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BREATHING HEARTS

Sufism, Healing, and Anti-Muslim Racism in Germany

Nasima SELIM

Breathing Hearts

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For my companions of breath on the path

Question: "Who is a Sufi?"
Answer: "A Sufi is someone who breathes well!"
—Conversation with Pir Zia Inayat-Khan, 29 March 2013

Map 0.1. Map of Berlin and Its Districts, 2005. © Felix Hahn, Wikimedia Commons, public domain © CC BY-SA 2.5

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Preface
The Ethnographer Breathes

Healing the suffering of fellow humans is a question that has preoccupied me for most of my adult life. I spent fourteen years (1991–2005) as a medical student and practicing physician, learning and practicing biomedicine as the mechanics and repair of the human body (and mind) in Bangladesh. In the following years, as a public health researcher and medical anthropologist, I studied and taught anthropological approaches to health and healing in South Asia and transnational practices of healing across Asia and Europe. I was born in a Sunni Muslim family in Bangladesh, then a newly independent country fraught with religious and secular tensions. Sufism was interwoven in the fabric of the Muslim-majority society where I grew up. My biography and lifelong interest in healing across diverse traditions, formations, and geographies shape the book you are about to read.

Breathing Hearts portrays the practices and politics of Sufi healing in a place far from my first home, in a city that has become my current home. This book draws mostly from my doctoral research (Selim 2019), with additional fieldwork materials collected in 2013–2015 and 2020–2021. As years went by, my Sufi companions navigated newer realities that may not be represented here. Yet, I hope readers will find it useful to read this ethnographic (and Sufi) journey in a postsecular city of Western Europe.

While writing this book, I recalled my first theological discussion as a six-year-old with my then fifty-five-year-old grandmother about Allah:

> Nasima: *Nanu* [Grandma], if Allah created everyone, who made Allah? Who is Allah?
> Nanu: Well! You see that madman who goes around the neighborhood? . . . He was asking such questions. *Allah-r waaste* [For God's sake], stop asking these questions!

It was a scary thought to see myself in the company of these so-called madmen on the streets looking for Allah. But I did not stop asking these questions. And I decided to enter a discipline (anthropology) that, rather, welcomes difficult questions. To the bewilderment of my mother and grandmother, I often raged in my early youth against the patriarchal image of the Divine. Neither my grandmother nor my mother understood why, then, after so many years of militant atheism and unquestionable devotion to my secular (note: native German speaker) prophet Karl Marx, I was eager to explore an Islamic tradition in a Muslim-minority German city. I did not fully realize it until that long moment when I sensed how I had followed my desire line[1] to breathe away from the prescriptive authority of Islam toward a practice deeply entangled with the Islamic tradition and expansive enough to breathe along the lines of other, non-Islamic traditions.

Sufism is commonly defined as Islamic mysticism. *Breathing Hearts* takes this definition as a point of departure to explore what it means to "breathe well" along the Sufi path in a place where public expression of certain religiosity is constrained, and Islam is increasingly marginalized. How is Sufi healing practiced and experienced here and now? This book presents a theoretically informed account of Sufism, healing, and anthropology in Berlin, as lived and recounted by the ethnographer, as a dual apprentice of anthropology and Sufi practice.

I recall an early lesson in Sufi breathing as I embarked as a breather-wayfarer on the "path of the Heart" (*Weg des Herzens*) in the spring of 2013: *Hush dar dam* (awareness of breathing). *Hush dar dam* is about silently or loudly breathing in and out. It is the first of the eleven Naqshbandi "rules" or breathing practices that Khidr,[2] a postmigrant Sufi healer in Berlin, taught his students (the ethnographer among them). He repeated the rule often to remind his audience how central breath and breathing are in Sufi practice.

> Life depends on breathing, and in all authentic traditions, it is vital to pay attention to correct breathing without an obsession with it! Find your inner rhythm of breathing for your daily activities, as well as the hopefully more relaxed spiritual exercises. Allow the body and the breathing to organically reach their correct rhythm, no matter what the activity—be flexible and adjust to what it is you are doing. Stress and tension must be avoided to correctly perform in 3D [three-dimensional] reality as well as when doing an exercise . . . Please don't worry about your breathing. Just

> allow it to settle naturally and give it some attention in the beginning. Once you are relaxed and engaged in the correct breathing, surrender to it, and focus on merging with the exercise or activity you are engaged with. For loudly chanted dhikr [the Sufi breathing practice of recollection and repeated recitation of the names of Allah and sacred healing words or phrases], there are definite breathing techniques you can learn from the teacher and/or when engaged in a group exercise of this nature. Listen, observe, and harmonize with what the group and the teacher are doing. But even for silent dhikr alone or in a group, correct breathing and an awareness of breathing are required to maximize the effort of the exercise. When in doubt, or [if you are] not sure, please feel free to ask. *Hush dar dam* can be used as a dhikr to calm down breathing and relax the physical body before doing any other exercises. You breathe in *hush*, then you breathe out *dar*, then you breathe in *dam*, then you breathe out *hush*, and so forth. This rule and dhikr are also helpful when someone decides to stop smoking. I'm speaking from my personal experience doing it, and it worked wonders! (9 April 2014)

A few weeks after receiving her first Sufi breathing lesson, the ethnographer dreams[3] that she is standing on the balcony of a house where she grew up in central Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. She smells fire and jumps off the balcony. To her relief, she did not crash on the street. The street had turned into a lake. Immersed in cold water and shivering, she saw a raft decorated with colorful light bulbs floating a few meters away. She heard familiar voices reciting the names of Allah and stretched out her hand. A friend, Sophia,[4] pulled her up. The smell of wet wood, smoke, and incense filled up and calmed her troubled senses. In this dream, the ethnographer sits down on the raft, dipping both feet in the water, listening to the dhikr, with her eyes following a pair of clouds turning into a sinister giant. She feared that something terrible was about to happen. Suddenly she saw Khidr coming toward the raft. She cried out to everyone, "Look! He is walking on water. What a miracle!" (The connection to the legendary miracles of Khidr—the green prophet, the guide of the prophet Musa or Moses, and teacher of all Sufis—should not escape our attention here). At that moment, Khidr whispered into her ears, "What miracle? The lake just turned into ice. Wake up!" I woke up breathless in my apartment in Kreuzberg Berlin and jotted down the dream in a field diary.

Human beings are liturgical animals.[5] Whether in secular, religious, or spiritual terms,[6] we cultivate the capacity to imagine alter-

natives and allow ourselves to be critically dis/re-enchanted. In doing so, we may find the existential resources necessary for daily struggle and heal everyday secular and religious suffering. In this regard, the beguiling diversity of Sufi practices in Berlin can teach anthropologists a few lessons about how breathing, wayfaring hearts seek and live otherwise. Perhaps there is no miracle, as Khidr pointed out in the dream. Yet Sufi breather-wayfarers are supposed to be awakening in the R/real[7] and joining the struggle for something else.

Breathing Hearts describes the practices and politics of Sufi healing in a city with persistent inequalities yet filled with some conditions of possibility. *Breathing* in this book is an organizing principle, a corporal metaphor, entangled with the practice of *wayfaring* as a "perambulatory movement" (Ingold 2011, 148). If wayfaring and breathing are the fundamental modes by which "living beings inhabit the earth" (2011, 12), all humans are, in this sense, breather-wayfarers, living (and breathing) along lifelines. *Breathing Hearts* describes how Sufi healing practices are constitutive of the historical lines of transmitting breath, the desire lines of breathing-becoming Sufi, the subtle-material bodies transformed in dhikr and breathing otherwise, the quest for healing secular and religious suffering, and the (anti-)politics of these ways of breathing. Sufism and ethnographic research on Sufi healing may lead to different forms of knowledge. Anthropologists and Sufis may live different lives, yet, both traditions enable us to talk back to anti-Muslim racism[8] and the trivialization of the postsecular imagination in German society.

Notes

1. *Desire line* is a pathway of longing and belonging that we may follow in life, analogous to an informal route that "pedestrians prefer to take to get from one location to another rather than using a sidewalk or other official route" (Shepherd and Murray 2007, 1).
2. Al-Khaḍir or al-Khiḍr, "the green one," is a guiding (imaginal) figure for the Sufis (Franke 2000, 2; Wensinck 2012). The "Khidr" in this dream is a composite figure of the legendary al-Khiḍr and a writer, designer, multimedia artist, and Sufi teacher of Color whom I met in Berlin in the summer of 2013. The contemporary Khidr introduced me to Ibn Arabi (1165–1240), known as the al-Shaykh al-Akbar (the greatest master) in the Sufi tradition (Ateş 2012).

3. Dreams are alternate means of apprehending reality (Ingram 2015), whether articulated by the interlocutors or experienced by ethnographers in the field. Katherine Pratt Ewing (1994) discussed her dream of a Sufi saint in Pakistan to raise the problem of "anthropological atheism" and the ethnographer's vulnerability toward the "temptation to believe" (1994, 571). See Amira Mittermaier (2011) for a detailed treatment of dream stories in contemporary Egypt.
4. Sophia is a fellow wayfarer, a white German social worker who grew up in (former) West Germany. In 2013, I met her in a Sufi meditation and reading group led by Khidr.
5. This statement follows James Smith's (2012, 178) argument of "secular liturgy" against the distinction between the religious and the secular: while not every practice is religious, certain "secular" practices function religiously in that they value/worship and practice "formative rituals of ultimacy" (2012, 178).
6. My interlocutors often distinguished between organized religion and (individualized) spirituality. I am ambivalent about the ontological separation between the two terms. Like religion, spirituality lacks a specific definition. While *religion* indicates "communal identity and interactions, authority, and tradition," the related term *spirituality* seems to underscore "individual experience, novelty, and anti-authoritarian impulses" (Bender 2012, 48).
7. The Real is the translation of *al-Haqq*, one of the ninety-nine names of Allah, the all-encompassing entity in the Islamic tradition (Chittick 1989, 132). I use "the Real" to encompass Allah's existence as Sufis imagine it, and I use "the real" as an "epistemological field that creates (and delimits) the conditions of the possibility of knowledge" (Mittermaier 2011, 259). Waking up in the Real is a heightened recognition of the unsuccessful efforts to escape the material conditions of existence.
8. The term "Islamophobia" is often used to describe the persistent hostility toward Muslims and their experiences of discrimination. I prefer to use the term "anti-Muslim racism" following postmigrant scholars and antiracist activists in Germany (Attia 2007, 2009; Keskinkilic 2019; Lewicki and Shooman 2020; Shooman 2014). "Anti-Muslim racism" takes into account the political, structural, and institutional dimensions of racializing Muslims, unlike the term "Islamophobia," which semantically alludes to the supposed fears individuals *feel* against "Islam" and "the Muslims," letting the questions of historical continuities and sociopolitical contexts recede into the background (Keskinkilic 2019).

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Note on Transliteration and Translation

I have adopted phonetic transliteration for the frequently used Arabic, Farsi, and Turkish words. For example, I refer to the two oft-cited Sufi figures as Mevlana Rumi and Ibn Arabi, instead of writing their full names. For frequently appearing terms, I use the most recognized form, for example, *dhikr,* instead of the multiple forms (*zikar*, *zikir*, *zikr*). On the first appearance of Sufi terms, I have included the standard Arabic transliteration followed by other forms relevant to my field settings. For example, I mention the Arabic words, *samā'* and *suhba,* and the Turkish words, *sema* and *sohbet,* as they were related and often synonymous. More often, I have chosen the Turkish spelling commonly used in my field settings. I have adopted the Brill transliteration system from the *Encyclopaedia of Islam Online Edition* for Arabic, Farsi, and Turkish terms and historical figures, as well as the rather rare Bangla terms. For the cited Qur'anic verses, I have consulted English translations from *The Study Quran* (Nasr 2015). For stylistic purposes, I have chosen "you" instead of "thou" in these translations. I mention "Allah" instead of "God" to do justice to the invocation of the Divine name in my field settings. English translations are provided in parenthesis for all non-English terms and phrases and/or with endnotes on their first appearances. The glossary at the end of the book provides brief explanations for the most significant and recurring terms and acronyms. For the German words, I followed the standard usage in the *Langenscheidt* German-English-German lexicon. For the translation of Arabic, Farsi, and Turkish terms, I consulted the Brill *Encyclopaedia of Islam Online Edition*. The English spellings follow standard US usage, except for the direct quotations and the titles of cited works. When in doubt, I checked with the native speakers of the languages mentioned above. All translations are mine unless otherwise specified.

Abbreviations

AfD	Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany), is a right-wing populist-nationalist political party.
AOM	*Alt-orientalische Musik- und Bewegungstherapie* (Ancient Oriental Music-and-Movement Therapy), practiced by Tümata.
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.
CAM	Complementary and Alternative Medicine
ISO	International Sufi Order, renamed Inayati Order/ Tariqat-i Inayatiyya in 2016, is one stream of the networks inspired by Hazrat Inayat Khan.
ISM	International Sufi Movement, one stream of the networks inspired by Hazrat Inayat Khan.
NPD	Die Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (the National Democratic Party of Germany) is a far-right political party ideologically aligned with the historical Nazi party.
SRI	Sufi Ruhaniat International, one stream of the networks inspired by Hazrat Inayat Khan.
SZR	Sufi-Zentrum Rabbaniyya, formerly known as Sufi-Zentrum Berlin (Sufi-Center Berlin).
Tümata	Türk Müziğini Araştırma ve Tanıtma Grubu (Traditional Turkish Music Research and Promotion Society) founded by the late Rahmi Oruç Güvenç.

Introduction
"A Sufi Is Someone Who Breathes Well"
The Ways of the Breathing Hearts

"Who is a Sufi?" I asked Pir Zia Inayat-Khan in March 2013, as we sat breathing together in Gersfeld, a small (West) German town, following a group of Inayati Sufis from Berlin, the capital of reunified Germany. Pir Zia (b. 1971) is the head of the transnational Inayati Order (Inayatiyya) (formerly the International Sufi Order with its headquarters in the United States) and the grandson of Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882–1927), a north Indian Sufi whose name frequently appeared during my fieldwork. Pir Zia listened to me attentively, paused momentarily to breathe, and looking straight into my eyes said, "A Sufi is someone who breathes well!" (29 March 2013).

A year later, in the summer of 2014, I asked Ayşe a different but related question, "What role does healing play in Sufi practice?" Ayşe is a lawyer in her forties, a first-generation migrant woman of Color[1] from Turkey and a key figure in one of the most prominent Sufi networks in Berlin, the Haqqani-Naqshbandis. Sitting in her home during one of the hottest Ramadan months in Kreuzberg, Ayşe returned my question with another question, "Why do I suffer, and what should I do?" She answered it herself with an extended narrative of chronic depression in a society fraught with a long history of hostility against immigrants and Muslims. Ayşe described how her quest for healing eventually led her to Sufi practice (21 July 2014; chapter 2). Ayşe's desire line to become a Sufi mobilizes the narratives of "breathing well" by talking back to anti-Muslim racism in Germany and against the secular Turkish Muslims, who consider Sufism "backward" or "brain-washing" (21 July 2014; chapter 2).

"The right-wing attacks our mosques,"[2] Abu Bakr, a social worker, a white German Muslim Sufi, said before adding, "and our Muslim brothers do not consider us to be real Muslims!" In the spring of 2013, and at the beginning of my fieldwork, Abu Bakr[3] and I sat together, sipping black tea at the Sufi Center in Neukölln. We were discussing the predicaments of the Sufis in the city. In the following years, especially since the so-called refugee crisis in 2015[4] and the more recent terror attack in Hanau in 2020,[5] anti-Muslim racism in Germany has taken a sinister turn (chapter 6, Epilogue).

What does it mean to "breathe well" as a Sufi in a place where public expressions of religion are constrained, and Islam is increasingly marginalized? What is Sufism? How is Sufi healing practiced and experienced in Berlin and connected sites? *Breathing Hearts* documents various answers to these questions. This work is an account of navigating and breathing along with the *ways of the heart* and a chronicle of learning about Sufism and anthropology. This book is based on eighteen months of non-consecutive ethnographic fieldwork in Berlin and connected sites, several towns and villages in Germany, and a small town in Turkey. Between 2013 and 2015, I followed four Sufi networks that I label Sufi Muslims (Haqqani-Naqshbandi), universalist Sufis (Inayati),[6] therapeutic Sufis (Tümata-Berlin),[7] and nomadic Sufis who do not belong to a formalized network.[8] Between 2020 and 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, I conducted digital fieldwork to follow how my Sufi interlocutors were making efforts to "breathe well" in the pandemic ruins of anti-Muslim racism fraught with intersectional breathing troubles (Epilogue).

Islam and Anti-Muslim Racism in Germany

"Islam belongs to Germany," the former German Chancellor Angela Merkel declared in the aftermath of the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 (Zeit Online 2015). In 2010, former German president Christian Wulff said something similar on the twentieth anniversary of the reunification of the former East and West Germany. He emphasized that Christianity and Judaism unequivocally belonged to Germany before accommodating Islam. Almost as an afterthought, he said, "But in the meantime, Islam also belongs to Germany" (Wulff 2010; Zand 2012).

The conservative and liberal politicians and heads of the German nation-state repeat these rhetorical gestures from time to time. But anti-Muslim racism is an everyday experience for anyone perceived to belong to the Islamic tradition in Germany. The right-wing populist-nationalist political party AfD (Alternative für Deutschland, Alternative for Germany) manifests it most visibly in their political agenda, agitating the non-Muslim majority against Islam by popularizing slogans such as, "Islam does not belong to Germany" (*Der Islam gehört nicht zu Deutschland*) (Zeit Online 2016). And the conservative and liberal forces are complicit in the right-wing project by not taking anti-Muslim racism seriously. Islam remains subordinate to the German state's paradoxical commitment to dominant Christianity and political secularism.[9]

Anti-Muslim racism is a historical phenomenon and structural force in German society. Long before I began fieldwork and in the following years, the heightening of anti-Muslim racism was of grave concern among postmigrant[10] Muslim communities in Germany (and in Berlin) (Lewicki and Shooman 2020; Özyürek 2015; Shooman 2014; De Néve 2013; Kühnel and Leibold 2007). When I arrived in Berlin in 2012, the talk of the town was the serial murder of Turkish, Kurdish, and Greek "migrants" in Germany by a far-right nationalist group.[11] Today the anti-Islam rhetoric of populist nationalism continues to dominate the public imagination. It obscures the persistent structural inequalities and the plights of Muslim minorities. Ayşe and Abu Bakr had reasons to be concerned for their Sufi Muslim community. In the suffocating atmosphere of anti-Muslim racism in Germany and the rejection of Sufism by some Muslims, it is difficult to "breathe well" as Sufis, as breather-wayfarers in Berlin.

The citizens of a nation-state constitute *imagined communities* (Anderson [1983] 1991) centered around identity and difference, including some and excluding others. Commonly defined as "Islamic mysticism" and historically situated within the Islamic tradition, Sufism has a minority presence and is not *seen* as part of the imagined community called Germany. Labeled by followers as a *way of the heart*,[12] Sufism in practice connects and separates the Islamic and non-Islamic presence here. It brings together and sets apart the Sufis from other Muslims and non-Muslim subjects. Sufism as a phenomenon exceeds the lines drawn between social fields marked

as the religious, the therapeutic, and the performing arts. Sufis are unseen neighbors in Berlin, which I call a "city of mirrors," where neighbors remain strangers and unseen (chapter 1). The project of making the minority presence of Sufi healing practices visible lies at the heart of this book.

Sufism and Healing in Berlin

"There must be something else," said Gertrud, a seventy-year-old white German woman, a language teacher, and *Heilpraktikerin* (alternative healing practitioner). She reflected on a crucial moment in her life story when I asked her, "How did you come to Sufism?" Gertrud had been looking for a way out of the "cornered landscape" (*eckige Landschaft*) of postwar Germany (interview, 16 June 2014). Later, she joined Tümata-Berlin, a loosely formed network of friends, musicians, and healing practitioners who practiced music-and-movement therapy and organized Sufi whirling ceremonies (*sema*) in the city. In the moments of whirling, from right to left, allowing her body to resonate with the melody of the Sufi music, Gertrud felt that she could step out of the cornered landscape of German society (chapter 4). The expressive articulations of Sufi experience—are they only temporary escapes from a disenchanting reality or enactments of an alternative, the possibility of living otherwise?

Using the motto "new discovery of old traditions," Raphael juxtaposed tradition and modernity in Sufi practice. He is a leading figure in Tümata-Berlin, a white German musician and physician practicing biomedicine and complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). In the autumn of 2013, we were sitting in a café in Kreuzberg a few steps away from his office. Raphael explained how bringing the old and new medical traditions together made it possible to practice what he rather hesitantly called the "Ancient Oriental Music-and-Movement Therapy" (*Alt-orientalische Musik-und-Bewegungstherapie,* AOM). AOM is informed by the reimagined tradition of Islamic medicine and Sufi thought traveling across the Silk Road. Raphael said, "The music therapy [AOM] is based partly on historical data and partly derived from data [generated by] modern scientific and music studies . . . [and] it is also connected to Sufi thought" (interview, 25 September 2013).

Raphael is a long-term student of the Tümata founder, the late Rahmi Oruç Güvenç (1948–2017), a Turkish psychologist and Sufi teacher. Raphael's everyday life consists of navigating biomedicine and alternative (Sufi) healing. In practice, he brings the sounds and movements of Central Asian Shamanism and Turkish Sufism into conversation with the reimagined golden age of Islamic medicine (chapters 1, 5, and 6). Are the Sufism-inspired therapeutic forms practiced by Tümata-Berlin only enacting popular (affirmative) orientalism, or are they also illustrative examples of participatory performances in the real, a "medicine of the imagination" (Kirmayer 2014, 41) (chapter 5)?

Healing in Sufi-Berlin mobilizes breathing bodies, ontologies, histories, subjectivities, and politics. It is about seeking answers to existential questions, as Ayşe asked, "Why do I suffer, and what should I do?" when confronted with chronic depression (interview, 21 July 2014). I asked Renate the same question I had asked Ayşe earlier ("What role does healing play in Sufi practice?"). Renate, a white (former East) German scientist active in the Inayati healing network, said, with a smile of relief on her face, "I can now say [the word] God without stress!" before emphasizing that "Sufism is not a religion" (interview, 7 May 2014). Renate disentangled the label "religion" and "spirituality" in her navigation of biomedicine and many forms of complementary and alternative medicines; before turning to Sufi breathing in her quest for healing a chronic orthopedic condition that had progressively disabled her. Growing up in the state-sponsored atheist and secularist society of former East Germany, with a visceral suspicion of organized religions and "dark churches," Renate sought recovery in an Inayati Sufi network, considering Sufism "not religious" but "spiritual" (chapter 2).

Khidr, Pir Zia, Ayşe, Abu Bakr, Gertrud, Raphael, and Renate are some of my key Sufi interlocutors. Other than Pir Zia, they lived in Berlin at the time I met them. Their statements and narrated pathways are illustrative examples of the internal diversity of Sufi practice in Germany, especially in Berlin. How is Sufism enacted in what they practiced and experienced? If not restricted to the religious field, what else could Sufism be? *Breathing Hearts* does not resolve these dilemmas. The book situates these questions within two traditions of inquiry: Sufism and anthropology.

Breathing Hearts is the first book-length ethnographic account of Sufi (healing) practices and politics in Berlin. It examines the life worlds of the postmigrant people of Color, multiethnic immigrants, and white Germans to shift the conventional anthropological gaze through the sensibilities of a former physician and South Asian anthropologist-writer, breathworker, and a woman of Color living and working in Germany. The book offers a unique perspective to study Germany from a point of view of the postcolony (Varela and Dhawan 2015; Chaudhary 2006), with a humble yet critical shifting of the gaze, rather than the radical claim of "reversing the anthropological gaze" (Ntarangi 2010, 9). Studying Sufism as a *murid* (learner) parallels learning how to do ethnographic fieldwork, attending to the challenges of a dual apprentice as a methodological approach drawing from affective sensuous scholarship (Stodulka, Selim, and Mattes 2018; Stoller 1997) and hermeneutics of affective pedagogy[13] (Selim 2020a). Dual apprenticeship moves beyond methodological atheism and agnosticism (Porpora 2006), not by "going native" in the conventional sense but by performing a methodological dance of stepping close and stepping away, immersing in Sufism to embody the practical logic of fieldwork and creating the "critical distance" in writing (Engelke 2018, 12; chapter 1).

Sufis, like other intentional communities[14] of religious/spiritual practice, are rarely visible in the imagination of alternatives to late liberal capitalism. The growing religious/spiritual landscape is regarded as a market for buying and selling spiritual products (Zinser 1997, 62) for "religious/spiritual oriented healing and therapeutic" consumption, especially in the last two decades (Klinkhammer and Tolksdorf 2015, 3). What does contemporary Sufism offer beyond a set of salvation goods?[15] This book aims to tackle this question, among others.

It is quite likely that no city in Germany harbors the same kind of super-diversity as Berlin does, although cities like Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg, or Munich could claim to be more diverse.[16] Visitors enamored of its present fame as a liberal cosmopolitan city are often unaware of the structural inequality and the hidden suffering experienced by its inhabitants. The healing landscapes in Berlin offer numerous practices drawn from diverse religious and alternative medical traditions.[17] However, everyday reality in the "world capital of atheism" (Berger 2001, 195) is shaped by the hegemony of major-

itarian Protestantism-inflected secularism and anti-Muslim racism today (Lewicki and Shooman 2020; Özyürek 2015; Shooman 2014; Jonker 2006).

Breathing Hearts is not a study of structural racism or secularism in Germany. This book situates Sufi practices and politics in the context of anti-Muslim racism and Protestant-inflected secularism in German society to widen the understanding of Sufism and healing in this particular setting. On the one hand, these structural forces exert an external burden on Sufi wayfarers looking for an "otherwise" (Povinelli 2014) within German society. On the other hand, the scriptural and literalist Islamic authorities exercise an internal burden on Sufi-identified Muslims, who are interested in Islam's explorative and expansive enactments. The hegemonic secularism and the more prescriptive formations of Islam produce a double burden of secular and religious sufferings. These are everyday forms of social suffering resulting from "what political, economic, and institutional power [of secularism and prescriptive literalist religious authority] does to people and reciprocally, from how these forms of power themselves influence responses to social problems" (Kleinman, Das, and Lock 1997, ix). *Breathing Hearts* describes how Sufism, whether articulated as Islamic, universalist, therapeutic, or nomadic, offers an entangled web of (healing) practices through which such sufferings are exceeded, with more or less success (chapters 2, 4, and 5).

Many Sufis and scholars defined Sufism as "Islamic" mysticism, while the Sufi tradition has been contested from within Islam. In Berlin and elsewhere, in the global history of Sufism, its beguiling internal diversity has time and again produced contested ontologies in relation to the Islamic tradition, as an assemblage of terms and practices that hang together in its name.

Ontologies of Sufism

"Sufism was invented in Berlin! You are in the right place to ask these questions," Bernhard said with an ironic smile (13 October 2014). I stared at him for a few seconds before saying, "You mean the concept of Sufism, the word *Sufismus*?" Bernhard is a white German musician and writer, who traveled widely and wrote books about these travels and Sufi music. Bernhard has been a long-term inhabitant of Berlin—since the 1960s. He was a close friend of my primary

teacher Khidr. We were drinking coffee at his flat, the backhouse of a building in Kreuzberg that survived World War II bombing. Bernhard narrated an instance of local knowledge-making, relating to a historical ontology of Sufism.[18]

> Bernhard: Yes! Like many other –isms [*–ismus*] born in that century. Capital-ism, Social-ism . . . This German guy Tholuck wrote in the 1820s a Latin text . . . *Ssufismus sive Theosophia Persarum Pantheistica*[19] . . . Pantheistic tradition? He had no idea! So you don't just call it Sufism!
>
> Nasima: If not Sufism, then how would you call it?
>
> Bernhard: Well, have you read Hujwiri? He was one of the first writers of what you call Sufism, around the eleventh century . . . He said it was *tasawwuf* . . . It is not about *Suf* or wool . . . Hujwiri also said there was a time when *tasawwuf* was a reality without a name, and now it has become a name without a reality! (interview, 13 October 2014)

What is Sufism? It is an ontological question that drives scholars to provide diverse responses.[20] The origin stories of the term "Sufi" are shrouded in the veils and debates on its possible etymologies. As a derivative of *ṣūf*, the Arabic word for wool, the term indicates that the early Sufis might have worn wool garments (known as "wool-wearers"). Etymologically the word "Sufi" has also been associated with wisdom (Greek *sophia*) (Green 2012, 18), and the Arabic word for "purity" (*sāfá*) mentioned in the first (eleventh-century) Farsi treatise about *taṣawwuf* (Al-Hujwiri 1998, 30).[21]

The English word "Sufism" and its German counterparts, *Sufismus* and *Sufitum*, were first used by nineteenth-century orientalists to translate the Arabic word *taṣawwuf* (Dickson 2015; Khalil and Sheikh 2014; Schimmel [1985] 1995). Certain forms of religiosity in the Islamic tradition were designated with the Arabic word *ṣūfi* and its derivatives, since their mention in eighth-century Islamic literature (Chittick 2015). Sufism was associated with the *ṭarīqah* (path), referring to the diverse Sufi orders, and often used synonymously with *ma'rifah* or *'irfān*, derived from the notions of recognition and gnosis, as a form of knowing and recognizing (*'arafa*) reality (Chittick 2015).

Sufism was defined as "Islamic mysticism"[22] by scholars who defined Sufi practice as "a set of techniques by which Muslims have sought a direct personal encounter with the divine" (Green 2012, 1). Others have emphasized the difference between a "puritanical"

Islam and experiential, bodily oriented "Sufi" Islam (see also Parkin 2007). The early Sufis belonged to the mid-ninth-century mystical movement that arose in the region of present-day Iraq (Melchert 2015; Karamustafa 2007; Green 2012). Until the later part of the eighth century, the term "Sufi" did not appear in Islamic discourse (Melchert 2015, 6). The early Muslim definitions of "Sufi" (wool-wearer) and "Tasawwuf" (becoming a Sufi) implicated ethical self-formation practices. These definitions were discussed by early twentieth-century historians in terms of the "rules of discipline and devotion which the novice (*murid*) learned from his spiritual director (*pir*, *ustadh*)" (Nicholson 1906, 321). More recent historians of the early period of Sufism mentioned only a few texts that refer to ascetic practices of self-mortification. Only one text, however, mentioned the wearing of wool (Green 2012, 18).

Opposition to the Sufi tradition within Islam is as old as its origins (Sirriyeh 1999, ix). Sufi claims to the immanent experience of divinity were immediately contested by pious Sunni circles as early as 877–78 CE when Baghdad had its first anti-Sufi "inquisition" (Melchert 2015). Antinomian trends were present among specific Sufi movements and persist until today (Karamustafa 2015). In the Islamic tradition, Sufism received a mixed reception. On the one hand, it has been regarded as integral to Islam, often complementing rather than contravening *sharia*,[23] a popular term for Islamic law (Ridgeon 2015a; W. Ziad 2015; Trimingham [1971] 1998). On the other hand, modern reformers either attempted to reform Sufism to follow the Sunnah more rigorously and become legally subordinate, or they discredited Sufism as *bid'a* (innovation) and persecuted the Sufis in Muslim societies (Sharify-Funk et al. 2018; Ahmed 2016; Sirriyeh 1999).

Sufism survived early and more contemporary oppositions. The Sufi tradition spread from its early Middle Eastern origins in multiple directions, to Central Asia, to the African continent, and Asia: spreading from Morocco to Bengal, China, and Indonesia; and further westward to Andalusia in southern Spain. In the twentieth century, Sufism arrived in Western Europe as the first Sufi networks began to establish themselves in the region (Green 2012). Defining Sufism as essentially "Islamic" except for "rule-breaking" (antinomian) groups, historian Nile Green (2012, 8–9) listed Sufi-designated supererogatory ("above what is required") practices, such as:

> chanted "remembrance" (*dhikr*) of God; meditation (*muraqaba*) on different aspects of the psyche and God; meditation of moral virtues (*ihsan*) through the observance of formal rules of etiquette (*adab*); . . . respectful interaction (*suhba*) [or *sohbet*] with their master . . . ritualized listening (*sama'*) [*sema*] to music and poetry as a means to reach ecstatic states (*ahwal*) . . . rituals of initiation into such a "Path" or brotherhood and its accompanying pledge of allegiance (*bay'a*) to a master marked the formal entry to discipleship.[24]

Shahab Ahmed (2016) described the urban Sufi structures as centers of practice (*khānqāh*, *zāwiyah*, *tekkeh*, *merkez*, etc.), describing the "*barakah* (spiritual power)–charged" tombs of the saints (*mazār*, *dargāh*, *ziyāratgāh*, etc.) and mentioning, among other practices, the public visitation (*ziyārah*) of Sufi shrines/tombs (2016). One of the defining characteristics of Sufism, in his analysis, is the aspiration for "higher Real-Truth" (*ḥaqīqah*) and the "perfect human" (*al-insān al-kāmil*) as a figure of aspiration for the novice (2016, 21).

Such Sufi conceptual vocabulary is an integral part of the idiom of speech for Muslims since Sufism was articulated in the major languages of Islamic self-expression through poetry, stories, and songs (Ahmed 2016).[25] In the twenty-first century, Sufism continues to exist in diverse forms. The conceptual vocabulary of Sufism and the repertoires of its practices have circulated beyond the Muslim world. Ahmed referred to this wider temporal-spatial field as the "Balkans-to-Bengal complex" (2016, 32). Geographically speaking, Sufis today belong to the so-called Occident (the West)[26] and the so-called Orient (the East).

Academic and popular orientalism have surely invented the term "Sufism" as such, informing the early knowledge practices about Sufism as a phenomenon.[27] In 1821, the first doctoral dissertation on Sufism was written in a major European language (Latin), *Ssufismus sive Theosophia Persarum Pantheistica* (Sufism or Persian Pantheistic Theosophy) at the Berlin University (now Humboldt Universität zu Berlin) (Tholuck 1821). August Tholuck, a Prussian Lutheran theologian, based his dissertation on the firsthand reading of Arabic, Farsi, and Turkish Sufi literature. Unlike most orientalists of his era, Tholuck argued that *Sufismus* was "Mohammedan Mysticism" and established its Islamic ontology early on (1825, 35).

There is no doubt, therefore, that the term "Sufism" inherits an orientalist genealogy.[28] However, most contemporary Sufi studies

scholars still find the term productive for an academic inquiry.[29] Sufism is the subject of Sufi studies, and it is "neither anything more nor anything less than what the name itself denominates in any one instance of naming," argued the editors of the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Sufi Studies* (Ohlander et al. 2012, 1). Using the term "Sufism" does not prevent the possibility of pluralizing the notion of Sufism. Following the multiple enactments in practice and narrativized experience assembled around the singular term, it is possible to organize its diversity.

"Libraries have been written on the phenomenon of 'Islamic mysticism' or 'Sufism'" in the Muslim world (Knysh 2005, 106). In contrast, the academic study of Sufism in the Muslim-minority "West" and "Western" scholarship is a recent but generative development.[30] Previously dominated by historical, literary, philosophical, and philological approaches, the anthropology of Sufism in the last decades has become a polyvocal interdisciplinary terrain.

Anthropology of Sufism (and Healing)

"Sufism is Islamic mysticism," Edward Evans-Pritchard (1949, 1) began his ethnography of the Sanusiyya Sufi order in the Cyrenaica (part of Libya under British colonial rule). Drawing on his (colonial) encounters during World War II, he described (Sanusiyya) Sufi practices, as "asceticism, living apart from the world, contemplation, charity, and the performance of supernumerary religious exercises producing a state of ecstasy in which the soul, no longer conscious of its individuality, of its bodily prison, or the external world, is for a while united with God" (1949, 2).

In the post/colonial history of anthropology, Sufi Islam has received significant attention with diverse lines of inquiry across generations of ethnographers (Evans-Pritchard 1949; Geertz 1971; Gilsenan 1973; Crapanzano 1973; Rabinow 1977). Anthropological scholarship on "Islamic mysticism" has focused on distinctive forms of local/regional religious expressions as rural folk Islam, positioning these expressions as antithetical to the urban, scriptural/scholarly faith (Mahmood and Landry 2017), among Muslims in Egypt (Gilsenan 1973, [1982] 2000), Morocco (Gellner 1969; Crapanzano 1973), Morocco and Indonesia (Geertz [1968] 1971), and West Africa (Cruise O'Brien 1971), among others. Anthropologists

have described the Muslim and non-Muslim veneration of Sufi saints contested by other Muslims in India, a Muslim-minority society, which is home to one of the largest constellations of Sufism (van der Veer 1992). Increasingly, anthropologists challenged the divisive dichotomies of Sufi versus non-Sufi Muslims and began to focus on the interconnections between rural, urban, and transnational contexts of Sufism (Soares 2004, Werbner 2003).

