sinne berauschte und gleichzeitig traurig stimmte wegen etwas, das für immer verloren gegangen war. Die Natur hatte ein schönes Land geschaffen, genauso wie es ein begnadeter Steinmetz mit seine Händen meißeln würde. . . . Wenn man zum Meer hinabschaute, sah man es von wilder, urzeitlicher Berglandschaft umgeben, bewachsen von dichten, grünen Wäldern und durchfurcht von tiefen, fast ausgetrockneten Bächen und Schluchten. . . . Erbarmungslos und blindwütig hatten die Palästinenser und ihre Verbündeten zugeschlagen und alles . . . zertrümmert oder in Brand gesteckt, so daß der Berg nun wie eine verwilderte, schwarzgrüne Ruine aussah.(62)

It is interesting to see that Alwan considers the damage a “zarte Zerstörung” (63). He compares the damaged state of the mountain to a noble lady, whose beauty shines through even at a mature

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<sup>169</sup> Damour is a Christian-Lebanese town that is located in the South of Beirut. On January 9, 1976 Palestinians occupied the city and during the Israeli invasion of 1982, the Israeli air force bombed the city.

age and reminds the individual of her once perfect body.<sup>170</sup> The picture of destruction is represented as a natural necessity (like aging) which cannot totally extinguish the beautiful. For the narrator, this description is kitschy. According to Matei Calinescu, “the whole concept of kitsch clearly centers around such questions as imitation, forgery, counterfeit, and what we may call the *aesthetics of deception or self-deception*” (229). It can be considered as a form of wish-fulfillment, pleasure and relaxation and it has the function of providing an illusionary escape from the banality and meaninglessness of contemporary day-to-day life. It is a reaction against the terror of change and meaninglessness introduced by modernity. Alwa’s usage of kitsch might also be related to his trauma and anguish in the face of meaningless war and destruction. Only through kitsch can Alwan impose a meaningful narrative upon the hollowness of destruction. However, when Alwan changes his voyeur position from a distance and looks more carefully at the ruined buildings by walking through them, he loses this idealized image.

During his residency in Beirut, Alwan is once more convinced of the meaninglessness of nationalist ideology. When he reads a wide range of nationalist newspapers, he becomes amazed at how easily they can become critical of another country’s policies, when they turn a blind eye to their own nation’s wrongdoings. Alwan feels relieved for a moment that he can read criticisms of the Iraqi government in Egyptian and Syrian newspapers, which would be impossible to find among Iraqi newspapers.

(Er). . . war in höchstem Maße erleichtert darüber, wie unbedeutend Heimatländer und die Gefühle, die man ihnen entgegenbrachte, doch sein konnten. Sobald man die Staatliche Marschmusik und die lauten Schreie verließ, hatten sie kein Gewicht mehr. . . . Alwan erinnerte sich daran, wie viele Stämme und Völker es gegeben haben mochte, die sich im Laufe der Jahrtausende im fernen Iraq

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<sup>170</sup>This analogy brings forth metaphors from war literature in which Beirut was represented with feminine qualities such as erotic, violated, and raped. Miriam Cooke asserts that Beirut was a “vibrant being that excited ambivalent emotions, . . . It was the Bitch/Goddess upon whose survival the survival of much more depended. Writers often addressed this muse, sometimes as a queen, sometimes as a prostitute, sometimes as an ascetic” (16).

zwischen den geschichtsträchtigen Flüssen niedergelassen und dann gänzlich in diesem fremden Land aufgelöst hatten. Wie viele waren es gewesen und wo waren sie nun geblieben? Verschmolzen? Erloschen? . . . Wie leicht schlug man die Wurzeln mit eigenen Händen ab, wie leicht war die undankbare Verkennung . . . (57-58)

Alwan's cosmopolitan attitude, however, is seen as suspicious among the leftist groups in Lebanon since the revolutionaries want to know about his nationality and aspirations. When Alwan asks for guidance in order to find his lost friend Muhammad Karim, he finds himself entrapped by the community of leftist organizations that want to recruit him as a fighter. When his identity papers are taken away, Alwan finally consents to work for the Central Information Office of the Democratic Front for the Freedom of Palestine. However, he resists the leaders' insistence to recruit him as a soldier and ends up editing their magazine for a short time. During this period, Alwan gets disillusioned with the ideological blindness of the people and the never-ending civil war, which generates a self-perpetuating hatred.

Alwan's most traumatic experience in Lebanon is his discovery of the corpse of a donkey and a small child on the street. While gazing with sorrow at the damaged bodies, Alwan feels a growing rage against the lack of empathy and brutality. Immersed with guilt; he ponders his helplessness and inability to prevent these deaths. Lebanon has become a forgotten wasteland, a haunting cemetery forgotten by the world. The narrator comments:

Diesem Schicksalsschlag war niemand gewachsen, denn die große Politik, also der große Krieg in diesem Falle, dachte nicht an jede Kleinigkeit, sie durfte nicht daran denken. Unter Umständen konnte eine Kugel wesentlich mehr bedeuten als ein Menschenleben, vielleicht noch teurer sein. Dieses kleine Menschenleben, welches in seinem eigenen Blut erstickte, das Gesicht auf dem harten Boden liegend, das den Dreck und den Unrat der unheimlichen, bezahlten und überbezahlten Revolutionäre, Söldner und Soldaten beseitigt hatte, war sicherlich in der Rechnung der Mordplaner keinen Augenblick aufgetaucht. Es kam Alwan vor, als wären alle Menschen dieser Erde an diesem Mord beteiligt gewesen, auch er, als Teil der gesamten Menschheit, fühlte sich schuldig an diesem Kindesmord. Er spürte ein ersticktes Röcheln in der Kehle, war von innen mit Schmerz und



Trauer vollgestopft. Dennoch konnte er nicht in Weinen ausbrechen. Ein Revolutionär soll keinen Schmerz oder Anzeichen einer Niederlage zeigen. Er soll Holz weinen. (99)

According to Alwan, the meaningless war is the unfolding of a monstrous greed, where death rates become abstract numbers. The war becomes an automatic self-perpetuating machine that erases the materiality and suffering of bodies. It is ironic that when Alwan hides in an underground bunker with the well-known intellectuals of the country, nobody pays attention to the corpse of the little child. While they discuss religion, ideology, and nation, they forget everyday existence, and the presence of material decay and sorrow. When soldiers come to evacuate them (since the intellectuals are national treasures to be protected) nobody even volunteers to bury the child. Alwan is sure that if he asks the question regarding what the right deed is, everybody would declare that it is to defeat the enemy and take revenge for the victims. However, who really does care for the victims? Nobody shows respect anymore to the corpses, since they are seen as mere waste. Later in Germany, when Alwan remembers these events in a nightmarish flashback, he becomes disappointed with the world and humanity. He recalls the words of a Shiite Muslim militiaman, who boasts about butchering the Arabic Sunnis out of sheer vengeance: “Mit Bajonetten und Äxten jagten wir die Sunniten von Beirut in Gassen, in Häusern, in allen Schlupflöchern. Wenn wir mit einer reichen Jagdbeute zurückkehrten, schenkten wir uns gegenseitig sunnitischen Gliedmaßen als Souvenirs” (171). It is impossible for Alwan to find the appropriate language to describe his horror in the face of this inhuman brutality. As an outcome, he loses his trust in humanity and is on the verge of losing sanity. He exclaims: ““ Ja, selbstverständlich, Die Iraker gegen die Iraner, die Schiiten gegen die Sunniten, Die Sunniten gegen die Drusen . . . die Palästinenser gegen die Juden, die Juden gegen die Deutschen, und die Deutschen gegen alle . . .” (171).

Since Alwan cannot deal with the atrocity of the Lebanese Civil War, he decides to make a new start. In the summer of 1982 he leaves Lebanon on the last ship that evacuates the resistance groups to Syria. Alwan witnesses how one speaker forms an analogy between their journey and that of the Prophet Muhammad. Only by manipulating religious imagery does he aim to awaken the energy and ambition of these fighters. He claims that as religious warriors, they have the right to kill men if they show resistance. Furthermore, he argues that women and cattle will become their prey and personal property. Alwan observes how these fighters mix the discourses of religion, Marxism, ethnicity, and patriarchy in order to gain power and repress people. He feels as if the transformation of his rebellious soul stopped and he knows that he has to leave the Middle East. All of a sudden, East Germany flashes up in Alwan's mind, which was represented as a rich and wonderful land by one of his friends. While he believes that the Marxist ideology of the Communist Party of Iraq was manipulated, he is still hopeful that he can encounter a perfect version of communism in the GDR. He is naively convinced that he will become an equal member of the socialist nation in a short time since he supposes that ethnic, religious, and racial affiliations do not play an important role in the GDR's nationalist imagination. As a result, equipped with a false Yemeni passport Alwan travels to East Berlin in the fall of 1982. Yet, he quickly grows disillusioned with both the coldness of the local population and the unwillingness of fellow Marxist Iraqi immigrants to help him.<sup>171</sup> In a moment of desperation, Alwan decides to move to West Germany, which becomes his last hope for survival.

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<sup>171</sup> Only a short part of the novel is preoccupied with Alwan's experiences in the GDR. The novel focuses mainly on Alwan's dilemmas as an asylum seeker in the Federal Republic of Germany. In this chapter I am also interested in critically analyzing Alwan's confrontations with West German national imagination.

#### 4.4.b Alwan Experiences in the Federal Republic

In *Der Marschländer*, Al-Mozany's interventions into the German nationalist imagination of the 1980s and 1990s are formed through a critical double vision. Al-Mozany creates temporal and spatial proximities between the Middle East and Germany through the analogies he forms between seemingly distant collective and private memories. For instance, Alwan's and the narrator's confrontations with German collective memory discourses such as romantic German nationalism, WWII, and the Holocaust regain their significance in light of the contemporary discrimination against Middle Eastern-heritage minorities. Alwan's relations to German national discourse are shaped by his traumatic memories of Shiite discrimination in Iraq, the ruthless extermination of the political opponents of the Bath' Party, the Lebanese Civil War, and the Israeli-Arab conflicts in the Middle East.

Alwan's initial hopeful and optimistic attitude at the beginning of his journey to West Germany, leads the way to loneliness and disorientation. His worst fear comes true when he realizes that the nationalist imagination is informed by ethno-culturalist barriers. As an Arab man with weak language knowledge (later a heavy accent) and a dark complexion, Alwan is approached by the Germans with either prejudice or treated as a non-entity. His fellow countrymen, on the other hand, engrossed in their own traumas and everyday problems, cannot provide him emotional support. While he is determined to meet new people, improve his language skills, and familiarize himself with the culture, Alwan finds no interlocutors. His distortion is exacerbated by his status as an asylum seeker, which hinders him from finding a decent job, travelling freely, or getting a promising education. Notwithstanding his hopeful mood at the beginning of his arrival, he is slowly dragged to the brink of madness as a result of his social and cultural alienation. His dilemmas are worsened by his traumatic memories and guilt

complex, which haunts him in light of the bad news he gets daily from Iraq. Alwan slowly realizes that even if he can master the language, find a decent job, and obtain a legal residence permit, he will not be considered an equal member of the German nation.

Alwan's tragicomic experiences with the romantic German national imagination start right after his transfer to a hotel in Hilter, which is a small town in the Teutoburg Forest, Lower Saxony<sup>172</sup>. Alwan's transfer to Hilter, whose name the narrator describes "wankelmütig" and "verkehrt" (120), is symbolic not only because of its association with Hitler, awakening memories of WWII and the Holocaust, but also because of the symbolic significance of the Teutoburg Forest in the romantic nationalist imagination. The Teutoburg Forest is believed to be the sacred ground where an alliance of German tribes under the leadership of the German hero Arminius (or later called Hermann) destroyed three Roman legions in the year AD 9, which led to their independence from Roman serfdom. The prominent Roman historian Tacitus lengthily described Arminius' courage in his *Germania* (written around AD 98), and set the tone for future generations. In the nineteenth century, Tacitus became the most important inspirational force of the German romantic nationalist movement<sup>173</sup>. In the twentieth century, however, the National Socialist regime utilized Arminius' struggle as a symbol for German racial superiority to incite hatred against foreign influences in the culture. Fraught with the contradictory memory of both a valorized past and the horrors of National Socialism, the space of Hilter becomes the very

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<sup>172</sup> Hilter is a municipality which is in the district of Osnabrück.

<sup>173</sup> Between 1750 and 1850 approximately two hundred poems and operas used the Hermann theme. According to Koshar, "the patriotic movement of 1813, spurred by Prussia's role in an alliance against Napoleonic armies, enhanced Hermann's symbolic capital even more for educated German speakers" (37). In 1875, a monument was dedicated to Hermann as a national shrine in Teutoburg Forest.

ground where the Janus-face of German nationalism unfolds. It not only conjures up images of glory, but also of horror and extermination.

Although nearly four decades have passed since the end of WWII, Alwan still confronts the closed ethno-cultural and linguistic barriers of the local society in Hilter. However, he slowly realizes that he will not be allowed to become an integral part of the community, which increases his alienation and loneliness:

So und nicht anders hatte sich Alwan eine wohlhabende deutsche Stadt vorgestellt. Frauen in dicken Mänteln, Männer mit warmen Mützen, Kinder, die vor Angst und Freude im Karussell schrien. Es war eine wohlgeordnete und zufriedene Welt. Wie er da so durch die Straßen mit den gemütlichen, kleinen Läden lief, mit seinem langen, schwarzen Bart, der sein Gesicht verbarg, und den steifen Blicken, die er zur Seite warf, gehörte er, wenn auch heimlich, dazu. . . . Alwan konnte wenigstens behaupten, er sei bis auf weiteres geduldet. (14-15)

While Alwan cannot communicate with the people on the street, who seem to be engrossed in their cocoon-like existence, he decides to take his chance in a local bar. Nevertheless, his attempts to communicate in broken English end in failure. When people inquire after his reasons for coming to Germany, he mistakenly states that he wants to fight against the German people. Alwan, in fact, fights against his own burdens from the past. Although he tries to clarify his mistake when his words are translated, he is exposed to the hostile critical looks of the people. Nobody offers him another chance to rephrase his statement and understand why Alwan came to Hilter. One person even threatens to jostle him. The second time Alwan comes to the bar, the inattention and ignorance of the people perpetuate: “Die dörflichen Leute waren, wie Alwan sich vorstellte, viel zu sehr mit sich selbst beschäftigt, sie rauchten, grinnten unbekümmert, lachten und schrien; sie hatten einfach zu viel zu tun, um auch nur im geringsten auf seine Sorgen und seine Entschuldigung zu achten” (11-12). The serenity and contentment of these people begins to look suspicious to Alwan. He wonders if their feelings are genuine or a type of pretense or

repression: “Wie glücklich mußten all diese Leute sein, die von der Welt nichts wußten oder wissen wollten, die so ausgeglichen und bestimmt wirkten, als ob sie ihrem Endziel nahe wären. Oder waren sie bloß lahm, betäubt?” (11-12). For Alwan, who gets strength from his multiple affiliations and a more engaged outlook toward the world events, the isolation of these people from reality and their suspicious approach to outsiders becomes problematic.

I contend that Alwan’s doubtful approach to the townspeople can be interpreted as Al-Mozany’s critique of the closure of borders of the Heimat imagination which presents insurmountable barriers for foreign populations. In the following parts of the Hilter episode, Al-Mozany unpacks the underlying causes behind the cultural and social boundaries for foreigners in the Germany of 1980s which is not solely limited to Hilter. The novel represents an ethno-cultural understanding of the nation, which can be traced back to the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century, as the main barrier against Alwan’s integration to society. This becomes obvious in the narrator’s parodic attitude, especially toward the Romantics’ association of German national identity with the forest. It seems that after his failed attempts at integration, Alwan also naively believes that the community will embrace him if he immerses himself in nature. He moves to a remote house in the middle of the forest which the narrator describes as “das reine deutsche Herz” (19). The old German couple who live in the house teach Alwan the language and the customs. For the narrator, this could be the last chance for Alwan to become an “authentic German”:

Der Wald war zu dieser Zeit in vollem Laub, von einem üppig leuchtenden Grün. . . . Es war Brutzeit und alles war in ihrer Reichweite, der Regen, der Wald, das frisch bestellte Land und der leichtbewölkte Himmel. Eine runde Welt. Man konnte sich fragen, warum sich die Leute ausgerechnet diese einsame hügelige Gegend zum Leben ausgesucht hatten. Doch solche Fragen stellte wohl nur der städtische Mensch; das Ursprüngliche und das Natürliche waren einsam und vergessen. Man erkannte hier, wie die Jahreszeiten sich aneinanderreichten, sich

gegeseitig und in allem Einvernehmen ablösten; man war hier mit den Bäumen, den Vögeln und dem Unkraut vertraut, man wuchs Tag für Tag wild mit der Natur. . . . Er würde hier rasch deutsch reden können, deutsch sehen, deutsch atmen und deutsch singen, im Wald, auf dem Feld und in den weiten, ausgedehnten farbenfrohen Wiesen. (19)

In this passage the narrator reflects the process of becoming German as an “organic development” which depends on the individual’s close emotional ties with the forest. While in the discourses prior to the eighteenth century the forest image was associated with darkness, evil, and sorcery, in the late eighteenth century these images began to transform. For the early Romantics, such as Ludwig Tieck, Novalis, and the Schlegel Brothers, the wild and disharmonious nature of the forest became the very ground where individuals could commune with God and reach sublimity. However, it was through the works of Ernst Moritz Arndt, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, Heinrich Kleist, and Casper David Friedrich that the image of the forest began to reflect the core of national identity. Confronted with Napoleonic invasion, these writers searched for a common symbol which would unite Germans. Tacitus, who in his *Germania* associated the barbaric and freedom loving nature of Germans with the forest, became an inspirational force for them. Accordingly, by the middle of nineteenth century the German forest, “had come to stand for fervent love of the fatherland, for mythical ideas of a primeval Germanic freedom rooted in natural law, for liberation from foreign dominance and struggle for national unity, for heroism, vigor, and manliness” (Imort 58-59).

The forest’s association with the nation was also promulgated by the works of social scientists. The most influential among them in the nineteenth century was the cultural historian Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823- 1897). Riehl supported a romanticist understanding of the nation, and considered industrialization and urbanization threatening to the rootedness of the community. He insistently pleaded for the protection of the forest, since it “kept the pulse” of

national life, “beating warmly and happily” (50). He stated: “In the contrast between forest land and arable land we see the most natural and elementary precondition for Germany’s social diversity, that plenitude of unique qualities in which our nation’s strong powers of rejuvenation lie concealed.”(50). Riehl’s use of forest symbolism also gained anti-Semitic qualities since he idealized the forest dwellers and peasantry in opposition to the wandering Jews who lived in the cities. Riehl became an inspirational force for many völkisch movements in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In Weimar Germany, ultra-nationalist groups perpetuated the biological association of the nation with the forest through their ritualistic activities<sup>174</sup>. The Third Reich took the forest imagery to its extreme by developing the blood and soil ideology.<sup>175</sup> Turning to the 1980s and 1990s, the nature discourse was not only taken up by the Green Party, but also perhaps surprisingly by right-wing environmentalists who were alarmed by the increasing number of immigrants and asylum seekers. In Jonathan Olsen’s words, asylum seekers were conceived “as sources of dirt, filth, and pollution who threatened to overwhelm and destroy Germany’s natural and social environment” (127). Imagining the German nation and people as an “eco-system”, many right-wing and conservative politicians and intellectuals argued for the transformation of the asylum law, since they thought that the carrying capacity of the nation was overburdened.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> One of the biggest ritualistic activities took place around the Hermannsdenkmal. “In 1925 50,000 young German men in warrior costumes marched through the woods to Hermannsdenkmal, in a celebration organized by Jungdeutschenorden (Order of Young Germans) and Stahlhelm (Steel Helmet)” (Hayman 108).

<sup>175</sup> In 1934 Dauerwald forestry (back-to-nature forestry) became the official doctrine as a result of Hermann Göring’s special interest in forestry. The basic idea in this principle was the management of the whole forest organism rather than individual trees. Consequently, an entire stand could not be cut, but selected trees were cut on a continual basis. Imort states that the Nazi regime’s predilection for this system was to further their own propaganda: “Like the sustainable forest, the national community was supposedly an eternal collective in which the individual worker toward the greater good but was ultimately dispensable” (72). This ideology was also disseminated in the semi-documentary *Ewiger Wald* (1936), in which the 2000 year history of the German Volk was reflected through events which emerged in the forest.

<sup>176</sup> Olsen cites Peter Gauweiler, the former environmental minister of Bavaria, as the most radical propagator of the right-wing ecological view. Gauweiler considered the immigration and asylum seeker problem also as an ecological



In the following parts of the Hilter episode, Al-Mozany perpetuates his parodic attitude toward the ethnoculturalist understanding of the nation by depicting Alwan's education by the rooted German couple. The novel implies that Alwan's integration might become successful only through a symbolic rebirth in the forest, supported by his authentic German upbringing. The narrator states, "Das alte, abseits gelegene Bauernhaus mit seinen netten Bewohnern ließ Alwan Geborgenheit und Vertrauen fühlen, wenn auch nur für kurze Zeit. Er fand plötzlich das, was ihm die ganze Zeit gefehlt hatte, die gute, bodenständige, aber gleichzeitig schlichte Seele bei diesem alten Ehepaar" (20). That Al-Mozany parodies romantic descriptions of German rural community becomes apparent from the clichéd description of the couple. The narrator does not disclose the name of the old farmer woman or describe in detail her personality and background. He prefers to inform the reader about her strict rules in the household: "Die alte, beleibte Bäuerin und Herrin des Hauses war Alwan auf Anhieb angenehm. . . . Sie benahm sich fast überschwänglich freundlich, verlangte aber auch Respekt: Man sollte seine Schuhe nicht vor die Tür stellen, sonntags keine Wäsche aufhängen, die Haushaltsgeräte . . . sauber und geräuschlos halten und so weiter" (19). In opposition to the farmer woman's description in the private realm, the narrator prefers to disclose information about the husband's role in the public realm as a farmer and former soldier. "Stattlich, breitschultrig und sehr ruhig. Wie alle Leute hier war er Bauer, und so wie alle hatte auch er den Krieg mitgemacht, war verwundet worden und dann in russische Kriegsgefangenschaft geraten" (20). It seems to me that by mentioning Hans's critical past as a *Wehrmacht* soldier, the narrator wants to parody or transform the erasures and silences in the Heimat discourse, in which the rural society was described in innocence and harmony. The

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problem. In one of his speeches he stated, "with asylum seekers every model of reducing waste, as increasing reuse, is doomed to fail" (Olsen 129). For thinkers like Gauweiler Germany's transformation to a multicultural society would destroy the natural bonds between the Germans and nature forever.

topic of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* pierces through the harmonious narrative, which I will discuss in the proceeding part of the essay.

During his stay, Alwan metaphorically experiences his childhood once more through learning German. Interestingly, the first German word that the farmer woman teaches Alwan is *singen* since her canary bird, Hans, sings beautifully every day. What could the metaphorical significance of this first word be? I argue that the verb *singen* evokes images of the indoctrination of German youth to romantic German nationalism at the beginning of the century. Between 1900 and 1920, numerous back-to-nature movements appeared in Germany which cherished *völkisch* attributes. The Wandervogel (1901) was one of these prominent youth movements, the overarching aim of which was to awaken the spirit of German nationalism among the young. Wandervogel groups would take trips into the German countryside where they hiked, camped, sang songs, and tried to associate themselves with nature<sup>177</sup>. While the groups had no “overarching political coloring . . . it has been estimated that by the end of the First World War more than one-third could be placed on the extreme right of the political spectrum” (Olsen 64). By immersing himself in nature like the young members of these groups and learning the language through the “rooted” German couple, Alwan also begins to undergo a transformation. The narrator states that before living with the couple Alwan could not differentiate between “Geist” and “Seele” and he was not familiar with concepts such as “Charakter,” “Moral,” and “Sinnlichkeit” (21). Now, however, he has a very deep understanding of these concepts: “Die deutsche melancholische, unruhige Seele, die sich aus Rebellion, Dichtung und Musik zusammensetzte und die dann durch die seltsame, einzigartige Natur geschliffen worden war, in

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<sup>177</sup> The Wandervogel held rites of Germanic origin in which they celebrated the heroic ancestors. They also reviewed many folk songs, which they believed united them through their sharing of emotions. According to George Mosse the Wandervogel’s “allegiance to the Volk, Germanic faith, tradition, heroism, nature lore, and its identity with the aesthetic qualities of the Nordic man were varied but concrete” (*Crisis of German Ideology* 172).

diesem scheinbar offenen, in Wahrheit jedoch verschlossenen Nordteil der Erde, began er eben erst zu errahnen" (21).

In the following parts of the novel, Alwan seems to get over his naiveté and foster a more suspicious attitude regarding German nationalist imagination. As Alwan's German improves, he has more opportunities to talk with the couple and approach the conversation critically. In Alwan's dialogues with the old farmer one of the important topics that unfolds is the problematic relationship between German collective memory and private and family memory. The tensions in the memory discourse were not only embraced by the war generation but had a heavy impact on the lives of later generations leading up to important controversies. Hans also chooses to tell Alwan a story of his victimhood during WWII. The narrator states: "Ein russischer Soldat war zu ihm geeilt und hatte versucht, mit einem Bajonett den Ehering von Hans' Finger abzustechen, aber Hans erwachte im letzten Moment und gab dem Russen seinen Ehering." (20). This is the only story Hans tells about WWII. We do not learn, for instance, about his relationship with the German-Jews and what his ideological stance was. Alwan also does not ask him questions about that period, but he keeps thinking about this traumatic story. He asks himself: "Aber was hatte der nette Bauer seinerzeit in Rußland gemacht, als er ertappt wurde?" (21). With Alwan's open-ended question, the chapter leaves it to the reader's imagination to formulate an answer. A possible answer might reveal Hans as a perpetrator or perpetuate his victimhood. For Alwan, who through his traumatic experiences in Iraq and Lebanon knows the difficulty of clearly separating perpetrator from victim roles, Hans' story is not satisfying. When he was young and naive, Alwan also acted as a perpetrator in Iraq and informed on some members of the Communist Party because of their criticisms of the party. While he did not know the consequences of his action back then, he felt extremely guilty when those members disappeared.

Maybe because of these traumatic experiences, Alwan does not ask Hans what he did in Russia during the war. He might be afraid to confront his own historical burdens or perhaps he does not want to offend the friendly Hans. All in all, the open ended question challenges the reader to critically engage with his or her own notion of “Heimat literature” and its all too often unprobed tensions with collective and the personal memory discourse.

In the subsequent chapters of *Der Marschländer*, another highly relevant topic is Arab minorities’ relationship to the Holocaust memory in Germany. Having lived in a region where different religious and nationalist political organizations have used Holocaust imagery in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Arab-Israeli Wars, how strongly can Middle Arab immigrants and asylum seekers relate to the traumatic experiences of the German-Jewish community? Do their experiences of civil wars, dictatorships, and ethnic cleansing in the region on top of their integration problems in Germany add a different perspective to their reception of the Holocaust? Keeping these questions in mind, in this part I will analyse in what ways Alwan and his dialogue partners’ traumatic memories affect and are affected by their negotiations of the Holocaust memory. I contend that while Al-Mozany points to the urgency of creating “touching tales” between the Holocaust memory culture in Germany and the German-Arab’s collective and individual memories of victimization, which also points to the transnationalization of Holocaust memory, he also depicts its difficulties if the analogies are based on a competitive cultural struggle for recognition.