In this book, I attempt to bring the Sufi tradition into conversation with anthropology as a dual apprentice. Shahab Ahmed's framing of Islam as "hermeneutical engagement" (2016: 345–404) has helped me approach contemporary Sufi ontologies in this book as Islamic, even when non-Muslims practice Sufism. Amira Mittermaier (2011) engaged with the term "Sufi" in her consideration of "Sufism" as a historical tradition of Islam and by framing her key interlocutors as Sufi in contemporary Egypt. Her ethnography on (Sufi) dream practices in contemporary Egypt has brought "Western" anthropological theory and the Islamic tradition of thought together. In bringing classical and contemporary Sufi discourses together with anthropological theory, I have attempted to pursue a similar path. Esra Özyürek (2010, 2015) has situated the ambivalence of white Germans and converted Muslims toward immigrant and postmigrant Muslims in the spectrum of Islamophobia and Islamophilia. In this book, I follow the desire lines of Muslim and non-Muslim Sufis not in terms of conversion but in terms of their diverse engagements with Sufi practices and politics (chapters 2 and 4).

In the last few decades, Sufi actors, ethics, experiences, objects, sounds, movements, spaces, subjectivities, and practices across Muslim-majority regions have received considerable ethnographic attention. A wide range of studies explored distinctively localized (fakir) becoming, saintly affects, and place-making in queering religion (Kasmani 2012, 2017, 2022); postcolonial subjecthood and antinomian desire in Pakistan (Ewing [1997] 2006); ordinary ethics in Lebanon (Clarke 2014); feminine interior worlds and ethnographic listening in Senegal (Neff 2013); connection to the Elsewhere in Egypt (Mittermaier 2011); mystical experience in Syria (Pinto 2010); and the interpenetration of Shamanism and Sufism in Afghanistan, Central Asia, Indonesia, Iran, and Turkey (Zarcone and Hobart 2013; Sidky 1990).

In Muslim-minority regions with a significant historical and contemporary presence of Sufism (India), anthropologists have paid attention to ritual and spiritual healing (Basu 2014; Flueckiger 2006). Pnina Werbner and Helene Basu's (1998) edited volume discussed ritual embodiment, embodied emotions, and sacred peripherality steeped in Sufi charisma and intersections with modernity, with case studies from South Asia, contributing to the debate about syncretism in Sufism. Sufism, they argue, is a "living, embodied, postcolonial reality" with diverse networks of "individual supplicants and devotional communities generated through voluntaristic loyalties which extend beyond local, regional, and even international boundaries" (1998, 3).

However, ethnographic attention to Muslim-minority European and North American Sufism (and healing) as sites of Sufi practice is a relatively new development (see the following section). Sufism in "the West" is an emerging field within the anthropology of Islam. The porous boundaries of the religious field in which Sufism is often examined, are "permeable and increasingly empirically defined" (Dilger and Hadolt 2015, 137). Samuli Schielke (2010, 2) urged paying attention to the contrast drawn between Islam and the secular, suggesting that "something more" must be going on, because "there is too much Islam in the anthropology of Islam."[31]

What is that "something more" than Islam in the anthropology of Sufism (and healing)? How can we discuss an Islamic practice that is not only practiced by Muslims but also non-Muslims, by postmigrants of Color, multiethnic immigrants, and white Germans, beyond the trope of "cultural appropriation" alone?[32] How do we explore a phenomenon that is not restricted to the religious but entangles alternative modes of history-making, healing, bodily and aesthetic performances, and politics? How can we think about the anthropology of Sufism in partial connection to the anthropology of Islam, but not restricted to the problems defined by the sub-field of inquiry?

Breathing Hearts retains the ontological insecurity of not accepting or offering a ready definition of what Sufism is. Instead of being a hindrance, this is a productive force that recognizes the highly diverse practices and politics of Sufism in Berlin. As a phenomenon, Sufism triggers many debates regarding location, practice, theory, and interpretation. Yet, there is a consensus that in much of its his-

tory, Sufism enjoyed a global presence. And, therefore, its reception needs to be localized in the German language and the urban landscape of Berlin.

From Sufism in Germany to Sufi-Berlin

Wer sich selbst und andre kennt,	Whoever knows him/herself and the other
Wird auch hier erkennen:	Will also recognize here:
Orient und Okzident	The East and the West
Sind nicht mehr zu trennen.	Can no longer be separated.
	—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe[33]

It is difficult to locate an exact moment for the origin of popular German interest in Sufism.[34] As an object of knowledge, Sufism had arrived in Berlin long before it became a part of urban practice. As early as the fifteenth century, the Protestant reformer Martin Luther (1483–1546) praised Ottoman Sufis for devotional asceticism, comparing them to Catholic monks, who, in his view, were more interested in worldly power (Sedgwick 2017).[35] In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, generations of orientalists discussed Sufi literature in German-speaking texts (Tholuck 1821; Schleßmann 2003). It took until the early twentieth century for Sufism in Germany to be established as a tradition of practice (Klinkhammer 2005, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c).

In 1910, German followers established a little-known *Bektashi*[36] network in Berlin (Schleßmann 2003). In 1925, *Sufi Bewegung* (Sufi Movement), the first German "Universal" Sufi network, was established as an association by the local *murids* (disciples/students) of Hazrat Inayat Khan, the founder of a distinctive form of Sufism in North America and Western Europe (Schleßmann 2003). Three different streams of the Inayat-Khan-inspired Sufi networks are currently active in Berlin: the International Sufi Order (ISO) (renamed Inayati Order (Inayatiyya) in 2016), the International Sufi Movement (ISM), and Sufi Ruhaniat International (SRI). I refer to them as the Inayati Order (Inayatiyya), Inayat-Khan-inspired Sufi Movement,[37] and Sufi-Ruhaniat. I use the Inayati designation when discussing these networks in general and the practices common to all three streams, for example, the Inayati healing ritual (chapter 5).

In the late 1990s, there were about twenty-seven places of "Sufic devotion" in Berlin (Jonker 2006, 74). This number might be higher

if we include the smaller, non-registered Sufi friend circles. Some networks aligned themselves exclusively with Sufi Islam, for example, the Haqqani-Naqshbandis, MKMT (Mashihat der Kubrevi-Mevlevi Tariqat), and Tariqa Burhanya (Falasch 2006). Others adhered to a more "universalist" ontology of Sufism beyond the regulatory practices of Islam. The Inayatis, the Sufi Tradition of Omar Ali-Shah, and Reshad Feild's Chalice fall into this category, including most nomadic Sufis. In contrast, Tümata-Berlin focused on Sufism's therapeutic dimension rather than the division of Islamic/universalist ontologies. Several Sufism-inspired networks were engaged in healing, aesthetic practices, and public performances.[38]

The first comprehensive review of contemporary Sufi networks in Germany ended with notes of caution (Schleßmann 2003). Ludwig Schleßmann criticized the labeling of Western/German formations of Sufism as "pseudo-Sufism" (Hoffman 1995, 319–23; Elwell-Sutton 1983) in contrast to "authentic" Sufism in Muslim-majority countries.[39] He urged Sufi teachers in Germany to be careful about the "pathological cases" who might need medical treatment instead of Sufi teaching, while arguing that German "scientific medicine" should recognize that "in spiritual work lies a great potential for the healing of 'soul-sickness'" (Schleßmann 2003, 190).

Schleßmann (2003) offered his dichotomous classification of Sufism in Germany as universal and traditional Sufi communities focusing on universalist and sharia-centered perspectives, respectively.[40] This book, however, shows that these identities and practices cross over to include other identities and practices within the Sufi networks. In Berlin, Sufism is not only restricted to Islam but circulates beyond the confines of the Islamic tradition and religious practice, diffusing into the therapeutic fields, performance arts, and politics (Klinkhammer and Tolksdorf 2015; Selim 2015a, 2015b; Klinkhammer 2009a, 2009b). Most Sufis are presumed to have a "migration background" predominantly from Muslim-majority societies. But a growing number of Muslims and non-Muslims with superdiverse backgrounds belong to the constellation of Sufi practice. Although Sufism is framed as Islamic, not all Sufi networks associate themselves with a Muslim identity. The differentiation of Islam and Sufism has to do with the "balance of truth" (Ahmed 2016, 24) since Islam's earliest days and its continued "inner epistemological

struggles" (Parkin 2007, 54). In their local enactments in Germany, Sufism has followed its distinctive trajectory connecting Islamic and non-Islamic spaces.

Transethnic Sufism in Germany spanned from an Orientalist preoccupation with mysticism toward a more contemporary tradition-oriented authenticity (Klinkhammer 2009b). The Haqqani-Naqshbandi is one of the largest Sufi networks in Germany (Schleßmann 2003). In addition to its organizational history in Germany (Schleßmann 2003), sociologists and religious studies scholars studied conversion (Wohlrab-Sahr 1996, 1999) and group interaction of the male members ("born-Muslims" and "converts") of this network in a German city called Mittelstadt (pseudonym), examining ritual action and sociality of the "Sufi-milieu" between 1996 and 1997 (Hüttermann 2002, 253). Jörg Hüttermann discussed how the transnational network navigated their milieu in the context of modernity and globalization.[41] The transnationality of this German network was studied in terms of its connection with its counterparts in Syria, Lebanon, the United States, and France (1999–2003), conceived as the "Haqqani Universe" (Böttcher 2011, 26).[42]

Tümata Sufi rituals designed by Rahmi Oruç Güvenç were explored as an eclectic system of practices, as the result of "transfer processes" drawing ritual elements from diverse traditions: classical Sufi movements and music; Central Asian, and Central European folk music (Langer 2011, 11). The shift of ritual elements into another context in the case of Tümata was not only geographical (from Turkey to Germany) but covered spatial, religious, and social transfer processes (Langer 2011, 11). Tümata's religious-therapeutic performance in a clinical setting of Heidelberg (Germany) has been studied to make a similar argument of the transfer process from the ritual to the clinical context (Langer 2015). Tümata's repertoire was understood as an example of ritual dynamics that enable the adaptability of Sufi practices across rural Anatolia, urban Turkey, and Western European contexts (Langer 2011,2015).[43]

The Inayati Sufi networks received a lot of scholarly attention to their historical trajectory, eclectic practices, and syncretistic focus but mostly in North America, the United Kingdom, and Australia.[44] Zia Inayat-Khan (2006), a scholar-Sufi, examined the hybrid history of the Inayati networks in North America and Western Europe but detailed only the developments in Britain, France, and the Nether-

lands. Marcia Hermansen's (1996, 2005, 2007) discussion of Universal Sufism placed it in the context of religious healing and female leadership, but her focus was entirely on the US context. In contrast, Celia Genn (2007, 2008) described the Inayati formation as an expansion of the Chishtiyya's diaspora and discussed the role of Inayat Khan's Indian heritage in shaping his transnational Sufism. In the German-speaking region, a notable exception is the ethnographic study of Inayati female visions and leadership in Austria (Kuehn and Pokorny 2019).[45]

To my knowledge, neither the Haqqani-Naqshbandi network in Berlin nor Tümata-Berlin had been studied ethnographically to track their enactments of Sufism.[46] The contemporary Inayati networks in Berlin and Germany seem to have escaped systematic ethnographic attention as well. The Sufi networks that accept Sufism as historically derived from within the Islamic tradition but do not have an intrinsic relation to the shari'a-centered regulatory practices of Islam are often neglected or categorized as either "New Age" (Lassen 2009, 148) or "pseudo-Sufism" (Hoffman 1995, 319). Gerdien Jonker, for example, was dismissive of the real/virtual "hidden presence" of "neo-Sufic organizations" and "Universal Sufism" in Germany, considering them to be a "mixture of new age therapies, Shamanism, musical performances, and artistic endeavors" (2006, 71–72).

Only certain Sufi networks, especially those operating with prescriptive authority and in line with literalist and reformist enactments, seem worthy of academic attention. Perhaps this explains why the Haqqani-Naqshbandi led by Turkish-Germans, "born-Muslims" and "converts" received more scholarly attention as the representatives of Sufism in Germany, while the Inayati networks remained classified under the label of "religious trends since Enlightenment" (Rademacher 2003, 574), separated from the section on Sufism as "Islamic mysticism" (Schemeit 2003). Given the early presence of the Inayat-Khan-inspired Sufi movement in Berlin in 1925, I find this analytical and empirical gap surprising.

Anthropologists, historians, sociologists, religious and Islamic studies scholars have provided a rich, living archive of historical, organizational, and descriptive information about several Sufi networks in Germany. Their foci, however, remain exclusively actor-centric. Sufism is not articulated as an object of anthropological inquiry nor studied in a specific urban location through long-term

ethnographic fieldwork. Sufi practices, when studied, are domained as essentially religious practices. Apart from summary descriptions of what Sufi networks do, detailed descriptions of practices and experience-near narratives are not foregrounded. The epistemological standpoints of these scholars are either a form of methodological atheism or agnosticism. Learning, as a methodology, was not considered to be an option. The connections between Sufism, healing, and alternative medicine have been rarely examined in Germany.[47] None of the existing literature explicitly problematizes secular and religious suffering in Germany. Islamophobia makes occasional appearances (Özyürek 2015), but the persistence of anti-Muslim racism does not figure prominently in the scholarship of Sufism in Germany as the sociopolitical context in which all Sufi and Muslim actors and practices operate.

In contrast, *Breathing Hearts* combines ontological and existential approaches to explore Sufism (and healing) in the context of anti-Muslim racism. This book contributes to the global scholarship on Sufi healing that otherwise draws from Muslim-majority contexts. Making the hidden religious and secular suffering in German society visible and exploring the ontologies of Sufism, this book questions the commonplace definition of Sufism as Islamic mysticism to articulate Sufism as *breathing, wayfaring* practices across religion, medicine, and arts. In this regard, *Breathing Hearts* differs from the preceding works significantly: in terms of the object of ethnographic inquiry, the methodology of dual apprenticeship, and the theoretical foregrounding of a postsecular imagination of healing.

The Way of the (Breathing) Hearts: Postsecular Imagination of Healing

It was in the autumn of 2012. I had not begun my official fieldwork yet. I saw a poster hanging in Bergmannstraße (Kreuzberg) announcing an event, Weg des Herzens (Way of the Heart), offering Sufi music, poetry, and stories for a donation of five to ten euros. The event was to take place in a small room in another neighborhood of the same district.

On the announced date, I entered a brightly lit room.[48] The leading musician, a Turkish-German man of Color, sat with a long reed-like wind instrument (*ney*). He wore a light brown felt hat, a loose

white shirt, and long trousers. Around him sat several musicians, one with a *tablā* (paired percussion instrument commonly used in South Asian musical traditions) and an older man with an acoustic guitar. A white German woman with heavy make-up and glittering ornaments recited a few poems by Mevlana Rumi.[49] A bearded man (Hafiz, a Turkish-German person of Color) wearing a green turban and a long-sleeved *khirqah* (traditional Sufi attire) read stories out loud from Attar's *Conversations of the Birds*.[50] Later, he and a white German woman (Claire) started to whirl. Claire wore a long white skirt, a long-sleeved shirt, and a white cap—emulating the Mevlevi attire. The leading musician joined the whirling while drumming and reciting Allah's names. In the end, they broke out into a sweat and bowed down with hands crossed over their shoulders. The woman who had recited poems earlier walked to the audience, collecting donations on a metallic plate.

The Weg des Herzens concert marked the beginning of my urban expedition. In subsequent years, I met Hafiz and Claire time and again. They were crucial interlocutors in my early efforts to find Sufis in the city. I began to understand what the whirling and collective breathing were about, why certain sound instruments were used and not others, why specific clothes were worn, who these people were, and how and which stories were retold. I was an audience to numerous events with the "Sufi" label attached to them that invoked the metaphysical (breathing) heart as a key metaphor. Serendipity brought me to the *way of the (breathing) heart*. I walked along with its signposts in the city.

"From London to Moscow, Berlin is the spiritual center," the Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sheikh Eşref Efendi described the city beyond its secularist imagination, "even if the city is not spiritual, some people in this city are spiritual, and their light is strong enough for Berlin" (Hildebrandt 2014, 00:02:02–00:02:18). Berlin used to be known as the "world capital of atheism" (Berger 2001, 195) more than two decades ago. By the time I arrived, Berlin had assumed a postsecular identity, marked by the growing religious/spiritual and therapeutic landscape that marks a "postsecular city" (Ley 2011). In 2011, the urban policymakers introduced the *Long Night of Religions*, marking a public space in the city for religious diversity, where Sufi Muslims and universalist Sufis participated from time to time.[51]

The *postsecular* frame articulates a palpable Zeitgeist (Gorski et al. 2012). It juxtaposes the religious, the secular, and the transition from both to something else. A postsecular society brings its focus to the renewed public presence of religion in previously secularized societies (Habermas 2001, 15).[52] In a postsecular city, the boundary-making "lines and roles of religion and science, faith and reason, tradition and innovation are no longer rigidly enforced" (Beaumont and Baker 2011, 2). The "post" does not refer to a condition beyond secularity. It offers a subversion of the hegemonic master narrative underlying secularity, "occluding, or belittling, whole dimensions of possible religious life and experience" (Taylor 2007, 199). The term *postsecular imagination,* in addition, articulates the condition of retaining the "best features" of (state) secularism and "preserving the inspiring, generative, imaginative features of religious thought and practice, such as faith, awe, wonder, transcendence" (Ratti 2013, 7). Postsecular imagination questions received pieties, engaging with the possibility of thinking beyond the new orthodoxies of nationalism, secularism, and religion (2013, 7).

The secular is an epistemic category and secularism functions as a political doctrine (Asad 2003, 1). The history of the nation-state of Germany lays bare a fractured and unfinished formation of secularism (Wohlrab-Sahr and Burchardt 2012; Jonker 2000).[53] As a secularist society, Germany understands religion to be one option among others and renders it contestable, while foregrounding Protestant Christianity in public life. While secularization refers to societies becoming less religious (e.g., due to modernity), secularism (in Germany and elsewhere) is an ideological positioning advocating for the loss, or ontological separation, of the religious from other spheres of life.

The postsecular framing also questions the secular bias in social analysis (El Amrani 2021). Religion, medicine, and modernity are not in a "zero-sum relationship" (Giordan and Pace 2012, 1). The postsecular frame accommodates "the de-territorialization of the sense of belonging" (2012, 1). The weakened ties to the religion of birth and inherited and acquired traditions shape identity. The "democratization of the sacred" empowers individuals and collectives to talk back to "institutions that have always codified and controlled it" (2012, 4–5). Two distinct trends exist in the ambivalent "postsecular condition" (Braidotti 2008, 10). First, the radicalization of

many religions within the context of perpetual war and global neoconservative politics. Second, and in contrast, life-affirming postsecular feminist theories challenge secularist (white) feminism to argue that religious/spiritual piety can convey/support ethical subjects in exercising forms of agency beyond a simplified binary of subordination and resistance (2008, 10; Mahmood 2005). It is in this second, life-affirming mobilization of the term that I situate my argument for postsecular Sufi practice and subjectivity in this book.

The creative borrowing and integration of practices from other traditions are well-known in the continuum of Sufi lifeworlds, as a form of "Sufi-philosophical amalgam" (Ahmed 2016, 31). However, the eclectic assemblage of diverse traditions in contemporary postsecular settings engenders new forms of aesthetic, therapeutic, and adult learning tools. In many Muslim-majority societies, the syncretic nature of Sufi practice often renders it vulnerable to the label of being non-Islamic (2016, 31). In postsecular Berlin, the juxtaposition of Sufi discourses, historically tied to Islamic lifeworlds, with the Judeo-Christian tradition and Buddhist teachings is prone to the typical labeling of "New Age Sufism"—as if eclectic Sufism is nothing but a mish-mash of multiple techniques without inherent logic (Selim 2020a). Having spent countless hours and more than half a decade with the Inayati Sufis in Germany, I argue that the logic of unlikely juxtapositions that Sufi networks make is situated within the historical tradition of eclectic Sufism, on the one hand, and its postsecular politics of "blurred boundaries" on the other.

Anthropologists are skeptical of rigid domaining practices (Lambek 2013). The intertwining of the religious and medical spheres is oft captured by the idiom of healing (Parkin 2007, 2014). Anthropology of Sufism and healing in Berlin and connected sites cut across the lines of conventional separation and domaining. The Sufi networks in Berlin are registered as religious associations, but they also operate as informal social networks of healing. In practice, they move from the religious (Haqqani-Naqshbandis) to the therapeutic field of alternative healing (Inayatis, Tümata-Berlin, nomadic Sufis), to the performance arts (Tümata-Berlin and nomadic Sufis) and yet inhabit the religious/spiritual landscape of Berlin at the same time.

Breathing Hearts focuses on the postsecular as a heuristic field where the religious and the secular co-exist,[54] where the medical and the religious/spiritual, and performing arts meet. In these conflating

real (and virtual) fields, the unseen neighbors mark their existence, and the ethnographer makes their "hidden presence" (Jonker 2006, 71) in Germany known.

Book Outline

What does it mean to "breathe well" as a Sufi in a place where public expressions of religion are constrained, and Islam is increasingly marginalized? How is Sufi healing practiced and experienced in Berlin? This chapter raised these questions to place Sufi healing practices in the context of anti-Muslim racism in Germany. The global/local history of Sufism has addressed the debates around its ontologies. Situating this work in the anthropology of Sufi practice, I hope to have laid the foundation to argue how Sufi practices challenge taken-for-granted ontologies of medicine, religion, and aesthetic performance with a postsecular imagination of healing.

Chapter 1, "The Unseen Neighbors and a Dual Apprentice: *Silsila*, or Drawing the Lines of Transmitting Breath," describes the ethnographic entry into selective Sufi spaces in Berlin and offers early impressions of these unseen neighbors. The contemporary "intention" (or invocation) of Sufis reconfigures the line of transmitting breath in the presence of Sufi teachers and students. In Sufi parlance, such lines (or chains) of transmission are known as *silsila,* transgressing time, place, and personal biographies, connecting Sufism in the here and now to the Elsewhere and somewhere else. The chapter also reflects on how affective pedagogy and dual apprenticeship (in Sufism and anthropology) as a method provide agile conditions for doing ethnography, helping ethnographers learn how to learn.

Chapter 2, "'Why Do I Suffer and What Should I Do?': The Desire Lines of Sufi Breathing-Becoming," details selective narratives of several Sufi women articulating postsecular imaginations of healing in their life transitions: from Turkish secularism to Sufi Islam, from German state-enforced atheism to Inayati Sufism, and from a Christian upbringing to nomadic Sufi practice. These articulations are multidirectional desire lines through which Sufi interlocutors found tentative answers to their existential quests. Through Sufi breath, sound, and movement, the recovery from the problems of living, and the pursuit of a nomadic longing. The desire lines of their

existential quests remain irreducible to consumerism or predatory (cultural) appropriation.

Chapter 3, "Techniques of Transformation: Subtle-Material Bodies in Dhikr and Other (Breathing) Practices," elaborates on the techniques of Sufi body prayers and healing practices centered around breath, sound, and movement. The everyday secular, materialist bodies are transfigured into subtle/material bodies, even if momentarily, through the techniques of whirling, breathing, and energizing. The possibilities for imagining and inhabiting the human body expand through the practice of Sufi techniques of and discourses about the transformation of a self-centered ego (*nafs*), activating the subtle centers (*lataif*) and the metaphysical (breathing) heart (*qalb*) in the novice's journey through the anticipated stages/stations (*maqamat*), guided by an authorized teacher.

Chapter 4, "'There Must Be Something Else': The In-between World of Healing Secular and Religious Suffering," articulates the existential quests of key interlocutors and the postmigrant longing of the ethnographer as postsecular subjects to heal secular and religious suffering. Postsecular Sufi subjects in Berlin inhabit an in-between world (*Zwischenwelt*), a confluent configuration of the religious with the therapeutic and aesthetic fields to "breathe well" in seeking "something else." Healing secular and religious suffering does not necessarily mean an epistemic jump to the obliteration of social suffering. Sufi healing practices do not mark the end of social suffering but equip a Sufi breather-wayfarer with the existential resources to bear such modes of everyday suffering.

Chapter 5, "Participation in the Real: The Healing Power of Breath, Words, and Things," illustrates Sufi practices as participatory performances of healing: be it a weekly healing meditation, a healing ritual (*Heilritual*), a healing companionship in conversation (*sohbet*), a music-and-movement therapy session, or resonating with the healing sounds of the ninety-nine names of the Real. The healing dimension cannot be separated from the rest of Sufi practice. The healing power of Sufi practices arises from the material and subtle worlds of ritual breaths, words, sounds, and enlightened things. These participatory performances of healing reflect the agile ontologies of Sufism navigating the otherwise bounded fields of religion, medicine, and performing arts, as *barzakhs* or things-in-between.

Chapter 6, "'The Right-Wing Attacks Our Mosques and Our Muslim Brothers Do Not Consider Us to Be Real Muslims': The (Anti-) Politics of Breathing Hearts," argues that the popular non-political image of Sufism is illusory. The clash of ontologies in media debates and anti-political politics is exemplified in Sufi engagements with social responsibility. Reflections on media debates and conversations with Sufi interlocutors demonstrate the divisive ontological politics of contemporary Sufism. Focusing on the importance of affective pedagogy and calm reflection in Sufi practice and public anthropology, a collaborative event illustrates how ethnographic documentation evolved into a field of engagement in the context of the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 and growing anti-Muslim racism. The chapter argues how life-affirming action is made possible by expanding the affective politics beyond secularism, engaging both Sufism and anthropology.

"Conclusion: Lessons from the Breathing, Wayfaring Hearts" summarizes the key arguments of this book. I discuss the limitations of this work and map a few unchartered terrains to consider future lines of empirical and theoretical inquiry. The book concludes with an epilogue.

Notes

1. In this book, "woman" and "man" stand for "cis woman" and "cis man" respectively. I did not ask for specific information regarding the gender identity and sexual orientation of my interlocutors, other than what they explicitly shared with me. Racialized identities are framed as "white," "of Color," and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) unless the interlocutors identify themselves otherwise.
2. Since the so-called refugee crisis of 2015, the number of attacks on mosques in Germany has increased (Becker 2017).
3. Abu Bakr was born in a German Protestant family. He spent years exploring Berlin's "spiritual scene" before joining the Haqqani-Naqshbandi network. As a white man, he was not perceived as "Muslim" in Germany, unless he carried Islamic objects or wore a prayer cap.
4. In 2015, the arrival of refugee newcomers, primarily from Muslim-majority Syria and the Middle East, but also from Central Europe and Africa, reached a peak (BAMF 2015). While the so-called refugee crisis was created by the rigid, discriminating German laws and administration, which were unable to provide support for the refugee newcomers, the right-wing and conservative forces renewed their attacks on Muslims by accusing them for their failure to integrate into "German culture" and blamed refugee Muslims for the repeated ISIS-inspired attacks in Western Europe (2015–2017).

5. On 19 February 2020, in Hanau, a small town near Frankfurt, a white German right-wing extremist (Tobias R.) attacked two shisha bars and killed nine people of Color (Ferhat Unvar, Hamza Kurtović, Said Nesar Hashemi, Vili Viorel Păun, Mercedes Kierpacz, Kaloyan Velkov, Fatih Saraçoğlu, Sedat Gürbüz, and Gökhan Gültekin). Tobias R. had been posting his racist conspiracy theories with threats of attacks against "nonwhites" and singled out Islam to be a threat to Germany. Yet the German intelligence service did not consider him to be a potential danger for postmigrant communities of Color (DPA 2022; Bax 2021; Baş, 2020; Initiative 19. Februar Hanau 2020). The terror attack in Hanau is a turning point in the discussion of anti-Muslim racism in Germany. The white-majority German public discourse had systematically denied or relativized anti-Muslim racism in foregrounding radical Islamism as the only form of Islam (Keskinkilic 2019). After the Hanau terror attack, for the first time, the (former) German Chancellor Angela Merkel publicly denounced the "poison" of racism and hatred against racialized Muslims in Germany (Connolly and Oltermann 2020). On the first anniversary of the Hanau attack, Berlin established an expert commission against anti-Muslim racism for the first time in Germany (Betschka 2021; Breitensträter 2021).
6. "Inayati" is a working frame to refer to all Sufi networks inspired by the Universal Sufism of Hazrat Inayat Khan.
7. Türk Müziğini Araştırma ve Tanıtma Grub, (Turkish)/Traditional Turkish Music Research and Promotion Society, was established in 1976 in Istanbul, Turkey. Tümata-Berlin refers to the network active in Berlin since 2000.
8. Khidr, the Sufi teacher mentioned in the Preface, considered himself a nomadic Sufi, although he had received lessons from three different Sufi teachers belonging to Naqshbandi, Nimatullahi, and Chishti networks (chapter 1).
9. See Amir-Moazami (2022).
10. The term postmigrant/*postmigrantisch* is a politicized self-definition inspired by generations of artists, activists, and scholars who consider themselves to be integral to Germany, and hence no longer "foreigners" or "migrants" in a society fundamentally shaped and transformed by migration (Foroutan 2016; Langhoff 2011).
11. I heard the term "Döner murders" (*Dönermorde*) within a few days after my arrival (May 2012). Between 2000 and 2007, an underground neo-Nazi group Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund (NSU), killed Turkish, Kurdish, and Greek "migrants" and a policewoman. The German police and the secret service initially argued that the murders were linked to organized criminals (with "migrant background"). The NSU link became clear after two NSU members died and the third surrendered to the police in 2011. In November 2012, citizen protests took place across Germany criticizing the secret service and the police for institutionalized racism (DPA 2012).
12. In German, the common expression was *Der Weg des Herzens* (The Way of the Heart) or *Der Herzensweg der Sufis* (The Heart-Way of the Sufis)

(Al Habib 2009). *The Way of the Heart* (Scorer 2010) is the title of a documentary film that features Hazrat Inayat Khan. The Sufi networks in Berlin often used the label "way of the heart" for Sufism. The term is not specific to Sufism. It has been applied to other traditions, for example, the practices of early Christianity and its contemporary versions (Nouwen [1981] 2009). Seyyed Hossain Nasr discussed the Sufi prayer or invocation (*dhikr*) as a "prayer of the heart" (2004, 41). See James Cutsinger (2004) for the comparative theologies and prayers of the heart across diverse traditions.

13. The hermeneutics of affective pedagogy (what is there to learn along desire lines?) attempts to move beyond a hermeneutics of suspicion (what is there to criticize?) and grounded in a critical understanding of faith (what is there to believe in?) (Ricoeur 1970, 35). The term "hermeneutics of suspicion" is derived from Hans-Georg Gadamer (1984, 313) drawing from Paul Ricoeur's framing of Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud as the "masters of suspicion" (1970, 35). I discuss the hermeneutics of pedagogy in taking issue with the above-mentioned hermeneutics, adapted from Peter Sotirou's (1993, 365) articulation of "hermeneutic pedagogy" (chapter 1). I have borrowed the term "affective pedagogy" from Anna Hickey-Moody's (2013, 92) discussion of aesthetic and affective forces produced by artwork. This framing is helpful because the affecting force and pedagogic acts of the teachers and their reception by the learners were crucial in my research settings (Selim 2020a).
14. An intentional community is "consciously formed with a specific purpose in mind" (S. Brown 2002, 3). With a shared vision of life, such communities grow out of religious/spiritual, political, economic, and artistic initiatives.
15. Jörg Stolz (2006) and Enzo Pace (2006) engaged with the Weberian concept of salvation goods (*Heilsgut*) to discuss the religious markets both in terms of exchange and gift economy.
16. Personal communication with Saboura Naqshband on 6 February 2023. The framing of *super-diversity* rethinks migration in shifting from an "ethnic lens" to intersecting categories of differences. Super-diversity points to the dynamic interplay of shifting demographics and "multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated, and legally stratified immigrants" (Vertovec 2007, 1024).
17. See Dilger and Schnepf (2020); Dilger, Peterson, and Werkstatt Ethnologie (2018); Grübel and Rademacher (2003); Jütte (1996).
18 "If we are concerned with the coming into being [ontology] of possibilities, what is that if not historical?" (Hacking 2002, 583). Following Ian Hacking (2002), I use the term *historical ontology* as the temporalized coming into being of possibilities. See Holbraad and Pedersen (2017) for details about the more recent *ontological turn* in anthropology.
19. Tholuck's dissertation (1821) is the first comprehensive academic text on the phenomenon of Sufism in a major European language (Schimmel [1985] 1995, 24). Bernhard probably referred to this when he implied that "Sufism" was invented in Berlin.

20. See Sharify-Funk et al. (2018); Dickson and Sharify-Funk (2017); Ahmed (2008); Heck (2007a); Ernst (1997); Schimmel ([1985] 1995); and Lings (1975).
21. *Taṣawwuf* is the "phenomenon of mysticism within Islam" (Massington et al. 2012). Hence, a "mystic" in the Islamic tradition is to be called *ṣūfi* or *mutaṣawwif* (2012). However, there is no common consensus regarding the etymology.
22. Paul Heck questioned the framing of Sufism as *Islamic mysticism*: "[I]s it mysticism? What is its relation to Islam?" (2007a, 148), but in response, he simply replaced "mysticism" with the word "spirituality," defining Sufism as "the spirituality of Islam" (2007a, 148).
23. *Sharīʿa* (lit. the point of entry to a water-hole or the area around it) refers to the rules and regulations that govern the lives of Muslims in terms of Islamic jurisprudence (Bearman et al. 2012a). Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and the Hanbali are four major schools in Sunni Islam that offer interpretations and influence the execution of the Islamic law based on Qur'an and *sunnah* (Prophetic tradition) intersecting with the secular law of the nation-states (J. Brown 2014).
24. See Nanda and Talib (1992) for a discussion on the teacher-student (*Piri-Murid*) relationship in Sufi discourse.
25. In colonial Bengal, the Sufi conceptual vocabulary not only informed the everyday Muslim but was also ingrained in the syncretistic self-expressions of the Bāul (Openshaw 2018).
26. "The West" refers to the imaginary of a vast geographical region with enormous internal differences in history and the contemporary, but includes mostly Judeo-Christian and secularized Western Europe and North America with their allies and wealthy nation-states (e.g., Australia) that are implicated as major forces deploying colonialism and advanced capitalism, (neo-) imperialism, and orientalism on the rest of the world (Said [1978] 1995; Nader 2015). The imagined "East" (the Orient) (mostly Islamic in Said's work) is invoked in academic and popular orientalist discourses as the other of the imagined "West" (the Occident) where Islam and Sufism are minority traditions.
27. This fact is evident from the nineteenth-century texts by the British orientalists, William Jones (1807), J. Malcolm (1815), J. W. Graham (1819), and E. H. Palmer (1867) (Khalil and Sheikh 2014; Ernst 2003).
28. See Khalil and Sheikh (2014, 2016), Sijbrand (2013), Knysh (2005), and Küçük (2008).
29. See Sharify-Funk et al. (2018), Milani (2018), Ridgeon (2015a), Chittick (2015), Taji-Farouki (2009), Ernst (2003).
30. For a selection of these works, see Xavier (2023), Sharify-Funk et al. (2018), Sedgwick (2017), Geaves (2015), Weismann (2015), Khalil and Sheikh (2014), Geaves, Dressler, and Klinkhammer (2009), Raudvere and Sternberg (2009), Klinkhammer (2009a, 2009b), Rawlinson (2009), Küçük (2008), Malik and Hinnells (2006), Westerlund (2004), Hermansen (2000, 2004), and Werbner (2003).

31. Drawing on the controversy around the Danish caricature in Egypt and his observations in the Netherlands, Samuli Schielke (2010) argued that the populist sections of the "Muslim" Egyptians and "secular" Dutch people reacted similarly, mobilizing populist sentiments, and something other than Islamic tradition was at play in those instances.
32. *Cultural appropriation* is a term rarely discussed in German anthropology (for notable exceptions, see H. Hahn 2011, 2012). But the term is popular among antiracist intellectuals and activist circles in Berlin as a powerful critique of the widespread predatory "white culture" in Germany that takes or adopts traditional practices from marginalized social groups or societies without any reflection or acknowledgment (Sow 2011). Integral to cultural appropriation is this asymmetry of power relations between societies or social groups within a society (Arya 2021). In my work, cultural appropriation implies the phenomenon of majority/dominant white actors taking or adopting Sufi practices from the marginalized Islamic tradition and racialized Muslim societies and communities, without adequately reflecting on historical contexts and sociopolitical implications of the power asymmetries involved (Chapters 2, 4, and 6).
33. This is a frequently cited poem from the collection of Goethe's poetic imagination of the "East" or "Orient" (Gundert, Schimmel, and Schubring 1952, 5). Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832) was frequently cited in Sufi-Berlin. Andrea (Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat) considered him to be a Sufi Muslim, a widespread misconception (Mommsen 2001, 2014). Esra Özyürek (2015, 25) showed how white German "converts" to Islam reimagine the "lost ideals of the German Enlightenment" embodied in the figure of Goethe being Muslim.
34. The first German translation of the Farsi-speaking Sufi poet Sa'dī's *Gulistān* (Rose garden) in 1654 had a significant impact on the German understanding of the Islamic world, impressing the classical writers of the German Enlightenment, such as Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) and Goethe (Schimmel 2010). See also Klinkhammer (2009a, 2009b) and Schleßmann (2003), who detailed the history of German interest in Sufism.
35. See Sedgwick (2017) for a detailed history of such contacts in terms of pre-modern intercultural transfers and the subsequent establishment of "Western Sufism" between 1910 and 1933, tracking its subsequent development till 1968.
36. Bektaşiyye/Bektāshiyya is a Sufi network established by Balım Sultan in fifteenth-century (Turkish) Anatolia and named after the thirteenth-century figure Hacı Bektaş Veli (d. 1270) emerging from several antinomian trends (Zarcone 2004). See Robert Langer (2011) for a discussion of the Bektashi and Alevism in Turkish and German contexts. In addition to Mevlana Rumi's work, Tümata-Berlin regularly performed songs drawn from the Bektashi repertoire. For example, Yūnus Emre, a fourteenth-century figure whose poems in old Anatolian Turkish are immensely popular in Turkey (Ambros 2012).