One of the important scenes in the novel, which depicts the complex interaction between memories of victimization in the Middle East and the Holocaust is when Alwan discusses the Iran-Iraq War with an Iraqi acquaintance. During his residency in Germany, Alwan gets distressed by the daily news of the war, which lasted for eight years and resulted in more than

half a million deaths. The narrator states: “Der tobende Grenzkrieg nahm an Abscheulichkeit zu. Es wurden Massenvernichtungsmittel, Minen und vor allem Giftgas eingesetzt” (114). When Alwan receives the news of his uncle’s death in the war, he feels the urgent need to talk to a fellow countryman who can understand him and share his worries. As a result, he visits an Iraqi acquaintance in a city near Hilter, whose name is not revealed in the novel. Their discussion forms a key moment in the text since it is informed by the juxtaposition of two different memory discourses. During their discussion the acquaintance reveals his resentment for the lack of interest in Germany regarding the Iran-Iraq War, followed by his remarks about German-Jewish relationships and the Holocaust:

Was mich an der ganzen Sache stört, ist die Tatsache, daß der Tod einer Einzelperson sehr viel Wirbel und Aussehen erregen kann, wenn aber Hunderte, Tausende oder gar Millionen Menschen Opfer eines Massenmordes, einer Epidemie oder Naturkatastrophe werden, dann wird dies als rein statistische Angelegenheit deklariert. . . . Diese Menschen hatten genug mit Mitleid und Erpressung zu tun. . . . Nur ein Jude kann ihr Mitleid oder ihre Angst hervorrufen, aber kein anderer. . . . Wenn du . . . Jude bist, dann erregst du gleich Mitgefühl, Liebe und Anerkennung, dann kriegst du die richtige Zuwendung . . . . Das Unglaubliche dabei ist, all dies geschieht nicht, weil diese jüdischen Opfer, die in Wirklichkeit deutsche Bürger, sogar die besten Deutschen waren, wehleidig oder armselige Bittsteller sind . . . . sondern, weil sie stark und mächtig sind. . . . Es ist seltsam, diese Angst, und noch seltsamer ist das Geschäft mit der Angst. . . . Ich bin mir mittlerweile sicher, daß ein einziger Jude in der Lage ist, den Staatspräsidenten zu stürzen. (115-116)

The acquaintance’s speech is riddled with bitterness, resentment, and anger, which is surprising to Alwan. On one hand, his negative feelings for German society might be connected to his segregation in Germany because of his Arab-Islamic origins and lack of interest to the traumatic experiences of Arab minorities. He doubts if Germans have learned from their past mistakes and confronted their racist attitudes in a self-critical way. On the other hand, his prejudices against the German-Jews and his lack of empathy for Jewish suffering in the Holocaust seem to be

shaped by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the Middle East and Europe's approach to the conflict. Israel's reluctance to form a bi-national state in the region and its ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians resulted in some ultra-right oriented nationalist and Islamic fundamentalist Arab groups' embracement of an anti-Semitic discourse. One of the common arguments developed in connection to Israel's powerful influence in the region is the Jewish conspiracy theory, which also seems to have influenced the Iraqi acquaintance. The theory became popular with the dissemination of the deceitful anti-Semitic documents "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," supposedly "written by a certain Mathieu Golovinski in Paris in 1900-1901" (Achcar 114)<sup>178</sup>. The protocols portrayed Jews as Freemasons and underscored the idea that the Jewish world conspiracy was to dominate Christian civilization run by the leading elder of Zion. The protocols were translated into many languages and published in numerous editions. They were later utilized by the Nazis in their anti-Semitic propaganda which turned German-Jews into scapegoats. Some ultra-nationalist Palestinian and Arab leaders such as Amin al-Hussaini (1895-1974) also made references to these protocols in their criticisms of Israel and showed lack of respect for the traumas of the Holocaust<sup>179</sup>.

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<sup>178</sup> Achcar argues that "the documents were commissioned by the ultra-reactionary, orthodox head of the Russian political police in France with the intention of influencing the czar" (114).

<sup>179</sup> Amin al-Husseini was a Palestinian-Arab nationalist and the grand mufti of Jerusalem (1921-1937) during the British Mandate of Palestine. He was known for his anti-Semitism and his close collaboration with Nazi Germany. His office enabled him to have control over schools, mosques, and religious endowments. Furthermore with his appointment as president of the Supreme Muslim Council his power over the Muslim affairs in the country intensified. During the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt in Palestine al-Husseini began opposing the British, which resulted in his exile in 1937. His last destination of residence became Germany where he collaborated with Hitler's Germany. He wanted Hitler to oppose Jewish establishment in Palestine and in 1941 he announced a call for Jihad against the British. Al-Husseini helped in the recruitment of Muslims to the SS and was promised the leadership of the Arabs once Germany won. Between the years 1967 and 1974 Amin al-Hussaini wrote his memoirs in Lebanon in which he made multiple references to Hitler's rhetoric and expanded on Nazi notions of a world Jewish conspiracy theory. Achcar states that "He deployed the whole anti-Semitic arsenal, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* not excepted, to justify the Nazis' . . . hatred of the Jews" (157-158). Later the Hamas charter published on August 14, 1988 perpetuated an anti-Semitic stance. Achcar points out that "article 32 quotes *the Protocols of the Elders of Zion*" (250).

Influenced by the competitive memory discourse in the region, the Iraqi acquaintance's diasporic memories do not offer possibilities for critical reflection. While he might be right in resenting the fact that some of the genocides or catastrophes in the world are not given enough attention due to political, national, or geographical reasons (especially in the realm of Third World Countries), this should not result in the underestimation of Jewish suffering during the Holocaust. In his influential book, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, Rothberg points to the dangers of articulating the past in collective memory "as a struggle for recognition in which there can only be winners and losers, a struggle that is thus closely allied with the potential of deathly violence" (3). For Rothberg, memories are not in possession of a single group, nor do they have clear cut boundaries. Rather, they are "multidirectional" and subject to "ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not private" (Rothberg 3) which has been highlighted by Adelson and Şenocak in different formulations as well. Unfortunately, the acquaintance's ideological blindness results in his perception of identities and memories in essentialist terms, which are incommensurable and static. He perceives the world in binary categories, where there are only winners and losers and is convinced that Europeans hate Arabs. His bitter attitude toward life also results in his being devoid of human empathy and understanding. Alwan is shocked by his acquaintance's pessimistic assertions and constant criticism, because he has not directly experienced the traumas of the Iran-Iraq War and Lebanese Civil War like Alwan did. In order to make him think critically about his statements, Alwan persistently inquires if he visualizes a solution to the problems he mentioned. The acquaintance, however, stubbornly resists a self-critical approach. Alwan also gets disappointed when the acquaintance does not treat him with proper respect as a guest and fails to offer him some of the milkshake he prepared for himself. While he bitterly criticizes "the

Germans” and “the Jews”, Alwan thinks that he should first learn to show due respect to human beings: “Alwan war klar, daß dieses seltsame Benehmen den Beginn eines unmittelbar bevorstehenden moralischen Verfalls ankündigte. Niemand konnte sich in Anwesenheit eines anderen Menschen mit solch stumpfsinniger Ignoranz benehmen, es sei denn, er war innerlich krank oder geistig verdorben” (116). In the Iraqi acquaintance’s pessimistic world of trauma and bitterness, there is no possibility for genuine dialogue and understanding.

Another important scene in the novel, which is informed by a double-layered memory discourse regarding the Holocaust and Jewish-German relations is when Alwan converses with the young German woman Anna, who becomes his girlfriend in the following chapters. Alwan meets Anna by a strange coincidence in the city center one day when he is quarrelling with a stranger. The quarrel is caused by a strange German man’s insistence to talk to Alwan on the street, since he assumes that Alwan is Jewish. When it becomes impossible to avoid the man, who persistently exclaims that he loves the Jews, Alwan angrily hits the man. This incident attracts Anna’s attention who tries to understand the reasons behind Alwan’s aggression. She asks Alwan if it would be possible for her to visit him and discuss this awkward event. Alwan, who is surprised by this beautiful woman’s friendly offer, consents immediately. During their second encounter, Alwan tries to make it clear that he is not against the Jews, however he thinks that Germans might still have anti-Semitic tendencies. He tells her in a pessimistic attitude “einmal passieren, immer passieren” (127), forming an implicit reference to the Holocaust. Like the Iraqi acquaintance Alwan also develops a negative image of the German community because of his segregation in Hilter. His dark physical appearance and heavy accent form barriers in his communication with the Germans, which makes him suspect that a racist outlook might still be dominant. Anna tries to prove to Alwan that Germans have learned from their



mistakes, however, she does not seem convinced that Alwan is not anti-Semitic. While the stereotypes against German society make her upset, she perpetuates her prejudiced attitude against Arab-heritage individuals. As a result, she wants Alwan to consider her a Jewish-German which creates complex feelings in him. For a moment Alwan feels alarmed that she might be an Israeli spy, which depicts Alwan's unconscious fears about the Arab-Israeli conflict. When he realizes the absurdity of this idea, his fear turns into delight, because he considers Anna as "alte Blutsverwandte" (127). All of a sudden, the long history of Jews in Mesopotamia flashes up in Alwan's mind and his thoughts are directed toward the Iraqi Jews whose suffering was erased from Iraqi collective memory. The narrator comments on Alwan's inner feelings:

Die Juden waren einmal altansässige Mesopotamier gewesen, die vor zweitausendfünfhundert Jahren im Zweistromland gelebt hatten, bevor man sie per Dekret und Konspiration zwischen irakischen und britischen Geheimdiensten einerseits und den zionistischen Organisationen andererseits ausgebürgert und in den jüngst gegründeten Staat abtransportiert hatte, ohne nach ihrem Einverständnis auch nur gefragt zu haben. (127)

Unlike the mindset of the Iraqi acquaintance, for Alwan, Jewish communities form an integral part of Middle Eastern collective memory. Alwan's brief evocation of the tragic history of Iraqi Jews, who were expelled from the country in the 1940s, forms an important moment of multidirectional memory discourse awakening images of WWII, colonialism, the Holocaust, Nazi- and English- Iraqi relations and finally "the Farhud". The urban Jewish community was one of the oldest and most established communities in Iraq, possessing religious and educational autonomy under Ottoman and British rule. However, as a consequence of the increasing aversion against Zionism and the British forces in the 1930s, and Iraqi independence in 1932, Iraqi Jews

became the growing ultra-nationalist groups' targets<sup>180</sup> During this period, Nazi influence also intensified in Iraq with the arrival of the anti-Semitic Orientalist Dr. Fritz Grobba<sup>181</sup> and the broadcast of Radio Berlin in Arabic. The situation worsened when an Iraqi military coup, which was led by Rashid Ali al-Gailani (1892- 1965)<sup>182</sup> took place in April 1941. After al-Gailani became prime minister, the relationship between Britain and Iraq deteriorated since he had anti-British tendencies and supported Nazi Germany. His government was overthrown through British military intervention by the end of May 1941. During British reoccupation until 1945, the ultranationalist groups vented their anger onto the Iraqi Jews, who they accused of conspiring with the British and supporting Zionism<sup>183</sup>. This resulted in the catastrophic Iraqi pogrom in Baghdad, called "Farhud" (May 31- June 2), leaving 180 dead, several hundred wounded, and much property damaged<sup>184</sup>. The Farhud left indelible traumatic traces in the Iraqi-Jewish collective memory. From 1947 on, life in Iraq became unbearable for the Jews due to the 1948 Arab- Israeli War and the arrival of Palestinian refugees, which resulted in their mass exodus.<sup>185</sup>

While the Iraqi government declared emigration to Palestine illegal at first, in the 1950s a law

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<sup>180</sup> With the death of King Faisal in September 1933, his son Ghazi, who supported the nationalist associations formed by Palestinian and Syrian exiles, ascended to the throne. Due to the Arab Revolt in Palestine (1936-1939), numerous nationalists such as Amin al-Husseini escaped to Iraq. In his speeches al-Husseini embraced an anti-Zionist rhetoric and blamed the Jews in the region for collaborating with the Zionist and British forces.

<sup>181</sup> Moshe Gat states that Grobba "purchased the *il-Alem il Arabi*, which was under Christian ownership where he published, in installments, an Arabic translation of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*" (18).

<sup>182</sup> Rashid Ali al-Gailani (1892- 1965) was a Baghdad trained lawyer who became the justice and interior minister of Iraq after 1924. While he was prime minister from 1933 to 1935, he became president and interior minister in March 1940. He was fascinated by the nationalist ideology in Germany and Italy and also was supported by the Grand Mufti Amin al-Husseini, who took refuge in Iraq. While the British forced his expulsion from government, on April 3, 1941 he seized power once more. Germany decided to help Gailani's armed struggle and provided weapons and military support. After he was overthrown a second time, he went to Berlin, where he remained Hitler's guest.

<sup>183</sup> The Iraqi Jewish community appalled by the increasing hatred persistently tried to prove that they did not support Zionism. For instance on October 8, 1936 the leader of the Jewish community, Hakham Sassoon Kadoori "issued a statement severing all ties between the Jews of Iraq and the Zionist movement in Palestine or elsewhere" (Gat 19). Many Jewish intellectuals and community notables also followed in Kadoori's footsteps.

<sup>184</sup> Ultra-nationalist and pro-Nazi soldiers and members of ultra-nationalist youth organizations were the prime perpetrators of Farhud.

<sup>185</sup> "In 1948, Article 51 of the criminal law stated that both communists and anyone accused of Zionism could face imprisonment and death" (Roumani 63). This law resulted in the arrest of a significant number of Jews and later on more laws were passed which legalized government's confiscation of Jewish property.

was passed lifting the citizenship of those who departed from Iraq. Around 110,000 Iraqi Jews had to leave the country between the years 1950- 1951. They could never return back to their former country. For Alwan, Iraqi-Jews' forced emigration, caused by the complex power interests in the region was a betrayal to the community. Being an avid supporter of the rich multi-ethnic and –religious heritage of Iraq, he despises the ultra-nationalist ideologies of groups and governments which propagate essentialist ideals.

While Alwan cannot tell Anna about his recollection, probably because of his weak language skills and his fear that she might not be interested in the history of Iraqi-Jews, I contend that this fleeting memory image forms another key moment in the text. Alwan can not directly relate to the collective memory of the Holocaust, since he and his family are not perpetrators or victims, yet through his imagination of the Holocaust he can enliven the traumatic images of Iraqi-Jews whose voices have been erased in Iraqi collective memory. In Alwan's recollections we can detect the difficulties of coming to terms with the past, since maybe because of his shame and embarrassment in belonging to a nation of perpetrators, he cannot directly remember the Farhud. However, he also seems convinced that the dilemmas of Iraqi-Jews cannot be connected to an eternal rivalry between Arabs and Jews in Iraq, but should be considered in light of the power interests of England, Zionists, and the ultra-nationalist Arab leaders during and after WWII. While Alwan does not make an explicit reference to the Nazi influence in the region, I argue that his remembrances bring forth further images of the entangled histories of the Third Reich and Iraq during WWII and depicts the dangerous complicity between the nationalist ideologies of Iraq and Nazi Germany. As a matter of fact, the reader is challenged to visualize historical interconnections and form proximities between seemingly disparate memory discourses such as the Farhud, Kristallnacht, and the Holocaust. Through Alwan, Al-Mozany

points at the need for communication between different groups in Germany, like Middle Eastern immigrants, the German- Jews, and the Germans, who by sharing their alternative collective or private memories can try to work through the past and establish a common future. This process will not be easy, since the interlocution partners should be genuinely willing to forsake their preconceived prejudices and attempt to find a common language that will allow them to discuss about the traumas of the past.

In the final chapters of the novel, the narrator alludes to one of the other important watersheds of German national imagination, the 1990 Reunification which triggers troublesome memories among German minorities. Alwan, who becomes a witness to this event, cannot share the happiness of the crowds since he feels a stranger to the German nation: “Aber gerade das, was den einen Freude bescherte, wurde den anderen zu unerträglichem Leid. Im Maße der Wiedervereinigung war Alwan innerlich gespalten. Die große Geschichte lief unbemerkt an ihm vorbei.” (184). Alwan’s unhappiness can be interpreted as a foreshadowing of the negative consequences of the Unification, after which attacks on foreigners skyrocketed. The immigrants and asylum seekers in the country became scapegoats for the stagnant economic situation and were treated as outcasts. While the people are dancing and singing in a happily, Alwan remembers his mother’s sorrowful letter, in which she claims that he has become a stranger to her: “Du bist mir fremd geworden. Verloren für immer. Dennoch möchte ich mich von dir verabschieden in der Hoffnung, daß der allmächtige Gott, der uns nicht die Gelegenheit geben möchte, uns im Diesseits wiederzubegegnen, es uns wenigstens im Jenzeits ermöglicht” (185). Not only has Alwan become a stranger to his mother, but also to Mesopotamia, which now seems to torture him more and more. His loneliness results in heavy depression that leads to his ultimate suicide in the end.

The funeral ceremony of Alwan in Germany is riddled with ironies. It is interesting to see that Alwan has a decent funeral, which is attended by the city mayor, a Muslim Imam (priest), a Catholic priest, and journalists from the local newspaper. Tragically, only his corpse can get the attention of the political and religious representatives of the German town. Towards the very end of the ceremony a tragicomic incident takes place when the Muslim cleric sneezes and his dentures fall in the direction of the Catholic priest. No one can laugh at this absurd incident as it would be inappropriate. Metaphorically, the falling of the “false teeth” might indicate the insincerity or lack of communication between these different groups. Maybe for the narrator, the only way to handle the tragic death of Alwan, and the meaningless world around him, is to approach it in absurdity and humour.

I contend that Alwan is the embodiment of those Middle Eastern heritage asylum seekers and refugees of the twenty-first century whose lives are marked by constant fear and expulsion in the wake of the traumas they have experienced. These individuals can no longer be treated as undesired non-entities who stain the purity and harmony of the German nation. Al-Mozany, through his cosmopolitan interventions, invites his German readers to critically negotiate the relationship between their private memories and the German collective memory and form multidirectional connections between their own memories and those of the minorities in the country. This also holds true for the minority populations in Germany who should be willing to contribute to a cosmopolitan memory culture rather than clinging to a competitive memory discourse. Despite the novel’s melancholic end, I argue that the novel forms an open-ended dialogue with other literary texts, disciplines, and audiences through its performative and dialogic structure which aims to dissolve nationalist barriers.

## CHAPTER 5

### **Wadi Soudah's *Absturz im Paradies: Geschichten eines Eingewanderten* and *Kafka und andere palästinensische Geschichten***

#### **5.1 Introduction**

One of the most important complexities German writers of Arab heritage encounter is the expectation that their writings perpetuate Orientalist images, clichés, and also aesthetic traditions. Those Arab heritage writers, who tend to focus on the victimization of Muslim women or utilize Middle Eastern fairy tale techniques, have gained more prominence among the German audiences and intellectuals in the last three decades. Unfortunately, some other Arab heritage writers' critical interventions to the German national discourse, identity politics, and collective memory have not been sufficiently researched yet. Furthermore, publishing companies and editors that shape the taste of the audiences, have also played an important role in controlling the writing techniques of these authors. For instance, while the twentieth century Arabic writers in the Middle East have showed scarce interest in revitalizing Arabian Nights story techniques, numerous Arab heritage German writers frequently made use of it. This restrictive expectation made writers like Rafik Schami and Wadi Soudah utilize fairy tale techniques in a transgressive way. In their literary undertakings they challenge the reader to confront the heterogeneity of cultures, ethnicities, races, religions, and class structure in the Middle East, to experience the social and political turbulence in the region, and to familiarize themselves with the multifaceted dilemmas of the Middle Eastern immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. While numerous articles have been dedicated to the novels and stories of the Syrian-German writer Rafik Schami (who is a

well-established figure in the German circles), not much attention has been paid to the books of the Palestinian-German writer Wadi Soudah. In this chapter, I present a detailed analysis of Soudah's short stories from his books *Kafka und andere palästinensische Geschichten* (*Kafka and Other Palestinian Stories* 1991) and *Absturz im Paradies: Geschichten eines Eingewanderten* (*The Fall in Paradise: Stories of an Immigrant* 1998).

One of the most remarkable qualities of Soudah's stories is the ironic and satiric outlook related to the sufferings of the Palestinian exiles and refugees in the late twentieth century Middle East and Europe. Soudah focuses on the multifaceted experiences of Palestinians in their villages under Israeli occupation and forms an interrelated picture of his experiences in Germany as a Palestinian minority and writer. In addition, he also forms interventions to the German nationalist imagination in the Unification period by underscoring the inherent cultural racism in the society (Balibar) and emphasizing the possibility of a negotiation between former East German citizens, West Germans, and Middle-Eastern heritage minorities. In many important moments of the stories, *Arabian Nights* story technique becomes an important tool to discomfort the readers. This works because the silenced voices of the refugees and exiled Palestinians pierce through the narrative and create an alienation effect in the reader. Thus, in this chapter I focus on how Soudah negotiates his Palestinian exilic identity in the stories and what types of relationships he forms to Palestinian collective identity and nationalist consciousness. In an interrelated way, I also analyze what types of attachments the narrator forms to German national consciousness and history and in which ways he imagines the identity of Middle Eastern and Palestinian refugees in the twentieth-century Germany and Europe.

Unlike Al-Mozany, Ören, and Şenocak, there is very little information available about the life of Wadi Soudah. He was born in 1948 in Nablus Palestine (in the West Bank) and belongs to a big shepherd family. He studied sociology and Islamic philosophy in Beirut between the years of 1969-1977, and afterwards he began living in Amman, Jordan. Soudah moved to Germany in 1979 and went to Bielefeld to continue his graduate studies. It was shortly after this period that he started publishing stories in German and Arabic. Wadi Soudah's first story compilation, *Kafka und andere palästinensische Geschichten*, consists of fifteen stories narrated in the first person. The stories, some of which carry a satiric or ironic tone, are mostly based on everyday life in the West-Bank, the experiences of Palestinians with Israeli invasion, and also the narrator's experiences in Germany as a "foreigner". Several of the stories focus on village life in Palestine, the relationship between family members, the dialogue between Christian and Muslim Palestinians, the narrator's understanding of exile, and his experiences as a sick person in Germany. Soudah's second book, *Absturz im Paradies: Geschichten eines Eingewanderten*, consists of twenty-one short stories that are also narrated from the first person. In most of the stories, the author-narrator forms a dialogue (in a metanarrative way) with the reader. Similar to Soudah's previous collected-stories book, most of the stories in *Absturz im Paradies* carry sarcastic and ironic overtones. However, this time the stories are mainly focused on the problems of the immigrants and asylum seekers in Germany of the 1990s. This allows the author to open up discussions concerning the German Unification (1990), the relationships between immigrants, East and West Germans, and the perception of the Middle East in German and European cultural and national imagination. Most of Soudah's stories carry autobiographical traits and depict the ambivalences of Soudah as a writer, particularly since in Germany he is expected to utilize Middle-Eastern story technique. As a result, in a few stories Soudah makes use of *Arabian*



*Nights* story format while also forming metanarrative distortions by the intervening voice of the author-narrator. It seems that Soudah's ultimate aim in the stories is to debunk the power of the Orientalist discourse and invite the reader to become familiar with the present social, political, and cultural turmoil in the Middle East which includes the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Gulf War.

## **5.2 Exile, Identity, and the Nation**

### **5.2.a Soudah's Imagination of Palestine and Palestinian Collective Memory**

In "The Burdens of Interpretation and the Question of Exile", Edward Said poignantly asks, "Do we exist? What proof do we have? The further we get from the Palestine of our past, the more precarious our status, the more disrupted our being, the more intermittent our presence. When did we become "a people"? When did we stop being one? Or are we in the process of becoming one? . . . Are there really such things as Palestinian intimacy and embraces?" (*The Question of Palestina* 34). Said reveals the identity dilemmas of the Palestinians in the twentieth century whose rights to have rights have been taken away from them. While the establishment of Israel in 1948 promised hope for a new national awakening of the Israeli Jews, the same event remembered as "Nakba"<sup>186</sup> became the hallmark of defeat, displacement, dispossession, and exile for the Palestinians. "Approximately 700,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled because of the war and the atrocities that occurred in relation to the creation of the state of Israel" (Schulz and Hammer 24).<sup>187</sup> Until the Arab-Israeli War of 1967, Palestinian refugees were hoping to

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<sup>186</sup> Webman further states: "Indeed, the term 'Nakba' expresses the enormity of a disaster that was inexplicably and unexpectedly inflicted on the Palestinian people by an outside force- a catastrophe or cataclysm . . . thus exonerating the Arabs and the Palestinians from any responsibility for its occurrence" (29). The Nakba became the foundational story of the Palestinian experiences and gained primordial qualities.

<sup>187</sup> Most of the Palestinians became refugees in Egypt, Lebanon and Transjordan. Although at first they were positively received, antagonism towards them rose through time. Currently there are four main groups of Palestinian

return to Palestine<sup>188</sup>, yet the rapid defeat of the Arab countries created further Palestinian disillusionment and distrust towards the Pan-Arab movement. This defeat, coined as “Naksa”, became the second major event that caused the dispersal of Palestinians.<sup>189</sup> A new rhetoric of self-reliance took force, resulting in the inception of the Palestinian Liberation Movements.<sup>190</sup> This collective experience of pain, suffering, and loss created a novel national Palestinian consciousness through time and became pivotal “in shaping and expressing a separate Palestinian identity” (Webman 29). Palestinian writers (especially poets) also contributed to the formation stage of Palestinian national identity and negotiated their feelings of sorrow, alienation, and anger in their writings.<sup>191</sup> The term “Al-Ghurba” became especially popular among Palestinians, signifying “absence from the homeland, separation from one’s native country, banishment, exile; life or place, away from home” (Schulz and Hammer 20). Also in Wadi Soudah’s stories we encounter moments of sorrow as a result of the loss and occupation, psychological disorientation, and a melancholic yearning for return to the Palestinian homeland. Exilic consciousness might have resulted in an enriching double consciousness in the protagonist/narrator. However, it is a bitter experience and diminishes his life force, which is metaphorically reflected by his kidney failure. Soudah’s stories focus on his yearning for water— a representation of life force— that he

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diasporic communities: In the West Bank and Gaza, Israel (labeled as Israeli Arabs), Arab countries, and Western countries.

<sup>188</sup> Many editors in Jordanian and Egyptian newspapers avoided using the term “Nakba” altogether between 1949 and 1967 or placed it in the subtitle. They emphasized that the refugee camps were only temporary and that the Palestinian refugees would eventually return to their villages or towns of origin.

<sup>189</sup> As a result, many of the Palestinians who resided in the West Bank had to flee a second time since it was occupied by Israel. Another category involved those who were not allowed to return to the West Bank or Gaza after the war.

<sup>190</sup> Fatah was founded in 1960 and PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) 1964.

<sup>191</sup> In the initial stages of their exile the concept of “Al-‘Awda” (return to Palestine) became a prominent topic among Palestinian writers. According to Hammer, “Al-awda . . . has a highly symbolic and almost mythical meaning for Palestinians. It relates their exile, suffering, and homelessness to the place in which they have their roots, and it concentrates their life’s efforts on returning to that place of origin, the finding the stability and context missing in their diaspora experiences” (80).

is not allowed to consume, which is also metaphorically representative of his constant hunger for a lost homeland.

Some of the important constituents of Wadi Soudah's stories about Palestine are the recurrent nature metaphors, such as the olive tree and river that stand for the mother/nation. The landscape is intensely sensed and experienced in his stories. Soudah perpetrates the tradition of numerous Palestinian exile authors, who have used similar nature metaphors in order to describe Palestine. After the Nakba, the portrayal of homeland and Palestinian identity underwent important changes among the works of Palestinian writers. As opposed to the abstract and monolithic depiction of the homeland in the pre-1948 works, "in the 1950s and 1960s Palestinian poets and writers shifted their focus on rural land and life" (Parmenter 72). Whereas Israeli writers underscored the transformations in the vast landscape through drainage, irrigation, or construction of cities, the Palestinian writers depicted the landscape in an ahistorical way. They "focused on material elements in the immediate environment," (Parmenter 74) such as the olive tree, vineyards and groves, rather than providing a scenic depiction of the wide vistas of the landscape. In their reconstruction process of the folk landscape the authors tried "to recapture in words and images a natural, spontaneous relationship between Palestinians and their environments" (73). Many authors showed the essential unity of land and person in that the person partook of nature's strength and resistance.

In Soudah's stories about his village in Palestine (Nablus), natural objects and landscapes also gain symbolic value. "Der Olivenbaum" in *Kafka und andere palästinensische Geschichten* can be considered one of Soudah's most poignant stories, portraying the narrator's melancholic exilic state and his longing for his mother's affection. Abundant in visual and sensual metaphors and riddled with the inability of the narrator to portray his feelings, "Der Olivenbaum" comprises

an ancient Bedouin saying and an unaddressed letter written by the narrator, Wadi. Interestingly, the saying involves an analogy between women and trees and depicts how Bedouin women can be compared to an olive tree, because: “. . . sie ist stark, gedeiht überall ohne Pflege, ist ewig und immer grün” (74). The saying becomes pivotal in the interpretation stage of the title of the story and the letter, which I contend addresses both Wadi’s mother and the lost homeland. In Palestinian literature, the trope of the olive tree, which has been abundantly grown in the region, has often been utilized as a powerful metaphor for depicting the strong bond between the land and the Palestinians. Since the olive tree can survive for centuries without the need for much care, it has come to symbolize Palestinian rootedness, strength, and endurance. Furthermore, because the olive tree is a basic ingredient of sustenance for the nation (olive oil, soap, and lighting before kerosene), it can be considered a nourishing mother figure. Schulz and Hammer also underscore how the olive tree came to represent the Palestinian strategy “sumud”, which was pursued from 1967 onwards in the West Bank and Gaza. According to this strategy, the ideal image of the Palestinian was represented as the peasant who refused to leave his land. Schulz and Hammer assert, “It also constituted an important subtext to the Palestinian as the fighter, in symbolizing continuity and connections with the land, with peasantry and a rural life” (105).<sup>192</sup> The title of the story embraces these overlapping meanings pointing to the double-discourse in the letter.