37. Petra Schildbach, the German representative of the Sufi-Movement (*Sufi-Bewegung*), expressed a strong reservation against the term "Inayati," preferring the framing, "Inayat-Khan-inspired" (conversation with the author, 7 March 2018). Since the term *Inayati* in this book is a working label and does not refer to the Inayati Order (Inayatiyya) only, I stay with the term, but to accommodate her reservations, I frame the organization she represents, the Sufi-Movement, as "Inayat-Khan-inspired" instead of Inayati-Movement.
38. During my fieldwork, I have also briefly engaged with other smaller groups: the Institute of Sufi Research, Flaming Heart Meditation, the Rumi Project, and Whirling Berlin (renamed Sufi Laboratorium).
39. Such an assumption often arises from the notion that decoupling Sufism from the "ritual formalism of normative Islam" inevitably domesticates Sufism to fit the "ethos of . . . individualism, liberalism, and neoliberal privatization" (Lipton 2011, 427–28).
40. Scholars have also classified Sufism in Western Europe into diasporic, conversion, and New-Age Sufism, based on generational changes in Sufi communities and translocations of Sufi orders (Lassen 2009a, 148).
41. Tayfun Atay's (2012) ethnography in a Haqqani-Naqshbandi community in London draws from the community's perspectives on (secular) modernity, millenarian themes, and political views on Turkey, Iran, and Saudia Arabia. Sufism in European countries and North America have also been explored in terms of "emulation and embodiment," enacting the "connections between this world and Elsewhere" among the Naqshbandis in Denmark (Rytter 2016, 229). Ron Geaves (2009) described the strategies of continuity and local transformations of the Naqshbandi in Britain regarding the relationship between the Sufi shrines and educational seminaries, while Simon Stjernholm (2009, 2015) focused on translocal practices of the network in Britain and Cyprus.
42. The Haqqani-Naqshbandi network members have published several texts and translated primary texts into German. See Sheikh Eşref Efendi (2004, 2011) and Sheikh Nāẓim (2004). The Haqqani-Naqshbandi was the only Sufi network depicted in a recent documentary about Berlin's spiritual landscape, *Spirit Berlin* (Hildebrandt 2014).
43. Tümata members have published texts and became involved in audiovisual productions. For example, see Güvenç (2014), Güvenç and Güvenç (2009), Bachmaier-Ekşi (2004, 2007), and Bergmann (2006).
44. For studies of Inayati Universal Sufism in the United States, see Sharify-Funk et al. (2018); Dickson (2015), and Hermansen (2000, 2004); in the United Kingdom, see Geaves and Gabriel (2014), R. Jackson (2014), and Geaves (2012); and in Australia, see Genn (2007, 2008).
45. Inayati network members have translated numerous English texts into German and a few audiovisual productions. See Douglas-Klotz ([1990] 2007), W. Meyer et al. (2011), and Iradah (1996) for illustrative examples.
46. Gritt Klinkhammer studied the histories of specific Sufi networks in-depth, especially the Mevlevis (2009c) in Brandenburg and Tariqa Bur-

haniya (2005) in Berlin and Haus Schnede of Salzhausen. In addition to Schleßmann (2003), Klinkhammer (2009a) has provided brief histories of Inayati, Haqqani-Naqshbandi, and Tümata networks in Germany.

47. For notable exceptions, see Langer (2015), Klinkhammer and Tolksdorf (2015), and Klinkhammer (2015, 2009b).
48. Fieldnote 28 October 2012.
49. Djalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (ca. 1207–1273) was born in Balkh, present-day Afghanistan, and died in Konya, present-day Turkey, where the Mawlawaiyya/Mevleviyya dervish order was later founded by his son (Ritter and Bausani 2012). The order was named after the title he was given, Mawlānā/Mevlânâ (our Master). The word Rūmī referred to him as an inhabitant of Rûm (Roman Anatolia). This historical Sufi figure is frequently cited as "Mevlana Rumi" in Sufi-Berlin and connected sites. Rumi was declared a best-selling poet in the United States in 1997 but remains popular worldwide. A contemporary biographer calls this global popularity "Rumi-Mania" (Lewis [2000] 2014, 1).
50. Farīd Al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (ca. 1119–1239) was a Farsi-speaking poet who wrote *Manṭiḳ al-ṭayr (Maḳāmāt al-ṭuyūr),* known in popular translations as *The Conference of the Birds* or *Conversations of the Birds* (German. *Vogelgespräche)* (Schimmel 1999). It is a parable of the recurring Sufi themes, such as *fanā* or annihilation of the self-centered self (Ritter 2012). Attar is quite popular among the Haqqani-Naqshbandis. Feride Gençaslan, a leading figure in the network in Berlin read Attar's stories during the 14th Berlin International Literature Festival (10 September 2014).
51. Berlin's postsecular identity is enacted in the recent tradition of celebrating the Long Night of Religions (*Lange Nacht der Religionen*) where Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sufi-Center Berlin and Inayat-Khan-inspired Sufi-Movement took part. The Long Night of Religions emerged along with other initiatives such as the Berlin Dialogue of Religions and Berlin Forum of Religions, urban projects supported by the city council since 2011 (Kreutziger-Herr et al. 2015, 13).
52. See Josef Bengston's (2015) genealogy of postsecular thought in the history and philosophy of Western modernity. For a discussion of global secularism and the revival of religions, see Rectenwald, Almeida, and Levine (2015).
53. Germany is known for its secularization as well as its postsecular religious landscape, as a "Republic of Faith" (*Glaubensrepublik*) (Drobinsky and Keller 2011). The Protestant (Lutheran) Church enjoys a long history of state privileges since its interests are intertwined with that of the nation-state of Germany (Jonker 2000, 312). Jonker described the fractured landscape of German secularization to track a crucial moment of its establishment. In 1919, the church provision policy in the German (Weimar Republic) constitution made a distinction for the first time between the tasks of the nation-state and those entitled to the church (2000, 313). The status of the German "corporation of public law" (*Körperschaftsstatus*) privileges the Catholic, Protestant, Greek Orthodox Churches and the Jewish

communities by granting them the rights to raise taxes, receive financial endowments, provide "pastoral care" in public institutions, obtain state-supported social welfare, and provide religious instructions in state schools (2000, 313). Islamic institutions, however, are barred from these rights by most regional governments in Germany (2000, 313; Özyürek 2015, 8). Berlin Islamic Federation, after two decades of legal challenges, was granted the right to provide religious instructions in public schools upon parental demands (Yükleyen 2012, 161). Klaus Obermayer has described the fractured secularization of Germany as an "independence [of the nation-state, but] with Christian overtones" (1977, 10) (Jonker 2000, 312).

54. Everyday Islamic (or other religious) practices are embedded in and co-constituted by "secular modes of living," however selectively (Liebelt and Werbner 2018, 4).

Chapter 1
The Unseen Neighbors and a Dual Apprentice

Silsila, or Drawing the Lines of Transmitting Breath

বাড়ির কাছে আরশী নগর
সেথা পড়শী বসত করে,
একঘর পড়শী বসত করে
আমি একদিনও না দেখিলাম তারে...
সে আর লালন একখানে রয়
লক্ষ যোজন ফাঁক রে, তবু
লক্ষ যোজন ফাঁক রে,
আমি একদিনও না দেখিলাম তারে।

My home is in the city of mirrors.
I have neighbors living there.
We have not met even once . . .

They and Lālan live side by side.
A hundred thousand miles lie between us.
We have not met even once.
—Bāul Lālan Fakir, *Arṣinagar*[1]

I arrived in Berlin on a cold spring day in May 2012. Gi (a born Berliner) and my supervisor were the only people I knew in the city at that time. Gi had left Bangladesh the year before, having lived there for almost a decade. We met in Dhaka and shared our enthusiasm for transnational post-Marxist feminism, the sounds of Bangla Bāul music, the poetry and life story of Mevlana Rumi, especially the legend of how he met his mentor, the wandering *dervish* Shams of Tabriz.[2] We chatted about probable Ph.D. topics. By that time, my past interest in exploring breathing meditation[3] techniques shifted to a growing curiosity about Sufi healing practices in Germany. Gi was not convinced about my tentative plans. Her first reaction was: "Sufis in Berlin! Where will you find them?"

While in Dhaka, I tried out several search engines with the keywords "Sufi," "Sufism," and "Berlin," going through German-language

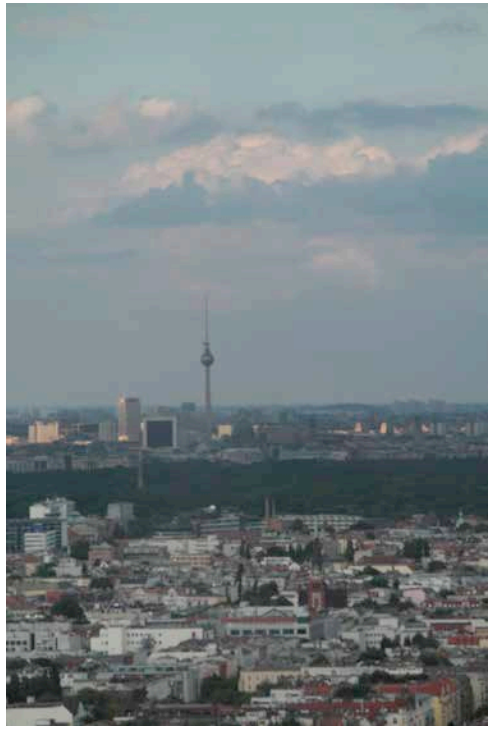

Figure 1.1. Berlin—a city of mirrors, 17 June 2014. © Nasima Selim.

websites with limited success. After I arrived in Berlin, I looked for the Sufis on the ground, asking everyone I met if they knew anyone. Berlin appeared to me as an *Arṣinagar* (city of mirrors), bringing to my mind a popular metaphor for the material world here and now expressed by the nineteenth-century Bengali Bāul Lālan Fakir. In this city of mirrors, very few people have seen the faces of their Sufi neighbors. They are not always visible as Sufis. So, I set out to meet these unseen neighbors, tracking the ways of their (breathing) hearts.

Sufi networks in Berlin spread themselves across several neighborhoods (*Kiez*) and districts (*Bezirke*) (see map). I tracked them by following the word "Sufi" through their websites, leaflets, announcements, publications, and by word-of-mouth. The neighborhoods where the networks were situated were different from each other, and the kinds of people who gathered in each place differed

too, whether as an audience for the public performance of Sufism or to practice it. At times the unseen neighbors spoke languages other than German, most frequently a mix of German and Turkish (Haqqani-Naqshbandi and Tümata-Berlin) and English (Inayati and nomadic Sufis), but using many words of Arabic and Farsi origin.

The Sufi networks were super-diverse constellations of affects,[4] techniques, breathing practices, words, sounds, things, subjectivities, histories, and politics. The subsequent chapters describe these constellations. As I write the final lines of this book, I look back and wonder how the elements that I discerned much later seemed to have been always already present in my initial glimpses of the places where Sufi breather-wayfarers gathered to practice and experience Sufism (and healing).

The Unseen Neighbors

Haqqani-Naqshbandi Dergah: Sufi Islam in Berlin's So-Called Problem Quarter

In the summer of 2013, I crossed the threshold of the Sufi-Center Berlin for the first time. A narrow hallway led to the kitchen on the right side beside the toilet for women. Further down to the right, I entered a smaller carpeted room filled with books in Arabic, Turkish, German, and English, red sofas, a portrait of the Ottoman Sultans, and a wooden structure to mark the direction of the regulatory Islamic prayers. Adjacent to it stood the men's toilet. I saw a disclaimer sign: "If you wish to be left alone, choose a place behind or beside the camera operator because videos and photos are taken and displayed on the internet."

In the hallway, on the left side, the main prayer hall was decorated with red and black carpets, images of the Grand Sheikh, an Ottoman seal, the Ottoman declaration of human rights, large abstract paintings, and several images of whirling Sufi dervishes. Photocopied pages scattered on red cushions, containing instructions on how to do the dhikr. In one corner of the bigger hall, I saw an audio-visual recording kit. On the other corner, a huge sofa stood with a round table in front. On top of it, a fresh rose had been placed in a clean, transparent glass filled with water. It was the seat of the sheikh. The center was preparing for the upcoming Sufi evening.

Figure 1.2. Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sufi-Center Berlin in Neukölln, also known as Sufi-Zentrum Rabbaniyya (SZR), 22 September 2013. © Nasima Selim.

Sufi-Zentrum Rabbaniyya (SZR), formerly known as Sufi-Zentrum Berlin (figure 1.2), used to be the locally managed center of the transnational Haqqani-Naqshbandi network, registered as an association named *der wahre Mensch* (the true human). Near the Hermannplatz subway station, this center stood close to the border between Kreuzberg and Neukölln districts (Kreuzkölln). The ground floor of a spacious, old residential building was turned into a *dergah*[5] and operated as a meeting place, a community center that looked like a reconstructed (new) Ottoman teahouse in the Southeast Berlin neighborhood.[6]

In populist anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant discourse, Neukölln is perceived as one of the "problem-ridden" quarters (*Problemviertel*) of Berlin, where many people of Color live, with and without a so-called migrant background. Neukölln is also home to the largest number of mosques in the city. In contrast, there are hardly any mosques in the former East Berlin districts.[7] The Sufi-Center Berlin of Neukölln was a hub for German Sufi Muslims and non-Muslims,

Turkish-Germans, and "native" Germans, both white and people of Color. The *dergah* was open to their families, friends, neighbors, tourists, new migrants, and refugee newcomers. The most anticipated and crowded events were the dhikr and *sohbet* on weekend nights (Fridays and Saturdays). The center also organized language and music lessons, workshops on *Drehtanz* (whirling dance) on Wednesdays and Sundays, and *Hayy-Kraft* Yoga on Sunday afternoons (Selim 2015a). The kitchen was always busy under the care of staff members of both genders. Young men in red Ottoman caps served tea in curvy glasses, and a free meal was served on the weekends.

Most long-term members of the Haqqani-Naqshbandi network identified themselves as Sufi Muslims. The center provided an informal mosque space to host the ritual practices of the regulatory Islamic prayers five times a day, collective Friday *jumma* prayers, and various festivities, such as Şeker Bayramı (Zuckerfest in German and Eid ul Fitr in Arabic, the Islamic festival of breaking fast) at the end of the fasting month of Ramadan and the Kurban Bayramı (Opferfest in German and Eid ul Adha, the Islamic festival of sacrifice).

On Friday and Saturday nights, a video camera provided simultaneous viewing for the visitors in a smaller hall room and live-streaming video on the web. The center was crowded on weekends, especially in the late evening when Sheikh Eşref Efendi led the *sohbet* and dhikr. The events at the center were occasionally featured in magazines on spirituality (SEIN and KGS), online platforms (MYP), newspapers (TAZ), and entertainment magazines in Berlin (Weiß 2017; Gunderlach 2017; Bax 2014; Rigney 2014; Efendi 2007, 2011). SZR took part in multicultural music festivals and interfaith events, such as the Long Night of Religions (2013–2015). Yet the Sufis of this center were not welcomed as neighbors. In December 2014, the Center had to leave the place (and Berlin) due to neighborhood concerns about "too much noise" late at night and followed a central decision from its headquarters in Turkish Cyprus.

Sufi-Center Berlin was not the oldest Sufi network in the city, but it was the more visible of all the networks I have followed. I found the address of the center on their well-managed website and waited for their response to my emails, written in English at that time. From 2013 to 2014, I took part in the workshops that Abu Bakr led. I joined meditation evenings that Timur Efendi led on Friday afternoons. Later, I began to participate in the weekend dhikr and *sohbet*

evenings. This is where I met Abu Bakr, Ayşe, Sheikh Eşref Efendi, and his sister Feride Funda G.-Gençaslan—leading figures in this network. Hafiz and Claire, both of whom I had met in the 2012 Weg des Herzens event, also attended the festivities and the weekend activities at the center regularly with their friend Zafar.

Haqqani-Naqshbandi is one of the most prominent Sufi networks in Germany. Worldwide, the network spread under the leadership of the late Grand Sheikh Nazim Adil al-Haqqani al-Qubrusi an-Naqshbandi (1922–2014).[8] In addition to his initiation as a Khalidi-Naqshbandi, Sheikh Nazim was trained in the Hanafi School of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), one of the four major Sunni schools of Islamic law, followed by many Turkish Muslims (Brown 2014).[9] Sheikh Eşref Efendi was authorized by Sheikh Nazim in 1995 to lead the network in Berlin until the *dergah* shifted to southern Germany in the winter of 2014, eleven years after its opening. This book draws its materials from the time the network operated in Berlin.

In my early days in the field, I was self-conscious as a woman of Color speaking "broken" German. Yet I did not feel threatened in neighborhoods like Kreuzberg, Neukölln, and Schöneberg. However, hanging out in the former East Berlin neighborhood, made me apprehensive, perhaps because of the lack of visible diversity. I was not delighted when I found out that an Inayati Sufi *khanekah*[10] was situated in Pankow, a (former East) Berlin neighborhood in the north. On my first day in Pankow, I saw racist anti-immigrant posters of the right-wing party NPD[11] all over this neighborhood. They displayed the slogan, *"Guten Heimflug!"* (Nice journey back home!), featuring a flying carpet with racialized foreigners and (perceived as) Muslim figures: a dark-haired, mustached man, a big-breasted woman with a headscarf, and a blackfaced man with a talisman hanging around his neck (figure 1.3).[12] I wondered how Sufism, a tradition deeply embedded in the Islamic tradition, could thrive in a society fraught with anti-Muslim racism.

Despite my visceral discomfort walking around in the neighborhood, Pankow's Sufi *khanekah* was a place that I visited frequently.[13] In the garden hall of an apartment building in this foreboding neighborhood, I met Murshida Rabeya, a white psychotherapist and Sufi teacher, for the first time. The transformative experience of that first meeting informed my decision to take my apprenticeship in Sufism a step further.

Figure 1.3. "Nice journey back home!" (*Guten Heimflug*), an NPD election poster. These posters were all over the Pankow neighborhood, 24 August 2013. © Nasima Selim.

The Inayati Sufi Houses

Universal Sufism in Affluent Berlin

When I entered the Inayati Sufi house in North Berlin, I saw an unusual piece of metal standing out in the garden. It was a bit rusty from the rain and air. Later, I realized that it was the winged breathing heart symbol of the Sufism of Hazrat Inayat Khan (figure 1.4). Inside, to the right, a wooden board with leaflets announced various events: *Dances of Universal Peace*, healing seminars, and the upcoming Sufi summer school 2013. Underneath the announcement board, there was a shelf with warm, woolen socks. The door on the right opened into a quadrangular hall with soft cushions, candles, and seating stools. A rug was hanging from the wall embroidered with numerous whirling dervishes. A flower, incense sticks, a glass of water, and a stack of books stood against the wall.

The Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat *khanekah* is a privately owned building open to the public on certain days of the week (usually Fridays, Sun-

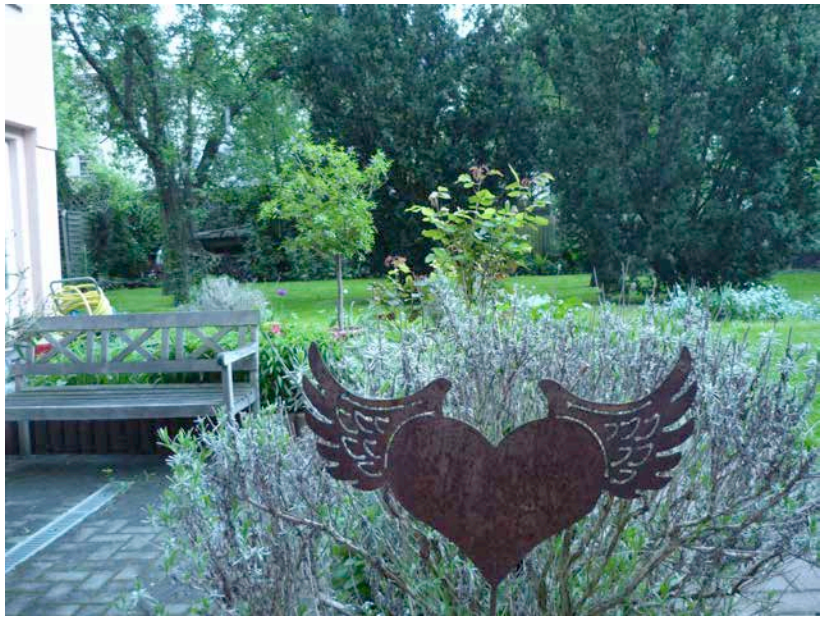

Figure 1.4. The Inayati symbol, the winged heart, in front of the garden hall in Pankow. The actual symbol consists of the contour of a heart-shaped form bearing a moon, a five-angled star, and two spread-out wings. 12 May 2013. © Nasima Selim.

days, and Mondays). But in practice, the building was accessed only by members and their friends. Within a decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall, a few long-term and senior teachers of the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat moved to the building that consisted of individual apartments.[14] The ground-floor hall was designated for Sufi gatherings. Here the dances, walks, healing rituals, and *murid* meetings have taken place since the early 2000s. The earliest Dances of Universal Peace in Berlin took place in 1991, although the Inayatis have been practicing elsewhere in Germany much earlier.

Back in 2012, before coming to Berlin, I made email contact with one of the organizers of the annual Sufi Summer School of the European Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat networks. My Scottish contact was closely related to the Inayati network in Pankow and introduced me to Murshida Ganga and Murshida Rabeya, two senior teachers

of the German network. After arriving in the city, I wrote to them and was invited to join an upcoming weekend retreat, a Sufi healing seminar (email to the author, 14 January 2013). In this *khanekah*, I later met Andrea, Hermann, Renate, Rahima, and the current spiritual director of the transnational Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat network, Pir Shabda Kahn.

On my first day, the sidewalks were lined with cars, and a sweeping canopy of green leaves shaded the long street. I saw hardly any graffiti on the walls facing the street. It looked like a relatively affluent neighborhood of upper- and middle-class inhabitants. In contrast to the welcoming color, smells, and sounds of the Neukölln neighborhood, this predominantly white neighborhood seemed quieter, and I saw fewer pedestrians of Color. The foreboding atmosphere of the neighborhood was transformed into a welcoming one when I was greeted and embraced by Murshida Rabeya and Murshida Ganga, who had been practicing Sufi healing for more than two decades.

In the course of my fieldwork, I also visited the oldest Inayat-Khan-inspired Sufi Center in Berlin, on public occasions and for an interview. The Sufi-Heim Asal Manzil (Sufi-Home True Abode) is a grand villa in Grunewald where Mrs. Petra B. Schildbach lives and coordinates the activities of this branch of Inayati Sufis. She is the official representative of the Inayat-Khan-inspired Sufi-Movement network in Germany, the oldest Inayati network established in Berlin during the 1920s. Mrs. Schildbach organizes the practices of the Sufi-Movement in Berlin and is in charge of sending newsletters by post. Access is usually granted to members. This Sufi house is open to non-members only during public events. Mrs. Schildbach occasionally conducted Sufi walks in Berlin, retracing the history of Inayat Khan's visit to Weimar Berlin.

One of the major streams, the Inayati Order (Inayatiyya), organized its events in public places and living rooms and occasionally collaborated with local Protestant churches in Berlin. They called their placeless center *Na Koja Abad,* meaning, "the place of no place" in Farsi. During the Easter retreat in Gersfeld in 2013, I met Pir Zia Inayat-Khan, the current head of this transnational network. There I also met Amir for the first time, through whom I came into contact with Joachim. Both became my key interlocutors in the Inayati Order (Inayatiyya).

The Inayati networks in Berlin derive their genealogy from the central figure of Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882–1927), a North Indian Sufi and musician of the Hindustani classical tradition. He migrated to North America and Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the interwar years, he visited Berlin several times. Soon after his initial visits, the first Inayat-Khan-inspired network was established in 1925, known at that time as *Sufi-Bewegung* (Sufi Movement). The three streams of the Inayati network currently in Berlin are officially known as the International Headquarters of Sufi Movement Germany, the Inayati Order (Inayatiyya) (formerly known as the International Sufi Order), and the Sufi Ruhaniat International Germany (with its associated Dances of Universal Peace Network). Together they form the Berlin branch of the Federation of the Sufi Message, a joint association of the diverse Inayati networks worldwide, originally established in 1997.[15]

The Neukölln Sufi-Center Berlin and the Inayati houses were the more permanent Sufi sites where I conducted my fieldwork. The Neukölln center was supported by wealthy businessmen and donations from members and visitors. All events in the center were offered free of cost, even weekend evening meals. The Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat *khanekah* charged seminar fees for public events and accepted donations. I attended public events of the Haqqani-Naqshbandis and the Inayatis (and private gatherings of the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat) free of cost. But I paid for travel, food, and accommodation costs for annual retreats outside Berlin.

Apart from the more permanent places, Sufis also gathered in temporary places of make-shift nature. Friend circles gathered in living rooms. Protestant churches frequently accommodated Sufi events. Sufi practices occasionally took place in a physician's office and rented rooms. My next stop in this round of early impressions is one of those temporary places where Tümata-Berlin members gathered.

Tümata-Berlin

Intersecting Religion, Medicine, and the Arts

During the early days of fieldwork, I moved around Berlin to make sense of its enormous geography and decipher the ubiquitous urban

references to the past. The city offers a prolific number of museums and exhibitions of historical artifacts. I was surprised at the number of "dark churches" (*dunkle Kirche*)[16] in every neighborhood. My dominant associations with Berlin were still revolving around the image of the colonial city where white Europeans decided on the fate of the African continent in the nineteenth century, followed by the two World Wars, the Holocaust, the postwar construction and fall of the Berlin Wall, and more recent perceptions as the "world capital of atheism," a thriving queer city, and the legacy of anti-capitalist resistance in the 1980s and 1990s.

During my first autumn in Berlin, Gi and I went to an exhibition that showcased the role of the resistance of the Church against the (former) East German government. The exhibition took place in a Protestant church in Friedrichshain, a (former) East Berlin neighborhood. At the exhibition, I leafed through the displayed old newspapers from 1989. An article in one of these newspapers mentioned the founder of Tümata in Istanbul, with the title, "Where the Sick are Healed with Music . . . Istanbul Scientist Researches the Soothing Effect of Sounds" (Pils 1989).

A quarter of a century later, Tümata no longer lies hidden in an East German newspaper archive. Tümata-Berlin operates in the urban landscape of alternative healing, with their breathing and whirling practices, the sounds they make, and the movements they perform. The network did not have a fixed center during my fieldwork.[17] The members moved around in each others' living rooms. They also rented small rooms to organize monthly music-and-movement therapy and bigger halls for public events. A mixed audience interested in Sufism, music, and movement attended these events. Like the Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sufi Center (Sufi-Zentrum Rabbaniyya, SZR), Tümata events cut across the Muslim/non-Muslim divide. They brought together the parallel lives of older and new migrants, white Germans, and postmigrants of Color.

Tümata was established as a music and movement therapy group in Istanbul in 1976. A Turkish psychologist, ethnomusicologist, musician, and Sufi teacher, the late Dr. Rahmi Oruç Güvenç, founded the network. Together with his wife, the white German and Turkish-speaking occupational therapist Andrea Azize Güvenç, Oruç Güvenç popularized Tümata events in Western and Southern Europe. In comparison to the Haqqani-Naqshbandi and the Inayatis, the Tümata-

Berlin network is rather small and consists mostly of musicians and healing practitioners. Members belonged to multiple Sufi networks.[18] The leading figure is a white German Muslim physician, Raphael, and Minar, a Turkish-German medical student, and musician. Along with Gertrud, the healing practitioner I referred to in the Introduction, they were my key interlocutors in this network. I met them during a music and movement therapy group session in the spring of 2013.

It was a small room that accommodated about ten participants with yoga mats, blue and maroon cushions, several colorful blankets, and chairs standing at the back. A long black and brown shawl was spread over one corner. Cushions and music sheets were spread out. An *oud* stood quietly on a chair. Halima, an elderly white woman and a German-language teacher, and Raphael, the physician, together with Hannah, another white German woman, were the three leading musicians of the session. All of them were long-term students of the founder of the music therapy group (fieldnote, 15 April 2013; figure 1.5.).

My first impression of the neighborhood was slightly different from the neighborhoods in Neukölln and Pankow. It was in South Berlin at the intersection of Schöneberg and Kreuzberg. The rented room was a few meters away from one of the biggest "spiritual" bookshops in Berlin and the headquarters of KGS (*Körper Geist Seele*), a popular magazine that dealt with "spiritual" matters. On occasion, I also visited Raphael's apartment in Kreuzberg where the group mostly met for rehearsals.

For ten Euros, anyone was welcome to subject one's body and disposition for an hour to the hybrid practice of Sufi music-and-movement therapy, engendered with a crossover of Turkish Sufi and Central Asian Shamanic practices. The sessions usually took place once a month on Thursday evenings. For beginners, rehearsals took place in a bigger living room in another member's home, usually on Fridays. In addition to the monthly music therapy sessions, Tümata-Berlin offered music therapy instructions with teaching seminars, *ilahi*[19] singing seminars, and public *sema* (whirling ritual with accompanying music) events around the year under the tutelage of the founder. Tümata-Berlin seemed less focused on engendering the Islamic ontologies of Sufism. They emphasized the aesthetic and therapeutic forces of breath, sound, and movement.

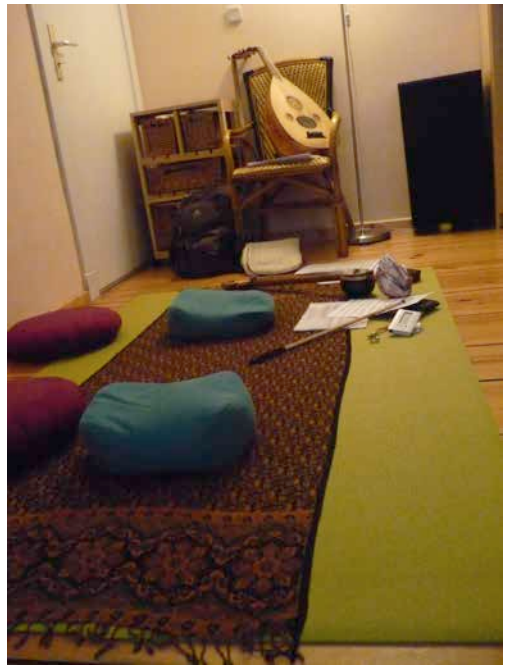

Figure 1.5. Tümata-Berlin music and movement therapy in a rented room in Schöneberg, 25 April 2013. © Nasima Selim.

Nomadic Sufis

Khidr's Healing-Reading Circle

In contrast to the more or less formal gatherings organized by the Haqqani-Naqshbandis, the Inayatis, and Tümata-Berlin, the nomadic Sufis met at the apartment of their teacher. They organized themselves as a loose network of friends around the figure of the late Sufi artist and teacher of Color, whom I call Khidr (1955–2019) (Preface). I have come into contact with my Sufi interlocutors at many different crossings on the path of the (breathing) heart. But Khidr, my primary Sufi teacher, was the only one who contacted me. Raphael (Tümata-Berlin) informed me early on about a Sufi healer who holds private Sufi gatherings on Thursday evenings. I was told that the Sufi healer would check my profile and contact me if he wished. I was curious and waited for weeks.

In August 2013, during one of those unexpectedly gloomy summer afternoons in Berlin, I received a call from Khidr, who asked me a few preliminary questions. We agreed to meet in a café in Kreuzberg. The following week I arrived early at the designated café and ordered tea, waiting anxiously for the Sufi healer. Khidr came to the meeting, wearing a flamboyant shirt, black three-quarter trousers, and a pair of silver sunglasses, with a *tasbeeh* in hand, his hands moving along the beads as he spoke. Khidr extended his hand, smiling at me. Within minutes, we began to tell each other our life stories, each taking the turn to speak.

My first encounter with Khidr felt like the beginning of a love story. This "love story" was not the romantic kind between two people attracted to each other erotically, but of another non-normative and metaphysical kind, the taste with which I was not yet familiar.[20] Khidr invited me to his weekly reading and healing circle on Thursday evenings at his apartment in Kreuzberg, surprisingly only two subway stations away from where I lived at that time. The apartment was filled with innumerable Sufi-themed paintings, books, objects such as *tasbeeh* (a string of prayer beads), ornaments, and perfumes that Khidr made himself. In this apartment, I later met Abdullah, Sophia, and Idris—the nomadic Sufis—who became my most intimate and trusted companions on the Sufi path.

Khidr was a polyglot writer and a multimedia artist. He spoke five languages fluently, German, Spanish, English, French, and Arabic. According to what Khidr shared, he was the son of an "unmarried" Egyptian mother who had to give him up. He was adopted and raised by white German parents in a small village near Hamburg. Khidr lived a nomadic life in the true sense of the term. At seventeen, he had left home early to travel first to Spain and later to Morocco, where he spent a considerable number of years before returning to Berlin in 2004. He was fifty-nine years old when I met him in 2013, and he died at 65, in November 2019.

Khidr was initiated and trained by three Sufi teachers from three different Sufi networks (the Naqshbandi, the Nimatullahi, and the Chishti).[21] But he was loosely associated with these networks in the formal sense. Khidr's reading-healing circle consisted of occasional visitors to Berlin (Abdullah, a Black US-American activist and writer) and long-term inhabitants in the city, first-generation migrants (like

myself), postmigrants of Color (Minar), and white Germans born in the former West (Sophia) and East Berlin (Idris).

Later in 2013, Khidr provided me with full access to his private archives and accepted me as a student. Between 2013 and 2019, we met weekly, on Thursday evenings, with the other students, unless one of us was traveling or had to be somewhere else for work or appointments that we could not cancel. Khidr permitted me to publish our recorded conversations only after his death. I was not allowed to include in my doctoral dissertation (Selim 2019) any material that I recorded during these years (except the dream that I had about him, see Preface).[22]

In November 2019, Khidr disappeared from my everyday life, as mysteriously as he had appeared six years earlier. I found him in his apartment in Kreuzberg, in a cross-legged posture, with his long-lashed eyes wide open, looking rather surprised at the appearance of the angel of death (Azrael) (in Islamic terms) or the passing of the final breath (in secular terms) or on the way to meet his Beloved (in Sufi terms). Khidr had been ill for a few months, diagnosed with throat cancer. After extensive medical treatment and our collective healing prayers, we hoped for his full recovery. But his time was apparently over in this material world.

On 2 November 2019, as I waited for the emergency team and the police to come over, I opened the door of Khidr's apartment to get some fresh air. I wondered about what he thought and how he felt at the end. Migratory birds were flying across the gray sky of yet another Berlin autumn—as if carrying his last breath on their wings to the invisible world, from which no one returns to tell the story. I remembered the "intention" with which Khidr always started the healing practices on Thursday evenings, as I sat and breathed with him and my companions, listening to his booming voice, reciting:

> *Bismillahir Rahman ir Rahim*—In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful. *Ya Pir Dastgir*—Oh master, give me your hand. I affirm to be present here with the clear intention to reinforce my links with the Sufi tradition . . . the *silsila*—the chain of transmission. I also call upon all those in a position of authority within the Sufi tradition, so that their *baraka* (blessing, benediction, energy) may be accessible here. (Recorded on 13 September 2019)

Khidr invoked the names of his three teachers from three different Sufi traditions, although he studied with many other Sufi teach-

ers (including the founder of Tümata). His students (including me) add his name to their "intention" at the beginning of their practice to remind themselves that the Sufi tradition draws its strength from breath to breath. The intention (or invocation) of Sufis, in any network, reconfigures the line of transmitting breath in the presence of Sufi teachers, their students, and others who accompany them. In Sufi parlance, such lines (or chains) of transmission are known as *silsila*.