Exile in “Der Olivenbaum” becomes a source of anguish, sorrow, and desperate waiting that cannot be portrayed in a romanticized or celebratory mood. The narrator Wadi, who lives in a foreign country, has not set foot in Palestine for ten years. His nostalgia for his homeland is

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<sup>192</sup> In one of his speeches in the mid-1980s, Arafat also highlighted the importance of holding onto land: “The most important element in the Palestinian program is holding on to the land. Holding on to the land and not warfare alone . . .” (Schulz and Hammer 106).

coupled by his longing for his mother, who stayed behind facing Israeli occupation. In the very beginning of his letter he writes, “Mein Hunger nach Zärtlichkeit ist grenzlos, die Fremde so herzlos und die Sehnsucht nach der Heimat übermächtig. . . . Oh, wie sehr wünsche ich mir, Dir wieder zu begegnen!” (74). The trope of *die Fremde* (the foreign) appears as a recurrent motif in Soudah’s stories, in a binary opposition to the Heimat, which is a source of life force. In the letter it is not clear where the foreign land is located. Yet, if we take the narrator Wadi as the author-narrator, Germany might be considered as the foreign land. While one of the basic reasons for the perception of heartlessness of the foreign might be related to the negative Palestinian stereotypes, I argue that Wadi’s inability to return to a physical homeland (i.e. his homeless nation) intensifies his alienation in the foreign country. Agonized by an unquenchable longing for his Palestinian village and constantly conjuring up images of the Israeli invasion, Wadi’s exile at times becomes an unbearable condition. In his “Reflections of Exile”, Edward Said underscores the traumatic experiences of millions of people like Wadi, who have been forced out of their homelands due to wars, ethnic cleansing and invasions in the twentieth century. It is difficult to aesthetically or humanistically comprehend the exilic situation of these people. He states,

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home. Its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, and even triumphant episodes in an exile’s life, these are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever. (173)

While Wadi praises the mother who decided to stay behind in her village, he conceives of himself and the others, who are in exile, as “blind and beeinflusst” (75). His usage of “we” in the description implies his denial to represent exile as a subjective experience. The consequent wars

and occupations have taken Palestinians' will-power and turned them into victims, not only of Israeli forces, but also perhaps the Arab countries where they stayed as refugees. Wadi's use of passive tense in describing their disorientation and helplessness and his likening their situation to a donkey also becomes an indicator of their "victim" status: "Doch der Unterschied ist, daß Zakeyyas Esel weiß, wer ihn zieht und wohin er gezogen wird. Wir . . . werden gezogen, ohne zu wissen wohin und von wem. Und wenn einer von uns schreit, hört es niemand" (75). According to Wadi, the exile of the Palestinians represents a denial of dignity and a "contemporary political punishment" (175). In his praising of his mother's staying behind in Palestine, Wadi might be depicting his guilt complex for not having followed the strategy of "sumud", which might be a better condition than exile and longing.

In "Der Olivenbaum" Wadi makes use of a metaphorical and gendered language in order to lay bare his feelings for his mother and his situation as an exile. One of the striking qualities in the letter is the depiction of the mother as "(die) Große und Starke" (75), whereas they (Wadi and maybe all the men who are exiles) have been castrated. The national defeat and invasion is experienced as an emasculating, and has resulted in the loss of honor and the humiliation of the Palestinian men. This metaphor also introduces the colonial analogy of the Palestinian land as a virgin woman, who has been raped by the invasion of Israeli forces.<sup>193</sup> During this turbulent time the mother becomes a comforting and consoling image for Wadi, who I contend also becomes the embodiment of the nation and homeland. In Wadi's letter one of the foremost qualities of the mother is love: "Du bist ein Fluß aus Liebe, in dem ich meinen Durst löschen will. Ich möchte hineintauchen und mich darin von der Fremde reinigen" (74). While in Celtic mythology the

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<sup>193</sup> Indeed, the metaphor of rape has been commonly utilized by Palestinian politicians. Massad states that, "in the introduction to the Palestinian Charter, The Zionist conquest of Palestine is represented as a rape of the land. Palestine is portrayed as a mother, whereas Palestinians are its children. In the Zionist discourse, on the other hand, Palestine was both a motherland and the virgin land to be fertilized. For Massad, this discourse carries similarities with the Orientalist discourse. (44)

river was a living expression of the mother earth, with its life giving and healing force, in Christian imagery, rivers were typically embodiments of God's care and love for humanity. By diving into the river (i.e. being embraced by the mother) Wadi wants to heal his pain of exile. Interestingly, the mother does not limit her love and affection to Wadi, but provides it to all the others who are in need. He writes, "Deine Liebe und Deine Großzügigkeit kennen keine Grenze, keine Rasse und keine Farbe" (74). While the mother becomes a protective figure for Wadi, she is herself ravaged by the invasion. As a result of the cold and nonsensical attitudes of the soldiers, her love has turned into hatred and she is forced into throwing stones. Wadi is impressed that the mother can still smile and keep her humor under the "unmenschliche Besatzung" (75). Her humor represents her relentless struggle for agency and her fight against the imbalance of power. In the last part of Wadi's letter the ambiguity of the mother/nation image comes to the foreground. He states, "Ich fühle, wie ich Dir verwurzelt bin. Der Olivenbaum, in dessen Schatten Du uns gestillt hast, kann Deine Ewigkeit bezeugen" (75). In this romantic and essentialist portrayal, Wadi describes his relationship to the mother/homeland/nation in organic terms. He implies that the union between the land/mother and Wadi/the Palestinians is ancient and everlasting. As a result, the expulsion from the land can be seen as distorting the natural state.

Gendered metaphors of the homeland and nation have been frequently utilized by Palestinian writers and poets. In her study "Imaging the Homeland", Tina Sherwell states that the three main icons of mother, virgin, and beloved have been utilized to eulogize the Palestinian homeland. She states that the image of the "mother" is "deployed to articulate the importance of the reproduction of the nation and its boundaries, and is imagined as the space of cultural authenticity and the preserver of traditions" (132). Feminist critics such as Elleke Boehmer, Nira

Yuval-Davis, and Anne McClintock have provided a deconstructionist critique of the gendered imagination of the nation. McClintock underscores the ways nations have been figured as domestic genealogies, resulting in their passive and iconographic roles. She states, “women are represented as the atavistic and authentic body of the natural (inert, backward looking and natural), embodying nationalism’s conservative body of continuity. Men, by contrast, represent the progressive agent of national modernity. . .” (92). While this gender biased discourse has been relentlessly perpetuated by numerous Palestinian poets and writers, Soudah is well aware of the limitations and artificiality of this discourse. He voices his critical and ironic attitude towards this discourse in his second story book, *Absturz im Paradies*, in a story entitled “Die Traumzeit”. Carrying fairy tale characteristics, such as the narrator’s dialogue with a djini, the story is based on a dream event in which the djini helps Wadi to fly to his home village. What is of interest in this story is the portrayal by Wadi of his homeland and the mother. In the dream event which gains nightmare qualities, Wadi is invisible to his mother and sisters although he walks past them and screams. Interestingly, Wadi finds his mother sitting in the same place he left her fifteen years ago. She also seems to be unaware of Wadi’s plans to return. Wadi thinks that the mother was unable to get the telegram he sent her. He says: “Den deutschen Postbeamten gefiel die Adresse nicht. . . . Die Adress lautete: ‘An die Hände meiner Mutter. Unter dem Olivenbaum. Palästina’”(124). According to Wadi’s interpretation it was his failure to write Israel that prevented the arrival of the telegram. However, we as reader can see that it is the insistence of utilizing solid metaphors for the homeland that also creates a failure in communication. In the changed circumstances of the country, the frequent usage of romanticized and ahistorical metaphors of Palestine does not offer solutions. Wadi will be invisible to his mother and family members, since he is unable to perceive them in real time. On the other hand, Soudah as the



narrator also experiences the narrative impasse of the Palestinian writers and cannot help but use the very same metaphors to describe his exilic state and the nation.

Another important topic for Soudah is the experiences of Palestinian refugees in the Arab countries after the Nakba (1948), which he thematizes in the story “Ich höre, also bin ich” in *Absturz im Paradies*. The story starts with a rather pessimistic tone when the narrator exclaims, “es überfällt mich eine unheilvolle Erinnerung” (67). The narrator’s remembrance of past is filled with memories of the Palestinian collective. Images of alienated, suffering Palestinian refugees and their children come to his mind. He says, “Ihre Geburt war verdammt und verflucht. Sie kannten nur die Tränen ihrer Mütter. Im Dreck waren sie geboren, und im Dreck starben sie. . . . Seit die Flüchtlinge zwangsweise in Drecklagern leben mußten, strahlte der Mond nicht mehr auf sie. Wer im Dreck lebt, träumt nicht von den Strahlen des Mondes” (69). The filth in the narrator’s description, in fact, forms a stark contrast to the edenic quality of the homeland in the other stories. The camps established in the borderlands form an artificial ground that prevents Palestinians’ natural relationship with the land. In her field research, for instance, Rosemary Sayig found out that this form of life style portrayed the end of the world for many Palestinians: “In describing their first years as refugees, camp Palestinians use metaphors like ‘death’, ‘paralysis’, ‘burial’, ‘non-existence’, ‘we lost our way’, ‘we didn’t know where to go’. . . . Thirty years after the uprooting, the older generation still mourns” (Schulz and Hammer 107). In their desperation, thousands of Palestinian refugees tied their hope to the Pan-Arab movement of the 1960s, which was heralded by the leftist Egyptian leader Gamel Abdel Nasser (1918-1970). The narrator states: “Er war der Vater der Freiheit und ihre zärtliche Mutter zugleich. Wir waren die Kücken und er unsere Glücke. Seine Worte waren die Seele unserer Seele. Er war unser Retter und Erlöser” (69).

Nasser, who overthrew the Egyptian and Sudanese monarchy in 1952 along with Muhammad Naguib, became one of the most powerful leaders in the Arab world during the twentieth century. An ardent anti-colonialist and propagator of Arab socialism, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Company and tackled the Suez crisis in a successful way. He also became a supporter of Pan-Arabism during his leadership, known as Nasserism, which turned him into a popular figure in the Arab world. Nasser also was an ardent supporter of Palestinian rights, and in 1964 decided to establish an organization that would represent Palestinian rights (i.e. PLO, established in May 1964). One of the most important factors in Nasser's widely disseminated fame and in his consolidation of power was his control of the radio. "The Voice of the Arabs" station, which was introduced in 1953 and owned by Nasser's friend Ahmed Said, propagated Pan-Arab unity. The radio created a cult like figure of Nasser and popularized phrases such as Arab Egypt, Arab solidarity. Furthermore, the expulsion of the imperialist influences of France and Britain was also encouraged.

In the absence of the material and spiritual support of the Arab kings in the region, Nasser's rhetoric broadcast through radio gained symbolic power for the Palestinians: "Wir hatten seine Wörter auswendig gelernt und wiederholt. . . . Mit einfachen Worten erklärte er uns die politische Lage und Begriffe wie Kapitalismus, Kolonialismus, Sozialismus und die zionistische Siedlungspolitik in Palästina." (70). The narrator also became an ardent supporter of Nasser through his radio shows: "Das alte Radio bleibt mir als das beste Erinnerung. Damals hieß es: "Ich höre, also bin ich. Sag mir, was du hörst, und ich sage dir, wer du bist" (68). The narrator remembers how the population was influenced and drifted by the ardent rhetoric of Nasser, who promised hope to the people. However, even this basic right of listening was taken away from many when the Arab kings started to envy Nasser's power and plotted against him.

The narrator says, “Die arabischen Könige gründeten eine Anti-Nasser Bande. Vergebens versuchten sie, den Hörgeschmack ihrer Unterdrückten zu steuern. . . . Sie erklärten ihren Unterdrückten den Radiokrieg und die Einschränkung der Hörfreiheit” (68). Through a well-developed spy network, those who listened to radio were imprisoned in the country in which the narrator lived. Although the narrator does not disclose the name of the country it may have been Jordan, since King Hussain was often criticized by Nasser. In this pessimistic environment, the defeat of the Arab forces against Israel in the 1967 War formed a new wave of disappointment. It is also through this event that Nasser’s popularity waned in the region. The narrator exclaims, “Liebe macht blind. Abd-el Nasser ist tot. An seinem Grab haben wir alle Hoffnungen begraben. Die Ungeheuer sind geblieben. Das Volk geht weiterhin Barfuß. Israel bombardiert uns immer noch. Ich denke, daß auch die neue Generation sich irgendwann verlieben wird, um sich von dem Dreck zu befreien” (76). With his implication of “blindness”, the narrator also seems to form a criticism of the Palestinian’s unconditional support for Nasser and his belief in the Pan-Arab movement. Yet, he also implies that in their helplessness and desperation, the Palestinian community might ardently support another leader in the future, even if he might promise false hopes.

### **5.2.b Soudah’s Confrontations with German National Imagination**

Soudah’s stories about Germany focus on the author-narrator’s and his Palestinian fellows’ alienation, loneliness, and their incessant longing for their homeland. While the narrator wants to consider Germany as a second Heimat, his everyday confrontation with prejudices and stereotypes about Palestinians, who are seen as terrorists, disorient him. The narrator’s problematic experiences start firstly at the border crossings (i.e. the German airport) where he is unjustly treated because of the Arabic script in his passport. He is approached with

a suspicious attitude by the border police and harassed for a missing signature in his passport. Even though the narrator keeps his patience and tries to explain the bureaucratic procedures in his country, the policeman implies that he belongs to an uncivilized country. Later on in Germany, the narrator faces the greatest of his difficulties when he gets sick. He is sent back and forth between several doctors who are unable to diagnose his kidney failure, and he is treated with fear and dismay by one of the doctors when he finds out about his Palestinian origins. Remembering the Munich Massacre in the Olympics of 1972, the doctor considers Palestinians terrorists, creating uneasiness in the narrator. On another day, the narrator confronts his fellow countrymen, most of whom are suffering with depression and melancholia due to trauma. In the face of these complexities, it becomes the mission of Soudah to confront the German reader with the underlying reasons behind their own prejudices and fears and in an ironic way remind them of the “humanity” of the Palestinian asylum seekers. In this process his utilization of sarcasm, poignant metaphors, and the Arabian Nights Story Technique creates an alienation effect in the reader.