Silsila as the Lines of Transmitting Breath

> Today Ṣufīism [*taṣawwuf*] is a name without a reality, but formerly it was a reality without a name…That is to say, formally, the practice was known and the pretense unknown, but nowadays, the pretense is known and the practice unknown.
>
> —Al-Hujwiri[23]

> Sufism, people say, was born in Arabia, grew up in Iran, bore fruits in Turkey, and harvested the fruits in India.
>
> —Zafar[24]

Contrary to popular perception, Sufism has carved a space for itself in the urban landscape of healing in Berlin. Sufism is not just a name, as Al-Hujwiri suspected more than a thousand years ago. The Sufi history-making practice of invoking the *silsila* is a predominantly monumental practice of transmitting breath. Because it invokes the examples of revered human figures in the lineage of the network to which the Sufi actors belong as a singular line connecting one teacher to another. They are also antiquarian because the Sufi networks actively immerse themselves in traditions to which they belong to animate their present activities. The contemporary Sufi networks "look backward to the past to understand the present and stimulate their longing for the future" (Nietzsche 1873, 10). The monumental practice of invoking Sufi teachers in temporal and spatial transfer from outside the contemporary and imagined Europe and embodying the presence of past Sufi teachers, constructs a lived genealogy, moving across and creating cartographies of temporal imagination, corporeal breathing, and spatial wayfaring.

Silsila means a chain in Arabic (H. Ziad 2017).[25] In Sufi discourse, *silsila* is often described as lineage, a line of transmitting the *baraka*

(grace, blessing, energy). Whether used to mean a chain, line, or lineage, *silsila* is a well-traveled Sufi concept. During my fieldwork, I experienced the *silsila* as a monumental history-making practice in which a current Sufi teacher was linked to the teachers of the past and the founder of the respective networks. One of the usual aims of an unbroken *silsila* is the claim to authenticity by linking one's network to a well-known Sufi figure of the past and often back to the Prophet Muhammad.

In elaborating on the practical uses of *silsila,* anthropologist El-Sayed El-Aswad (2006) coined the term *spiritual genealogy.*[26] He discussed how various Sufi orders contributed to Islam with diverse innovations: integrating with local cultures, specific methods of experiencing, aesthetic expressions (poetic and musical), and last but not least, spiritual kinship with the material and the subtle worlds across time and place. Leaders play exemplary, charismatic roles in a spiritual genealogy/*silsila*, with "the affiliation and allegiance among members adhering to certain religious or sanctified principles, values, rituals, and practices expressed in hereditary, social, and transsocial or spiritual terms" (El-Aswad 2006, 503).

The Sufi networks engendered *fictive kinship*[27] among the members of the networks, calling each other brother (Bruder) and sister (Schwester), a common practice I observed in the Haqqani-Naqshbandi, to some extent in the Inayati networks, and Tümata-Berlin as well. In contrast, Khidr and the nomadic Sufis preferred non-familial kinship terms, such as "companions" or "friends." Both the Inayatis and the Haqqani-Naqshbandis invoked their *silsila* as a line of transmission within the network history and geographical trajectory and a spiritual genealogy of the renowned figures of the respective Sufi tradition. In the Tümata-Berlin network, Mevlana Rumi and other "Turkish" Sufis were brought together with the Central Asian Shamanic tradition in a therapeutic genealogy.

Academic history enacts the spread of Sufism along the axis of the expansive routes of Sufi networks (Calderini 2007, 196–97). The thirteenth/fourteenth, and sixteenth/seventeenth-century origin of the Naqshbandiyya/Naqshbandi networks from Central Asia, expanded from the East to the West and further East of the region (Weismann 2007). The Khalidiyya/Khalidi branch (nineteenth century to the present) from the original Naqshbandi of Central Asia flourished in the Ottoman-ruled regions. From this latter Khalidi

branch, the contemporary Haqqaniyya/Haqqani derives its genealogy (Weismann 2007). Another line of transmission enacts the fourteenth-century origin of the Chishtiyya/Chishti networks from present-day Iraq to India, across Afghanistan and Pakistan. Hazrat Inayat Khan was predominantly initiated in the Chishti tradition (Inayat-Khan 2006). Hence the Inayati networks are connected to the Chishtis through their *silsila*.

Yet another line of transmission draws the route of the sixteenth-century Bektashiyya/Bektashi networks from Anatolia, which is also the area where the thirteenth-century Mawlawiyah/Mevlevi networks originated (Langer 2011, 2015). From these Sufi networks, Tümata-Berlin draws its line of transmitting breath from the hearts of the teachers to the hearts of their students.

Haqqani-Naqshbandi Silsila

"Destur ya Sheikh Nazim Kubresi. Destur ya!" Sheikh Eşref Efendi began every dhikr and *sohbet*, invoking the *silsila*, and requesting permission from the late Grand Sheikh Nazim Adil Al Haqqani (1922–2014). After the death of Sheikh Nazim, the name of his successor and elder son, Sheikh Mehmet Adil Al Rabbani (1957–), was added to the invocation. The transnational Haqqani-Naqshbandi[28] network is a recently revitalized lineage popularized by the late Turkish Cypriot Sheikh Nazim. Like most Sufi networks, this network constructs its lineage back to Prophet Muhammad but emphasizes the link to the Prophet's companion and the first Khalifa Abu Bakr. The most charismatic and central figure of the network was the late Sheikh Nazim, who had assumed the title al-Haqqani (hence the network is designated in the academic discourse as Haqqani-Naqshbandi).

Berlin's Haqqani-Naqshbandi network began its activities in West Berlin during the 1980s with visits from the late Grand Sheikh (Schleßmann 2003, 59). Since 1995, Sheikh Eşref Efendi (born to Turkish parents) has been authorized to teach (*Lehrerlaubnis*) and represent the network in Berlin. Between 2003 and 2014, Sheikh Eşref Efendi led Sufi-Center Berlin, first in Kreuzberg, then in Neukölln, until the center moved to southern Germany in the winter of 2014. Since then, SZR (Sufi-Zentrum Rabbaniyya) has conducted occasional events at a local cultural center in Berlin.

The Haqqani-Naqshbandi network in Berlin draws its line of transmission from Turkey, Cyprus, and Central Asia. The Inayati net-

works invoke another route. They draw the wayfaring cartography of Chishti Sufism from North India via North America to Western Europe, entangling the founder of universalist Sufi formation within the network and its *silsila*.

Inayati-Chishti Silsila

"The relationship between the teacher and the *murid* (student of Sufism) is not bound to the physical," Murshida Ganga said to me with an affected voice, "So when they leave the body, the connection is [still] there" (interview with the author, 2 May 2014). The teacher of her teacher was a student of Murshid Sam, founder of the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat network. Murshid Sam was a student of Hazrat Inayat Khan and Murshida Rabia Ada Martin, the first woman initiated in the Inayati tradition. Framed portraits of teachers of the lineage adorned the living room of Murshida Ganga. In the annual Sufi summer school (July 2013), the framed photographs of Inayat Khan and Murshid Sam energized and guided the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat community of practitioners.

Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882–1927) was a classical musician from the North Indian town of Baroda (Gujarat) who arrived in New York in 1910, authorized by his murshid, Pir Abu Hashim Madani.[29] After his death, his brothers and students took charge of his network of students in Western Europe and North America, and later his sons. Three major streams developed from the organization Inayat Khan founded: the Inayat-Khan-inspired Sufi-Movement, the Inayati Order (Inayatiyya), the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat, and several minor ones.[30] All the major streams are active in Berlin.

Although healing practices played a prominent role in the Inayati network and the nomadic Sufis, and to some extent, the Haqqani-Naqshbandi network, therapeutic practices are at the heart of Tümata-Berlin's line of transmission, entangling Islamic Medicine with Turkish Sufism and Central Asian Shamanism from the legendary Silk Road.

Tümata's Therapeutic Silsila

Tümata-Berlin's music-and-movement therapy is often framed as an *old tradition newly discovered* at the intersections of Turkish Sufism and Central Asian Shamanism. Raphael described to me its possible origins:

> With Oruç Güvenç on one side is Sufism. He is a Sufi teacher in a specific tradition . . . Sufi thoughts are always in the background. It is an attitude to life (*Lebenshaltung*). He draws the elements from the Sufi tradition in his therapy . . . For example, *sema*, this whirling dance, was originally from Mevlana Rumi . . . a very strict ritual. But Oruç conducts it only partially: three days or sixty-six days or ninety-nine days . . . There are other dances. From the Bektashis . . . There are religious but also healing dance . . . Moreover, there are Central Asian elements. The spiritual background is drawn from the Shamans . . . [I do] Arab Ottoman *makam* music therapy. (interview with the author, 25 September 2013)

"Horasan [Khorasan] is one area that covered today's Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, north Iran . . . This area was so central in the Middle Ages, a cultural center . . .," said Raphael, invoking the greater Khorasan road, commonly labeled as the Silk Road (interview with the author, 25 September 2013). Rather than invoking a specific Sufi *silsila*, Raphael drew a line of transmission of breath from two Turkish Sufi traditions (Mevlevi and Bektashi) and Central Asian Shamanism.[31]

In Tümata-Berlin's spiritual genealogy, the "Golden Age" (Hajar 2013) of Islamic medicine, is imagined as taking place along the historical Silk Road.[32] In Raphael's narrative, as well as in Tümata discourse, "Horasan Medicine" along the Silk Road was alive and running: "Ibn Sina was there, Al-Farabi was there, . . . and the Silk Road runs through. The Silk Road to East Asia . . . Oruç Güvenç says it was the center to meet these different cultures, so there is a certain legitimacy to bringing [these techniques] together" (interview with the author, 25 September 2013).

In addition to the people and places, therapeutic practices are significant in Tümata-Berlin's line of transmission. Theirs is predominantly a *silsila* of practices, a therapeutic genealogy that informs the proliferation of the community of practitioners. *Sema*, the whirling ritual, is drawn from the Mevlevi tradition (chapter 3), the *ilahis* (songs in praise of Allah) are drawn from the repertoire of Turkish Sufism (Rumi, Bektash Veli, Yunus Emre), and the AOM (Ancient Oriental Music-and-Movement Therapy; *Altorientalische Musik- und Bewegungstherapie*) combines elements from the Central Asian Shamanic traditions (chapter 5).

The ways Sufi networks draw their lines of transmitting breath illustrate monumental and antiquarian engagements with historical

figures, places, periods, and practices. Practices are as prominent as people, periods, and places. In this regard, Sufi practices of invoking the *silsila* transgress linear time, geographical restrictions, and personal biographies, connecting Sufism in the here and now to the Elsewhere[33] and somewhere else. Documenting the *silsila* of Sufi configurations in the contemporary is about tracing the long historical lines of wayfaring practices and how they were transmitted from one to the next, along with the whiff of breathing face to face, the divine and human breaths. As a (scholar) breather, the scribe-anthropologist had to learn the crucial lessons of "learning how to learn" by becoming a dual apprentice of Sufi practice and ethnographic fieldwork.

Dual Apprenticeship as Method

"The uninitiated cannot join the circle," Paul Stoller (1997, 161) mentioned the Sanghay proverb to emphasize the significance of his apprenticeship with Adamu Jenitongo, a Songhay healer of Niger: "Just as the uninitiated person can never join the circle of possession dancers, so the uninitiated anthropologist . . . can never plunge into the real—of the field" (1997, 161). What kind of initiation is sufficient for a plunge into the real? The object of my inquiry (Sufism) and my academic discipline (anthropology) made different but equally challenging demands. How was it possible to do fieldwork and critical theoretical inquiry with Sufism?

"I am trying to remember what happened," I wrote the following lines to Murshida Rabeya, after a healing seminar with the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat in the spring of 2013:

> There were so many different techniques, and they left so many different impressions on my heart, mind, and body! I do not know where to start and where to stop! Matters have become more difficult because I not only wish to learn this but also would like to write about these experiences . . . But my head and my heart conflict . . . The more I try to write about what happened, the more it slips through my fingers. I hope you will respond to this email and the confusion I find myself in. (email, 4 March 2013)

I sent off the email and waited with trepidation. Two days later, Murshida Rabeya wrote back, asking me to see her in person. It was the beginning of a teacher-student relationship that continued

throughout my fieldwork. What happened in that first one-to-one meeting set the mood of our encounters for the following years:

> Nasima (N): I am not sure what I should do. Which path should I follow? I don't know if I can commit.
>
> Rabeya (R): You have time! . . . Patience is good. *As-Sabūr* is the ninety-ninth name of Allah, which means supreme patience. It comes with time. Step by step . . .
>
> [The silence in the room made me hear my restless breathing. I tried to jot everything down. Rabeya signaled me to stop writing.]
>
> N: I thought I had many questions. But I do not know anymore. I have this tendency to want to know *more*. As if, if I work hard, it is all good.
>
> R (*smiles*): And plop! You get an A! . . .
>
> N: There were so many mixtures of techniques in this [healing] seminar. How to practice? What to practice? These are powerful techniques. Should one do them without a guide?
>
> R: No, it is important to do it with a guide. I will help you. *Ich begleite dich!* [I will accompany you!] (fieldnote, 15 March 2013)

The healing seminar and the energizing meeting with a Sufi teacher moved my energies profoundly. Because of that first meeting and many more, Rabeya became my *murshida* (female Sufi guide). She listened to the laments of a student anthropologist trying to live in an in-between space of three languages (Bangla, English, and German) and a series of two distinct worlds: Dhaka and Berlin; anthropology and Sufism; abstract concepts and embodied practice (see also chapter 4). But at the time this conversation took place, I was still figuring out to what extent initiation and apprenticeship were necessary for fieldwork.

Ethnographers, in my understanding, are required to perform the double task of splitting their consciousness, immersing themselves in the field at first, and later creating critical distance when they write. In my fieldwork, however, another route emerged, which I call *dual apprenticeship*. Dual apprenticeship as a method is based on the epistemic ground that the way to know has less to do with belief or identity but depends on "learning to learn" (Ingold 2013, 1)[34] or *learning how to learn* (Shah [1978] 1985). It is about adopting a student's disposition toward practicing and experiencing.

One way of doing ethnography (the study of people) fulfills its aims by becoming a praxiography (the study of practice) (Mol 2002).

In contrast to Sufism as a tradition (within Islam or in connection with it) of embodying the Real (Allah), anthropology is a professionalized (secularized) tradition of knowing and articulating the real in terms of human (and nonhuman) differences in practice/experience. During my fieldwork, I had to learn how to use anthropological methods, tools, and techniques while learning the Sufi techniques I encountered. The methodology evolved along with efforts to situate Sufism in Berlin and the literature about Sufism in Germany. The duality becomes further evident in the combination of the ontological and existential anthropologies that inform my research questions, the hybrid design of fieldwork (sensuous praxiography), and the analysis of field materials with two traditions of inquiry.

Fieldwork also led me toward the epistemological standpoint of *affective pedagogy* (Selim 2020a).[35] It is a truism that we *affect* others and are *affected* by others in life and the field. But, the researchers' affects in the field can be mobilized for epistemological purpose (Stodulka, Selim, and Mattes 2018).

The Hermeneutics of Affective Pedagogy

Fieldwork is a process of "learning to learn" and "knowing from the inside" (Ingold 2013, 2). Doing ethnography is to adopt an *apprenticeship* position and learn (Favret-Saada [1977] 1980). Ethnography is both a "dialog between the outsider and his[/her] host" and an apprenticeship, during which "an outsider is taught to decode a symbolic system [s/] he did not know before" ([1977] 1980, 26). The transformative potentials of ethnographic fieldwork offer a *rite de passage* through which the novice fieldworker becomes an anthropologist (Freilich 1970, 16).

Learning, for anthropologists, has always been integral to developing insights from the field (Hasse 2015). But, while documenting the lived experiences and practices of the host communities is the sine qua non of fieldwork, not all fieldworkers decide to subject themselves to the same degree to the "education of attention" (Gibson 1979, 254). The documentary purpose of ethnography does not always become the transformational process of educating our attention with a persistent focus on studying *with* and learning *from* the host communities (Ingold 2013). There are precedents for both apprenticeship and critical immersion (without becoming an appren-

tice) in anthropology. Although apprenticeship as a field method is an oft-discussed topic in anthropology (Coy 1989, Singleton 1998), the dual nature of apprenticeship, in the practice of doing fieldwork that the ethnographer must learn by doing, and in the practice that the ethnographer participates in and examines in the field, is rarely discussed together.

"There is more to learning than *being there*" (Hasse 2015, 101). Anthropologists, as professional newcomers, have often studied and inculcated certain skills, for example, that of a canoe builder (Mead [1935] 2002), a tailor (Lave 2011), an acupuncturist (Hsu 1999, 2006), or a molecular biologist (Latour 1987). Becoming an apprentice did not always end up making anthropologists experts in the practices they studied but transformed them in the process of "knowing from the inside" (Ingold 2013, 2). In terms of apprenticeship in non-biomedical healing practices, thick descriptions have often been fraught with negotiating the art and the science of ethnography (Clifford and Marcus 1986). Paul Stoller (1997, 26) proposed an embodied art of ethnography that "reverberates with the tension between the political and the poetic." Apprenticeship is required for such incorporation, he argued, and spending long periods with the elders and experts, mastering knowledge and practice, is a fundamental task. In one of his earliest publications on Sanghay sorcery, Stoller described how he had deliberately avoided mentioning that he had been a sorcerer's apprentice (Stoller and Olkes 1987, xi). He relegated this crucial information to a footnote and stuck to the ethnographic realism that instructed the anthropologist to be unobtrusive in the field. Later, as a mature anthropologist, Stoller (1997) wrote extensively about his apprenticeship in terms of the epistemological standpoint of sensuous scholarship, inviting scholars to engage their bodies and senses in fieldwork.

Elisabeth Hsu has argued that "participant experience" (1999, 5) modifies the "power relations between the researcher and the people with whom she works," simply because the learner/anthropologist "puts herself into a position of a dependent apprentice" (2006, 149). Jo Wreford (2008) has described her involvement first as an apprentice and then as a practitioner of traditional African medicine to argue for a "language of spirit" in her efforts to translate a spirit-informed tradition into the language of social science. Loïc Wacquant insisted that apprenticeship is a "practical initiation" (2005, 465) in the field,

being both the object and the means of ethnographic inquiry. Dual apprenticeship as a method is in line with these notions of apprenticeships discussed in anthropology but directs further attention to the dual nature of learning to do fieldwork and learning to practice the techniques that the fieldworker examines, both happening at the same time. Dual apprenticeship is about being mindful of the politics of representation that require the ethnographer to pay equal attention to the academic tradition (anthropology) and the tradition of inquiry (Sufism) I examine in this book.

"Representation becomes significant, not just as an academic or theoretical quandary but as a political choice" (Said 1989, 224). The various critiques of anthropological discourse refer to a renewed awareness of the representative power divide between the (imperialist) West and the (subdued) non-West. However, for my work, the critique offered by *Orientalism*[36] needs to be complemented by its mimetic other, *Occidentalism*,[37] how "the West" may be perceived by "the Rest" (Nader 2015; Elie 2012; Carrier 1995).

The study of Sufi practice in "the West," as in Western Europe, by a brown woman coming from a postcolonial Muslim-majority country does not necessarily invert the historically situated politics of anthropological discourse on the other located elsewhere (far away from home, in "the West") studied predominantly by white Euro-Americans. Acknowledging academic orientalism as my disciplinary heritage and the shared perception of the imagined West as a postcolonial subject ensures that I do not dissolve into an identity of "the anthropologist" but specify a complex set of positionings. *Breathing Hearts*, in this regard, shifts the conventional anthropological gaze rather than radically "reversing" it (Ntarangi 2010, 9) through my sensibilities as a former physician and South Asian anthropologist. In doing so, I offer a perspective to study Germany from the point of view of the post-colony, extending the project of provincializing Europe and stepping beyond Eurocentrism (Varela and Dhawan 2015; Chakrabarty 2007; Chaudhary 2006).

Besides being cautious about either orientalist or occidentalist representation, an anthropologist must be critical of her interpretive habits. How is it possible to move from the hermeneutics of suspicion or faith toward the hermeneutics of pedagogy? *Hermeneutic pedagogy* is based on the assumption that "the human being is always understanding and understands by participating in a conver-

sation with what he or she experiences" (Sotirou 1993, 365). The hermeneutics of pedagogy is about building bridges between different worlds with a focus on learning, evoking the etymological root of the Greek god Hermes, and transmitting messages between the different worlds.

Tim Ingold (2018, 58) proposed the possibility of considering "anthropology as education," as a way "to enter imaginatively into the world our teachers open for us, and to join with them in its exploration; it is not to close that world down" (2018, 63). Such learning from one's research participants—who, at the same time, are teachers of others—involves paying attention to their *affective pedagogy*.[38] During fieldwork and its long aftermath, my primary Sufi teachers/healers, Khidr and Murshida Rabeya initiated me as a breather-wayfarer apprentice. I took their invitations seriously, entering imaginatively into the worlds that they opened up for me. Their affective pedagogy, along with other teachers of the tradition, taught me how the repetitive lessons of what, when, and how to *feel* might begin with and result in inhabiting a hyper-corporeal Elsewhere,[39] at once inner and outer, here-now and there-after (Selim 2020a).

"The fact that an ethnographer allows herself to be affected does not mean that she identifies with . . . [an] indigenous point of view, nor that her fieldwork is little more than an ego-trip" (Favret-Saada 2012, 443). "Being affected" by fieldwork is not without its dangers. Allowing ourselves to open up could also "mean that one risks seeing one's intellectual project disintegrate. . . . But if something happens and the intellectual project is somehow still afloat at the end of the journey, then ethnography is possible" (2012, 443). My intellectual project of tracking Sufism seemed to disintegrate many times. During the early phases of fieldwork, I often felt overwhelmed by the experiences generated by Sufi practices. I wondered about the futility of writing up the ineffable immediacy of experience generated by breathing practices, movements, discourses, comments, gazes, embraces, and the subtle/material energies of my encounters with Sufism. These moments and their analytical potentials shaped a hermeneutics of "affective pedagogy" of the Real (Selim 2020a), built upon the premises of a sensuous, affective scholarship (Stoller 1997; Stodulka et al. 2018; Davies and Spencer 2010).[40]

Learning how to learn involved a focus on the epistemic power of one's own emotions in the field in addition to paying attention

to the body and the senses. For fieldwork, I adapted the "emotional diary" (Stodulka 2015, 91) into a Sufi-emotion diary. It was, in part, a generic affect-focused field diary to articulate emotions, and partly the contemporary enactment of a traditional dervish diary. The diary evolved into integrated components such as significant dreams, conversations with Sufi teachers and students in the tradition, the differentiated experiences of *ḥāl* (a temporary state) bestowed from the Elsewhere and the anticipation of sustained *maqām* (station/place; a more permanent state of development) as a result of the systematic efforts of a wayfaring learner. Thus I combined the anthropological genre of field/emotion diary with the classical genre of the dervish diary. Both Khidr and Murshida Rabeya had advised me to keep one, and I followed their teaching instructions.[41]

The hermeneutics of affective pedagogy (of the Real) shares Jeanne Favret-Saada's conviction and combines it with the lessons of my fieldwork. The practices/experiences of the ethnographer always get entangled with the practices/experiences associated with the object of her inquiry. A cautious analysis of our "(shifting) positionality and subjectivity is essential not only for better understanding (and rendering more transparent) our ways of coping with difficult field encounters and the moral stances we take in response to them . . . [but] also a substantial element of analyzing our data and writing ethnographic accounts" (Dilger, Huschke, and Mattes 2015, 5). In fieldwork, moral stances are imbued with immediate emotions, sustained affective dispositions, and socially coded feelings/sentiments.

Fieldwork lives its afterlife in ethnographic representation. As ethnographers, we ponder unfinished lessons. We stay troubled by contestations. We take delight in unexpected insights. We follow our longings across the meandering paths that bring us closer and further away from our interlocutors. The next chapter draws from multidirectional desire lines of wayfaring, learning from selective pathways of Sufi becoming. I discuss how postsecular subjects in Berlin encountered Sufism and what was at stake for them in practicing Sufism, in their efforts to "breathe well" along desire lines beyond conversion narratives.

Notes

1. I recall these lines from Arṣinagar (city of mirrors), a popular song composed by Bāul Lālan Fakir (ca. 1774–1890). Bāul is a Bengali tradition of composing/performing songs drawing from Sufi Islam, Vaishnava Hinduism, and Tantric Buddhism (Openshaw 2018).
2. *Dervish* is a derivative of the Farsi term *darīsh* (poor, mendicant). Dervish in the medieval Sufi tradition referred to those who practiced material and spiritual detachment and renunciation, known as "practitioners of religious poverty" (Papas 2011). The label "dervish" and "Sufi" in contemporary usage are often synonymous (Schimmel 2012).
3. In 2010–2011, I conducted fieldwork in another European city (Amsterdam) to learn about the everyday sitting and breathing practices of Buddhism-inspired Vipassana meditation. This fueled the interest in exploring the so-called Eastern/Oriental practices that have migrated to the cities of Western Europe (Selim 2011a, 2011b, 2014).
4. See Dilger, Kasmani, and Mattes (2018) for the role of affect and belonging in placemaking among a Sufi group in Berlin.
5. *Dergah* is the Turkish variation of the term *dargah*, which in Farsi denotes a Sufi shrine built in the memory of a dead Sufi saint. The term literally means a "portal" or "threshold," a place to leave one's shoes before entering.
6. Neukölln is often perceived as Berlin's *Problemviertel* (problem quarter) with a high rate of unemployment, an increased number of people receiving "social support" (*Sozialhilfe),* and a large number of people with the so-called migrant background (Groeger 2001, 351). The social support system was reformed and reframed (the 2005 *Hartz-IV* Reform) (Fehr and Vobruba 2011). However, Neukölln has undergone both "social mixing" and "gentrification" in recent years (Huning and Schuster 2015, 738).
7. See Becker (2017) and Jonker (2005) for a detailed discussion on Berlin's mosque spaces.
8. See Weismann (2007) for a historical account of the Naqshbandiyya/Naqshbandi (thirteenth to sixteenth centuries) of Central Asia and the Khalidiyya branch (nineteenth century to the present) of the Ottoman regions, from which the Haqqaniyya/Haqqani derived its genealogy. Nielsen, Draper, and Yemelianova (2006) described the transnational dimensions of this network. See Böttcher (2011) Hüttermann (2003, 2002), and Schleßmann (2003) for the historical development of the network in the German context.
9. Feride paraphrased the theologian-Sufi Imam al-Ghazālī (ca. 1058–1111), "There is no tariqa without sharia and no sharia without tariqa" (interview with the author, 2 February 2018). The Haqqani-Naqshbandi network seems to follow legally subordinate Sufism or sharia-minded Sufism. However, Feride expressed her discomfort with being represented as "sharia-minded," as "it gives a wrong impression" (interview, 2 February 2018). The word "sharia" in the current political climate gained such negative publicity

that she felt uncomfortable with the term, although she upheld the value of Islamic law. The "legally-subordinate concept of Sufism" became a dominant formation among the Naqshbandis only in the last three centuries (Ahmed 2016, 30).

10. *Khānḳāh* is a word of Farsi origin, a composite term referring to places throughout the Islamic world where Sufis gathered and practiced, and still do (Chabbi 2012). Other terms, such as *tekke* and *zāwiya* refer to similar establishments.
11. NPD stands for Die Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (National Democratic Party of Germany), a far-right political party founded in 1964 that emerged as a significant neo-Nazi organization in postwar Germany (Davies and Lynch 2002, 315); ideologically and discursively allied to the historical Nazi party, NSDAP (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei/National Socialist German Workers' Party) (Kailitz 2007, 337).
12. In the 2016 provincial elections, neighborhoods like Kreuzberg and Neukölln were filled with racist posters of the right-wing populist-nationalist party AfD. AfD was initially a Euroskeptic political party founded in 2013. AfD entered the local parliaments in 2014 and 2016, and the national parliament in 2017. In Berlin, the AfD won enough votes (14.2 percent) to gain representation in the local parliament in the September 2016 state election (Statista 2017).
13. The only exception was Khidr's apartment in Kreuzberg, where I spent countless evenings and afternoons during the six years that followed.
14. House rents in this area were affordable at that time. In recent years, gentrification has taken place here, like most other neighborhoods in Berlin (conversation with Murshida Rabeya, 28 February 2018).
15. In the summer of 2016, the Sufi Federation meeting took place in Berlin. The senior leaders from all three networks attended the meeting.
16. Renate used the term *dunkle Kirche* referring to the outer gray architecture and her aversion to Christianity and organized world religions.
17. In 2017, Tümata-Berlin established an official meeting point, Tümata Zentrum (Center), in Kreuzberg.
18. Halima also belonged to the *Chalice* network of the renowned Sufi writer-musician, Reshad Feild. Another Tümata member was active in the Omar Ali Shah network, *Tradition*.
19. *Ilāhī/ilahi* is a term in Turkish referring to the genre of popular poetry inspired by religious sentiments, with/without instrumental accompaniment, sung solo or in chorus, often at sessions of dhikr in Sufi contexts (Boratav 2012).
20. In her ethnographic biography of Baba Rexheb, anthropologist Frances Trix described the process of learning, "the love of the murshid," as a necessary step to the awareness of all-encompassing love in one's heart (2009, 40). Omar Kasmani (2022) also described the crucial role such intimacy plays in teacher-student relationships in Sufi contexts. See also Nanda and Talib (1992) for a general discussion of such a relationship.

21. Khidr was initiated by a Naqshbandi teacher he met in Spain, a Nimatullahi teacher he met in England, and a Chishti teacher in Hamburg, Germany. The Nimatullahi tradition traces its lineage back to the fourteenth-century Sufi Shah Nimatullah Wali in Kerman, present-day Iran (Nimatuallahi Sufi Order 2019; Milani and Possamai 2013). The current head of the order is Dr. Alireza Nurbaksh, who was initiated and appointed by the late Dr. Javad Nurbaksh (1926–2008).
22. Khidr had appointed his lifelong friend and Sufi companion Abdullah as the heir to his written work, paintings, audiovisual materials, and archives. With Abdullah's explicit permission, a selection of the recorded conversations on Thursday evenings has now been incorporated into this book.
23. Al-Hujwiri ([1911] 1998, 44). Ali b. Uthmān al-Hujwīrī (ca. 1009–1072/77), also known as Dātā Ganj Bakhsh, wrote the first formal treatise on Sufism in Farsi (Knysh 2000, 132).
24. Interview with the author, 23 August 2013.
25. *Silsila* is considered a feature of a tariqa, as the method of handing down a particular tariqa (H. Ziad 2017).
26. The *murshid-murid* (teacher-student) relationship in Sufism can be considered "spiritual kinship," beyond biological kin relations (Frishkopf 2003, 6). In my usage, *spiritual genealogy* refers to other temporalities and geographies, evoking the human and non-human dimensions beyond a strictly humanistic kinship and form of belonging.
27. Fictive descent relations between teachers and students do not operate in a vacuum. Fictive consanguinity among the students of the same teacher—as fictive siblings, is entangled in such relations. In the Inayati and Haqqani-Naqshbandi *silsilas*, certain branches were also led by family kin through the transmission of authority.
28. The Naqshbandiyya is a major Sufi network in history, going back to what is known in Sufi discourse as the *tarīqat khawājagān* (the Way of the Masters) founded in Central Asia by Abū Ya'qūb al-Hamadān (d. 1141) whose shrine stands in contemporary Turkmenistan (Khorasan). The network was later renamed Naqshbandiyya ("design maker") after the most influential figure, Bahā' ud-dīn Naqshband (ca. 1318–1389) of Bukhara (the capital of contemporary Uzbekistan) (Schleßmann 2003; Hüttermann 2002). Although in the beginning, the network was supposedly formed in reaction to the local prescriptive traditions dominant in that era, most contemporary Naqshbandi networks inhabit the spectrum of shari'a-centered Sunni Islam, a development often attributed to the reformist Sufi Sheikh Aḥmad Sirhindī (ca. 1563–1624) in Mughal India (Hüttermann 2002, 110). Sheikh Nazim was born in Larkana (Cyprus) to parents with lineages back to two prominent Sufi networks: the Qadiriyya (his father was the son of a Qadiri Sheikh) and the Mevleviyya (his mother belonged to the network). Sheikh Nazim, however, joined the Naqshbandi circles and traveled extensively until he met his teacher Sheikh Abdullah ad-Daghestani in Damascus, Syria. Since the 1980s, the Naqshbandiyya has experienced a revival in the

Turkish republic (Algar 1989, 168). The current transnational network has more than a million members across the world in various countries and a few thousand members in Germany.

29. Khwaja Mu'in al-Din Chishti (ca. 1143–1236 CE) moved from Herat (present-day Afghanistan) to Delhi and later to Ajmer (present-day India) in the early thirteenth century. The Chishtiyya/Chishti order turned global in the early twentieth century and during the British colonial period (Kugle 2020). See Celia Genn (2007, 2008) and Zia Inayat-Khan (2006) for a history of the Chishti diaspora and the Inayati networks.
30. In the 1950s, Pir Vilayat Inayat-Khan (1916–2004), Inayat Khan's eldest son, became the head of the International Sufi Order. His son Pir Zia Inayat-Khan (1971–) is the current head of the network and renamed the network, and shifted the headquarters from New York to Richmond, Virginia. Until 2016, the *International Sufi Movement* was jointly led by Murshid Karimbaksh Witteveen (1921–) and Pir Hidayat Inayat Khan (1917–2016), the younger son of Inayat Khan, with its headquarters located in The Hague, the Netherlands. The current heads of the network are Nuria Sabato and Nawab Pasnak. In the 1960s, Murshid Samuel Lewis (1896–1971), a student of Rabia Martin and Inayat Khan, led to the formation of another Inayati network, known initially as the Islamiya Ruhaniyat Society, later renamed Sufi Ruhaniat International. He was survived by his students, Pir Moinuddin Jablonsky (1942–2001) and Pir Shabda Kahn (1947–), the current spiritual director of the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat. There are three smaller Inayati streams, the Sufi Contact, Sufi Way, and Fraternity of Light. I did not meet anyone connected to these streams in Berlin. All Sufi organizations of the Hazrat Inayat Khan lineage are enlisted in The Federation of the Sufi Message, an association established in 1997.
31. Oruç Güvenç's parents were of Volga Tatar background. He connected his spiritual genealogy to both Mevlevi and Bektashi Sufi networks through Turgut Baba (Turgut Söylemezoğlu), a student of the last head of the *Galata Mevlevihanesi* (Mevlevi lodge) in Istanbul and Ziya/Ayur Baba (Ziyadeddin Kuldur). See Langer (2011) for a detailed discussion of Oruç Güvenç's *spiritual genealogy*.
32. Oruç Güvenç and Andrea Güvenç (2009, 114) discussed the term "Horasan Medicine" along the Silk Road. There had been not one but many Silk Roads. The English word is a translation of *Seidenstraße* coined by the German geographer Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen (1833–1905), who described the trade routes that connected India, China, and the Mediterranean areas via Central Asia, linking Europe to Asia (Christian 2000). Along with silk or other material goods, medical knowledge, music styles, and movement techniques traveled along the road. The famous Islamic physician, philosopher, and polyglot Ibn Sina (Avicenna) was trained in eleventh-century Central Asia, and part of his fame is attributed to the "Silk Road legacy" (Liu 2011, 55).
33. Amira Mittermaier has written about the interlocutory possibility of the Elsewhere in relation to *barzakh* as a "dialogical in-between space, a space

in which the living and the dead can meet" (2011, 36) (see also chapters 4 and 5).

34. Gregory Bateson (1972, 169) discussed "learning to learn" in terms of *deutero-learning* (second order learning) to separate it from *proto-learning*, the first order of learning that happens without reflecting on the learning process.
35. See Nurhaizatul Jamil (2019) for the discussion of affective pedagogies in terms of Islamic self-help practices. See also Omar Kasmani and Dominik Mattes (2020) who observed affective continuities across apparently disconnected Muslim and Christian spaces in Berlin.
36. Lisa Sijbrand (2013, 108) urged readers to situate Sufism historically, emphasizing the power structures and being aware of academic (mis-)representation.
37. See James Carrier (1992) and Fernando Coronil (1996) for a detailed discussion of occidentalism.
38. See James Wilce and Janina Fenigsen (2016) for an earlier discussion around "emotion pedagogies."
39. More recently, Annalisa Butticci and Amira Mittermaier (2020, 178) defined Elsewhere as a more than religious location, but "not a physical location in which we can do fieldwork in the classical sense of 'participant observation.' It is the elusive, the invisible, the unknown that enfolds, disrupts, or reframes the visible world. It is not the here and now in a material sense. But it is very much *here*. And it is very much *now*" (2020, 178).
40. Wilce (2004) argued for a somewhat similar term, calling it "passionate scholarship."
41. Sufi teachers often instruct their students to jot down their questions, insights, and experiences on the path. See Michaela Özelsel (1993) for a German-language rendition of the dervish diary as an experiential report (*Erfahrungsbericht*), written during her forty days of retreat in Istanbul. See Cemal Kafadar (1989) for a historical treatment of this genre of writing.

Chapter 2
"Why Do I Suffer and What Should I Do?"

The Desire Lines of Sufi Breathing-Becoming

> desire line (di.ZYR lyn) n. An informal path that pedestrians prefer to take to get from one location to another rather than using a sidewalk or other official route.
>
> —Nick Shepherd and Nöeleen Murray[1]

"Why do I suffer, and what should I do?" I was listening to Ayşe, sitting in her apartment during one of the hottest Ramadan afternoons in July 2014. I watched how Ayşe's eyes sparkled with an existential longing inherent in the question. "Now I can say [the word] God without stress," Renate said with visible relief in another part of Berlin. I was listening to Renate's trouble with the word "God" in the same year, sitting in her garden. "Whatever you do becomes part of you," Sufi dancer Claire expressed an aversion toward fixing identity and belonging in her navigation of techniques from different traditions. We were sharing our respective breathing, wayfaring journeys at my Friedrichshain apartment earlier in the spring of 2013.

How are Sufi subjects narrating the journeys of breathing, wayfaring hearts? What kind of experiential subjectivities emerge from these narratives? This chapter focuses on these questions. It deals with the formation of the postsecular subjects of Sufism in Berlin, articulating their languages of experience. Tracing the desire lines of breathing, wayfaring women, I illustrate how the pathways of their (Sufi) becoming, were constituted by their search for something else (here and in chapter 4).

Sufism and the discussion of gender have contributed to a growing field of interdisciplinary scholarship across Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority contexts.[2] Following these lines of inquiry, during my fieldwork, I spoke to both men and women. I have redrawn these narrative lines here, but they are not selected randomly. The most detailed, insightful, and evocative life stories were entrusted to me by only a few remarkable women I met in the field. It is hard to tell whether it is my gendered presence or their eloquence that resulted in this skewed collection of life histories. In any case, I have tried to retain as much diversity[3] as possible in their retelling, situating the desire lines in between the lines of majority history narratives of the postwar, divided, and reunified nation-state.

Desire Lines of Breathing-Becoming Sufi

Transitional Subjects of the Divided and Reunified Germany

The ethnographer walks with her interlocutors on a shared journey, however brief that is. She listens, watches, senses, feels, and accompanies them along lifelines. She articulates their pathways to becoming. Becoming continues to happen along these lines of desire.[4] The geographical metaphor of desire line grounds the trajectory of the subject by the analogous pedestrian desire to use alternate routes on the path s/he walks. Conceptually, the term is related to the Deleuzian line of flight, "the act of fleeing or eluding but also flowing, leaking, and disappearing into the distance" (Massumi [1987] 2004, xvii). My interlocutors narrated their desire lines in English and German, following up on questions I posed or walking in the directions their stories took themselves.

I redraw these desire lines with three life stories to articulate the pathways of (Sufi) becoming, among a generation of women in their mid and late forties. Compared to the desire lines and frames of reference of older Sufi wayfarers in postwar Germany (Gertrud, Ganga, and Rabeya in chapter 4), in the narratives about their healing quests in the divided and post-unification German society of my younger interlocutors, different historical forces are at play. Listening to the traces left by the submerged social forces in the narratives of Sufi women is an exercise of sensing the postsecular imagination

within the multidirectional transition routes: from Turkish secularism to Sufi Islam (Haqqani-Naqshbandi) and from state-enforced atheism to Inayati Sufism.

As a student of anthropology and a postmigrant writer, I read Germany's majority history discourse with a newcomer's curiosity, learning to deal with collective time in a new country. The formative periods of the nation-state (Germany) and the city (Berlin) had intersections that cut both of these landscapes deeply. From Sufi women who grew up in postwar Germany (see chapter 4), I gradually shifted attention to the time when Germany was divided into two nation-states, and Berlin was not one but two. It was also a time for the labor migration that helped build the (former) West German economy with the arrival of the so-called guest workers from Turkey.[5]

Different subjectivities emerged among the women who grew up during the 1960s and 1970s. The narratives in this chapter are shaped by age differences and connected to the historical circumstances that accompanied them. State-enforced atheism in socialist East Germany and the arrival of Turkish labor migrants in West Germany are critical events. In addition, the 1960s and 1970s were also when the proliferation of alternative healing techniques and religious traditions became widespread in the first wave of the so-called hippy period in Germany.[6] The life stories of my interlocutors are embedded in these intersecting forces that constitute the postsecular landscape of Berlin today.

"Who Am I . . . Why Do I Suffer?" Postmigrant Ayşe's Discovery of Sufi Islam

It was the month of Ramadan in the summer of 2014 (July 21). Mild heat encapsulated the city. Ayşe and I met in the cool shade of her apartment in Kreuzberg for an interview. Ayşe was forty-six years old. Together with her husband, she played a leading role at the Sufi-Center Berlin (Haqqani-Naqshbandi). We had previously met in the crowd that gathered at the center during weekends. We also met in the more intimate space of the Easter retreat of the network in southern Germany earlier in April 2014 (figure 2.1). On the day of our interview, Ayşe opened the door and greeted me with a smile. She was fasting but offered me herbal tea, which I thankfully accepted. She asked me how long I was planning to stay in Germany and how I managed everyday life in the city.

Figure 2.1. Ayşe during a Sufi retreat in southern Germany, 17 April 2014. © Nasima Selim.

A huge flat-screen TV hung on the wall of the living room on one side. Two comfortable sofas stood on the other side, with *ney* and *bendir* at the corner. The walls were decorated with the seals of the Naqshbandi network and the late Ottoman Empire. A huge wooden shelf stood against the wall, filled with books in several languages, mostly German and Turkish, with a few in English and Arabic. I saw several copies of the Qur'an, Turkish-German dictionaries, and texts on Reiki healing, among others. I sat on the sofa next to Ayşe and began my usual set of questions.

Ayşe was born to a "secular Muslim" Turkish family and left Turkey with her parents when she was only four. She lived most of her life in another major German city before moving to Berlin with her husband. She organized dhikr for women on Thursdays and often translated the lectures of the sheikh from Turkish to German. At that time, she was also working hard to set up another Sufi center in the German city where she grew up. Ayşe had a professional uni-

versity degree but was not working at the moment. In the course of that conversation, Ayşe described to me a long, tortuous desire line constituted by her long-term depression, with a parallel, intense desire for meaning and purpose in life.

"It was 2001. I have gone the same way as most others who come to the Sufi center. I had 'suffering of the soul' (*seelisches Leid*)—psychological problems (*psychische Probleme*)." Ayşe has battled with severe depression since she was sixteen. At some point, after realizing that she did not wish to be occupied with only the "distractions" of life events, Ayşe started to question her non-religious education as a source of suffering:

> I had distractions, time and again. First love! Then everything was so nice, then separation. *Ugh!* Then again, depression [*laugh*]. That is how the [material] world distracted me time and again. Studying, in the beginning, was great. And then again not so good! I always thought it could not be that the human being is dependent on external circumstances. Happiness must be a deep state of peace and bliss. It should not be dependent upon external circumstances . . . Earlier, I was not at all spiritual. Not at all! I had no religious education from my parents, although I am Turkish! (interview with the author, 21 July 2014)

Ayşe connected her biographical journey to Sufi Islam as a typical pathway that, according to her, represented how most members came to the Haqqani-Naqshbandi center in Berlin. She connected the hidden suffering of their "difficult destinies" (*schwere Schicksale*) to the pleasant and playful ambiance of the Sufi center, the *dergah*:

> Maybe it is the impression or the image that we have of the Sufi center . . . [The visitors think] "Ahh! There is so much laughter, there is music played and sung, and a lot to eat and drink" [*in a funny voice*] "Where is, then, the healing!" [*feigning surprise*] someone may ask. Or, "Do people come here to eat and drink, to laugh . . . ?" one may ask. That is the image. But behind this image, . . . the sheikh knows the best; there are difficult destinies. People who come here have very difficult destinies behind them, or [they are] in the middle of a life crisis triggered by either a difficult life situation or early experiences. This suffering of the soul may have many origins/causes, but these are only [triggering] occasions/events. In the deeper sense, it is about [the questions] "why do I suffer, and what should I do?" (*Warum leide ich und was soll ich tun?*) (interview, 21 July 2014)

Ayşe's narrative emphasized that people came to the Sufi center due to current life crises or past experiences of suffering. She argued that drugs and psychotherapy were only temporary support for the suffering of the soul and psychological problems. Sufi Islam, provided the necessary healing in her view, as she described the Haqqani-Naqshbandi center as a place of *spiritual psychiatry*:[7]

> Many, who came to us, were in psychotherapy. Maybe they were taking medicine. Last week we had three people, who were in psychiatry [psychiatric treatment]. Sometimes they can go out . . . But they must always go back there. They sleep there. They are allowed to come out, sometimes even in the evening. They have been there for years. And they have somehow found us because they noticed, there is no [permanent] solution in pills and talks with doctors and psychologists. They seek alternatives. Our center is an alternative . . . It is spiritual psychiatry! (interview, 21 July 2014)

After becoming disillusioned with psychoactive drugs and conventional psychotherapy, Ayşe sought healing in what she called "the spiritual scene." In 2004, having spent almost a decade in yoga centers, Hare Krishna temples, and Buddhist centers, Ayşe still desired a community. She said that her "heart did not accept it!" "It" meant the techniques and traditions she had experimented with. Ayşe felt she needed a guide, someone who could lead her on a path of healing, because she felt she could not continue alone.

Ayşe confronted her internalized Islamophobia by realizing how her relation to the Islamic tradition was shaped by both the anti-Islam sentiments of secularist Turkish circles and the prevalent anti-Muslim racist discourses in Germany: "I was very much anti-Islam. What people say, . . . , Islam is misogynistic!" A deeply moving encounter with a disciple of the late Sheikh Nazim got her interested in Sufi Islam. Ayşe met a friend for a casual chat over coffee. The friend had just returned from Turkish Cyprus, where the late sheikh lived at that time. As her friend continued to describe her own experience, Ayşe said that she began to feel an increasing sense of excitement and expectancy. The reporting of the breathing sounds of dhikr found a moving resonance within her heart. The entity "Sufism" was a grand discovery within the tradition she imagined as "misogynistic" Islam. In her words:

> My heart was so excited. [I asked], "Which mantra?" She said, "We were doing dhikr. That was *La ilaha illallah. La ilaha illallah.*" I heard this for

> the first time in my life, although I was born into a Muslim family. I began to cry . . . I asked, "What else have you been doing?" She said, "Allah. Allah. Allah. Allah." I was crying. I wanted more of that. My body was shivering . . . I said, "I want more of that. What is that? All my life, I have been looking for this." She said, "This is Sufism!" (interview, 21 July 2014)

Ayşe eventually met the late grand sheikh, whom she described as loving and full of humor.[8] She described the rest of her life history as following the Sufi path and all that came with it. Her initial exploration of Sufism met difficulties and troubles from her secular Turkish family. They hardly understood why Ayşe decided on this path. Her birth family considered Sufism to be "backward" (*rückständig*) involving "brainwashing" (*Gehirnwäsche*). They made derogatory comments, for example, "That is stupid!" (*Das ist dumm!*).[9] According to Ayşe, these internalized anti-Islam sentiments were common among the secularist Turkish Muslim circles to which her parents belonged. Despite resistance from her immediate family, she continued the journey of her breathing, wayfaring heart.

For Ayşe, the most important element on the Sufi path was to be able to ask existential questions and find healing in the cultivation of self-confidence/consciousness (*Selbsbewusstsein*) in making life choices. She emphasized this point with an example:

> [T]hat is the way to healing: To be more confident/conscious [*bewusst*] about oneself. That is self-confidence/self-consciousness. Who am I? What am I doing here? Why do I suffer? What is suffering? Where does it come from? All these questions are very existential questions that every human being should ask oneself. Why am I here? And that for only a short time? Why does it [life] come to end at some point? Why isn't it allowed to go on for eternity? [*laughing at the existential humor inherent in this question*] (interview, 21 July 2014)

Part of this existential process of questioning and cultivating self-consciousness, for Ayşe, was about coming to terms with psychoactive medication and the decision to give it up. While attributing healing to the development of self-consciousness, the question of authority was significant. While the individual must learn to cultivate consciousness, the sheikh's words were crucial agents that rendered such healing possible. The sheikh guides the development of the members of the center. In Ayşe's view, listening to the words of "the one authorized by heaven," remembering Allah through un-

interrupted dhikr and regulatory daily prayers, slowly and surely the seeker could find healing:

> Sheikh [Eşref Efendi] says, "Come, and you do not need [to do] anything. Come, do dhikr, and listen! You do not need to do anything. We do!" They notice that, over time, something has changed inside. Yes! The words suddenly find certain forms/patterns (*Gestalten*) [of thought] also inside, [they think] in daily life may be [there is] another way to deal with the situation. (interview, 21 July 2014)

After narrating stories of healing and existential reflections, Ayşe suddenly stopped. I remembered that she was fasting. I sensed that her throat was dry from too much talking. I decided to give it a rest by keeping silent. We sat there, each buried in her world of affect-laden thoughts. It was in that charged, silent moment that I realized how the desire to find answers to similar existential questions led each of us on our pathway to different kinds of Sufism, whether it was for healing, meaning, or coming to terms with identities and entities significant in our lives. As postmigrants in a society fraught with anti-Muslim racism, both of us have to come to terms with the kinds of Islam that we were brought up with and the conditions of possibility in the Sufi Islamic tradition. The privilege of our access to higher education does not protect us from everyday anti-Muslim racism in German society, but rather makes it difficult to learn from and live with existential resources provided by the Islamic tradition. We deal with everyday suffering and life crises within our individual and collective life histories. Whether in the name of religion, spirituality, alternative healing, or dual apprenticeship, we learn to follow desire lines that resist the racist discourses of majority German society and draw existential resources from Sufism.

Few women or men I met in Sufi-Berlin stayed with the tradition they were born to.[10] Most people I spoke to, framed Sufism as the *other* tradition. They were born in families that harbored prejudices against certain forms of Islam or were immersed in the prescriptive formations within Islam. Some were raised within Protestant and Catholic traditions, or the apparent absence of faith, as in state-enforced atheist secularism. Ayşe's narrative articulates her formation of subjectivity in the transition of Turkish secularism to Sufi Islam in another society where both she and the tradition she now belongs to migrated. What that might mean in the larger politics of

subjectivity is not within the scope of this book, but the question can be followed further to ask to what extent such pathways are representative of the Turkish-German women who shifted from a particular kind of secularism to (Sufi) Islam.

In contrast to Ayşe, Renate's life history provides insights into another kind of transition. From her childhood and early youth in former East Germany to life after unification, Renate crossed over from strict state-enforced atheism to a gradual deepening of Sufi practice with the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat network. Like Ayşe, her story had to do with suffering from chronic illness and searching for healing. But her desire line took her in another direction.

"Now I Can Say [the Word] God without Stress!": An East German Atheist Seeks Sufi Healing

I met Renate at the European Sufi Summer School 2013 in Proitzer Mühle, a small village in northern Germany between Berlin and Hannover. Later we saw each other on many occasions at the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat *khanekah*. We also met serendipitously on the subway. Renate was one of the few Inayatis who responded to my email call for an interview. During one warm afternoon in the spring of 2014, I went to her place in a peripheral neighborhood in the former East Berlin. Renate looked tired after a full working day (she had a permanent position in a public institution). We chatted about life stresses before I raised the formal set of questions. Over the next hour, her face gradually lit up, and she relaxed. I prodded her to describe her initial encounter with the Sufi breathing practices. I requested her to trace back her desire line, asking what brought her to the Inayatis.

Renate had suffered from a chronic health condition for more than twenty years. She availed herself of all possible biomedical treatments and alternative therapies. In a healing center, she had met someone who suggested that she should visit a psychotherapist, who was also a member of the Inayati network. Through them, Renate was introduced to the breathing practices of dhikr and *wazifa*, the Dances of Universal Peace, the (embodied) walks, and the healing rituals. In the beginning, Renate was only curious about the healing practices, and she joined the dances. After a number of sessions, however, Renate felt a "heart connection" to the Inayati community. She befriended many members in the course of the following years.

After four years of occasionally attending the dances and especially the healing ritual on Mondays, Renate decided to become initiated as a *murid*.

Renate articulated her experience of the movements, breathing techniques, and utterances of the ninety-nine names, using terms like "collective energy" (*gemeinsame Energie*) and "collective wholeness" (*Gesamtheit*):

> First of all, it is like this, that I generally find that when one sings with others, one is connected. I feel (*spüre*) then the connection with the others [happens] as well. Well, with the voice, through the collective energy, through the collective sound! That I find totally nice. And let us say [that through] this body movement with each other, yes, I am connected with the others, finally also with those whom I do not know. I find it already intense when I know the people. But then I find it even more intensive when I do not know them . . . That is, let us say, for me, a collective wholeness. (interview with the author, 7 May 2014)

The healing ritual (*Heilritual*) provided Renate with the possibility of activating and transmitting "healing energy" to people with affliction and to herself (see chapter 5). Renate was hesitant to suggest that "spontaneous healing" occurred to relieve her condition. But she considered the recitation of *Ya Shafi, Ya Kafi* to be an integrated daily practice that helped her in dealing with everyday stress. The paired utterance of *Ya Shafi, Ya Kafi* (O divine healer, O divine medicine) was one of the most common healing-breath meditations practiced by the Inayatis. These breathing meditations, she said, helped her in living with a prolonged health condition, coming to terms with an incurable illness that was progressively disabling her, and mitigating the side effects of the medication she took regularly. Breathing silently in the city subways and public transport system, moving through her hectic, working days in spite of a chronic, painful condition, Renate found comfort in the *feelings* generated by her Sufi exercises:

> I feel this healing energy . . . Not only for others but also for me.
>
> [In response to my question of whether Sufi practices affected her health condition]
>
> It is always difficult [to say], but, I think it does. This [Sufi practice] has also helped me. I cannot say that there is some kind of spontaneous healing . . . It is like that, through the daily practice there, tuning into the healing energy. Every day I do a healing-breath exercise (*Heilatemübung*).

> I just practice [uttering] *Ya Shafi, Ya Kafi*. This daily practice helps me to get inside the energy . . . sometimes when I have pain in my joints . . . I get along with my illness and manage my medications . . . I notice that when I am stressed, it goes immediately to my joints . . . This stress! For that [stress], it [Sufi exercise] is wonderful. Sufi exercises are wonderful for calming down . . . I like it the most to simply breathe *Ya Shafi, Ya Kafi* . . . When I take a bus or take the S-Bahn, or I am on my way, for example, [I recite] *Allahu Akbar* . . . to get energy. I take hold of the energy . . . I make use of the traveling time. I practice in the train—*Ya Shafi, Ya Kafi* [*she breathes in and out, simulating her daily practice*]. (interview, 21 July 2014)

In addition to the "wonderful" effects of breathing/uttering names, Renate described the difficulty of sustaining affiliation with her community. She said that her current partner was initially skeptical about her practices. He expressed his concern about spiritual communities in terms of a prevalent fear of "the sect" in German society. However, in the five years they have been together, he gradually warmed up to the practices himself. Renate admitted that his reaction was similar to her own in an early encounter with the energetic rendition of the healing ritual. She recalled that she initially sneered quite cynically, saying: "What is all that!" (*Was ist das denn!*).

Renate was afraid that she might end up in a manipulative religious/spiritual sect. This is not an uncommon response from white (East) Germans, especially those brought up with an atheist, secularist disposition. This is also prevalent among the literalist and reformist religionists and authenticity-seekers who readily and dismissively attach the derogatory tag of the New Age or sect to a relatively new spiritual community to differentiate them from the more conventional communities built around recognized world religions.

Toward the end of our conversation, Renate and I got into discussing Inayati Sufism's connection to Islam. Renate did not consider Islam and Sufism synonymous, while others in the same Inayati network had different opinions.[11] Renate even resisted calling Sufism a religion. She expressed her aversion to prescriptive, literalist Christianity, associating them with the "dark churches" (*dunkle Kirchen*). In my interpretation, this is related to her life in former East Germany and, in part, to the prevalent anti-Muslim racism and fear of religious radicalization in German society, leading her to reject the word *religion* altogether.[12] Sufism was *spirituality* for her, practiced

with the movements of bodies, breathing, and healing energies. Contrary to "religion," Sufism, makes "unity thinking" (*Einheitsgedanke*) possible, imagining Allah/God as "a part of us":

> Renate (R): I do not connect [Sufism] with Islam . . . For me, it [Sufism] is not a religion . . . It has nothing to do with belief . . . Let us say, this idea— the total Christian ideas are dogmatic . . . the thousand rules . . . dark churches . . . So far, I find the idea of Universal Sufism independent of all that . . . Well, of course, we sing, we pray . . . but as a rule, it is totally independent of some kind of image of God . . . [Rather] this unity thinking . . . God is a part of us . . . Images of God are totally occupied by the religions… [Since I] shifted my attitude, now I can say [the word] God without stress. There is no image.
>
> Nasima (N): What is your imagination of God, then?
>
> R: I have no imagination of God. My mind says this is beyond everything . . . God is the universe, energy, and all . . . That [word, God,] does not disturb me anymore.
>
> N: It is not God with a white beard! [*we laugh together*]
>
> R: This compassion. These personal qualities/attributes [the ninety-nine names] . . . I do not have an image [of someone] . . . who observes and records our sins (interview, 21 July 2014).

Renate may not entangle her ontology of Sufism with the phenomenon called religion. Still, her narrative inhabits a contradiction inherent in the term "spirituality," which is too close to religion to be separated from it entirely. The kind of energetic rendition that Renate made of Allah definitely differs from an anthropomorphic image of God as the grand patriarch in prescriptive, literalist, reformist Islam that postmigrant Muslims (including Ayşe and I) have experienced, influenced by Christianity and hegemonic patriarchy.

Michaela Özelsel (1949–2011), a white German psychologist and Sufi Muslim woman, wrote in her dervish diary how the transition of an anthropomorphic God to the Sufi conception of a transcendent/immanent Allah made her think of a different kind of imagination of power: "These [Sufi practices] were only tools of this set-above, goal-oriented, Allah-named power, that replaced my naïve, childhood understanding of God" (1993, 42). The power that Özelsel named Allah was an entity, unlike her (former) naïve imagination of God. Like Renate's Allah, there seems to be a postsecular imagination of the transcendent/immanent deity at play. Informed by the

Sufi discourses of the past and the present, such imagination does not reproduce a vision of the moralizing male patriarch who watches from far, punishes us for our sins, and rewards us for subservience to the prescriptive authority. Allah-named power invites human subjects to explore life to meet its existential demands.

As a conclusion to this section, I draw the third desire line of engaging the senses, combining the spiritual quest with the breathing sounds (of dhikr and Sufi music) and movements (of *sema* and the dances) without fixating on one specific tradition of belonging. This is the desire line of a nomadic subject entangled with the political dangers of cultural appropriation, purifying Sufism from the Islamic tradition.

A Nomadic Sufi Dancer: Claire's Fascination and the Dangers of Cultural Appropriation

Everything that you do becomes part of yourself!
—Claire[13]

I saw Claire for the first time in the autumn of 2012, a few months after I arrived in Berlin. I had not yet started my fieldwork formally. Aimlessly walking on the streets, I saw the advertisement for the *Way of the Heart* event in Kreuzberg. At the event, Claire was wearing a Mevlevi-inspired hat and a long white skirt, whirling with her eyes closed along with Hafiz (figure 2.2; Introduction). Later we met a number of times in various settings. In the first phase of my fieldwork, I took part in the "Sufi trance dance" evenings that Hafiz led (chapter 3). We met in the living room of a retired, elderly woman in Kreuzberg. Claire was a regular participant there, and she led the group when Hafiz was absent. We also met at the Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sufi-Center Berlin during festivities and at the dhikr and *sohbet* evenings.

Claire is a whirling dancer and practitioner of what she called Aroma Art (*Aroma-Kunst*), the art of perfumes. At the time of our conversation, Claire was in her midforties. She had traveled extensively in terms of geographical locations and the body practices she learned. Her story is a reflexive narrative of embodying the movements and traditions she encountered and a sustained ambivalence against prescriptive religious traditions. Sufi movements in *sema* and dhikr were two techniques (among others) that she practiced regularly.

Figure 2.2. Claire and Hafiz whirling together, 28 October 2012. © Nasima Selim.

I interviewed Claire early in my fieldwork, in spring 2013 (April 24). On the appointed date, I cooked a Bengali lunch for us at my apartment in Friedrichshain. We discussed at length the recipes and modes of eating before discussing Sufism. The first part of the conversation was in German. Later we switched to English. Claire's initial impression of what she considered Sufism was "mysterious." She used words like *unheimlich* (uncanny) and *mysteriös* (mysterious), *fremd* (foreign), and *unbekannt* (unknown) to describe what was pulling her to Sufi practice: "I just had a vague feeling [of what Sufism was]. It had something to do with music. Something mysterious, uncanny . . . *Trotzdem dass das so fremd war, hat das mich angezogen* (Although it was so foreign, it pulled me)" (interview with the author, 24 April 2013).

Claire described her entry to Sufism as a series of contacts. She encountered Sufi breathing sounds, movements, and smells brought by people who came close to her during the various phases of her life. They "had something to do with Sufism," Claire said. Her con-

tact, and subsequent fascination, with the intensity of Sufi sounds and music, played a key role in her life. She described Sufi music as the space where she came in contact/touch with Sufism ("Wo ich richtig in Berührung mit Sufismus kam"). In her late twenties and early thirties, Claire met postmigrant musicians of Algerian, Gambian, Moroccan, and Pakistani origin. They came from societies strongly influenced by Sufism, especially in terms of traditional Sufi music and its contemporary fusion variants.

Having traveled for several years, working in the visual media and the underground music scene, Claire returned to Germany. She learned dance techniques and enrolled in Dance Studies at a public university. In the course of her studies, she was fascinated by a Sufi dancer's performance. It was about the same time she got in touch with Hafiz, having read his text on *sema*, published in a local magazine popular among Berlin's spiritual circles (chapter 3). In 2009, Claire met Hafiz, and it was the beginning of a close partnership. She wrote about the traditional *sema*, Hafiz's Sufi trance dance techniques, and learned to whirl. Later on, she began to participate in Sufi performance events in the city.

Since "fascination" (*Faszination*) was a key term in Claire's language of experience,[14] I probed, asking her what she meant by the word. Claire situated her fascination with a discourse of what I call popular, affirmative orientalism, rooting it in German dance history:

> Nasima: What was it that fascinated you?
>
> Claire: If you look at German dance history, in the 1920s and 1930s, influences were coming from the East . . . Mary Wigman[15] was the most influential expressionist dancer of that time. She used dervish dance in her choreography.
>
> Mary Wigman always said, "whirling is total dance!" . . . It already had an impact on German dance history. She also did performances with whirling . . .
>
> Nasima: Did you learn the whirling?
>
> Claire: We learned spiraling . . . That [whirling] I learned later.
>
> (interview, 24 April 2013)

Claire was born to a Catholic mother and a Protestant father in a small German town. In her early twenties, she stepped out of her church affiliation. She did not share with me many details about her early life, but, at some point in the interview, she told me that she

was not too keen on sharing her interest in Sufism with her mother. Nor was she particularly enthusiastic about monotheistic religions, such as Christianity or Islam. Claire articulated her desire for a spiritual tradition that could integrate the performance arts:

> I was always looking for a spiritual practice or tradition—let's say—that integrated music and dance. Because in the Christian religion, it is very cut-off, you know! Like—dancing is not good. Singing is not good. Music is not good unless certain . . .
> [I interrupted her: "But what about the Gregorian chant?" Claire dismissed my comment and said] *Ja! Ja!* But, Shamanism, [making a passing comment, "Sufism is coming from Shamanism"][16] has this aspect of dancing, music, and the arts like healing . . . like this aspect of healing in the arts or you could heal yourself through arts, through dancing, through music, through theater. This is why I was also interested in Sufism. Because, even if for many people, Islam is very dogmatic . . . then you have the Sufis, who are very broad and very different, and you have the dancing, and you have the singing, *ja*, music! (interview, 24 April 2013)

In response to my question, "why Sufism?" Claire emphasized her interest in the healing effects of performance arts and the prominence of the arts in Sufism. In comparison to the literalist formations within religions (Christianity and Islam), Sufism for Claire was about combining the performance arts, healing, and spirituality: "For me, art is therapy . . . Whirling has a very strong effect. Dhikr also. I feel it physically, but [it is] also in my mind. It is very good for me . . . [It has a] healing effect on me . . . [It makes me] calmer" (interview, 24 April 2013).

I was perplexed about how to address her ontological separation of Islam and Sufism. Statements like "Islam is very dogmatic," sounded too close to the populist discourses propagated by anti-Muslim racism in the white secularist German society that Claire otherwise distanced herself from. I decided to stop myself from arguing with her about what Sufism had been in its global history. This bracketing helped to keep the conversation going in the direction she wanted to take it. While discussing her interest in multiple body practices, I asked her if she considered herself a Sufi. Claire said: "Everything that you do becomes part of yourself . . . I practice whirling and dhikr. So I must have a Sufi in me" (interview, 24 April 2013).

This comment may be interpreted as a typically "New Age" expression or the symptom of an eclectic "cultural appropriation" of

techniques from various traditions without paying attention to the rich history of these traditions or being mindful of the personal and professional gains from appropriating techniques. The political dangers of uncritical cultural appropriation from other traditions haunt nomadic breather-wayfarers like Claire. Although Claire's long-term commitment to Sufi practices was evident in the way she practiced dhikr and *sema*, in her vibrant longing to step beyond the materialist German society, she did not seem to be adequately reflective of the political dangers of cultural appropriation. Her ontological separation of Islam and Sufism (like Renate) could be interpreted as perilously close to the discourses of anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia, that propagate the notion that "Sufism is good and Islam is bad" (chapter 6). I am mindful of these political dangers that white German Sufis, and especially the nomadic wayfarers, need to be more aware of. But, I would still argue that a nomadic subject often inhabits a perpetual in-betweenness that cannot be explained by her propensity toward "cultural appropriation" alone.[17]

Nomadic subjectivity is constituted by diverse traditions and techniques that provide the conditions of possibility in life. Postsecular life is not necessarily anathema to belonging to an intentional community or deepening one's practice in a specific tradition. Neither is such subjectivity superior to another in terms of being more authentic. The nomadic formations are not restricted to New Age conditions or uncritical cultural appropriation. Such formations are part of a global history where minor traditions are known to have formed at the intersections of more established, world religions.[18]

Claire may not seem well-informed by the global history of Sufism and its rootedness in the Islamic tradition. But her bodily engagement with Sufi techniques leaves no doubt about her commitment to and mastery of Sufi practice. There might be other reasons for Claire not to choose to be part of a formalized Sufi community. Expressing her intense engagements with Sufi dhikr and *sema*, Claire reflected on her ideological conflicts with Hafiz and the prescriptive injunctions issued by the late Grand Sheikh Nazim. In her view, the Sheikh assigned restrictive gender roles to women and men.[19] Claire declared her sustained passion for Sufi techniques and ambivalence toward the prescriptive authority of the Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sheikh. This was evident in her comment, "I like the whirling. I don't like the gender roles!"

Toward the end of the interview, Claire mentioned that Özelsel had a strong influence on her. The latter explored the interrelation between Shamanism and Sufism in terms of healing (Özelsel 1995). We ended our conversation reflecting on the significance of the non-materialist dimension in our lives. Claire considered a materialistic life restrictive, while the spiritual dimension widened the horizon of possibilities: "It cannot be that there is just this material world. It makes you feel ill! There must be something beyond us . . . . This spiritual dimension in Sufism or other spiritual techniques . . . If this dimension is not there, you get materialistic. Life becomes very narrow" (interview, 24 April 2013).

During our conversation, Claire's otherwise bright, sparkling eyes were occasionally dimmed, tinged with sadness. Still, she laughed with her mouth wide open. Even when she was speaking of the struggles in life, she oozed the impression that sadness could not take hold of her. Claire's passion for perfumes triggered in me the impetus to experiment with essential oils. She was excited to discuss her interest in the essential oils with an animated voice and widened pupils. Writing this ethnography, among other things, is an exercise to articulate the senses. I am still searching for an appropriate word to describe the perfume she wore on the day she came to my apartment.

I complained about the aches and pains in my lower back due to "too much dancing." She applied a drop of lemon-scented perfumed oil on my hand and advised me to smell it. The citrus smell reminded me of lemon but also hints of other chemicals and other essential oils. Her perfume filled up my senses. Smelling Claire's oil also brought to mind how Hafiz used to apply drops of perfumed oil on our knuckles before we proceeded to get into the Sufi trance dance that he aspired to teach us. Claire shifted into that state with apparent ease, while I struggled to reach any state that can be called remotely ecstatic. Claire, like her companion Hafiz, was bent on presenting Sufism in its subtlety and sensuousness, a combination of movement, breath, sound, and smell. To get a sense of Claire's narrative, one must imagine not only what the Sufi places, people, and events looked like or sounded like, but also how they smelled.

Listening to Claire's narrative time and again, I find some parallels with the assortment of bodily techniques I have drawn from diverse traditions as a postsecular nomadic subject (chapter 4). I

name three examples of breathing practices that mark my nomadic, wayfaring journeys across diverse traditions: the extemporaneous breathing-singing in the Bāul-inspired syncretism of Bengal, the breathing-sitting technique of Buddhism-inspired Vipassana meditation, and the breathing in Sufism-inspired recitation of dhikr and whirling *sema*. Claire and I both share an aversion toward prescriptive religious formations. But our opinions differ in terms of what prescriptive, literalist formation means, in the question of the ontological difference between Islam and Sufism. My experience of Sufism stands in stark contrast to Claire's, especially on the question of the teacher-student relationship. Claire did not mention any Sufi teacher with whom she shared an initiatic bond. In contrast, my immediate experience (*Erlebnis*) and the growing, sustained experience (*Erfahrung*) of Sufism have been formed under the tutelage of my Sufi teachers, Khidr and Murshida Rabeya (Preface, chapters 1 and 4).

The desire lines of breather-wayfarers, like Ayşe, Renate, Claire, and I, are co-constituted by the navigation of the "modern topographies of the self" (Vicini 2017, 120) as much as they are about the cultivation of the "sensibility of the (breathing) heart" (2017, 120) rooted in the Islamic tradition, whether Sufism is (discursively and) ontologically separated from Islam or not. These desire lines are about putting into practice the lessons of the affective pedagogy of Sufi practice, as articulations of longing beyond conversion narratives.

Desire Lines beyond Conversion Narratives

The human subject is the condition of experience.[20] The narratives, with which the subjects designate "Sufi" experiences, are where Sufi subjectivities are constituted, as in moments of speaking, listening, moving, and breathing.[21] It is necessary to combine field concepts with anthropological theory to understand these narratives (Lambek 2015, 64). The English word experience becomes two in German, *Erfahrung,* and *Erlebnis*. The concept of *dhawq*, or tasting, in the rich archive of Sufism, accommodates both the immediate (*Erlebnis*) and the longer-term (*Erfahrung*) dimensions of experience. The desire lines in this chapter and the next are lines of longing for this *dhawq*, of knowing and becoming on the path of tasting/experiencing Sufism.[22]

Anthropologists articulate Sufi subjectivities by drawing from local contexts in terms of historical and geographical locations.[23] Sufi interlocutors draw their pathways of breathing-becoming from diverse and often deterritorialized sources. The postsecular quest of the women who engaged with the diverse ontologies and repertoires of practices in Sufism (and Islam) allowed their horizons of becoming to open. Turning attention briefly to Renate's narrative, I juxtapose it with Ayşe's; two diverse strands become one. Renate was born in the former East Germany and grew up in state-enforced secular atheism. In post-unification Germany, faced with a chronic illness, she met and befriended an Inayati Sufi woman and entered the path of Inayati Sufism. Now she can laugh about her earlier discomfort with the word God. Her laughing statement that "Now I can say [the word] God without stress!" is a profoundly postsecular articulation of the "God" problem in the hegemonic secularist discourse.

When we listen to Ayşe's voice, we hear another story. The secularized Turkish family migrated to Germany, and Ayşe grew up without being grounded in her faith. From the repertoire of the Islamic tradition, she followed the Sunni-Sufi Islam practiced by the Haqqani-Naqshbandi network. Her desire line turned her from a secular Muslim to a Sufi Muslim. That is another formative moment of understanding postsecular subjectivity. Rather than digging deep into the past/background of Renate as a former East German atheist and Ayşe as a Turkish-German postmigrant, I stay close to what emerged from the narratives and the relational effects of their utterances in our interlocutory presence.