One of Soudah’s most poignant stories about the reception process of Middle Eastern minorities in Germany is the “Der Müllschmarotzer” in *Absturz im Paradies*, which confronts the reader with a rather disturbing and grotesque metaphor. I contend that the narrator, through the invented word *Müllschmarotzer*, forms an analogy between the non-German minorities and garbage-eating parasites. The narrator starts the story in an essay-like structure in which he claims that the amount of waste produced by a country depicts its degree of advancement. Waste control and disposal have become one of the most painstaking issues in Western countries, which produce roughly a thousand times more waste than developing countries. The

narrator implies that while Western citizens don't really care about where their waste is transferred in the long run, they become critical if a stranger uses their private dumpsters.

After the essayistic opening section, the narrator switches to a tragicomic story that thematizes an awkward experience of an anonymous immigrant or asylum seeker in Germany. In the story, the immigrant receives a warning through the mail from his German neighbor accusing him of using his dumpster. Apparently the German neighbor had searched the suspiciously full dumpster and found a torn envelope in it with the name and address of the immigrant. Since the German man in the story lives near a student dormitory and often sees international students, he suspects that the offender is an *Ausländer*. As a result, he decides to give him a proper lesson by writing: "Seit Ihr Mist in meinem Mülleimer gelandet ist, frage ich mich wirklich, ob in ihrem Mistland keiner den Müll des anderen achtet? . . . In meinen Augen sind sie ein Mülleimerschmarotzer! . . . Sie Ausländer, Sie Mistkerl! Sie leben von meinem Steuern, und nun soll ich auch noch Ihren Mist riechen! (12). In the remaining part of the letter, the German makes abundant use of expressions such as "Unser Müll", "unser deutsche Müll" and "Unser Gesätze". The mail provides an opportunity for the neighbor to voice his hatred against minorities, whom he perceives as outside the German national body. The recipient, on the other hand, feels suffocated by the frequent utilization of the pronoun "uns" and "unser" by the people around him. He is not sure at this point if he can ever be an equal member of German society. At this moment the narrator intervenes in the story by pointing to the importance of tolerance, even for a mundane issue like the usage of a dumpster. He exclaims:

Nachdem sich das Problem der Benutzung von Privatmülleimern so oft wiederholte, suchte man nach einer Lösung, nach Integration, nach einem Toleranten Mülleimer, getreu dem Motto: liebe den Fremden wie dich selbst. Es ist die Sache des Staates, des Wächters der Toleranz, einen toleranten Mülleimer

zu finden. . . . Die Würde des Menschen ist untastbar—doch wenn sie gar nicht da ist, wie soll man sie dann tasten? (13-14)

I contend that Soudah's utilization of the image of "waste", "waste disposal", and "waste control" in his discussion of tolerance and the rights of minorities in Germany and in Europe raises the important issue of the perception of refugees, immigrants, and asylum seekers as "waste" in the heart of Europe in the twentieth century. In his influential book *Wasted Lives. Modernity and its Outcasts*, Zygmunt Bauman underscores the fact that myriads of displaced individuals, such as immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, have become the new "waste" of liquid modernity, which is driven by consumer capitalism and globalization. Bauman tries to understand why the image of waste has gained negative connotations in modern society and how it can be related to the negative perception of minorities. While no objects are waste by their intrinsic qualities, "It is by being assigned to waste by human designs that material objects, whether human or inhuman, acquire all the mysterious, awe-inspiring, fearsome and repulsive qualities. . ." (22). Referring to Mary Douglas research, Bauman depicts how human beings, by getting rid of waste (i.e. removing polluted objects and restoring purity), try to positively re-order their environment and keep up the cherished classification. In our age of modernity, there is an obsession with constant change and advancement that results in a large amount of surplus material and waste. The aim is to get rid of objects in the most radical and effective way so that order can be maintained. The massive number of immigrants in Europe has raised fear in the host populations, since they defile and threaten the taken-for-granted order. Bauman states, "Immigrants, and particularly the fresh arrivals among them, exude the faint odor of the waste disposal tip which in its many disguises haunts the nights of the prospective casualties of rising vulnerability. For their detractors and haters, immigrants embody . . . the inarticulate yet hurtful

and painful presentiment of their own disposability” (56). Through their traumatic stories of war, economic hardships, and social inequality, the poor refugees, immigrants, and social outcast threaten the cocoon-like safety of the host citizens. They remind the host populations of the breakability and fragility of their own safe worlds as a result of which their existence becomes unbearable and threatening. The immigrants’ imagination as waste also erases their individuality and will-power. Interpreted through Bauman’s lens, it is not only the presence of the immigrants’ waste that makes the neighbor aggressive and nervous in the story, but the imagining of the immigrant himself as an outsider who defiles the regular order. Through his aggressive language, the neighbor unconsciously lumps the immigrant as a part of an unwanted collectivity, criminal, and a parasite who pollutes the national body of the Germans.

Soudah also voices his trenchant critique against the situation of non-German minorities in the story “Sheherezade im Nato- Land” (*Absturz im Paradies*), in which he satirizes the breach of human rights and lack of compassion, especially against Muslim heritage asylum seekers and refugees. One of the striking qualities of the story is the intermixture of realist and Arabian Nights story technique. Furthermore, the narrator forms metanarrative interventions into the story by discussing the reasons behind his drawing back on this story technique. For Nina Berman, Arabic origin German-language writers’ frequent usage of fairy tale and the fable/parable tradition forms a contradiction to the Arab writers in the Middle East. While “social realism, symbolism, and since the 1980s postmodern aesthetics clearly dominate the literary landscape [in the Middle East]” (234), fairy tales have attracted scant attention because of “the long-standing association of these genres with popular culture, and thus lowbrow literary aesthetics” (234). However, some famous authors, such as Taha Hussein in his *The Dreams of Sheherazade* (1943) and Naguib Mahfouz in his *Arabian Nights and Days* (1982), drew on this

genre in order to form political allegories in their texts and set the example for the future writers.<sup>194</sup> For Maher Jarrar, contemporary Arab novelists who created the post-Mahfouzean Arabic nouveau novel “draw on the *Nights* both from within— from the powerful folk and oral traditions of Arabic culture— and from without, as the *Nights* returned to the Arab world, having been absorbed by and repackaged in a new European form: the novel” (299). Writers such as Emil Habibi<sup>195</sup> and Elias Khoury<sup>196</sup> have all been inspired by the *Nights* and “in their works the *Nights* are used as a pretext for counter-narrative” against colonization (Jarrar 310).

Soudah’s story can also be considered a counter-narrative of the Orientalist and Eurocentric mindset in Europe and Germany. This time it is not the ruthlessness of a dictator that comes to the foreground, but the sufferings of twentieth-century refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants in the heart of Europe who are treated unequally. Luring the reader into the narrative through the Orientalist framework and the Sheherezade figure and then confronting them with the traumatic experiences of a contemporary Sheherezade, Soudah creates an alienation effect in them. While it is highly fashionable in our current multicultural society to frequently go to Middle Eastern restaurants, attend Oriental belly dancing nights, or organize Oriental story telling sessions, one becomes blind to the presence of Middle Eastern minorities or perceives them in stereotypes. For Soudah, it is important to depict the historical continuities in Europe’s

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<sup>194</sup> Hussein took the brutalities of the WWII as a background setting in his novella and thematized the relation between the ruler and the ruled and the power dynamics. In Ghazoul’s words “magic and supernatural incidents are contrived (in this novella), not so much in an artistic spirit, but in a heavy-handed allegory presenting an argument against war-mongering rulers whose focus on power rather than intellect leads them to play havoc with innocent and guiltless citizens” (136). Mahfouz, on the other hand, formed a critique of Anwar Sadat’s Open-Door policy and the rise of militant Islam in Egypt in his novel by intermixing political realism with metaphysical speculation.

<sup>195</sup> The Palestinian writer Habibi’s novel *The Secret Life of Saeed* (1972-1974), which thematizes “the Palestinian experience of dispossession during and after the creation of Israel, entails weaving various dialogical strategies, motifs, and techniques from the *Nights*” (Jarrar 305)

<sup>196</sup> Khoury’s novel *Bab al-shams*, which deals with the Palestinian Nakba, borrows heavily from *The Nights*. In Jarrar’s words “What follows is a series of stimulating narratives that are contained in one another in a structure en abyme technique, also deliberately reminiscent of the *Nights*. . . .The implied narrator recollects the Palestinian people’s oral memory, their geographical space as well as their personal inner spaces, only to besiege the reader and to seduce him/her gradually enter the world of the text . . .” (309).



and Germany's Orientalist visualization of Middle Eastern culture and individuals. From the very beginning of the story, the narrator underscores the repetitive and unchanging nature of the perception of the Middle East. He says: "Der Mensch im Abendland fängt plötzlich an zu fragen, was für in Kerl der Araber eigentlich ist. Komisch, vom ersten Kreuzzug bis zum Zweiten— ach, Entschuldigung! bis zur Bombardierung Bagdads— sind viele Jahre vergangen, und sie fragen immer noch: Wer sind eigentlich die Araber?" (40). The protagonist also suffers under similar expectations when he is invited as an honorary guest to tell some tales from the *Nights* accompanied by belly dancing: "Damit der Orient Orient bleibt— das gehört auch zu den demokratischen Spielregeln und ist eine tolerante Geste— laden sich Orientalen wie mich als Ehrengast . . ." (40). The narration of the fairy tale gains ritualistic qualities with the design of the room adorned with oriental carpets and pictures of camels with blond women riding on them. While the narrator expects the audience to depict their interest in the war, they bombard him with questions about the *Nights*: "Sollte meine Zunge aus Versehen mal in die Gegenwart rutschen und über demokratische Märchen im Orient erzählen, so schrien sie laut: ‚Märchen, Märchen, Märchen!‘" (41).

In the second part of the story, the narrator switches to the narrative mode of the *Nights* and introduces the young beautiful Iraqi protagonist Sheherezade, who is an opposing figure to the actual Sheherezade figure: "Es war einmal ein Mädchen, jung wie ein Olivenzweig. Es floh mit dem Rest seiner Familie vor einem furchtbaren Krieg. Man erzählt sich, daß dieser Krieg so furchtbar war, daß er alles, aber auch alles, sogar die Asche zu Asche verbrannte" (42). In the *Nights*, Sheherezade is the wife of the bloodthirsty sultan, who keeps telling him stories for one thousand and one nights so that he will spare her life. Considered a beautiful seductress, the paragon of feminist strength, and an outstanding intellect, Sheherezade has been one of the most

popular figures among Arab and Western authors. According to Mernissi, the popularity of Sheherezade can be related to her depiction as “a political heroine who keeps a tyrant at bay through the power of her intellect and wordplay, and finally as the truth-telling tale teller and, consequently, the standard bearer for the human rights movement” (Wu and Livescu 92). In Soudah’s story, on the other hand, the young Iraqi girl Sheherezade and her mother (who become refugees in Europe because of the Gulf War) do not speak—and even if they were to speak nobody cares to listen to them. In a metanarrative way, Soudah also points to the difference of his Sheherezade: “Damals träumten die armen Mädchen von einem Prinzen. . . . Die Sheherezade des 20. Jahrhunderts träumt von Papieren, von einem Stempel, . . . der besagt ‘Im Namen der Gesetze erlauben wir Sheherazade zu gehen, zu schlafen und zu arbeiten wo *wir* wollen.’ (Nach der demokratischen Regel: ‘Sag was du willst und mach, was wir wollen.’)” (44). After a long and tedious journey through different countries while facing geographical barriers, Sheherezade and her mother arrive at the border of a Western country. Nevertheless, their skin color, nose shape, and their overall physical qualities create a deep suspicion among the border police. After a ten hour, pointless detention, the border police decide to have them sniffed by the border dogs without even asking for their consent: “Er [Der Hund] kann die Leuten an ihrem Geruch unterscheiden, merkt, woher sie kommen, was ihr Ziel ist und ob ihr Geruch gefährlich ist für das Land” (42). After the humiliating examination, *the Herrscher* of the country, who respects laws more than anything else in his life, consents to Sheherezade’s and her mother’s residence. However, they are not allowed to leave the premise of their refugee dormitory and they have to carry a humiliating information sheet: “Größe: 1,20 m, Farbe der Augen: schwarz wie die Nacht, Farbe der Haare; noch schwärzer, Farbe der Haut: verbrannt, Form der Ohren: ziemlich gross, Form der Nase: lang, Ausbildung: null . . .” (43). I believe that, the racist characteristics of the

information sheet “de-selves” Sheherezade and her mother (takes away their agency), which also rises disturbing images from Germany’s colonial and National Socialist past.

While Sheherezade and her mother wait in patience to get their legal residence permit, their life takes on an unfortunate twist when Sheherezade is burned after an arson attack<sup>197</sup> to the asylum shelter. At first, the causes of the explosion are unknown and the media are reluctant to discuss the underlying reasons for the attack: “Das Fernsehen sagt: ‘Mutmasslich eine Unbekannte’, ohne zu sagen, woher sie wissen, daß er mutmaßlich unbekannt ist. . . . Um acht Uhr werden Namen genannt, ebenso politische Hintergründe, die nicht in die Märchensprache passen. Um elf Uhr aber steht fest, daß diese Unbekannten seit langem bekannt sind” (45). The police at first do not arrest the ultra-right youngsters, since they believe that they did not commit the act on purpose. The youngsters plead not guilty at the court because they claim that they were under the influence of alcohol. Their lawyer also forcefully asserts that the act cannot be categorized as “xenophobic” and “racist” since they did not know what they were doing. Even after the youngsters are found guilty of the crime, the media and politicians are reluctant to discuss the dangers lurking behind a racist and ethnocentric interpretation of German nationalism.<sup>198</sup> The problematic situation of asylum seekers and refugees, especially after the Unification, does not attract interest. At the end of the story, however, we hear the ironic voice of the narrator, who invites the German reader to confront their prejudices and their one-dimensional conceptualization of the nation: “Wie kann man von Tausend und eine Nacht erzählen mit Begriffen wie Demokratie, Fernsehen, Presse, Stempel usw. . . . Aber mein lieber

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<sup>197</sup> I contend that the arson attack foreshadows the difficulties the non-German refugees encountered in German after the Unification. The number of arson attacks especially against Turks and non-German asylum seekers by rightist groups skyrocketed between 1991-1995.

<sup>198</sup> In Mandel’s words “Rather than dealing with the root causes of the social problems of xenophobia, and rather than isolating the perpetrators of the crimes, the government instead opted to focus on the victims, by recasting the status of certain foreigners and amending legal right” (60).