These younger interlocutors were asking existential questions arising from mental illness and suffering as postmigrant subjects (Ayşe) or transcended atheistic prejudices to mobilize healing energies in everyday life (Renate) in the afterlife of the state-enforced atheism of the former East Germany. The respective desire lines led these women to a future with various Sufi communities, following the guidance of a Sheikh or Murshida, and finding everyday healing in their respective intentional communities.

In Özelsel's case, her desire line was a lifelong pursuit of bridging differences between apparently incommensurable entities, Sufism and "Western" psychology. In contrast, Claire and I are nomadic wayfarers. We navigate our multiple belongings by paying attention to learning and practicing techniques, albeit differently. Our lan-

guages of experience and pathways of becoming navigate the secular and religious/spiritual life while attempting to transgress forms and formulations of oppressive prescriptions (chapter 4).

These multifarious pathways of becoming are formed through narratives and body practices. These oral narratives emerge in the juxtaposition of written texts, published testimonials, and media reports. They are also conceived in silence and the raw, poignant moments of intimate sharing with me. Such narratives are usually framed, in social science, as *conversion narratives*. A conversion narrative invokes the notion of distinctive worlds marked by the "before" and "after," telling a story of rupture (Roberts 2012, 276). More than conversion, desire line, and breathing-becoming do justice to the experience-near narratives I engaged here.

The experiential narratives of human subjects are not typologies of conversion.[24] The pathways of breathing-becoming are not sculpted by the contrasting regimes of power relations alone. They are lines drawn with fluctuations, navigating after-lives, and serendipity. No conversion or transition is ever complete. The postsecular subjects do not and cannot afford to lose their grounding in secularist German society, which is fraught with anti-Muslim racism.

My interlocutors (and I) consider Sufi practices as techniques to mobilize the bodily locations of healing (chapters 3, 4, 5). These healing narratives articulate the desire lines of the dual apprentice and her interlocutors as akin to joy. Joel Robbins (2013) invited us to question the disciplinary suspicion of joy, a tendency to dismiss joy as a fantasy of the neoliberal subject, an ideology of marketed happiness narratives. Joy is not a utopian, enduring state of happiness, but ineffable, candescent moments (and their durable memories). Few anthropologists swim against a dominating current that explains (and reduces) the human condition to a state of perpetual "social suffering."[25] Finding an intentional community is not about finding never-ending ecstasy. There is a lot at stake when the Sufi subjects transition from secular, or religious literalism, to their second lives. All the more reason for anthropologists to take the narratives of desire lines seriously. Why must the complex, layered narrative of a Sufi woman fit the fancy of a social science scholar to gain respect? What is the purpose of the question of whether she fits the typology of conversion? Who is supposed to be the normative representative of Sufi or Muslim women?[26]

Practicing Sufism cannot be explained as an absolute surrendering to the neoliberal logic of self-help, making the individuals responsible at the cost of structural solutions, or cultural appropriation alone. Even if the organization of Sufi practices and their practical arrangements[27] operate within the political economy of these arrangements, there are existential resources to draw from, transformative techniques of participatory performances, and experiential narratives that allow the possibility of sensing, breathing, and living, that is not entirely determined by the politics and economy of a definite period and place.

Those who dismiss postsecular Sufi practice by labeling it "New Age" (hence not really Sufism!) or "pseudo-reasoning," are probably looking for essentialized, authentic versions of indigenous *tasawwuf*. These readers/scholars will be disappointed with my formulation of Sufism in this book as an existential resource for postsecular subjectivity, as one condition of possibility, among others. But the task of a dual apprenticeship and the aim of a sensuous praxiography is to illustrate how things are in practice by being part of the practice. The object of one's inquiry (Sufism) exerted a global presence for more than a thousand years across several continents, absorbing multiple styles of reasoning, emerging as tradition, political organization, sociocultural formations, and so on.

It is counterproductive to engage in a polemic against these diverse, historical ontologies to claim yet another as the essence of Sufism. Sufism, and whatever that may mean for human subjects, can be something to be desired enough to conceive a desire line for previously secular or religious subjects. Following these lines, in their biographies, they formulated a pathway through which they became postsecular (Sufi) subjects, not always by overcoming, but always already healing secular and religious suffering, and facing the problems of living (chapter 4).

Postsecular imagination of Sufism is enacted in multiple formations, the narratives of experiential subjectivity being one. Body techniques and especially breathing techniques, however, are central in the Sufi practices of mobilizing subtle and material bodies. In the next chapter, I address the constitutive practices of breathing, wayfaring bodies, shifting attention to the intimate "inner space" of movement, breathing, and energizing as techniques of transformation, zooming in on micro-practices, instructed as they are by the

Sufism of the past and the present. "Why should I suffer, and what should I do?" The answer to Ayşe's existential quest is not a universal solution for human suffering. But, for the breather-wayfarers on the path, the Sufi techniques of transformation provide the conditions of possibilities (albeit limited) for answering that question.

Notes

1. Shepard and Murray (2007, 1).
2. See Sharify-Funk (2020), Sharify-Funk, Dickson, and Xavier (2018), Diaz (2015), Haitami (2014), Neff (2013), Kasmani (2012, 2022), Shaikh (2012), Sultanova (2011), Küçük (2009), Helminsky (2003), Khosronejad (1996), Malamud (1996), and Schimmel (1982). See also Liebelt and Werbner (2018) who argued for gendering everyday Islamic practice.
3. I have selected narratives from different generations of women, with different social backgrounds (Turkish-German, former East and West German, and bi-national families), professions (language teacher, psychotherapist, lawyer, artist, and natural scientist), and the kinds of Sufism they practiced (Haqqani-Naqshbandi, Inayati, Tümata-Berlin, and nomadic Sufis) (see also chapter 4).
4. See Ernst (1985) for a detailed discussion of the articulation of ecstasy, longing, desire, and love in classical Sufi discourse. The desire of the modern individuals of "the West" to seek personal spirituality in Sufi meditation may be far removed from their counterparts elsewhere (local Sufi devotees of Zindapir in Pakistan) (Werbner 2017).
5. The term *guest-workers* referred to the postwar labor import to West Germany beginning in 1955 from Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Yugoslavia, and, following a bilateral agreement, with Turkey in 1961 (Rist 1978). See Rita Chin (2007) for a more recent discussion of the postwar labor migration, politics, and culture in (former) West Germany.
6. See Gritt Klinkhammer (2009b) for contextualization of divergent trends of Sufism in Germany with three periodic histories. She discussed how in the 1960s and 1970s, Sufi spirituality as therapy emerged as a practice and trope. Sufism is only one among the different traditions that offer existential resources for postsecular subjects today.
7. The detailed analysis of Sufi healing practices and the biomedical discipline of psychiatry lies beyond the scope of this book. See Athar Yawar for a vivid description of the Haqqani-Naqshbandi "psychiatry": based on the relationship between the patients and the Sufi teacher, shaping their "everyday life, largely through the master's reported ability to send spiritual knowledge to the 'heart,' and to arrange educational (or therapeutic) situations" (2020, 323). See Helene Basu (2014) for the entanglement of Sufi healing practices and psychiatry in India; and, Stefania Pandolfo (2018) and Amira Mittermaier (2011) regarding the intersection of psychoanalysis and Islamic (Sufi) healing in Morocco and Egypt.

8. The impression of the late Sheikh Nazim differed considerably among my interlocutors. Ayşe found the late Sheikh Nazim to be friendly to women. In contrast, Claire was uncomfortable with the strict gender roles preached by the late Sheikh Nazim and the gender segregation enforced in the network.
9. In 1925, the new Turkish republic banned the Sufi orders and closed down the Sufi centers (known as *tekke*, *dergah*, or *zaviye*) that were influential institutions in late Ottoman Turkey. One could read the reaction of Ayşe's family in line with the Kemalist and secularist discourse, which associated irrationality and superstition with Sufism (Silverstein 2011).
10. Mrs. Schildbach at the Inayat-Khan-inspired Sufi Movement was an exception. Unlike other Inayati interlocutors in Berlin, she was raised by her mother in an Inayati tradition.
11. Unlike Renate, Andrea, another Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat *murid*, expressed an opposite view (interview with the author, 6 April 2014). She is in touch with the Sufi Islam networks and is involved in the "liberal/progressive Islam" movement in the city. Andrea's desire line connected a lifelong Inayati affiliation with that of Sufi Islam and a later liberal Muslim subjectivity. The question of liberal Islam in Berlin, however, lies outside the scope of this book.
12. In Berlin, I was often confronted with a whole-scale rejection of *religion* as an existential possibility for inhabiting the world. Such views were not only common among former East Germans but also in left-liberal feminist circles. A friend who grew up in East Germany was horrified when I questioned whether and how atheist secularism might be considered a "negative" religion. She felt she belonged to a minority community of atheists in a postsecular world encroached on by religions.
13. Interview with the author, 24 April 2013.
14. My friend and former flatmate Roxanne identified with the "liberal" Muslims. She mentioned *Fernweh,* a longing for the faraway, to explain what made her travel so much outside Germany, and to experience diverse cultural traditions in Muslim-majority societies. The paired sentiments of *Heimweh* (homesickness) and *Fernweh* are intimately connected (Alsop 2002). Affective terms such as "fascination" and "longing" (for the faraway or the other) were common tropes in the languages of experience of my interlocutors. See Andrew Shryock (2010) for a discussion of Islam as an object of fear and affection.
15. See X. Theodore Barber (1985) for a comparative discussion of the Mevlevi ritual and the whirling in contemporary dance in 1920s Europe, including Mary Wigman's (1886–1973) rendition of whirling. Born as Karoline Sophie Marie Wiegmann in Hannover, Germany, she adopted the name Mary Wigman. She was an iconic artist in Weimar Berlin and became known as the founder of modern, expressionistic dance. See Susan Manning ([1993] 2006) for a discussion of Wigman's life and dance techniques in Germany's cultural history.
16. Tümata discourse also draws from a genealogy of the intimate relation between Shamanism and Sufism in Turkey and Central Asia (Güvenç and

Güvenç 2009). See Özelsel (1995) for her discussion on the therapeutic aspect of Sufism from Shamanic and Islamic perspectives. See Sultanova (2011) for an account of women practicing Shamanism and Sufism in Central Asia.

17. The figure of the nomad "lives and resides in some specific location and yet belongs universally wherever it is and no matter what it is" (Nail 2012, 251). The *nomadic subjectivity* resonates with Rosi Braidotti's "nomadic consciousness" that resists the forced imperative of a permanent identity with unpredictable *lines of flight* (1994, 58). See Soudeh Oladi (2017) for a nomadic connection between post-structural thought (Deleuze) and ecstatic Sufi poetry (Rumi). See also Ian Almond (2004) for linking nomadic thought (Derrida) with Sufism (Ibn Arabi).
18. See Jeanne Openshaw (2002) and Lisa Knight (2011) for a discussion of the syncretistic Baul tradition shaped by Sufi Islam, Vaishnava Hinduism, and Tantric Buddhism in Bengal.
19. The late Sheikh expressed his opinions against the use of contraception and delineated the gender role for women: "If I had the power, I would have prohibited women from working outside. I would provide them a higher salary than men so that they would stay at home, to be happy there, and not outside" (Nāẓim 2004, 57). In practice, the late Sheikh was pragmatic about gender roles without forcing his opinions on women followers. Ayşe described him as "loving and humorous."
20. Veena Das followed Wittgenstein to define *the subject* as the condition of experience (Das 2007, 4).
21. Narratives construct coherence through time (Kerby 1991). Through their telling and my re-telling here, the interior lives of my interlocutors are imbued with public meaning. See Nigel Rapport (2012) for an overview of the literary genre within anthropology.
22. Sufi scholar Sara Sviri wrote: "Sufis call this way of knowing *dhawq*, 'tasting' . . . We understand through our state of being, and the scope of our knowledge expands with the expansion of our being . . . The non-ceremonial 'widening of the horizons' through *dhawq* is the true and only initiation on the path" (1997, 40–41).
23. See Katherine Pratt Ewing ([1997] 2006) for a discussion of the Sufi as a postcolonial subject at the intersection of Islam and modernity, as a saint, curer, and exorcist in Pakistan. See Kelly Pemberton (2006) for a discussion of women Sufis in South Asia.
24. Ryan Szpiech (2013) discussed the Christian genealogy of the term *conversion*. Henri Gooren (2014) pointed toward the field of conversion studies and anthropologies of conversion. Monika Wohlrab-Sahr (1999) argued how conversion to Islam in Berlin and West German cities is a symbolic battle between two logics, with the latter frame clashing with the former frame of reference. Esra Özyürek (2010, 2015) framed the phenomenon of the white German converts' ambivalence toward immigrant Muslims within a spectrum of Islamophobia and Islamophilia.

25. Well-being practices and the pursuit of joy are neglected topics in anthropology (Skoggard and Waterston 2015; Robbins 2013; Miles-Watson 2011; Mathews and Izquierdo 2009).
26. Michaela Özelsel's books, for example, circulated widely and gained popularity among the Sufi audience and readers of popular psychology, to the extent that religious studies scholars analyzed her life (and work) consistently as a conversion narrative. She was accused of pseudo-reasoning and considered *not* representative of the converted Muslim woman (Wieringa 2009). In an early polemic against Sufism in "the West," Herbert Hayes lamented how Inayat Khan's Sufism found acceptance among "ladies of suffragette tendencies" who supported Khan's "propagandist work," and Hayes accused the Sufi movement of "sensualism" (1917, 31).
27. Such arrangements include the cost of everyday living, rent, cost of organizing events, seminars, retreats, etc.

Chapter 3
Techniques of Transformation

Subtle-Material Bodies in Dhikr and Other (Breathing) Practices

> The body is (like) a letter: look into it . . .
> go into a corner, open the letter, read (it).
> —Mevlana Rumi[1]

"The medicine of the heart is *dhikrullah* [breathing, reciting, and reminding oneself of Allah]!" Hafiz said to me, pointing his finger toward his chest. I asked him, "What is this heart? Is this an organ?" My biomedical bias and naiveté in the matter of the metaphysical heart could not be more evident. Hafiz continued to instruct me, "This is also an organ. First, it is a physical organ; then, when one has done a lot of dhikr [breathing and chanting of Allah's names], it is formed as an organ of consciousness. That is the spiritual heart [*qalb*]!" Pointing his finger to the left and the right side of his chest, he located these two hearts and said, "Here is the physical heart, and on the other side is the spiritual heart."

It was a summer evening in 2013. Hafiz, Claire, and I were sitting on an ornamental carpet in the living room of Hafiz's apartment in Kreuzberg. He brought three glasses and filled them with black, aromatic tea (çay). I switched on the recorder and leaned against the wall. The three of us discussed our respective interests in Sufism. At some point, Hafiz began to talk about the heart. He described it as material and subtle. The heart is a physical organ, but it can become an organ of consciousness. The heart is connected to the material world, and it remains subtle. More than the location of the heart in the human body, what the heart is or could be, seems more relevant in Sufi practice (Rustom 2008).

For Sufis, the experiential anatomy (Cohen 1993) of a subtle/material body affords the possibility of imagining a metaphysical heart.[2] The invocation of the material/subtle (breathing) heart features in classical discourse and contemporary Sufi narratives. What is the role of breathing, and what is the meta/physical heart in contemporary Sufi practice? What are the conditions of possibility for imagining and inhabiting a subtle body and its parts? What kinds of bodies emerge from practice across the different Sufi spaces in Berlin and connected sites? How are these bodies transformed, and how can such transformation be articulated as healing? I seek to address these questions by framing Sufi (healing) practices as body prayers, as the techniques of transformation.[3]

Healing Breath, Body Prayers, and Techniques of the Body

> [W]e will experience the inner way of Sufi body prayer. . . [W]e will experience a body awareness practice of cleansing and healing the senses, falling backward and downward into the arms of the Beloved, so that we can feel each new breath as a healing breath.
>
> —Murshid Saadi, European Sufi Summer School 2013

Sufi practices enact specific kinds of bodies with techniques that are, in fact, body prayers, for example, *sema* [whirling ceremony], dhikr, the Dances of Universal Peace, and the walks. The breathing, wayfaring bodies emerge from these sounding, moving, and feeling/sensing practices. The Sufi techniques transform the capacity of the human body, transitioning toward the postsecular imagination of what a body can become. My attention to the term *body prayer* is drawn from its usage by the Inayati Murshid Saadi Shakur Chishti/Dr. Neil Douglas-Klotz. He conceived Sufi practices as body prayers that involved the sacralization of the corporeal, bringing together "body awareness," "healing the senses," and the feeling of "healing breath" with a sense of the sacred, as "falling into the arms" of the Beloved/Allah. Body prayer is also a translation of the German theological term *Körpergebet* (Koll 2007, 139). What the body is capable of becoming cannot be taken for granted. How can one think of the human body in terms of transformative techniques?

A technique of the body is an action that is "effective and traditional. . . . There is no technique and no transmission in the absence of a tradition" (Mauss [1934] 1973, 75). Long after Mauss and especially since the 1980s, the anthropology of the body emerged with a focus on knowledge and epistemologies of body practices, their physical-symbolic-socio-material dimensions, their significance in medicine and religion, and the co-constitution of the concepts of the body in connection with the environment as part of the historical process.[4] Talal Asad criticized the dichotomous view that the human body is either the passive recipient of "cultural imprints" or "the active source of *natural* expressions" embedded in the local history and culture (1997, 47). The body is the human "means *for* achieving a range of human objects—from styles of physical movement (for example, walking), through modes of emotional being (for example, composure), to kinds of spiritual experience (for example, mystical states)" (1997, 47–48).

Sufi body techniques and healing practices have been in circulation for centuries, with past and recent innovations.[5] In its contemporary enactment, the breathing, wayfaring *postsecular body* refers to the transition of the body from an antagonistic relationship with (religious) traditions and bodily techniques toward a life-affirming positioning and practice, transcending a secularist negation and a literalist, religious confirmation.[6] The breathing, wayfaring body resonates with sounds connecting the everyday *real* world with the spiritual world of *the Real*. It mobilizes movements from the practical repertoires of Sufism. Sufi practices transform the body to be capable of specialized techniques, such as whirling, repetitive breathing, dancing, and walking. These techniques combine movements and visualization. An everyday, material body becomes a spiritual, prayerful, breathing, sounding, moving body through these techniques.

Techniques of Breathing, Wayfaring Bodies

"The human body is like a [musical] instrument. It can take in frequencies and can itself become like an instrument" (Güvenç and Güvenç 2009, 81). The Tümata leaders invited the imagination of not only a material body that can learn to play a musical instrument, but also a subtle/spiritual, non-material body centered on the heart that can become a musical instrument: "We can use the body as an

instrument, . . . not only in terms of listening to the sounds and the songs, but use the body itself as a sounding body (*Klangkörper*)" (2009, 81–82). It is in this form that the late Oruç Güvenç and his companion Azize Andrea Güvenç framed the discourse that informed the Tümata-Berlin events in Berlin and connected sites (Yalova, Turkey). With whirling movements, a sounding body expands into a breathing-sounding-moving *sema* body.

The Breathing-Sounding-Moving Sema Body

Sema (in Turkish) is derived from *samā'* (in Arabic), meaning audition, hearing, or listening, and denoting that which is heard. Samāʿ in Sufi discourse refers to a spiritual concert with a ritual form of devotional practice in terms of movements, physical agitations generating intense emotions, existential states, and even revelations (During and Sellheim 2012). Practicing *sema* is a core practice of Tümata-Berlin. The body that emerges from *sema* is a breathing-sounding-moving body in whirling motion, accompanied by a vast repertoire of songs and collective chants in a community gathering of *semazens* (practitioners of *sema*). *Sema* here is a body prayer: a sacred movement with sound.[7]

In Tümata-Berlin's rendition, *sema* begins with the dervish greeting (crossing hands on the chest and a deep bowing) and a conventional invocation of Allah in Arabic: *Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim* (In the name of Allah, the most gracious the most merciful). Tümata-Berlin members whirled regularly in private gatherings. They also organized semi-public *sema* events two or three times a year. In the next section, I describe a *sema* event that took place in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin and follow its transnational ties to another *sema* in Yalova, Turkey.

Breathing Sema Bodies in Kreuzberg and Yalova

At the entrance gate, I ran into my friend and former flatmate Roxanne. We had met in Istanbul, sitting beside each other in the ambiance of the Blue Mosque. She had just returned from Yalova, a small town about three hours from Istanbul, where the annual Tümata *sema* took place. Roxanne was about to leave Istanbul for Berlin, and I was on my way to Yalova. Four months later, we met again in Kreuzberg, Berlin. Many of the interlocutors I came to know at various phases of my fieldwork gathered to whirl that night.

The *sema* event combined whirling motions of the bodies with the playing of many sound instruments, traditional Central Asian and Turkish songs, as well as the songs of praising Allah (*ilahi*), remembering Allah with dhikr (collective breathing of the ninety-nine names) and *sohbet* (spiritual conversation). The sixteen-hour-long *sema* continued inside the hall with the *semazen*s (the whirlers) while musicians and participants sat/meditated in a circle around the central whirling space. Every few hours, an expert illustrated basic techniques of whirling to facilitate the movement of newcomers:

> We bow with a dervish greeting to the invisible presence of Mevlana Rumi seated on an empty white sheepskin. Using the left foot as a fixed index on the floor, one begins to move the right foot as if taking one step at a time. Keeping the right palm in front of one's face as a mirror to fix one's gaze is recommended to prevent falling. Later the right hand should go up in the mode of receiving grace (*baraka*) while keeping the left hand down as if giving away what was received. One continues to breathe and move, listening to the sounds coming from the musicians. (fieldnote, 17–18 December 2014)

Movement and sound energize the body. They also make the body hungry. Outside the hall, we munched, swallowed, and gulped dried fruits, oranges, warm lentil soup, biscuits, and several sorts of tea. After eating and drinking, I chatted with the whirlers in front of the half-open door that led to the *sema* hall. Participants went in and out at will. Hafiz and Claire were already there. We nodded at each other and conversed briefly. The *ney* and its notes of longing began leaking through the gaps. It was time I paid more attention to its sounds.

I went into the *sema* hall. Inside there was little light. We were instructed not to talk or take pictures inside. I saw Raphael and Minar seated on the small stage tuning their instruments. Halima was sitting on the right side on a sheepskin mat. On the other side, Roxanne took turns playing the frame drum. I took my place at one side of the circle that formed around the space in the middle, where the *semazens* were moving, slow and fast, each at his/her speed. Hafiz and Claire were whirling effortlessly. One of Hafiz's students, a woman in her fifties, caught my attention with her distinctive style of whirling. Wearing a long black dress with long, loose pants, she entered the whirling space turning fast and keeping her eyes closed. She entered the floor with arms folded across her chest and gradually stretched them outwards, spinning her body at the same time.

I watched her with awe as an absorbing smile lit up her face. It was evident from the emotion expressed on her face and the ease of her moves that she had been whirling for a long time, like many Tümata-Berlin members (and committed Sufi whirlers) who keep returning to the *sema*. Newcomers tried out novice steps with palms in front of their eyes. They looked puzzled. It reminded me of my longing to whirl, my initial inability to do so, and the sweet torture of such desire.

Compared to the public Sufi performance I described in the Introduction, Tümata-Berlin's *sema* was a semi-private event in which the public/newcomers could join. Usually, events were attended by the members of Tümata-Berlin, other Sufi networks, and friends of the participants. In the course of fieldwork, I experienced *sema* in multiple configurations. The whirling body was not only a feature of the *sema* organized by Tümata-Berlin but also at the Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sufi-Center Berlin. The latter offered *Drehtanz* (whirling dance) workshops on Sunday afternoons. In addition, one or two male members would rise up and whirl at the height of the collective dhikr in the Sufi evenings open to the public. Similar whirling moves were also incorporated into the easy steps of the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat Dances of Universal Peace, derived from the Mevlevi *sema* postures. Hafiz, in particular, devoted time to whirling as part of the Sufi evenings he organized with Claire and his friend circle. Apart from these organized *sema* events, spontaneous *sema* took place during Sufi concerts without planning or pre-announcement (chapter 6).

The historical Sufi tradition frames the contexts of *sema*. The practice of *sema* renders Sufism tangible. Not all Sufi networks across the world practice or even permit *sema* (Green 2012). The practice of *samāʿ* appeared around the ninth century CE among the early Baghdad Sufi circles (During and Sellham 2012). One of the first texts about this practice appeared in the tenth century, and around the same time, a parallel discourse condemning the *samāʿ* was in circulation (Al-Hujwiri [1911] 1998). Since that period, the question of permissible sounds of music and ecstatic movements has divided the Islamic tradition. However, the widespread perception of the Islamic tradition being hostile to music or body movements resembling dance forms has been refuted by anthropologists and ethnomusicologists worldwide (Stokes 2002).

Islam as a "discursive tradition" is not only governed by prescriptive authorities (Asad [1986] 2009). "Explorative authority" defines the Islamic tradition as much as "prescribed forms of correctness" (Ahmed 2016, 286). The *samāʿ* was the sum of "personal and collective exercises of Sufi existential experience" (2016, 286), performed in Sufi spaces, the whirling of the dervishes (of the order of Rumi) being the most well-known example. Given the popular presence of the Sufi *samāʿ* in the tradition (despite the long-standing reality of debates around its acceptance and rejection), it is not surprising that in Berlin and connected sites, the whirling movements and their more elaborate ceremonial formations are considered quintessentially Sufi.[8]

Mevlana Rumi figured prominently in the contemporary *sema* events that Tümata-Berlin organized. Whirling bodies deployed an intersection of the tradition of the Mevlevi ceremony of *sema* with the technique of whirling to transform the body itself. In Tümata discourse and practice, the *sema* body resonated with sounds of Shamanism-inspired music from Central Asia and Sufism-inspired music from Turkey, generating whirling bodies in moments the two streams come together.[9]

Ninety-Nine Days and Nights: Transnational Lines of Sema Bodies

For Tümata-Berlin and other Sufi networks, the Turkish town of Yalova offered an opportunity to join the elaborate global (Sufi) *sema* every year. In the summer of 2014, I followed Tümata-Berlin to Turkey and participated in the twenty-four-hour *sema* for a week. This event continued for ninety-nine days and nights. I attended the days and nights between ninety-three and ninety-nine. There, the sound of the *sema* was an intermingling of songs in Turkish, Farsi, Arabic, and English with a sonorous, collective dhikr. Groups of musicians took turns to ensure that there was no interruption. The organizers ensured that at least two people were whirling in the central octagonal *sema* floor. *Sema* took place without pause.

Like Berlin, the *sema* in Yalova was attended by a large number of women but very few men. Most bodies whirled from the right to the left. This was supposedly the (original) movement as instructed by Mevlana Rumi. Almost everyone who entered the floor came and bowed deeply with hands on hearts, kissed the floor, and began to

turn. At the end of their whirling, all bowed to the ground and left. Although whirling was a challenge for newcomers, I did not see anyone fall. Workshops took place outside the main hall in the nearby shade, where advanced practitioners prepared the newcomers with extensive instructions.

The following winter, the *sema* in Yalova was reproduced in a decorated hall in Kreuzberg, staged to become little Yalova. "Klein Yalova!" said Roxanne, and I agreed. Although in comparison to Yalova, the *sema* in Kreuzberg was scheduled for less than twenty-four hours. The *sema* events in Yalova (near Istanbul) and the Kreuzberg district of Berlin had varying lengths, numbers of participants, and ambiance. Both events were connected not only to each other but to other places (such as Istanbul and Konya) where *sema* was taking place on the same date in 2014 (17/18 December, the death anniversary of Mevlana Rumi).

Unlike Yalova where the word *sema* explained itself, in Berlin, it had many names with "dance" attached to it: *Derwisch Tanz* (dervish dance), *Drehtanz/Wirbeltanz* (whirling dance).[10] In Yalova, hundreds of people gathered to whirl. Whirling in Berlin was attended by fewer people. At the public *sema* events I attended, I saw perhaps fifty to eighty people. There were differences in organization, number, and diversity of participants, but the techniques engaged the subtle/spiritual and material bodies in both places. Whether in Berlin or Yalova, during the *sema*, the heads of *semazens* were often lightly tilted toward the heart on the left side. They crossed hands on their chests to greet each other and the sheikh. In *sema,* one imagines the breathing heart to be the connector of the transcendent and the immanent realms, of the materiality and the subtlety/spirituality of existence.

Sema was about turning around one's heart and how the heart was polished in remembering Allah (dhikr):

> The goal of the *sema* is to center and channel energy. The dervish turns himself to the left around the center of his heart. Like the atoms around the atom-center, like the planets around the sun, a dervish turns around his heart . . . [Referring to the Light verse (Qur'an 24:35), Hafiz concluded] Through the remembrance of Allah, the divine light comes into being, and the heart is polished so that it gleams like a polished mirror. (Hafiz's text in a local magazine, published in September 2008)

Sufi studies scholars have discussed the heart in relation to other (subtle) body parts (Pagani 2017; Milani 2013; Rustom 2008; Kugle

2007).[11] In Sufi Berlin, the heart is mobilized with popular metaphors. For example, Sufism is known as the way of the heart (*Weg des Herzens*), and Sufi teachers are also known as the *physicians of the heart*, those who practice medicine of the heart (Meyer et al. 2011). In addition to the whirling in *sema*, the heart is engaged in the bodily prayers of sonorous and silent dhikr. Dhikr is centered around the chest area as the movements of the head and body activate the subtle body centers (*latifa*). In the dances/walks, attention is also directed toward the center of the chest, perceived as the seat of love and knowledge. Heart chakra (a subtle center in the middle of the chest in Yoga discourse) is evoked in the Sufi Yoga innovations practiced in Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sufism (Selim 2015a).[12]

In Yalova and Berlin, the sounding, moving, feeling bodies are inhabited and co-constituted by their breathing hearts. Breathing allows the body to move effectively with sounds: "In intensive Sufi rituals with Zikir [dhikr] and Sema, the bodily movements, the breath, and the [human] voice become one" (Güvenç and Güvenç 2009, 82). Breathing becomes the heightened focus of practice when the body is immersed in dhikr. Sounds and movements are part of the dhikr body. But, breathing enacts Sufi bodies differently than whirling. In *sema*, whirling movement is the focus, and breathing is an accessory. In dhikr, the sensual experiences of breathing and reciting take over, and breathing is calibrated to reciting the names and phrases of varying length and frequency, while movements are accompaniments.

The Breathing-Reciting Dhikr Body

> The main goal of the ways of the *ṭarīqa* [path/order] is to train, to practice *dhikr*.
>
> —Sheikh Nāẓim[13]

The word *dhikr* (in Arabic) refers to reminding oneself or "remembering."[14] Dhikr leads to remembrance, in the context of Islamic tradition, with the tireless repetition of a litany (Gardet 2012a; Chittick 2004, 48). The bodily technique of dhikr mobilizes a breathing body, either accompanied by a sounding "practice of the tongue" (Lawrence 2015, 21), or in silence, as a practice of concentration. In contrast with *fikr* or discursive reflection, dhikr in Sufi discourse is about remembering and repeating sacred words,

most often the ninety-nine names of Allah. Reformist and literalist enactments of Islam often contest the dhikr as a permissible prayer form, arguing that Sufi practices are un-Islamic (Ahmed 2016). Sufi Muslims and non-Muslim Sufis, however, continue to practice dhikr, aloud or silently, slowly or fast, collectively or as a solitary practice. Dhikr is probably the most frequent form of Sufi body prayer and renders Sufism recognizable (Ahmed 2016; Gardet 2012a; Green 2012).

Throughout fieldwork, I participated in different kinds of dhikr, alone and in the company of others, in silence and with loud vocalization. I regularly attended dhikr evenings on weekends at the Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sufi center. On one evening in spring 2013, quite early in fieldwork, I entered the threshold of the center for the first time. I was struck by the contrast of a quiet bland outdoors with an inside where splashes of color, a thickened smell, and a rich tapestry of sound circulated.

I could hear the low hum of voices and faint drumming as I entered the bigger hall, which accommodated about a hundred people on that crowded evening. People of all ages gathered. Children were running around making noise, and a few adolescents were playing with their gadgets. In an adjacent smaller hall, Timur Efendi, a longtime member of the network, instructed the audience about the connection between the breath, the body, the word "Hu," and their relation to the most compassionate Being:

> What He created, what He has given you is your body. Do not think that your body is the absence of Him. Your body thinks of Him all the time. All your organs think of Him and praise Him. In every breath you take . . . Listen to each breath. What do you say when you breathe? Whom do you call when you breathe? Don't you breathe with Hu? What is Hu? Hu is Him. He is the most compassionate. It is His name. Who is He? He describes it through His qualities. He is the totality. His qualities are collected together in the word "Hu." (Timur Efendi, 17 May 2013)

In 2013, at the beginning of my fieldwork, I went through my first embodied encounter with Hu during the Sufi meditation Timur Efendi was teaching at the center. Roxanne and I were sitting on the carpet and speaking to each other in low, hushed voices when Timur Efendi came in. Unlike the collective dhikr in the main hall with a larger crowd, in this smaller room at the center, there were

mostly women and a few young men. We sat on the carpet and the red sofa lining the wall and waited. Timur greeted us heartily, "Herzlich Willkommen!" He began the session by asking newcomers their names and the meanings of these names. He asked if there was any question from the audience and spoke for about half an hour, covering various topics. Later, he came down from the sofa and sat with us on the carpeted floor. Turning on the CD player that emitted the sounds of the *ney* (played and recorded by Tümata), he invited us to join a dhikr with Hu.

> After fifteen minutes of silence and immersion in the sounds of the ney, Timur began to recite Hu. At first, slowly and on a long breath, followed by the unison of multiple Hu in male and female voices with a resulting, deep, booming Hu of resonance. Gradually his Hu gained speed, and his breath was shorter. Instead of a long drawn Huuuuuu, it was a series of rapid repetitions of *Hu!Hu!Hu!Hu!Hu!* louder and faster. Until Timur took the lead to utter the Hu softly, and gradually, the Hu was almost inaudible. Timur stopped for a second to begin chanting the first part of the *shahadah* repeatedly: *La ilaha illallah. Hu*! [There is no God but Allah. Hu.]. Timur recited several Qur'anic verses and Arabic phrases praising Prophet Muhammad, followed by the invocation of his *silsila* and the opening verse of the Qur'an (*Al-Fatiha*). He concluded by thanking us and said, *Danke schön!* (fieldnote, 17 May 2013)

On Fridays and Saturdays, after communal eating on the floor of the bigger hall, Sheikh Eşref Efendi, leader of the center, regularly guided a collective dhikr with the invocation: *Destur Ya Sheikh Nazim Kubresi* (With permission from Sheikh Nazim Kubresi). He uttered sacred phrases, and his audience followed. On most occasions, he repeated *Estağfirullah* (I seek forgiveness from Allah)—*ala hümme salli Allah* (O Allah, send blessings!)—*Ya Allah*, *Ya Rahim* (O Merciful One)—*Ya Karim* (O Generous One)—*Ya Selam* (O Peace)—*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim* (In the name of Allah the beneficent the merciful)—*Allah Allah* (in paired rhythms) and *Allah hu/Allah hu/Allah hu Haqq!* (*al-Haqq* in Arabic refers to the ultimate reality or the Real or the Truth).[15]

These shared, collective utterances created a charged atmosphere, with dimmed light, recitation, and the repetitive breathing sounds. The collective dhikr generated an ecstatic peak experience filling the otherwise secular urban space, and imbuing it with sacred

Figure 3.1. Dhikr and *sema* at the Sufi-Center Berlin, 3 August 2013. © Nasima Selim.

sounds.[16] Men and women stayed close to each other but in separate rows. The dhikr became a more melodious form of breathing with more vigorous movements in the late evening when a collective sound *Amentu billahi . . . hu hu hu hu!* (I believe in the existence of Allah . . . hu hu hu) filled the room. In the twilight shadow of darkness, we breathed a collective breath, sweating, shouting, and moving together (figure 3.1).

> The body in dhikr required sounding and moving began to match the movements of the neighboring bodies. Led by the sheikh and without speaking to each other, we began our mimetic movements, breathing fast and slow. Later in the evening, when the drums were loud, and the voices were rapidly breathing and chanting, we were still holding the hands of strangers next to us. We began to move our upper bodies to the left and front, to the back, to the right and the front, to the back, and to the left again. These moves happened without direct verbal instructions on how to move, in many variations. Every few minutes, the voices and the drums slowed down only to accelerate the speed again. Our bodies responded to

the gradual increase and decrease of the rhythms played by the musicians and the breathing of the sheikh. (fieldnote, 17 May 2013)

Doing dhikr with Hu and the names of Allah (along with other sounds) took place not only in this Sufi center but in the other Sufi networks as well. Hafiz, a Haqqani-Naqshbandi himself,[17] led a circle of friends in what he called *Sufi Trance Tanz* (Trance Dance) to practice a sound meditation uttering *ā* (aaa), *ī* (eee), *ū* (uuu) (also mentioned by Chishti 1991), and added "o" with movements of the hand and fingers, and closed eyes. *Hu* and *Hayy* were the two most frequently evoked sounds breathed by Hafiz's circle of friends. These sound bites of breath circulated among Sufi Muslims, Inayati networks, Tümata-Berlin, and nomadic Sufis, constituting a Sufi soundscape of shared, embodied utterances.