Leser, ich erzähle doch nur fiktive Märchen. Meine Zunge hat sich verklemmt.” (46). Here the narrator plays with the notion of fiction and reality. If the reader is accustomed to regard the content of *Arabian Nights* as truth (i.e. as representing the reality of the Middle East) then they should not worry about the tale of the narrator, since his is only a harmless fictive account.

Soudah’s version of the story, however, has a nerve breaking ending. After Sheherezade’s lawyer files a financial compensation request, it is denied because her origin country is not a member of NATO. As a matter of fact, she is not legally seen as a victim anymore. Only towards the end, when Sheherezade faces the threat of expulsion, does a minister decide to interfere and help her get a legal residence permit. However, she will forever carry the traumas of her turbulent past and the arson attack in her body and soul.

Soudah not only depicts the dilemmas of the Palestinian heritage residents in Germany, but also attempts to form touching tales of the experiences between those minorities and the former East German citizens after the Unification. In order to lay bare the complexities of the ethno-cultural imagination of the nation, Soudah visualizes (in his story “Dialyse”) a triangular discussion between the Palestinian author-narrator and two German individuals, one of whom comes from the former GDR. This is a rather unusual form of confrontation, since in the realm of German transnational literature not many analogies have been formed between the experiences of displacement of former GDR citizens and the Middle Eastern heritage immigrants. Soudah, who seems to be unconvinced by the possibility of such an incident in Germany, unfolds this story in Portugal in a dialysis center. The center is located on a high mountain that is forsaken and desolate. Apart from the villas of the rich that are scattered around, it becomes difficult to encounter people. The patients, who become more vulnerable and emotional during this process of blood cleaning in this distant health center, feel the need to communicate with their fellow

patients. As a result, one of German patients (from former GDR) makes an attempt to talk with the author-narrator, which is a surprising incident for him. Eventually a West German female patient also joins the discussion and they talk about their feelings and impressions in the new Reunified Germany. What mainly interests me in this story is how the characters approach their private and collective memories during this discussion and how this impacts their conceptualization of the German nation. I also inquire if the characters can form analogies between each other's experiences and memory discourses and what implications this might have for the story.

While Soudah in "Dialyse" underscores the importance of communication between non-German and German heritage minorities and also German citizens, he also reflects the complexity of these confrontations, since it becomes difficult for the individuals to find the appropriate language to translate their experiences to each other. Although the author-narrator has spent a considerable amount of time in Germany, it has been hard for him to communicate with the Germans. As I have expanded on my analysis in the other stories, the author-narrator has encountered prejudices because of his Palestinian background and dark complexion. He feels cultural distance and alienation when he talks to the Germans, since he thinks that they do not usually look into each other's eyes. However, during his discussion with the German man in the health center, the narrator feels for the first time that he is being treated differently. This is partly related to the fact that the German man does not immediately inquire after the narrator's origin or his religious beliefs. The narrator states, "Mein Nachbar gefällt mir. Er schaut den Menschen in die Augen. Damit entwickelst du Vertrauen zu ihm als Menschen. Und das ist jedesmal etwas neues für mich . . ." (94). When the narrator learns that his neighbor is a former East German worker, he becomes more curious about his life story. It might be the case that the narrator feels

himself closer to this man because he is convinced that both of them share a minority status in the Reunified Germany. In order to warm up the discussion, the narrator exclaims: “ ‘Du kommst aus Sachsen, aus der kolonialen Zone’ ” (95) which makes the German man call the narrator “a Wessi” since it was supposed that the Unification brought about the colonization of East Germany by West Germany. The naming becomes an interesting moment in the story, since the German man seems to be the first person who does not label the narrator because of his accent or dark looks. However, he still utilizes a class-based stereotype to designate the narrator.

The colonial imagination that the author-narrator utilizes, in fact, results in the German man’s revelation about his bitterness over East and West German relations. He says :“Vierzig Jahre haben wir geschuftet. . . . Ihr, die Wessis, habt alles kaputt gemacht” (95). The man seems to feel nostalgic about the former times of the GDR, which might be related to the economic crisis and high unemployment rates in Germany. The man voices his disillusionment with Chancellor Kohl’s policies, which awakens the anger of a West German female patient in the same room. In a mocking tone, she states that it was indeed the East German (whom she labels as “Ossis”) who wanted the Reunification because of their financial problems. The narrator realizes that the West German patient does not take him or the German man seriously. She seems to be convinced that East Germany carries the blame for the economic and social crisis in the country. The narrator says “Sie spricht ruhig, hochnäsig und von ihrer Meinung überzeugt. Ihre Ausdrucksweise ist gewählt und fehlerfrei. Sie nimmt seine Meinung nicht Ernst. Es scheint, als ob sie beim Reden aus einem Buch lese. . . . Für sie ist das alles letztlich nicht interessant, Schnee von gestern“ (96). The East-German man desperately tries to prove how hard he worked and it almost seems like he has nostalgia for those old times. This becomes apparent in his emotional language when he exclaims that he used to produce “Schleifmaschinen”. He boasts that GDR

products are preferred these days because of their good quality. The woman, on the other hand, contradicts his speech by claiming that GDR factories did not care about environmental pollution. It is interesting to see that their speech becomes a confrontation ground for the former state ideologies, where they do not see each other as independent individuals but parts of a collective. The man becomes enraged and emotionally tortured by the cool and distant stance of the woman who seems to assert her superiority and disinterest like a “colonizer”. The author-narrator senses the man’s emotional commitment to his former factory and its products. Like the narrator’s physical yearning for water, the German man has a spiritual yearning for the old GDR: “Die Sehnsucht nach seiner Ex-Firma und nach seiner Ex-Maschine ist eine andere Art von Durst. . . . Er weiß genau, so wie er auch seine geliebte Schleifmaschine kennt, daß er jedes Gramm, das er während der Dialyse mehr trinkt, zur nächsten Dialyse mitnehmen muss” (97). The narrator feels empathy for the German man, since he felt the same way when Germans became critical of Palestine. He states: “Wie er sich verteidigt und zugleich vor Durst quält, kann ich gut verstehen. Es ergeht mir nicht anders. . . . Meine Zunge zwingt mich oft aufzugeben, wenn es in Diskussionen um Palästina geht. . . Die Wörter im Satz werden vertauscht, oder der Satz wird nicht zu Ende gesprochen“ (97).

One of the interesting topics in the conversation between the narrator and the German man becomes his insistent remarks about the good old times in the GDR period. He is indeed the first German (that the narrator encounters) who talks about his alienation from contemporary Germany and yearns for the hard factory work. He says “Die beste Schleifmaschine habe ich mit meiner Hand gemacht. Sie hat uns nie im Stich gelassen. . . . Fünf Jahre hatte sie Garantie. An Rußland, den alten Genossen, mußten wir sie abliefern” (98). It is interesting to see that the German man does not remember the everyday political life in the GDR and the surveillance of

the Stasi agents; rather he conjures up memories of his work place and the GDR products around which his identity was constructed. The yearning of the German man can in fact be interpreted as “Ostalgia”. The traumatic encounter with Western liberalism, in addition to the economic recession, rising unemployment, and growing social anxiety, inspired in many East Germans nostalgia for the stability and solidarity of the old days. It was in this context that everyday objects assumed their role as new privileged sites of emotion and memory, narrative production, and unbetrayed intimacy. As Paul Betts rightfully claims:

. . . Old things (even broken ones) live on as narrative vehicles conveying impressions of a collapsed world of social status, fashion, comfort, and security. Despite—or perhaps precisely because of—the abrupt ‘secularization’ of GDR artifacts, where they no longer embody the dreams of a prosperous present and a hopeful socialist future, they now serve as repositories of private histories and sentimental reflections. (200)

This German man’s transformed remembering of old GDR can also be compared to the narrator’s imagination of Palestine in the old times. As I stated in the first chapter, it is also the everyday natural objects from the narrator’s childhood that gain metaphorical value in the present time. In his unquenched nostalgia, the narrator does not remember any negative experiences about Palestine. Rather, his memories reflect a harmonious and idyllic past and the abrupt destruction of it by the Israeli invasion.

As the conversion proceeds, however, the German man also begins perceiving the narrator through a prejudiced outlook. This is instigated by the remark of a nurse who naively tells the narrator that the Arabs like blond women kneeling on their knees and talks about the rich oil sheiks who are swarming into Portugal. All of a sudden the German man bombards the narrator with questions about the Arabs, the camels in the Middle East, his belief in the laziness of Arabs and the abundance of free time they have. The discussion takes an interesting turn when the



German man labels the narrator as “an Ausländer” after the narrator criticizes the West Germans for being prejudiced against East Germans. The German man talks about the benefits of the Unification and emphasizes the power and strength of Germany, which should be respected by the “foreigners”. In light of this turbulent discussion the narrator feels “abgeschoben and in die Ecke gestellt”. He says: “Hier bin ich und bleibe ich Ausländer, und hier werde ich auch als Ausländer sterben.“ (100). His enragement, however, is also filled with a strong self-reflexive attitude, since the narrator knows that he makes the same stereotypical mistakes as the German man. He says: “Andererseits kritisiere ich aber auch ständig die Deutschen, schreibe das auf und vermarkte es sogar. Warum sollten die Deutschen dann nicht auch ihr Ausländerklischee vermarkten?”(100). The narrator confesses his weakness when the discussion comes to the topic of nationalism and homeland, since he also feels bitter when people criticize Palestine. He says: “Nach außen verteidige ich uns immer. Wenn es um Kritik geht, dann lieber nur unter uns Palästinensern” (100-101). I believe that this self-critical approach becomes a key moment in the novel since it opens up the ground for a more productive dialogue. The narrator underscores the importance of examining one’s own national prejudices and stereotypes before blaming others for the same mistake. Only in this way one might form analogies between the collective and private national experiences.

In light of his self-criticism, the narrator decides to approach the German man in a more friendly way and underscores the commonality of their experiences as minorities in West Germany: “Die Wessis haben deine` Maschine und auch meine Kamele geklaut. . . . Neulich haben sie im Schwarzwald ein modernes Kamelzentrum eröffnet. Dort kann man arabische Klamotten ausleihen, sich auf ein Kamel setzen, . . . und eine Runde im Schnee zu arabischer Bauchtanz reiten” (101). The protagonist emphasizes that both GDR and Middle Eastern cultures

have become exotic commodities in the new Germany. It can be asserted that the protagonist's remark about the exhibitory quality of East German and Oriental cultures introduces an important point on how the identity of the non-Germans and former East-Germans was imagined by West Germans right after the Unification. I contend that the amusement park could be interpreted as a continuation of the Orientalist mindset of the Western observer and should be seen in connection with the colonialist exhibitions in Germany and Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The establishment of an oriental park in *Schwarzwald* with camels and belly dancing music can be seen as an organized visual spectacle, where the supposed truth or authenticity of the Middle East with its ahistorical and antimodern qualities is presented to the western observer. In these parks, the Western visitor wants to take part in the mystical reality of the Orient as an invisible observer wearing traditional clothes and riding a camel. This form of entertainment can also be seen as a continuation of the nineteenth century European interest for the Orient which resulted in numerous forms of exhibitions. As Timothy Mitchell rightfully asserts: "To establish the objectness of the Orient, as a picture-reality containing no sign of the increasingly pervasive European presence required that the presence itself, ideally, become invisible." (307). The visitor-observer through the exhibition constructs an a-historical reality of the Orient, which is a mere repetition of the previous exhibitions. In Mitchell's words, "The 'East itself' is not a place, despite the exhibition's promise, but a further series of representations, each one renouncing the reality of the Orient, but doing no more than referring backwards and forwards to all the others" (Mitchell 313). The picturesque Orient is only interesting for the Western visitors when they do not confront the returning gaze of the natives. It is in these parks that we encounter the commodization of ethnicity, where Arabs, camels, and belly dancers become "chic" and "attractive". As Ruth Mandel succinctly states, "In short ethnic is 'in'; that

is, when it does not extend beyond the friendly staff of the quaint and colorful ethnic restaurant, when it remains tourist friendly in a native village, when it stays in its safe, commodified place” (96).

A similar outlook can be applied to the commodification of the GDR culture after the Reunification to which the protagonist also refers. Although in the case of GDR we cannot talk about an ethnic, racial, or religious difference, still the culture was seen as threatening the western capitalist values. In the initial years there was a devaluation of East German history in the public narratives and also a sharp decline in GDR products. The following years of the Unification witnessed a boom in nostalgia industry with the revival of GDR products and the cataloging and museumication of everyday life. Not only were former GDR brands revived and re-produced, but also GDR Tv shows were produced again. In the exhibitions and shows an ahistorical and homogenous image of GDR was created. Many East Germans were not happy with these shows, since their experience remained peripheral to the West. This for Paul Cooke depicts an “Orientalist” use of GDR. He asserts: “In this new proliferation of interest in GDR consumer goods we see the complete rejection of GDR objects as being ‘normal’ or ‘down-to-earth’. Instead, such objects are turned into cult items, a process that then allows the tourist *Ostalgia* industry to foreground, indeed to fetishize, their ‘abnormality’, or exoticism.” (150). This exotic imagery robbed the individuality of the former GDR citizens and downplayed their political and cultural identity dilemmas.

As in Al- Mozany’s novel, the stories of Soudah represent a world of disillusionment, where the exilic individual confronts barriers in his homeland and Germany. The narrator in these stories, who I believe represents the author, lives as an exile in Jordon, where he encounters political problems. He comes to Germany in the 1980s hoping that the democratic

and enlightened environment, which is the cradle of so many intellectuals and thinkers, will give him the chance of leading a more harmonious life. However, he encounters high national, cultural and political boundaries in Germany. He is either seen as a terrorist or an Oriental entertainer, who performs oral stories. It seems that he can only be tolerated and become a part of the society, if he complies with the rules of the binary worlds (the Orient- the Occident). As an intellectual, who is well informed about German and European history, the narrator is never given a chance to criticize the German nationalist consciousness as a fellow member. Even though surrounded by these negative barriers, the narrator in a determined attitude tries to transcend those through writing. Literature offers him the chance of a critical self-understanding and self-realization.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

In this section, I would like to summarize the multidimensional approaches to exile in the works of Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany, and Soudah from a comparative perspective. These authors foreground the tensions in the representation of exile and exilic identities through both the form and content of their fictional narratives. In all of these works, the characters' cultural identities resist easy categorizations: they are neither stable nor entirely knowable. The displaced and travelling characters can neither be portrayed as a celebration of hybrid and free-floating identities (who disdain national affiliations), nor can their exilic situation be solely portrayed as a painful and alienating state that results in their nostalgic attachments to their home countries. While each experience of exile is distinct in these works, there are also commonalities that connect the protagonists across geographies and time. First of all, all of the exile characters form attachments, detachments, and reattachments to and from the nation. It becomes difficult to conceive exile as an individual and detached experience in these narratives, since there is always a tension between the individual and the collective. Many of the characters develop a detached outlook toward the discourses of nationalism and racism, and try to remap their homelands' and Germany's history and national imagination. However, the exilic situation of some other characters prevents them from perceiving the authoritarian and discriminatory perspective in an ethno-centric form of nationalism. As a result, the authors convey that the experiences of exile and movement might not always imbue the individual with a critical consciousness, but also with feelings of jealousy and resentment.

For instance, in *Der Marschländer*, Alwan is extremely critical of Iraqi national consciousness in the 1970s and 1980s as a result of the authoritarian Arab-Sunni dominancy. In Baghdad, his discrimination causes him suffering and he alienates himself from the nationalist ideology. As a result, rather than defining himself an Iraqi, he considers himself as a Mesopotamian and a Marsh Arab and cherishes his local attachments. Later in his life, Alwan becomes an asylum-seeker in West Germany and develops critical affiliations with an ethno-culturalist understanding of the German nation. He draws analogies between German and Iraqi collective consciousness, which conjures up images of the close relationship between Nazi Germany and Iraq. While Alwan wishes for an alternative national consciousness, his pain and suffering intensify when he finds no interlocution partners. In Wadi Soudah's stories, on the other hand, the Palestinian author-narrator, who lives in Germany, desperately yearns for the cultural and ethnic national unity of the Palestinians. However, he also criticizes the exclusionist nationalist policies of Israel and the ethno-cultural nationalist imagination in Germany, especially in the aftermath of German Reunification. In *Alman Terbiyesi*, the Turkish-German protagonist Salih Süvari, becomes a supporter of Turkish nationalism and Pan-Turkic nationalist unity at the beginning of the twentieth century that involves the formation of a Federation of Turkic people. Born in the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century, Salih witnesses the nationalist revolts in Europe and Middle East, and convinces himself that nationalism is the natural path for a people. When he moves to Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century, he also supports German nationalist consciousness and tries to become a member of the German nation by learning the language and immersing himself in the culture. While Salih does not propagate ultra-nationalist ethnocentrist nationalism, he fails to ardently critique the nationalist policies of Nazi Germany, as well as those of Talat and Enver Pashas in Turkey. Only towards

the end of the novel, when he witnesses his Jewish-German girlfriend's suffering, does he recognize his ideological blindness. In *Unerwarteter Besuch* on the other hand, the anonymous poet narrator, who comes from Istanbul and resides in Berlin, forms critical affiliations with German nationalist consciousness and memory discourse during his constant commute between East and West Berlin. Bits and pieces of Turkish collective memory also interfere in his imagination process. All in all, the individual exilic experiences of these protagonists cannot be studied without considering the relationships they form to the transnational and national collective.

Secondly, the exilic situation of these protagonists results in their alternative understanding of time. Critics of exile have developed alternative theories about exiles' perception of time. For instance, some scholars argue the impossibility of the exile to engage with the present time frame, since he is immersed in nostalgic melancholy and banished from the historical time of his nation. For example, Claudio Guillén states, "In our time the most terrible of banishments will often be the exile from the present- or even worse, from the future" (McClennen 275). Edward Said, on the other hand, points to the simultaneity of two different time perceptions. In his words, "For an exile, habits of life, expression, or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally" ("Reflections on Exile" 186) Said implies that while the exile lives in the present time frame of his host country, he also experiences the past of his native land. This double vision becomes an enabling force for the exile. McClennen also underscores the simultaneous impact of the present and past in the exile's consciousness. She argues, "... exiles often find themselves obsessed with recording their version of history, one that accounts for those who opposed the dictatorship. Yet

these memories of the past are always flawed, always tainted by the distortions of the exile's imagination and desire. The past is only understood in light of the present and vice versa" (59). I argue that Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany and Soudah's fictional narratives also portray the protagonists' complex imaginings of time, and their experiences of temporal conflict, which are also depicted through the performative structure of their novels.

Alwan in *Der Marschländer*, for instance, forms gaps and fissures in the linear and exclusionist national time of Iraq by conjuring up memories of the different civilizations and minorities in Mesopotamia. While he is excluded from the present time frame of Iraq in Germany, Alwan often remembers his past in a critical way. On the other hand, Alwan also forms connections to the present time of Germany and its national history, which results in an alternative exilic understanding of the nation's history. Towards the end of the novel, when Germany unifies, Alwan cannot involve himself in the present national time, since he is excluded from the picture. Past memories take hold of him leading to depression. By remembering Kafka and identifying himself with Joseph K. in *Der Prozess*, Alwan also affiliates himself with the time frame of other exiles. According to McClennen "Upon being forced to leave one's land, these mythological figures of exile become part of the exile's cultural community and they pull the exile toward the historical void of primordial time" (65). In Wadi Soudah's stories, the Palestinian author-narrator recalls memories that are related to his experiences in his Palestinian village of Nablus, which is located in West Bank. However, his memories create an idealized version of the past, since it is impossible for him to visualize the changes brought upon by the Israeli forces. Through the metaphor of the olive tree, a symbol for the eternity of the Palestinian nation, the author-narrator creates a primordialist concept of time. At other times, however, the author-narrator also forms connections to the present time in Germany and its collective history.



He attempts to form connections between his own experiences and memories, and those of an East German patient. In *Unerwarteter Besuch* and *Alman Terbiyesi*, the exilic conceptualization of time and the complexities of historical representation become main preoccupations. When Salih reluctantly returns from Berlin to Istanbul (because the National Socialist era begins in Germany) in 1939, he at first cannot affiliate himself with the present nationalist time of the Turkish Republic. Considering his residency in Istanbul as banishment, he sequesters himself in his room and reminisces about Ottoman Empire and Germany. By involving himself in the Pan-Turkist movement, and working as an informant for the German Embassy in Istanbul, Salih also affiliates himself with the present time frame, and works toward the realization of a utopia. By affiliating himself with the German poet Stefan George, who went through an internal exile, Salih also forms a connection to the primordial time of the exile community. The author-narrator in *Unerwarteter Besuch* also simultaneously involves himself with the past of Germany and his own country. Especially on his train rides from West to East Berlin, he conjures up haunting and fragmented images of the German-Jews, the proletariat, and East Germans, which interrupt the national history discourse. Nevertheless, by visualising images of the military coup in Turkey and connecting it to the suffering of the leftists all around the world during the Cold War years, he also enlivens Turkey's controversial history and creates a transnational memory discourse and time frame. Both of these novels utilize postmodern narration techniques where multiple and fragmented imaginations of past and present are juxtaposed. All of these works attempt to depict the artificiality of the discourse of a mythic national time as propagated by authoritarian political regimes.

In all these works, the exilic, fragmented outlook of the protagonists also results in a crisis of representation in the narratives. As a result, the writers make use of pastiche,

metafiction, irony, parody, and intertextuality in order to address the disorientation in representation. For these authors, the reconsideration and remapping of identity also involves a newer conception of both language and genre. As McClennen states:

. . . certain exile texts struggle to narrate; yet their authors have lost faith in language's ability to account for history. The exile subject must confront the loss of identity at a moment in history when, due to authoritarianism in their nations, the notion of the self and its relationship to language has become extremely fragile. (121)

The complexity of representing collective and private memory can be considered the main theme of *Alman Terbiyesi*. The third-person narrator's account is intersected by the memoir accounts of Salih and the letters of his wife and ex-girlfriend. Furthermore, the prologue of the novel, which comprises fragmented newspaper articles and Salih's notes—without the binding force of a narrator,—complicates the linear narrative frame. Through the third-person narrator we learn about Salih's crisis in representing a truthful picture of his past in the memoir. While Salih distrusts the accounts of historians, he also realizes that in his memoir-writing he also acts like a historian. It becomes, moreover, difficult to represent an integral picture of his identity, which undergoes major transformations during the wars. In a similar way, in *Unerwarteter Besuch*, the poet-narrator loses his trust in language, since through his writing meaning escapes him. This also forms a crisis in the representation of history and private memories. This crisis is reflected in the postmodern structure of the novel. Through unlinear flashbacks, constantly shifting narrative voices, intertextual references to other novels and newspaper accounts, and the meta-narrative comments of the poet-narrator (who reminds the reader of the fictionality of the work), the novel resists a teleological linear structure. We encounter characters, who face the crisis of understanding and representing their identities and memories. In Wadi Soudah's stories, representing identity and history also becomes a challenge to the author-narrator, who, in a

metafictional and ironic way, critiques himself as a Middle Eastern heritage German writer. While he thinks that it is a cliché to expect writers like him to utilize Orientalist story techniques and integrate exotic elements, he also cannot make do without them. The same problem arises in his representation of Palestinian history and identity, since he employs metaphors and concepts that have been commonly used by other exile Palestinian writers before him. The only possibility for him to transcend this crisis is to form interventions into the teleological linear narrative structure of his novels through his ironic voice, and utilize the *Arabian Nights* story technique to narrate the current problems of refugees. Lastly, *Der Marschländer*, which narrates the life story of Alwan from childhood until his death, can be considered an anti-Bildungsroman. Self-realization and establishing a successful integral identity are denied to the asylum-seeker Alwan. The novel portrays the difficulty of representing Alwan in clear cut terms.

In these works, the characters' perception of geography and space in relation to the nation is also multidirectional and informed by contradictions. In *Der Marschländer*, for instance, Alwan resists the Sunni Arab dominance over the Iraqi geography, and frequently states that he comes from Mesopotamia or the Marshlands. I contend that by denying to perceive Mesopotamian geography as a national space, Alwan underscores the coexistence of different minority groups in the region and also points to its rich cultural heritage. Baghdad, on the other hand, where the Sunni-Arab bureaucrats live, becomes a space of confinement for Alwan. In Germany, the space of the small city of Hilter where Alwan is transferred as an asylum seeker also becomes imprisoning. Firstly, Alwan feels confined because he is not allowed to leave; however, he also feels metaphorically imprisoned since Hilter, which is located in the Teutoburg Forest, carries the ghostly traces of a burdening national past. Nevertheless, for the ironic narrator the space of Hilter, which he sees through a romantic gaze, is the only place where

Alwan can become an authentic German. In its cosmopolitan affiliations, the novel depicts how different ideologies can affect our understanding of space. In Wadi Soudah's stories, the invaded Palestinian space becomes idealized through the imagination of the exile author-narrator. While he resists seeing the historical transformations in the geography, he foregrounds the olive tree as a symbol of the eternity of the Palestinian national space. Like Alwan's experiences in Hilter, Germany also becomes a confining space for the protagonist. Even in his dreams, when he tries to fly to Palestine, he comes across borders and walls. In *Alman Terbiyesi*, the protagonist who witnessed the nationalist struggles and wars in the early twentieth century loses his trust in maps. Losing his home city, Monastir, to Serbians during the Balkan Wars, he forsakes a territorial form of nationalism. Rather, he forms attachments to cosmopolitan cities such as Berlin and Istanbul. In *Unerwarteter Besuch*, the poet-narrator's exilic gaze also changes his perception of the space of East and West Berlin. The train journey he takes between East and West Berlin offers new imaginative topographies for the poet-narrator, since he conjures up images from the past. On the other hand, the Kreuzberg district becomes a haunting and imprisoning space for both Kadir and Heinz Lambert. Kadir, who feels trapped because of stereotypes against Turks, thinks that he cannot achieve self-realization in Kreuzberg. Heinz feels extremely threatened in Kreuzberg, since it does not seem a part of the German national space. He chooses to attribute Orientalist images to Kreuzberg.

By drawing critical analogies between the twentieth century national and diasporic memory discourses of their countries of origin and Germany, Ören, Şenocak, Al-Mozany, and Soudah try to reconsider and remap twenty-first century German imagination from an exilic point of view. For them the present crisis in German identity can only be resolved if the non-German residents can also join the discussions about German collective memory and narrate

their own experiences of exile and movement. While these writers try to enliven the silenced and erased voices of minorities in their fictions—and thus offer alternative forms of history writing—they also transgress the traditional forms of literary genres. Without insisting on the truth claims of their narratives, which is emphasized by their self-reflexive engagement with representation, these authors invite the readers to an open-ended dialogue and challenge them to question their perspectives on identity, history, and memory.

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## Vita- Yasemin Mohammad

### EDUCATION

- **Ph.D., German Literature & Culture**, The Pennsylvania State University, 2012
- **M.A., English Language and Literature**, Yeditepe University, 2005
- **B.A., Liberal Arts**, Bogazici University, 2002

### FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AWARDS (Selected)

- Arts and Humanities Graduate Student Summer Residency Fellowship, The Pennsylvania State University, Summer 2010
- Dissertation Research Fellowship, Christian-Albrechts –Universität zu Kiel, Germany, Spring 2009 and Fall 2010
- Trans-Atlantic Summer Institute in European Studies—Graduate Student Fellowship, University of Minnesota, June 2008
- Waddell Biggart Graduate Fellowship, The Pennsylvania State University, Summer 2006

### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (Selected)

- “Transgressing Borders Between the Orient and Occident in Jamal Mahjoub’s *Travelling with Djinn*” NEMLA Roundtable: Journeys of the Bicultural Self: Narrative Geographies, New Brunswick, New Jersey, April 7-10, 2011
- “Feminist Autobiographical Practices as Sites of Transnational Transgressions: Leila Ahmed’s *A Border Passage*” Globalization, Transnationalism and Narration Conference, Doğuş University, Istanbul, Turkey, November 24-26, 2010
- “The Clash between Cosmopolitan and Nationalist Outlooks in Hussain Al-Mozany’s novel *Der Marschländer: Bagdad, Beirut, Berlin* ” NEMLA Conference Session: Literary Production of Non-Territorial German-speaking Writers, Montreal, Quebec, April 8-11, 2010
- “Heteroglossia as a Creative Force of Cosmopolitanism in Emine Sevgi Özdamar’s *Mutterzunge* and Rafik Schami’s *Erzähler der Nacht*” ACLA Conference Session: Double Tongues-Multilingual Novels as Sites of Cultural and Linguistic Resistance, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 1-4, 2010

### TEACHING (Selected)

- **History of German Culture & Civilization**, The Pennsylvania State University, 2010
- **Religion and Literature**, The Pennsylvania State University, 2007
- **German Language** (Semesters I, II, III), The Pennsylvania State University, 2005-2012
- **English Language** (University) 2003-2005