The dhikr bodies that emerge from these sounds are made by breathing together with movements that correspond to the sounds of the sacred utterances. Both *sema* and dhikr mobilized material and subtle/spiritual bodies. There are differences internal to both practices across the Sufi networks, but the family resemblances between them render the *sema* and dhikr bodies recognizable in Sufi-Berlin. Sufi practices, such as *sema* and dhikr, make the ephemeral tangible. They generate palpable energy. This happens not only through the whirling-sounding and breathing-reciting but also through other kinds of movements and practices of innovation.

While dhikr and *sema* are Sufi practices that traveled from Islamicate societies to Muslim-minority Western Europe, the incorporation of dhikr and *sema* in the Dances of Universal Peace and (*Tasawwuri*) Walks of the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat network is a North American innovation added to repertoires of Inayati practice that found their way to Germany.

The Dancing-Walking Energy Body

The incorporation of whirling-sounding (in *sema*) and breathing-reciting (in dhikr), and in the circular dances and special walks (embodying the masters), generate energizing bodies. Whirling, breathing, and reciting in dhikr are common practices connecting the Sufi networks, whether they self-identified as Muslims or not. The mobilization of syncretistic energy bodies, however, was most prominent among the Inayati networks. An experiential entry into the collective body of Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat will make this point clear:

> Rabeya, Ganga, and Khadija greet me with smiles and long hugs. I meet Arham, a physician-Sufi from California. After a few minutes, we stand in circles, holding hands. [I am a bit embarrassed that my palms get moist quickly] . . . Rabeya recites the first lines in a slightly hoarse voice. We follow her voice with several recitations in Arabic: *Subhan Allah! Alhamdulillah! Allahu Akbar!* [Glory to God (4×), All praise to God (4×), God is great (3×)]. We begin to dance in circles and repeat the three phrases. Simple steps. From left to right. A few turns. Men and women stand together and take turns adding a different pitch to our collective voice. There are only three men. The rest of us are women. In the end, we all say *Amin!* to end the dance (*Amin* is the Islamic rendition that sounds and functions similarly to the Christian *Amen*) . . . The second dance is based on an Aramaic prayer.[18] Khadija leads the dance. We go through another round of new steps to learn and repeat unfamiliar phrases. (fieldnote, 12 May 2013)

The Dances of Universal Peace are an innovation central to the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat practice. These dances are blooming repertoires of techniques: movements, sound-making, and breathing. Not all Inayati networks are equally invested in these dances. But all Inayatis in Berlin begin ritual action by invoking the words of Hazrat Inayat Khan in German and English:

Toward the one	*Dem einen entgegen*
The perfection of love, harmony, and beauty	*Der Vollkommenheit von der Liebe, der Harmonie und der Schönheit*
The only being united with all the illuminated souls	*Den Einzigseienden, vereint mit all den erleuchteten Seelen,*
Who form the embodiment of the master, the spirit of guidance.	*die den Meister, den Geist der Führung, verkörpern.*

In the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat dances, the invocation led to movements, sounding, breathing, and reciting. The dances always ended with everyone exchanging hugs. Compared to the dhikr of the Haqqani-Naqshbandi and their late-night soundscapes of gradually increasing rapid/loud music and the vigorous movements of dhikr bodies, the Inayati practice mobilized a distinctively toned-down soundscape and a more syncretistic movement-space. Murshida Ganga explained how the bodily act of breathing was connected

to the cosmic breath in dhikr: "Breath is the cosmic breath, and it connects us all. It is your breath and my breath . . . In Aramaic, *ru* means breath, air, spirit, and soul. It is all one word in Aramaic . . . In Hebrew, it is *ruah*. In Arabic *ruh*. *Alaha ruhao* in Aramaic means: *God is breath*. So you have it. God is breath" (interview with the author, 2 May 2014).

"Eat, dance, and pray together!" is a phrase I often heard among my Sufi-Ruhaniat interlocutors. It is attributed to Murshid Sam (Samuel Lewis), a white US-American murid of Hazrat Inayat Khan. Murshid Sam came up with the circular dance form in the 1960s (R. Jackson 2014).[19] Holding hands, singing, and moving in circles for hours constitute the main ritual. The words used in these movements include the ninety-nine names attributed to Allah, but are also drawn from other religious traditions (Judeo-Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist). Breathing techniques and practices from body-oriented psychotherapy and American sacred dance forms by Ruth St. Dennis are also used (Douglas-Klotz 2003, 166).

A few months after my first encounter with the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat dances, I joined the annual European Sufi Summer School, where the subtle breathing heart was invoked often, and the Inayati winged-heart symbol was everywhere:

> Today's talk is titled "Polish Your Heart," the dance leader says. "Do not overdo it! Attend to your needs. Otherwise, after three days, you will collapse!" He also says, "At the end of this week, the heart won't be perfect, but we may get a hint." A woman asks, "How do we work with the heart?" The dance leader asks us to stand up and move in circles. After the dance, there is silence, and we are told to feel what just happened. The dance leader speaks again: "The body stores it. All the information we need is saved in the body. We need a key to open the body. Increase the heart's capacity. It is the heart with the wings [referring to the Inayati winged heart symbol]. The heart opens and goes home. It closes. It awakens in you the longing for the heart to stay open. Make the heart larger. Increase its capacity with prayer, *ishq* (love), dhikr, and spiritual work. All dances, meditation, chant . . . Then the smaller mysteries will be open. Then the bigger mysteries will be open. The key is *Ya Fattah* [Arabic. The opener]! (fieldnote, 1 July 2013)

The energy body is a collection of many breathing, moving bodies. An advanced practitioner and therapist in the Inayati network formulated the notion of a "collective body" that comes out of a

coming together with circular movements (Hermann, interview with the author, 17 September 2014). Murshida Ganga articulated her understanding of (Inayati) Sufism as getting connected to the body and to others:

> We say, our invocation is *Toward the One!* What is the One? The One is in my own body . . . I am connected with my feet, with my bones. That is the whole process. Many people are not connected. I wasn't! *Naja!* Thinkers. Big thinkers! [At this point, I interjected, laughing and saying: "in the head!"] But not in the heart, not in the belly, and not in the feet. Not connected to the earth . . . So the first thing is my own body. This is number one. Number two is my connection, now to you, to my surroundings, to nature . . . And then the other is to my friends, and everywhere I have connections, too. [With] the ones in the body and the ones not in the body. (interview with the author, 2 May 2014)

The steps of the Dances of Universal Peace are easy to learn. Holding hands, however, can be awkward. Looking into the eyes of strangers is perhaps the most difficult thing to do. During the dances, there is a silent exchange of body gestures. The hugs can be cold or warm, depending on the familiarity one establishes with the stranger moving next to oneself. At some point during the dance, however, I sensed no individual body anymore but a collective body in motion. The moving bodies, the wet and dry palms, and the swaying breaths heated the garden hall, in the midst of cold Berlin. These dances engender a collective sensuous body, with known and unknown words, collating breaths, fostering intimacy, and attempting to move beyond the confines of time, place, and differences internal to practice. The *sema* and the dhikr practices generate a collective body too, but a person can practice them alone at home. In contrast, the Sufi-Ruhaniat dances require collectivity. However, just as the collective practice of *sema* and dhikr (described in the sections above) are oriented to create a sense of belonging to an intentional community, these Inayati dances also generate the formation of a collective body, where one is required to hold the hand of another, to move and make sounds with others.

In addition to the Dances of Universal Peace, the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat practices another set of movements embodying the moods and body postures of past teachers in the lineage, known as the *Tasawwuri* walks or "the embodiment of the Master." Following Hazrat

Inayat Khan and Murshid Sam, Murshida Ganga summarized these walks as "embodied spirituality":

> It is not in the clouds. It is no way out. It is here. What we do . . . embodied! Here and now . . . The divine light and everything are in the body. If you work with the elements, we are these elements. The air is my breath. The earth is my bones. Water is in my flesh, and the fire is my blood . . . It has to do with embodied spirituality! (interview, 2 May 2014)

In an annual healing order meeting in May 2014 at Haus Schnede in Salzhausen, we gathered in a big hall on one spring afternoon. We were instructed to embody a particular Sufi teacher, breathe, and walk the way they might have done:

> Murshid S. (Murshida Rabeya's teacher) was walking the walk of Pir-O-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan holding a *Rudra Veena* (a stringed instrument used in Hindustani classical music) as if he was carrying a child. He was walking with his eyes filled with misty tenderness, and with short, light steps, he slowly came toward us, looking into our eyes, transmitting/performing a cultivated kindness. We were standing in a circle. He asked us to follow him and embody Hazrat Inayat Khan. We made serious efforts to concentrate on performing what we were not but could become. (fieldnote, May 2014)

Taṣawwur/i practice emerged in the late medieval period of Sufism (Malamud 1996). It was meant to train Sufi students into a state of absorption/annihilation (*fanā*) in the inspirational, monumental figures of the Sufi teachers with visualization, contemplation, and the body prayer of mimetic walking. In its contemporary enactment, *taṣawwur* is a term/practice mobilized by Murshid Sam and his students to refer to an attunement to the teacher's corporeal presence.[20] The *Tasawwuri* walks train the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat *murids* to embody the teachers of the *silsila* (lineage). This does not happen only in the act of imagining but in making a corporeal presence sensible. Each *murid* must learn to walk the walks and enact the subtle/material bodies of the past teachers. The attempt to embody the energetic presence of a particular teacher generates laughter, amusement, difficulty, and frustration. Success is ensured by repeated practice and can be recognized by peers and authorized teachers over time.

Techniques of transformation, however, involve much more than the participation of the body. Bodies slowly acquire the ability to par-

ticipate differently. Over time and with repeated practice, the novice gradually learns to inhabit a different kind of body. The question is: what kinds of bodies and body parts are being transformed by the techniques of whirling, breathing, and energizing? What kinds of substances are subtle (and material) bodies made of?

Substances of Transformation

In Sufi-Berlin, the metaphysical heart (*qalb*) and the self-centered self (*nafs*) were two prominent subtle/material body substances of transformation.[21] The concept of the *nafs* was reworked as ego, and the word *qalb* was invoked as *das Herz*/the heart.[22] "*Nafs!* Our small self [and the higher self]. How do they come together and make peace? The higher self is the boss. Not these other selves. My resistant self, my doubting self. They are all small selves" (Murshida Ganga, interview with the author, 2 May 2014).

There are many models of the *nafs* and the *maqams/maqamat* (stations/stages of the nafs) (Hermansen 1988). According to the Qur'anic hermeneutics, *nafs* can be interpreted as the human self or soul (Mittermaier 2011, 261). The transformation of the nafs involves multiple stages.[23] Hafiz echoed Shaykh Hakim Moinuddin Chishti (1991) in emphasizing the necessity of evolution/transformation of the *nafs* (the lower/self-centered self).

While *nafs* was a frequent trope, it was often interchangeable with the word "ego," the same word in English and German. Haqqani-Naqshbandis considered "ego-training" central (Abu Bakr, interview with the author, 13 July 2014): a Sufi student must train his/her *nafs* in everyday life. In the Inayati discourse, the word *nufs*/*nafs* was frequently cited by Hazrat Inayat Khan and Murshid Sam Lewis. In Tümata-Berlin, the *makam* (modal system) was evoked more in relation to the kind of sound that could affect a particular body part. Even if they sound the same, the Turkish word for the musical *makam* (*Tonart*, modal system) is not to be conflated with *maqam* (in Arabic), which means a station or subtle realm through which the *nafs* is progressively transformed and refined. My primary teacher, Khidr, repeatedly reminded his students that the principal tasks on the Sufi path were about: (a) paying attention to the breath; (b) opening the (breathing) heart; (c) transforming the self-centered ego (*nafs*) to be of service to others.

A sounding *makam* body looks like the mapping of several musical *makams* corresponding to various body parts (Güvenç and Güvenç 2009, 63).[24] For example, *makam Uşşak* is supposed to be working on the heart area on the left breast (2009, 63). Contemporary music-and-movement therapists (Tümata-Berlin) play particular tones to generate specific *makam* and heal sufferings linked to parts of the body.

Another component of the Sufi subtle body is the subtle center (*latifa*). Activating the subtle centers in the body is one way the lower soul (*nafs*) can be transformed. In the music therapy discourses, there is talk about "energy flow" but no mention of the *lataif* (plural of *latifa*) that the classical Sufi discourses mention.[25] There were diverse opinions regarding these subtle centers. Raphael, for example, informed me that "*Lataif* is a marker of the specific steps in personality development for some Sufi. In the tradition of humoral medicine, there are different body-souls (*Körperseelen*) or faculties (*Fakultäten*), but these are, first of all, psycho-physiological attributions" (email, 3 September 2014). The *makams* are closely linked to the *lataif* and correspond to these subtle centers clustered around the chest, emphasizing the centrality of the subtle heart (*latifa qalbiyya*).

In Tümata discourse, sounds are played to remove blockages of energy in the body that can be removed by playing music that resonates with the *makam* corresponding to the area where the energy is blocked. The sounds played in *sema* (and AOM [Ancient Oriental Music-and-Movement Therapy; *Altorientalische Musik- und Bewegungstherapie*]) evoke myriad sensations and a plethora of associations, if not by personal history, then by an acquaintance through travel experiences in regions belonging to the geographically vague idea of an Orient.

In terms of the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat walks and the dances, how does the classical discussion of the subtle centers (*lataif*) figure in practice? Moving the head from left to right, up and down, moving the body forward and backward in the numerous variations of the dances requires mimicking the more vigorous dhikr movements informed by the classical *lataif* discourses. The immediate verbal discourses do not always evoke these classical perceptions of the body or its subtle centers but evoke a modified version of the yogic chakra system.

The imagination of the subtle and material bodies circulates with an excess of movements and sounds in breathing, whirling, ener-

gizing them. The breathing heart makes a frequent appearance as the central metaphor and metonym. The symbol of the Dances of Universal Peace, for example, is a string of hearts in a circle. A circle of breathing, sounding, moving bodies may engage in conversations and exchange money before and after the practice. During the movements of bodies, breath, and energies, the individual bodies cultivate the capacity to transform the metaphysical breathing heart.

Qalb: *The Metaphysical (Breathing) Heart*

"The heart is the seat of the higher intelligence and the intuition," Khidr, my primary Sufi teacher, explained the Arabic word and concept of *qalb,* almost a year after I had the initial conversation with Hafiz mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Since the beginning of my fieldwork in the spring of 2013, I have had numerous discussions with my Sufi interlocutors about the "heart." I felt somewhat at a loss in my navigation of the classical discourses of the Heart, which proved to be many as well.[26] Khidr invoked the (breathing) heart to instruct me about worrying less about being lost, and instead focusing on *doing* the heart-centered practice. As an illustrative example, he elaborated on one of the eleven (*Naqshbandi*)[27] rules for everyday life, *wuquf-i qalbi* (the heart pause):

> In order to understand the full implications of the heart pause, it is necessary to look at the Arabic word and concept *qalb.* In this light, the heart is the seat of higher intelligence and intuition. It is a most vital *latifa,* subtle energy center . . . The heart occupies a special place because it is also the seat of love and the Divine. The *heart pause* has nothing to do with stopping the physical heart. It exclusively relates to detaching and putting a halt to sentimental conditioning and automatic emotional responses. It is indicated to concentrate on the inner being and the Divine. In other words, it stands for detachment. . . . It boils down to detaching the physical self and the spiritual inner being, allowing oneself to stay focused on love and knowledge as a duty. Visualize your personal *dhikr* inscribed as white light on a symbolic image of your subtle heart center, which has the color golden yellow. The *lataif* centers—especially the *latifa qalbiyya*, the subtle heart center—are organs of perception, nonmaterial in nature, and form an important aspect of each person. The *lataif* centers have to be awakened and activated via spiritual exercises in combination with color visualizations and dhikr. You can practice a silent dhikr breathing in

wuquf-i and breathing out *qalbi* to harmonize and energize yourself with this rule (recorded on 10 May 2014).

"The operation of the heart is done through the word of the sheikh," Ayşe was convinced of the authoritative power of the sheikh and the location of the exertion of that power, in the metaphysical heart (interview with the author, 21 July 2014). This heart is usually termed *qalb* in Sufi/Islamic discourse, although many terms relating to the heart on various levels exist. The *qalb* is more than the muscular pump that circulates blood in the body. The *qalb*, the metaphysical heart in Qur'anic hermeneutics, is a bearer of tradition and a site of transformation. It stores divine qualities (inscribed in the ninety-nine names of Allah) and contains the spirit-soul (*nafas*)—the "life-activating force," which, according to Chishti (1991), "enters with each breath, the breath that activates all physiological functions" (1991, 14). Michaela Özelsel, a German psychologist and Sufi Muslim, mobilized Carl Jung's analytical psychology to articulate *qalb* as a more comprehensive concept of the unconscious (1995, 136).

In Sufi-Berlin, the subtle metaphysical breathing heart accompanied the beating material heart, pulsating in the images, objects, stories, and conversations. Claire and Hafiz invoked the phrase "polishing the heart" as an effect of Sufi practice. In a longer conversation, Claire shared her narrative of experiencing the subtle heart:

> I went to his [Hafiz's] classes. Not only for the dancing. It had something to do with the heart, the opening of your heart. My heart felt so big! Like the whole underground station. Something was opened. It was physical [but] more energetically. Something small became enormous, the radius of my heart . . . They [Sufi practices] polish the heart, and they open the heart! (interview with the author, 24 April 2013)

In addition to the circulation of the heart discourse, the imagination practices and experiential anatomies invoked subtle/spiritual bodies and transposed them onto their material formations. Hafiz's discussion at the beginning of this chapter on the metaphysical heart was shaped by the circulation of various discourses of Sufi healing centered on the heart. When I probed further into his perceptions of the body, Hafiz directed my attention to Chishti (1991) for a deeper understanding of the *nafs*, the *qalb*, as the substances and loci of transformation of the material/subtle body.

The human body in ritual action can be conceived not only in terms of a theory of embodiment, linking the "intimate spaces of the body" (mobilized in Sufi practice) to the use of body-as-metaphor (Kugle 2007) but also to a theory of "enactment" (Mol 2002, 32), illustrating the kinds of bodies that emerge from immediate practice.[28] Sufi discourses and body practices inform the experience generated by these practices. The gradual training of techniques for the newcomers unused to whirling in *sema*, breathing in dhikr, or mobilizing energetic presence in the *Tasawwuri* walks, enhance the possibility of doing and experiencing the subtle body and body parts, in terms of the *nafs* (ego) and the breathing *qalb* (heart). The ease of the advanced, longtime members and practitioners in associating these subtle bodies with material bodies, illustrates the successful transitioning of secular bodies into postsecular Sufi bodies. Sufi techniques turn novice bodies, with innumerable repetitions of techniques, into expert, wayfaring bodies. The bodies of strangers who arrive at Sufi events, and subsequent practices, eventually collate into transforming the collective, sensuous, breathing body.

The invocation of the material-subtle heart is a remarkably persistent feature of Sufism in its otherwise enormously diverse historical and ethnographic representations. Sufi literature refers to the heart with an intense focus on the "matters pertaining to the heart" (*al-umûr al-qalbiyyah*) (Nasr 2004, 34). "Particular body practices imply (no less particular) metaphysical and cultural commitments, and may indeed finally induce them" (Coakley 1997, 8). The enactment of bodies and bodily experiences in practice shows how techniques, could be effective in transforming the egotistic self, even if they are not directed to a specific mode of suffering and involve older or more recent innovations. Sufi body prayers become techniques of transformation by shifting the imaginaries of subtle/material bodies in practice, by providing the corporeal conditions of possibility to inhabit such a hybrid, emergent body.

Lessons from the Breathing (Sufi) Bodies

Breathing, sounding, whirling, reciting, energizing Sufi bodies enact the ontologies of Sufism in postsecular practice. Sufi practices mobilize sounds and movements (and stillness) of the body. Words are recited with attention to the breath in dhikr. A circle of energy bodies

emerges from the walks and dances. Historical techniques and available discourses are configured with innovations in Sufi practice.[29] The focus of the breather-wayfarers on the subtle-material heart and their cultivation of a "sensibility of the heart" is rooted in the Islamic cosmology (even when they discursively separate Sufism from Islam) as they navigate the "modern topographies of the self" (Vicini 2017, 120) in becoming Sufis in Berlin (chapter 2 and 4).

Thinking with the body in Sufi practices offers multiple insights. Sufi bodies, together and separately, differ from the image of the human body in anatomical atlases. The subtle body of Sufism may not fit together even with the subtle bodies derived from other traditions (Milani 2013). Sufi discourse talks about the human body in ways that cannot be fully translated into academic discourse. I recognize and stay with this tension.[30] The use of the word "body" does not suggest that the image of the body is a singular formation. Juxtaposing the different bodies, bringing different discourses and practices together, may not resolve the dilemma of untranslatability and equivocation of Sufi concepts. These moves only point to the problems of naming and describing Sufi bodies in the language of an academic tradition.

"The [mystical] body is involved in an act of becoming a receptacle for the Sacred Other" (Saniotis 2012, 79). Sufi bodies are "projects where they creatively engage in achieving mastery of the self" (2012, 79). The Sufi imaginaries of the somatic topography employing Sufi concepts (*nafs*, *maqam*, *lataif*, *qalb*) generate the potential to move the body beyond the Cartesian mind-body duality.[31] Such possibilities of inhabiting the body destabilize habituated notions of thinking about the body.

The contemporary enactments of the metaphysical breathing heart are often practice-specific to a Sufi network. These practices also change forms and significance in the course of crossing national borders and moving somewhere else, as the practices of transnational Sufi networks in other European contexts illustrate (Diaz 2011). Juxtaposing Sufi healing technologies with heart discourses contributes to the repertoire of more-than-biomedical healing knowledge and corporeal epistemologies. Epistemological assumptions govern our ethnographic experience of "time, space, space-time, time-space" among other elements in fieldwork (Crapanzano 1999, 76). Ethnographers must take into account radical

alterity to imagine a range of bodily experiences, for instance, body-space, space-body, body-as-metaphor, and metaphor-as-body. In the Sufi-Islamic context, taking the Qur'anic hermeneutics of the body seriously can assist us further in making sense of the classical/contemporary metaphor of the subtle-material Heart.

There is a difference between a body that can whirl or not, a body that can breathe in a certain way and one that cannot, a body that can try to embody the attributes of Allah versus one that avoids even trying, a body that can energize itself to the extent that it can transmit its own energy to other bodies as against a body that does not imagine (and incorporate) such an energy resource. If we are to take such possibilities seriously, then the horizons of thinking and becoming a body expand. This also depends on whether one allows oneself to think and mobilize that kind of body. The human bodies I describe here did not take part in all the Sufi techniques available in the city. Partly because they were not interested in all kinds of practice, and partly because of their entry points and belonging to the respective *silsila*/lineage and the bodily repertoires that came with the kind of Sufism they practiced. If an anthropologist has the curiosity and the opportunity to come across diverse body practices and decides to participate, there is a possibility not only of witnessing transformations but of becoming a different body compared to the one she had inhabited before. Such opportunities are limited because access depends on respective Sufi networks and the predispositions of the fieldworker.

Sufi body practices do not operate without political implications (see chapter 6). For example, the popular Sufi practice of *sema* attributed to Mevlana Rumi has partially to do with Rumi's contemporary fame as a global icon. Such fame is not only an illustration of cultural appropriation but also the purification of Sufi practice from Islam. Rumi's utterances in medieval Farsi took place in the context of a Muslim-majority society. He drew from Qur'anic hermeneutics with innumerable references to the prophetic tradition. The aesthetic/affective appreciation of his verses today is not restricted to these hermeneutics and traditions. The aesthetic/affective power of Sufi practices lies rather in the ways and extents to which they are made to speak to current existential concerns. Whitewashing Rumi and other eminent historical Sufi figures as only Sufis, denying their Muslimness, their non-white, non-Western Islamic contexts,

are inherently political moves in the context of anti-Muslim racism in Germany.[32]

This chapter focused on how the wayfaring bodies shift from their everyday techniques of sitting, standing, walking, and moving, to the Sufi techniques of a sounding body: whirling, breathing, reciting, energized walking, and dancing, together and alone. These techniques transform the subtle/material bodies depending on both corporeal capabilities and social circumstances, and the technical, symbolic repertoires made available by the different traditions of Sufism. The orientational and ontological metaphor of the Sufi heart in Berlin enacts a human body capable of containing the Divine. The sacred anatomy of the subtle-material body and the metaphysical heart affords the possibility of de-territorialized (Sufi) healing knowledge. The next chapter will show how such knowledge is not reduced to the logic of curing diseases through the transformation of subtle and material anatomies but aimed toward a quest for healing secular and religious suffering.

Notes

1. The translated quote is taken from the contemporary website Masnavi.net (Rumi 2017).
2. The body is never solely a material entity in Sufi discourse (Bashir 2011, 20). The heart and its significance are well-documented in Islamic literature, with over one hundred thirty references to the heart (*qalb*) are found in the Qur'an (2:7; 28:10; 57:16) and numerous prophetic traditions (*ahâdîth*) (Nasr 2004, 2015).
3. Paul Heelas and Rachael Kohn (1986) coined the term "techniques of transformation" to discuss how Buddhist practice informs psychotherapy. Elisabeth Hsu engaged the term to discuss the sensorial experience of therapeutic practices in a postgraduate course she taught at the Freie Universität Berlin in the summer of 2016, titled *Techniques of Transformation: Medical Effectiveness in the Light of Sensorial Experiences in Therapeutics*, based on an earlier lecture series held at the University of Oxford in 2002 (email, 14 February 2017).
4. For example, the concept *body ecologic* in the context of the transmission of Chinese medicine refers to "a framework for an analysis that includes the concerns of people in their interaction with the natural environment . . . [building] on the awareness that these concepts have a history and have evolved by complex historical processes" (Hsu 1999, 80). See seminal works on the anthropology of the body and embodiment by M. Jackson (1983), Scheper-Hughes and Lock (1987), McGuire (1990), Csordas (1990), Lock

(1993), Coakley (1997), and a recent anthology by Mascia-Lees (2011). For bodily encounters in religious practice, see Fedele and Blanes (2011). For learning through the body, see Stoller (1997, 2008) and Stoller and Olkes (1987).

5. Innovation (*bid'a*) is often regarded as un-Islamic by many proponents of reformist Islam. The historical and human phenomenon of Islam could not take place without innovations, intersections, and intermingling with other traditions (Ahmed 2016). Thierry Zarcone and Angela Hobart (2013) discussed how Shamanism and Islam came together in Sufism, healing rituals, and spirits in Central Asia. Michaela Özelsel (1995) combined Western psychotherapeutic models of healing with the Shamanic and Sufi traditions of healing. See Robert Jütte (1996, 1999) for a history of nonconventional medicine and religious/spiritual healing in the German context.
6. In contrast, the *secular body* is inhabited by a "secular person . . . whose affective-gestural repertoires express a negative relation to forms of embodiment historically associated with (but not limited to) theistic religion" (Hirschkind 2011, 638).
7. The Qur'an makes no mention of the term *samā'*. The term existed in old Arabic, referring to songs or music performances (During and Sellheim 2012). Sufi *samā'* practices belong to the repertoire of techniques practiced in the Islamicate societies of the Middle East, Central, Middle, and South Asia, especially in Iranian, Turkish, and South Asian Sufi Islam (Kermani [1999] 2000; During and Sellheim 2012; Ahmed 2016). The Mevlevi *sema* of dervish gatherings transformed into a cultural performance for the public and tourists after the Mevlevi lodges were officially banned in 1925 by the Turkish government (Şenay 2017; Şahin 2016). The Mevlevi *sema* was documented as a dervish practice by Christian travelers from Western Europe as early as the fifteenth century, with increasing frequency by seventeenth-century travelers to the Ottoman Empire, and later, by Orientalist scholars (Sedgwick 2017). In the 1920s, European dancers began to perform versions of the *whirling dervish dance*, *whirl dance*, and *Mevlevi dervish dance*. In Berlin, the expressionist dance pioneer Mary Wigman performed Mevlevi-inspired whirling in 1923 (Barber 1985).
8. Ahmed emphasized the importance of labeling the Sufi practice of *samā'* as Islamic (2016, 288).
9. See Zarcone (2013a, 169) for a detailed discussion of "Islamized Shamanism," the intersection of Shamanism and Sufi Islam in Turkey and Central Asia. Sufi dhikr and whirling movements were influenced by local Shamanic practices, as much as the "mutual assimilation" of Sufi Islamic ideas began to infuse the local practices.
10. The term dance seems to be employed more frequently in the German context. In the Turkish context, the term *sema* is well-established, and a term such as *derviş dansi* only rarely appears. I thank Robert Logan Sparks for drawing my attention to this point (email, 7 February 2018).
11. One of the earliest depictions by Amr al-Makki (d. 909) showed how there are many hearts within one: the *qalb* is in *ruh*, and *ruh* in *sirr,* and are

successively dissolved as one gets closer to the Real (Massignon 1982, 3, 17). A nineteenth-century Sufi lithograph illustrated the seven concentric "subtle layers of the heart": the material heart (knot of flesh, *madgha*); the liminal/imaginal *barzakhi* heart (beating heart, *qalb*); the moral heart (*fuad*), and the most subtle layers (spirit or *ruh*, secret or *sirr*, light or *nur*, and "I am"- *ana*). The lithograph was found in a North Indian Sufi manual, *ḍiyā' al-Qulūb* (The brilliance of hearts) by ṭājji Imdādullah (1817–1899) (Kugle 2007, 250). This is a continuation of one of the earliest Sufi imaginings of *latifas* being encapsulated in one another (Milani 2013, 170). See Samuela Pagani (2017) for details on the heart discourse in Sufism.

12. The subtle body centers in Sufi discourse do not entirely correspond to the subtle body centers (chakras) in yoga discourse (Dale 2009). The Sufi schema of the subtle heart center may have been influenced by Taoist, Buddhist, and Hindu traditions, but exact historical linkages are not confirmed (Milani 2013; Ernst 2005). The *latifa qalbiyya* (subtle center of the heart) was prominent in the teachings of Naqshbandi Sheikh 'Ala Uddawla Simnani (d. 1336) (Lizzio 2007; Schleßmann 2003, 46).
13. Nāẓim (2004, 33).
14. "Remember (*udhkur*) your Lord when you do forget" (Qur'an 18: 24). The word "dhikr" exists in many languages of the Islamicate societies. In Turkish and Bengali, it is often pronounced as *zikir*. In English and German, the popular transliteration and pronouncement of the word is *zikr* or *zikar*.
15. The Real is William Chittick's (2004) translation of the term *al-Haqq* as used by Ibn Arabi. Chittick's description of the Real focuses on the frequent use of the Qur'anic verse (41:53): "We shall show them Our signs upon the horizons and in themselves, till it becomes clear to them that He is the Real" (Chittick 1989, xv). In Seyyed Hossein Nasr's translation, *al-Haqq* refers to "the truth" (2015, 1170).
16. The vigorous performances of Haqqani-Naqshbandi dhikr sacralize secular space in the United Kingdom (Werbner 1996). My fieldwork confirms the presence of a similar phenomenon among the Haqqani-Naqshbandis in Berlin.
17. Hafiz, like Sheikh Eşref Efendi and Timur Efendi, considered the late Sheikh Nazim his teacher. He occasionally attended the events at the Sufi-Center Berlin but led his small network with Claire. Hafiz repeatedly emphasized the role of the prayerful body in linking the dhikr to the metaphysical breathing heart.
18. Aramaic is an old Semitic language, arguably the language that Jesus Christ spoke (Douglas-Klotz [1990] 2007). Aramaic prayers are popular in the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat network.
19. See Roy Jackson (2014) for a discussion about Inayati practice in the United Kingdom.
20. *Tasawwuri* practice, the embodiment of the masters, was prominent among the Haqqani-Naqshbandi and the Inayati networks. In the medieval Sufi discourse, *tasawwuri* played a vital role in the Sufi novice's aspiration of being attuned with and absorbed in the teacher, as a necessary intermediary step on

the quest for absorption and subsistence in Allah (Malamud 1996, 93; Chodkiewicz 1990). According to the unpublished German Murid manual that I consulted during my fieldwork, Murshid Wali Ali Meyer's definition of *tasawwuri* was translated into German as *Einstimmung* (in the right mood of . . .): "It allows oneself to get into the right mood of the great beings, something we can learn through the process of fana (annihilation of the self)."

21. "The subtle body has a strange ontological status" (Syman 2010, 7). The subtle body is not entirely real and not "wholly imagined" (2010, 7).
22. Neither the English word "heart" nor the German word "Herz" does justice to the polyvalent meanings and resonances of *qalb* invoked in Sufi parlance. In Arabic, the different hearts are known as *lubb, fu'ad,* and *sirr,* and in Farsi, *dil*.
23. The impulse-driven *al-nafs al-ammāra* (self-centered self/the soul commands to evil, Qur'an 12:53), the differentiating *nafs al-lawāma* (self-reproaching self/blaming soul, Qur'an 75:2), and the serene *nafs al-muṭma'inna* (peaceful self/soul at peace, Qur'an 89:27). The Arabic word *nafs* could also refer to the body, its demands, and desires (Chishti 1991).
24. *Makam* (or *maqam*) is considered a concept, scale, and phenomenon in pentatonic music traditions (Yöre 2012). According to an anonymous treatise (fourteenth–sixteenth century), the *makam* body was conceived in terms of body regions, with each part and organ reacting differently to different musical tones (*makam*) (Neubauer 1990, 246). Tümata ideas of the *makam* body are informed by the 1864 illustration of Ottoman musician Haşim Bey Mecmuası (Güvenç and Güvenç 2009, 63).
25. The subtle body centers in Sufi discourse are entangled with personhood and self-transformation, although significant variations exist (Milani 2013, 169, 181). The tenth-century Iraqi Sufi Ahmad Ibn al-Junaid (d. 910) and his contemporaries mentioned these subtle centers. Later the *lataif* discourse was developed by the Central Asian Naqshbandis in terms of the first five *latifas*, followed by 'Ala Uddawla Simnani (d. 1336), who added the last two. See Arthur Buehler (1998) and Marcia Hermansen (1988) for a discussion of the historical development of the *lata'if*.
26. See Carl Ernst (1985) for a detailed account of affective aphorisms and their significance in the classical Sufi tradition, alongside their multidirectional impacts on Muslim communities.
27. These eleven rules or principles were attributed to Bah ad-din Naqshband Bukhari (1318–1389), the namesake founder of the Naqshbandi order (Sultanova 2011, 33).
28. Annemarie Mol (2002, 32) distinguished *performance* and *enactment*. While performance carries interfering associations of a backstage somewhere, enactment indicates that "activities take place—but leaves the actors vague" (2002, 33).
29. Richard Wolf (2006, 260) described the Mevlevi-inspired *malangs* in Pakistan spinning rapidly. He considered such spinning as an innovation in the local dance forms. In Sufi-Berlin, variations of the whirling set in motion the distinctive local imaginaries of Sufi movement.

30. I thank Annemarie Mol for pointing my attention to the problems of equivocation and translation of Sufi bodies (email, 7 September 2017).
31. Arthur Saniotis articulated the demands on the Sufi students in terms of the aspiration and cultivation of a certain "existential mastery in the form of disciplining the body . . ., the need for controlling the *nafs*, the seat of carnality" (2012, 79).
32. *Whitewashing* can be understood as the racialized "expropriation of cultural identity [that] cripples and deforms" (Hall 1989, 71). It constructs whiteness as universal and normative, expressing itself through racial erasures in a white supremacist society (Gabriel 1998). Whitewashing manifests in how popular Euroamerican media erase crucial contextual details when representing non-white and non-Western figures, exemplified by the casting of white actors to play a BIPOC character (Zhang 2017). I have discussed the political dangers of a related phenomenon (cultural appropriation) elsewhere in this book (Introduction, chapters 2, 4, and 6). However, restricting Rumi to a nationalist heritage, such as exclusively Iranian, Afghan, or Turkish, can be problematic. Considering Rumi as both Sufi and Muslim, who belongs to the transnational heritage of several nation-states beyond contemporary borders, complicates a singular identity. The contemporary appreciation of Rumi and other historical Sufi figures is emblematic of a global heritage accessible to Muslims and non-Muslims, whether they identify as Sufis or not, but not at the cost of whitewashing non-Western non-white Sufis like Rumi (Arjana 2020) and the cultural appropriation of an inherently Islamic tradition like Sufism.

Chapter 4
"There Must Be Something Else"

The In-between World of Healing Secular and Religious Suffering

Speech is born out of longing,
True description from the real taste.
The one, who tastes, knows.

—Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya[1]

Zwischen zwei Welten und drei Sprachen
sucht der wandernde Leib
nach einem fähigen Geist,
der ohne Schuld, Schmerz und Wurzeln
alles verlassen kann.

Between two worlds and three tongues
the wandering body seeks
a capable mind,
without guilt, suffering, and roots,
leaving everything.

—Aulic Anamika[2]

"There must be something else" (*Es muss was anderes geben*), Gertrud said to me with deep conviction on a summer afternoon in Charlottenburg in 2014 in a café not so far from her home. The seeking of "something else" brought her to the Sufi sounds of Tümata-Berlin. "What is really important?" In the bright light of spring of the same year in Pankow, Murshida Ganga asked me a key question that guided her on the Inayati Sufi path. We share a breathing, wayfaring journey on the Sufi path yet navigate divergent desire lines to Sufi practice. Tracing their (and my) desire lines illustrates how a search for something else often constitutes the pathways of (Sufi) breathing-becoming.

My conversations with these wonder-filled, searching, septuagenarian white German women of the postwar generation reminded me a lot of my deceased aunts, powerful brown matriarchs who would be of their age today if they were still alive, but with whom I never had the chance to have a (Sufi) conversation about seeking something else. Forming affective bonds and spiritual kinship with my older interlocutors in Berlin was about building rapport, a sine qua non of fieldwork. But it was also about acting out of postmigrant longing, the nostalgia of inhabiting an in-between world (*Zwischenwelt*).

Listening to Gertrud, Murshida Ganga, and Murshida Rabeya filled my curiosity about the Sufi lives of white German women seekers, without jumping to foregone conclusions about their "cultural appropriation" of Islamic Sufism as non-Muslims. My aunts were distinct in their approaches to Islam. While both practiced the regulatory prayers daily, unlike my mother and grandmother, they did not force Islam on their niece, the ethnographer. My aunts smiled at my impatience and mis/understanding of Muslim women's piety, perhaps waiting for me to grow up and understand what Islam could be.

The life stories of my beloved brown mother, aunts, and grandmother in Dhaka and my more privileged white German interlocutors in Berlin have little in common. The historical lines of global and local power structures have shaped their desire lines toward incomparable pathways in life. I, however, connect these albeit incomparable lines through the affective pedagogic instructions that I received from all these women, at various phases within the pathways of my breathing-becoming.

I can imagine these (more than) seventy-year-old brown and white women sitting in the sun (or at the fireplace when snow is falling outside), discussing the challenges of everyday reality that women (irrespective of race-class-intersecting differences) face in consumer patriarchal societies (be it Germany or Bangladesh). I can imagine these brown and white women gathering in body prayers in the name of the all-encompassing Real, reaching out in longing beyond the differences with which an unequal world has divided and separated them. In the speculative imagination of the ethnographer, the differences and the existential co-evalness of these women seekers, are woven into a braided line of unity that teaches us a few

things regarding how to "breathe well" and heal secular and religious suffering, in very different places, across very different times.

Secular/Religious Suffering and Formations of the Postsecular

What does it mean to "breathe well" as a Sufi in a place where public expression of religiosity is constrained, and Islam is increasingly marginalized? I return to the question running through this book as a red thread, to raise another: how is Sufi healing practiced and experienced in a place like Berlin, known for its liberal cosmopolitanism, yet exerting the double burden of secular and religious suffering on some of its inhabitants?

Secular and religious suffering are everyday forms of social suffering resulting from what "political, economic, and institutional power [of secularism and scriptural authority, for example,] does to people and reciprocally, from how these forms of power themselves influence responses to social problems" (Kleinman, Das, and Lock 1997, ix). Understanding "secular and religious suffering" requires a close look at the distinction between the secular and the religious body. Talal Asad's (2016) differentiation of the "religious body" from the "secular body" dwells on the former's experience of pain and liberal politics and calls out secularism's implicit grounding in Protestant Christianity.[3]

Contemporary Sufi subjects in Berlin, like many of their contemporary neo-religious actors, go through "secular suffering" as a kind of painful experience in the face of public secularist belittling of religious belonging on one hand (Taylor 2007). On the other hand, they experience antagonism and dismissal by the more scriptural interpreters of religious traditions impervious to alternative modes of imagination who consider such subjects not religious at all but secular. These double rejections contribute to the double burden of secular and religious suffering that Sufi breather-wayfarers seek to heal.

"The postsecular denotes not simply the end of the secularization thesis but its unpredictable afterlife, in which currents of disenchantment and re-enchantment coexist" (Graham 2016, 61). Formation of the postsecular (subjectivity) resonates with Asad's utterance, "formations of the secular," but only as a point of depar-

ture.[4] The postsecular refers to the juxtaposition of the religious and the secular. It is the co-presence of secularism and the revival of religion/spirituality in Berlin that justifies its framing as a "postsecular city" (Schlüter 2015; Beaumont and Baker 2011).

Imagining Berlin as a postsecular city shifts attention away from envisioning the city as a secular urban space to its simultaneous configurations as both the "world capital of atheism" (sociologist Peter Berger) and the "spiritual center of Europe" (Sheikh Eşref Efendi) (see Introduction). Sufi-Berlin thrives in the afterlife of the religious and secular landscapes of Berlin as much as it exists in parallel to them and intersects with them. The desire lines of Sufi interlocutors connect the religious and secular spaces, existential quests, and quests for healing, toward such postsecular formations.

My second and more relevant usage of the term postsecular in this chapter has to do with the negotiations with religious and secular subjectivities. The desire lines of my interlocutors came from and moved in diverse directions (see also chapter 2). Yet each of them (including myself) chartered a path from a previously secularist or (different) religious position (and belonging) to postsecular Sufism. This cannot be simply termed anti-secular or the other of the secular or even as a religious "conversion." Postsecular subjectivity consists of continuous negotiation with religious literalism and secularist hegemony, neither in unquestioned affirmation nor the absolute negation of either, but navigating an in-between world.

Subjectivity is a term that refers to "the emotional life of the political subject" (Luhrmann 2006, 345). It refers to the way subjects feel, share feelings, experience, and respond to others (2006, 345). Subjectivity is not erroneous but rather "connotes creativity, the possibility of a subject's adopting a distinctive symbolic relation to the world in order to understand lived experience" (Biehl, Good, and Kleinman 2007, 6). The articulation of subjectivity is a necessary part of "understanding how people (try to) act on the world as they are acted upon" (Ortner 2005, 34). Subjectivity emerges from the lived experience and the narratives (Good 2012) of those searching for existential dilemmas and the healing of the problems of living.

"The subject is never closed or done with" (Das 2007, 4). The human subject draws a boundary around itself to narrate the experience of a limit. During my fieldwork, such boundaries and lim-

its were triggered by a question the interlocutors often asked me, a question that I asked them back in our conversations: "How did you come to Sufism?" (*Wie bist du zum Sufismus gekommen?*). The narrative responses to this question in this chapter (and chapter 2) show how the subjectivity of Sufi practitioners (Muslim or not) was formed along desire lines, situated within a sustained tension between a secularist society, prescriptive religious traditions, and the existential longing for *something else*.

Esra Özyürek's (2015) recent ethnography argued that, on the surface, Sufi Muslims were significantly different from other Muslims, and Sufi communities lived in isolation from other Muslims. Her work on converted white German Muslims in Berlin and Potsdam is groundbreaking in laying out how race and religion mark the landscape of new Germany along the spectrum of Islamophobia and Islamophilia. Özyürek's otherwise seminal work, however, left out an in-depth discussion of Sufi subjects. Emphasizing an ontological difference between the diverse ways Muslims practice Islam and perform their identities takes attention away from other enactments of Islam revolving around explorative authority or Islam's intersections with practices from other traditions.

"The practice of referring to Sufism—as well as any kind of religion—as mystical inwardness and interiority should be questioned" (Klinkhammer 2017, 6). As scholars, we are expected to explore the claims of inwardness and instead discuss what being/becoming Sufi means in specific contexts. In my porous field, the phenomenon of Sufism has brought Muslim and non-Muslim subjectivities together in the spectrum of shared existential longing. How can we explore Sufi subjectivity beyond assumed interiority and presumed ontological differences between Sufi and Muslim identities?

"What are we to do, . . . how do we designate the non-Muslim actor who takes up units of meaning from the field of meaning of Islam and incorporates them into his [or her] existence *but remains a non-Muslim*?" (Ahmed 2016, 444). The hermeneutical engagement with Islamic practice should be taken seriously as Islamic, even if the practitioners do not identify themselves as Muslims. Not all Sufi subjects I met converted to Islam and became Muslims. More often, they transitioned from one denomination of Islam to another or from a particular secularist disposition to Sufism. Both forms of transition are exemplified by Ayşe, who shifted from a "secular Muslim" iden-

tity to becoming a Sunni-Sufi Muslim in the Haqqani-Naqshbandi network (chapter 2). The second form of transition is palpable in Renate's narrative. She moved from a secular faith in the state-enforced atheism[5] in former East Germany to Inayati Sufism in the post-unification city (chapter 2). I was instructed (and suffered) as a child in the socially inscribed, prescriptive Sunni Islam, which triggered my initial attraction and commitment to militant atheist secularism, followed by a postmigrant longing for the in-between world of explorative authority within the Islamic tradition. The transition from prescriptive, literalist religious traditions or atheist secularism toward *something else* is a notable feature of the Sufi subjects who narrated their pathways of breathing-becoming in Berlin.

"Ethnographic creations are about plasticity and unfinishedness of human subjects and lifeworlds" (Biehl and Locke 2017, x). The concept of *becoming* emphasizes desire's primacy over power and the confluence of social fields. Desires follow "world-historical trajectories" but need to be represented with the "ideas of and relationships to the constraints [and possibilities] and unfinishedness of [the interlocutors'] lives and milieus" (2017, x). In Berlin, my Sufi interlocutors, mostly from the privileged urban middle class with access to higher education, sought *something else*, thereby illustrating the primacy of desire over power in the multiple ways they navigated diverse social fields and (in-) commensurable interpretations of Sufism and the Islamic tradition.[6]

"From the worldview of Sufism, the human being is understood as an integrated, non-dual unity" (Özelsel 1995, 137). Michaela Mihriban Özelsel (later Özelsel-Heymann) (1949–2011) wrote these words in the 1990s in her widely read book *40 Days* (1993). Claire, the Sufi dancer (chapter 2), recommended that I read the *dervish diary* of this white German psychotherapist who walked the path of Sufi Islam. Özelsel's articulation draws from diverse Sufi discourses, arguing that the separation from the Real *is* suffering, under the veils of forgetfulness, manifesting in the body, mind, and soul:

> The development process and the healing of the body, mind, and soul, . . . consequently lead to psychosomatic—or physiomental, psychospiritual—perspectives. From Sufi perspective, any sickness is based on an "illusion of separation" through the "veils of forgetfulness," i.e., the loss of the direct, intuitive perception of the essential unity of creation. (Özelsel 1995, 137)

In Sufi discourse, dhikr is a breathing practice of remembrance. The repeated remembrance of existential "unity of creation" (*wahdat al wujūd*) through breathing, as Özelsel reminded her readers, lifts the veils that make it no longer possible to live with the "illusion of separation." These illusions disappear as the subject becomes one with the Real, remembering the ultimate unity of existence.

Sufism is enacted and experienced as *participation* in the encompassing reality through the performativity of Sufi practices: mobilizing breath, words, sounds, and things to emanate their healing power (chapters 3, 5). Like Ganga and Murshida Rabeya (both psychotherapists), Özelsel has brought analytical psychology and Sufi healing practices together to establish causal connections between separation and sickness on the one hand, and experiences of union and healing on the other (2005, 1996, 1995, and 1993). This kind of participation in the transcendental/immanent Real (Allah) and its entanglement with the causal makes it possible to consider Sufism to be healing, with participatory modes of thought and action. What it also entails is the formation of a subject along the desire lines of their processual narratives, also known as "experience report(s)"/*Erfahrungsbericht* (Özelsel 1993).[7]

During my conversations with Sufi interlocutors in Berlin, the name Michaela Özelsel appeared on several occasions. She was born Michaela Jantzen (1949) in Kiel, grew up in Turkey, and studied psychology in the United States and Germany. In 2013, during an interview, Claire suggested that I should interview her (chapter 2). In 2014, while discussing the history of Sufi practice in the city, Bernhard too asked me to find Özelsel (chapter 1). We looked for Özelsel only to realize that she had died in 2011 and before I arrived in Berlin.

A posthumous meeting with Michaela in her narrative made me aware of how she struggled with questions that the students of Sufism need to consider in their dialogue with the prescriptive, religious traditions, and hegemonic secularist narratives. Özelsel's narrative was formulated in a language of experience. Her postsecular subjectivity emerged as a negotiation between the religious and the secular, navigating an in-between world. She spent a lifetime trying to bridge the apparently incommensurable worlds: "Western" psychotherapy and ethnopsychology, and the healing practices of "Eastern" Sufism (Özelsel 1995).[8] Any reader can criticize (and rightly so) how the persistent inequalities of different social worlds and worldmaking do

not figure prominently in her "experience report." There are many places in *40 Days,* where I stumbled upon her "white fragility" in dealing with societal differences and expectations as a white German woman traveling to Muslim-majority Turkey.[9]

Apart from my posthumous encounters with Özelsel, I have met many animated, lively Sufi seekers in Berlin and connected sites: men and women, young and old, Muslim and non-Muslim, healers, and persons suffering from chronic health problems, BIPOC and white people across racial, socioeconomic, and gender differences. The informal conversations at field sites took place in English and German, while formal appointments for interviews took place in my apartment, their apartments, indoor cafés, and outdoor parks. Apart from participating in Sufi practice, we have shared meals. In the retreats that took place outside Berlin, we have shared sleeping (and dream-) spaces. With some, I have developed intimate, long-term friendships.[10]

In this book, I present a fraction of these numerous conversations to offer a glimpse into the languages of experience through which my Sufi interlocutors described their pathways of breathing-becoming and the narratives of their desire lines. Focusing on women brought up in a society dominated by the hegemony of a secularist narrative and the impending prescriptive forces within the Islamic tradition, I have tracked the desire lines that led them to walk the Sufi-designated path of transitions. These configurations of the postsecular condition are not only about the "re-enchantment of the world" (Csordas 2007, 295) but a juxtaposition of disillusionments and critical enchantments in an in-between world.

In the next section, I discuss contemporary articulations of two life stories, based on narrative-biographical interviews. I also draw from my narrative of arriving at and tasting Sufism in the company of a septuagenarian female Sufi teacher. These instances illustrate how experiential knowledge and articulation of (Sufi) experience constituted its desiring, experiencing, and becoming subjects in the quest of healing secular and religious suffering.

The Seeking Subjects of Postwar Germany

Gertrud and Murshida Ganga shared their search for *something else* and *what is really important*. I situate their narrative structures of subjective formation within the major historical events of postwar

Germany with tangential intersections. Gertrud and Ganga grew up in postwar West Germany, and parts of their narratives of becoming Sufi echo the afterlife of larger historical forces. Like many countries affected by wars, the disequilibrium of gender relations affected families in West Germany, and growing up in an atmosphere of domestic trouble was not uncommon (Moeller 1996). The following decades of affluence and conservatism were questioned by diverse movements in the 1960s and 1970s that affected Germany, Western Europe, and the United States with multiple effects on identity, morality, and interest in other traditions, Sufism being one of them (Klinkhammer 2009 a, 2009b).[11]

Gertrud is a white German woman, a trained healing practitioner, and a foreign language teacher. She learned to use her left (dominant) hand only at the age of forty. Late in life, she recognized how her tune resonated with the singing and drumming practices she shared with Tümata. Murshida Ganga, another white German woman, is a former psychotherapist who reluctantly became a teacher (Murshida) in the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat network. She found her material/subtle body-self in the Inayati ways of breathing (heart), the Dances of Universal Peace, and the Aramaic Jesus Prayers. Each time I listen to their narratives, what draws me deeper into these stories is the abundant joy and humor with which they narrated them. Their laughter continues to reverberate in my ears.

Gertrud and Ganga belong to a postwar generation of white German women in Berlin, but their narratives reveal two different trajectories of existential longing. Rather than pinning down that longing to immediate social circumstances, I follow their desire lines to see where they lead. How did Ganga move with the question of attributing significance (*what is really important?*)? How was Gertrud driven with the anticipation of the possibility of *something else*?

"There Must Be Something Else!" Gertrud's Healing Quest

Summer 2014. I took the subway to the Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf district, a neighborhood in the former West Berlin. Gertrud and I met in front of her house and walked to a nearby café. We had met earlier on various occasions. We rested beside each other and giggled on yoga mats during Tümata-Berlin's music therapy sessions. We sat together to drum our respective *bendirs* in the Tümata-Berlin

workshops and private rehearsals in Raphael's apartment. This was the first chance to have a longer conversation with each other. I asked Gertrud how she came to Sufism, to Tümata-Berlin. Her answer was short, "It is easy to explain! Knowing/knowledge of music (*Musikverständnis*)!" When I probed further, she stopped me and said, "Let me begin with my life history. That will be easier!"

Gertrud had short hair and lively gray-blue eyes. She came out of her house wearing a checked T-shirt and trousers, smiling. She was filled with more humor than anyone I knew in the city. She liked to make poker faces from time to time when she was about to say something funny. On one of her fingers, she wore a bright greenish-blue turquoise ring. Turquoise seemed to be a favorite among Berlin Sufis. I saw many of my interlocutors wearing it.

Gertrud was almost as old as postwar Germany. When we met, she was about to turn seventy, as Germany was about to enter the seventieth year after World War II. Gertrud told me she was born in Berlin during the last months of the war ("What a troubling time to be born, in the middle of a global war!" I thought). She grew up in a family with a *Wanderungsschicksal* (migration fate). Her father was a French soldier, and her mother was the daughter of a senior army officer in Nazi Germany. They met during the last days of the war. Gertrud said that her parents were not happy together and that she did not have a pleasant childhood. The strict discipline imposed by her parents was inscribed on Gertrud's child-body as she was forced to write with her right hand, although she showed an early tendency to be left-handed. Being left-handed was not acceptable in their "military" household.

It took Gertrud more than a decade and a half to realize the effects of forcing her body against its disposition. After a long training in alternative healing practices, the death of her mother, and increasing conflicts with her grown-up daughter (who had little patience or understanding of her mother's idiosyncratic healing interests), Gertrud rediscovered her (left) hand as she began to turn in *sema*. It is as if she reclaimed her body from the disciplinary regime of postwar Germany with something else.[12]

Gertrud described her life struggles since her twenties as a search for "something else," perhaps a different sound of music, "with one ear":

> I was always looking for a way out. I don't know what! I [thought] I must get out now [She broke into laughter when I asked her, "Get out from where?"] Get out of the body, the mind, the society! . . . I was always somehow—how to say that? . . .
> There must be something else! [*Es muss was anderes geben!*] It cannot go on like this. (interview with the author, 16 June 2014)

Gertrud mentioned that the psychoanalytical model of psychotherapy ("talk therapy") did not help her in the long struggle to come to terms with her unpleasant childhood. During our conversation, she showed me several childlike movements (*Kinderbewegung*) that constituted her daily routine of exercising the body. She tried many other methods of healing, such as Traditional Chinese Medicine. Gertrud showed me a special ring she was wearing that she used as an acupressure device.

Unfortunately, my effort to draw Gertrud into discussing the various concepts of Sufism was not successful. She seemed to care little about formal Sufi discourses, although she was a regular participant in the Sufi events in Berlin. Besides Tümata-Berlin events, I also met her in a healing seminar organized by the Granada Therapy[13] network. When I asked Gertrud what Sufism meant for her, she said: "Music is much more important!" Music, for Gertrud, was Sufism, in practice. When I asked her how mainstream German society could accept practices like Sufism, Sufi healing, or Sufi music, Gertrud came up with a criticism of her society, which she labeled as a "cornered landscape" (*eckige Landschaft*):

> They [those who came to Tümata] feel that somehow, straight thinking [*geradeaus Denken*] no longer helps. Let us take the example of music. You know five people [and they say], "What's that!" [*Was soll das!*] Then you play it [music], and we thought we could set something up there. No! That is doubtful. When you let go, a small distance [from everything], this distance builds itself. I do not build anything. That would mean we go against the wall. Rather there is a space in between [*Zwischenraum*] that can be built. That is what I think is now missing in our [societal] discussion. What happens in the discussion? When I look around, what does it tell me? What do I tell myself? Do I speak from joy? . . . There are always more of them . . ., who says, "there is something missing." Somehow, it is not nice, it is not round. It had never been round. It cannot be round. One cannot move around because it is

> square [*eckig*]! The house itself is also [like that]. Straight thinking is square [without space to move around]. This is a cornered landscape! (interview, 16 June 2014)

The "cornered landscape" that disciplined Gertrud's left hand, leaving her with carried-over wounds from a regimented childhood, was made round by side-stepping the corners that stifled her body and senses. That is what, I presume, partly constituted her love of whirling in *sema*, counterclockwise from right to left, creating and stepping into an in-between space,[14] navigating an in-between world. Gertrud whirled in her own rhythm. She was not a proficient musician, but she did not shy away from singing the *ilahi* (Turkish Sufi songs praising Allah) or tapping her drum. In all that, Gertrud found *something else* she was looking for.

"What Is Really Important? . . . Go to Your Breath . . . Trust the Heart!" Ganga's Question and Answers

A few months earlier, in spring 2014. It was raining and took me forever to reach the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat *khanekah* in the north of Berlin, a district in the former East. Murshida Ganga was waiting patiently. As always, she was wearing bright colors contrasting the gray city and the propensity of many inhabitants to wear only gray and black (note: a splash of color is considered suspicious, frivolous, or childish, evident in the rampant chromophobia[15] of German society). Today it was a red skirt. Around her neck, I saw a string of golden hearts on a green background (a symbol of the Dances of Universal Peace network). Ganga took my umbrella and served me tea. We were sitting in what looked like a multipurpose room with light pouring in. Looking around, I found Elif Shafak's *Vierzig Geheimnisse der Liebe* (The forty secrets of love) lying on a table.[16]

Ganga is a few years older than Gertrud. She is a retired psychotherapist and spends most of her time as a senior Murshida in the Inayati tradition, depending on the meager state pension she receives. She was the first Sufi teacher in Berlin with whom I established contact through email while I was still in Dhaka in 2012. A year later, she was teaching in the healing seminar I attended in the *khanekah*. I attended her classes earlier at the European Sufi Summer School in the summer of 2013. When we met for a formal interview in 2014, the physical agility and the lit-up smile on the

face of this seventy-plus-year-old woman impressed me. I could not help complimenting her on looking so young. She laughed, saying: "*Naja!* I am dancing! That is always good!"

Murshida Ganga spoke to me about her visits to India and regretted that she had never visited my country (Bangladesh). She informed me that she had lived in Afghanistan during the 1960s with her former husband. She did her best to make me feel comfortable by sharing her connections to South Asia, alleviating the discomfort I had frequently experienced among white people in Germany, who often had no clue about my South Asian heritage. Since Hazrat Inayat Khan, a South Asian Sufi, was the founder of the Inayati network, I often felt that I had received special treatment from the Inayati members, especially from Murshida Ganga and my teacher Rabeya. Looking back to this moment, I am not so sure how comfortable I was, given that (internalized) anti-Muslim racism never figured in conversations with the white German Sufis.

I tried to relax and focus on the conversation rather than my dis/comfort in the situation. Murshida Ganga continued with her life story. Two decades later, having traveled to many parts of the world, she found a Sufi teacher in Berlin, of all places. Meeting her Sufi teacher was an "inner knowing" in her narrative:

> I can talk only about my experience. [*laugh*] I met my first Sufi teacher in '86 in Berlin . . . I read many books about Sufism . . . But reading books is one thing. Meeting someone is another thing. When I met him [the Sufi teacher], my soul—now I know it was my soul—it immediately knew! It is an inner knowing. Yes! This is the path. (interview with the author, 2 May 2014)

Then she started talking about the importance of connecting "the one in the body" with "the ones *not* in the body." Among many other things, being connected to the body for Ganga meant staying connected to the "spiritual flesh" of the living and dead Sufi teachers. It is "nothing personal" and yet, a "deep connection to the soul." Ganga described her connection to the first teacher in a Sufi Muslim network. One year later, after meeting her teacher, she went on a pilgrimage to a Sufi shrine in North Africa. Ganga was ambivalent about gender segregation during the ritual dhikr (*hadra*). On the one hand, she was immersed in the "energy" produced in the dhikr she experienced with her peers. On the other hand, she described her ambivalence:

> The energy was very deep, very loving, very strong, and very passionate. I liked the energy . . . *Hadra* is so much fire! *Haah Haah! Haah Haah!* [she starts breathing loud and fast] . . . We [women] were allowed to do *Allah Allah* [hushed dhikr] but not sing [loud]! . . . We were sitting in the dark, and we were silent . . . It was hard for me to cope with this. Men and women [sitting separately]. But the energy was so strong. So I did it . . . But I felt that I want to sing also! [Only men were allowed to sing aloud] It was very clear. I loved the energy, but I wanted to sing myself. I wanted to move. (interview, 2 May 2014)

After about half a year, Ganga left that Sufi network. She felt guilty about leaving. She came to terms with her guilt by turning to an imagined conversation with her late sheikh (father of the current sheikh) of the network, who was rather relaxed about gender segregation. The older sheikh "gave his blessings," and Ganga continued on her Sufi path. She realized she did not need to feel bad about leaving a place where she did not belong. A few years later, after having visited the first *makbara* (Sufi saint's grave)[17] in an Arabic-speaking Muslim-majority country, Ganga visited her second *makbara* on the other side of the world, in the English-speaking United States, another society fraught with anti-Muslim racism.

It was near Murshid Sam's *makbara* and the "spiritual flesh" of the teacher of his teacher's teacher that Ganga found the dances, the dhikr, and the sounds she could now make, as loudly as she could. She felt she could now move freely with the dances and the walks (although these movements and walks are carefully choreographed as well). She was ready to embody her lessons from the past teachers. Ganga described what she experienced as her (inner) voice: "It is a *makbara* in nature . . . I loved it from the beginning, the simplicity . . . way up in the mountains. And then one voice in me said, "Keep going! This is what you are looking for!" The other voices were not ready . . . Many parts were not ready" (interview, 2 May 2014). Ganga and her companion at that time continued to travel to the Grand Canyon. She also remembered a dream voice from this period:

> [Someone said,] "Everything you have been doing is finished!" . . . I was sitting [asking myself] what I would do if I had one more week to live. Very seriously! What is the most important [thing] for me if I imagine I am dying? . . . Then I knew. I want to die in peace. This was clear, and then I knew what to do (interview, 2 May 2014).

It was the late 1980s. For Ganga, it was a turbulent time to be in Berlin. She was forty-nine years old and working as a psychotherapist. She sensed that formal psychotherapy ("talk therapy") was not sufficient to heal people. "Something was missing," she said. "Gestalt therapy was not enough. I was in search of more . . . Well, you can work through mother, brother, and all these *traumata,* but something was missing. Through these experiences, what was missing came [to surface]. But the process from the first deep experience to now is a long, long process" (interview, 2 May 2014).

Murshida Ganga emphasized the role of the body in Sufi practice. In her view, Sufism is "embodied spirituality." At some point during our conversation, Ganga reflected on her days as a "talking" psychotherapist. Her role shifted as she became a Sufi teacher guiding her students on the path. It was no longer about "fixing the problems" by talking to them, but instructing them in how to resonate with the ninety-nine names of Allah (to practice *wazifa*),[18] get connected to the body, pay attention to the breath, and learn to trust their hearts—the steps that she had to take as a life-long student on the path:

> I feel that my work and life as a therapist serve me . . . Maybe the difference is that on the spiritual path, I don't fix the problems. It is not my task! Although when I talk to my *murids*, they tell me about their problems. We talk about them. I give them the *wazifas*, prayers, and walks. Whatever I feel could be helpful for them. Methods . . . Instruments . . . With each murid, it is very individual . . . But for me [*laughing*], it is important that you relax [*she noticed I was tense*]. You go from here [*pointing up and down*] from the head to the feet. Go to your breath—*Yaaah!* Learn trusting. Learn to trust your heart. Our mind is good, but it is not so good when the mind is the boss. We are trained like this . . . I have to learn still to trust the heart. (interview, 2 May 2014)

At this point, I expressed my doubt about a (spiritual) teacher's abuse of authority and the "guru phenomenon." She laughed out loud and said that she was skeptical about gurus as well, especially when she was advised to take on a teaching role by her teacher. We agreed that the misuse of power is inherently possible in any position of authority. Ganga said that (Sufi) teaching was about helping students and not attaching them to the teacher. "The aim of the teacher is: My *murid* finds herself, her deepest self—God—so to speak! However you name it, it is in you. It is all about that. It is not about attachment" (interview, 2 May 2014).

At another point in the interview, Murshida Ganga said that there was a single question that guided her throughout and helped to set her priorities in life: "What is important? What is really important?" This question moved me profoundly. Toward the end of our conversation, Murshida Ganga began to reflect on her narrative. She said it might change in time, because "life is change," but it would not be far off from what she told me now. Sufi teachers are fond of making contradictory statements that throw the listener and the student off track, disrupting the logic of a linear rational mind and teaching how to bypass the mind and reach the heart. Sitting in the company of Sufi teachers, the disruption of linear thinking is an experience to be lived and tasted. Any description, thick or thin, is an inherently limited attempt to make the taste of such deep listening available to readers (see also chapter 5).

Murshida Ganga has practiced Inayati (Sufi-Ruhaniat) Sufism for the last twenty-four years. She will likely continue to do so until she dies. I sensed a quiet urgency in her, at peace and curious at the same time. Expectant of what is coming, she said, "[There is still] a lot of inner work to do. This is never finished. I know it is until my last breath I will be on the path actually of discovering myself" (interview, 2 May 2014).

Following Murshida Ganga's desire line, listening to her narrative repeatedly, the questions she raised, stayed with me: "What is important? What is really important?" as well as the answer she provided: "Go to breath . . . trust the heart!" In the course of our conversation, the one hour she had agreed on ran into two hours. My wet umbrella dried. I finished my second cup of tea and thanked her for giving me time. She smiled and wished me luck. Several years later, learning to do embodied spirituality with Sufi practices remains an unfinished lesson. But her question has stayed with me and guides me when I am lost in setting life priorities. Practicing the answers that guided her pathway, I hope to have found a few openings in life.

The Ethnographer as Postsecular Subject

Learning how to learn from the subject narratives and images they re/present is a crucial lesson in both anthropology and Sufi practice (figure 4.1). Listening to the voices of Gertrud and Ganga years after I recorded them brings back the inculcated memory of sitting beside

Figure 4.1. Ethnographer photographing the Inayati breathing heart symbol, 5 July 2013. © Nasima Selim.

these two older women, wondering where all the joy was coming from. I may not have found the answers to the most important questions in life, but I am beginning to learn how to ask them. Practicing breathing on the Sufi path has also taught me a few things about the efforts to "breathe well" in spite of structural limits.

"[F]rom the postsecular position, the researcher could no longer make herself the sublime and unaffected knower of religion and enchanted bodies" (Utriainen 2011, 430). In the shared journey with Sufi practice, my fellow breather-wayfarers and I inhabit a wide spectrum of the postsecular imagination of explorative authority in our efforts to transgress the authority of the imagined prescriptions of nationalism, secularism, and religion. Making the researchers'/anthropologists' (post-)secular positioning explicit is, therefore, not only about what she had done in the field but how she had been affected by the object of research, being part of the unstable object of research (Buehler 2013; see Introduction and chapter 1).

"I was skeptical, cautious!" Murshida Rabeya (a female teacher in the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat tradition, one of my Sufi teachers in Ber-

lin) fondly recollected an early meeting with her *murshid*. My first year of fieldwork was dogged by doubt and longing, confusion and joy. These affective states and their articulations are significant not only because they are mobilized to gather knowledge as an affective pedagogy based on sensuous, affective scholarship (Selim 2020a; Stodulka, Selim, and Mattes 2018). In Sufi practice, emotions are cultivated toward transforming them. With training and time, these emotions become sustained sentiments and structured feelings that help one progress on the path of transforming the self-centered self (Selim 2020a).[19]

Murshida Rabeya (and Khidr) guided me throughout my fieldwork and its aftermath. As a student anthropologist and a *murid*, my doubts were dissolved with humor and kindness when my teachers linked their narratives to mine, in the *baraka*, they transmitted to me from their lines of transmission. Listening to my interlocutors' narratives brings to mind an early meeting with Murshida Rabeya, her calm, reassuring voice along with mine, which was filled with doubt, uncertainty, and longing at that time. The word *murid* does not only mean a learner but one who wishes and desires to learn. That desire line is perceptible in the following excerpt:

> Nasima: I do not know where to start. In 2003, I started reading Rumi. I read a lot but never practiced Sufism. I had a horrible religious teacher and lost interest in religion. . . . I learned that the teacher-student relationship is very important [in Sufism]. I thought maybe I should be initiated. I don't know. What do you think? . . . I did not want to get involved with anything. You hear strange stories about cults [or, sects]. But this Sufi [healing] seminar moved me a lot . . . I need to write about all of these. That is my problem . . . That's it . . . I want to know what you think.
>
> Rabeya: I understand. I did Vipassana[20] for many years. I studied psychology and sociology. I was a yoga teacher. I also had similar thoughts. I was skeptical and cautious . . . Murshid S. listened to me. He smiled and said, "Oh dear! You have come to the right place. We all know this!" [*There was a long pause. We were both smiling*] He initiated me. I became a *murid* . . . [Looking at my puzzled face, she continued] I understand. You must question but listen to your heart [pointing to the chest]. You have to feel it, *experience!* (fieldnote, 15 March 2013)

Having spent a decade in the company of fellow breather-wayfarers, I am often asked by people curious about Sufism, "Are you a Sufi?" I try to resist their fixation on identity, whether it is national-

ist/linguistic, religious/spiritual, or secularist. My usual response is, "I am a student of Sufism. I am a student of anthropology. I would lie if I say I am not a Sufi. And I will be boasting if I say that I am." That is what I have become, an unfinished seeker who still has to walk the path and makes efforts to "breathe well." Breathing well is not about a physiologically optimized breath but rather an expression for joining breath, in coming together in the shared longing for "something else." The unfinished nature of existential desire holds for my interlocutors as well as my efforts, to "breathe well" and heal secular and religious suffering.

Healing Secular and Religious Suffering

Sufi subjects in Berlin make considerable efforts to find another life, driven by life crises or love of music, looking for meaning, or searching to resolve healing troubles with breathing, movements, sounds, and utterances. Their subjectivities are formed within the intentional communities with whom they practice Sufism. These pathways of breathing-becoming are also informed by postmigrant and "native" networks of belonging, popular and affirmative orientalism, conventional and alternative medical worlds, retreats and everyday life, inspirational and pragmatic acts in life, as well as the political dangers of whitewashing, cultural appropriation, and anti-Islam discourses. The larger historical forces and events in Germany and the rest of the world are echoed in these narratives, however faint they might be in the present articulation. Attending to these forces to track how they are enacted in micro-narratives is not the primary concern of this book. The desire lines are only partly determined by life circumstances and historical forces. They cannot be reduced to subjectifying regimes and local histories. But, one person's longing cannot be conceived as a universal prescriptive ideal for every woman to follow. Neither can the efforts of those I conversed with be reduced to "cultural appropriation" alone, even if the political danger of white privileged subjects consuming and appropriating non-Western traditions is real in Germany. Attending these complex ground realities, we need to be mindful of the existential longing for and tasting *something else* that plays its part in Sufi seeking and healing.

Critical feminist scholars argue against the tendency of (Western and white) feminism and post-Enlightenment political theory

to conflate secularism with humanism and emancipation (Graham 2016). Rosi Braidotti (2008, 2) deployed the "postsecular turn" to argue that it "makes manifest the notion that agency, or political subjectivity, can be conveyed through and supported by religious piety, and may even involve . . . spirituality." Postsecular feminist thought teaches us to attend to life-affirming religiosity/spirituality in understanding women's subjectivities in diverse contexts in terms of Islamic feminism (Sirri 2017, Shaikh 2012), the postsecular turn in European feminism (Braidotti 2008), encountering otherness (Irigaray [1999] 2005), and the rethinking of female agency in the politics of piety (Mahmood 2001, 2005).

"What is it about the secular condition that can generate transgression?" (Heelas 2014, 76). The proliferation of (new) religion/spirituality in Europe lies in the transgressive power of the ideals, in the desire for *more* than the secular: "The 'more,' 'something there,' 'something more,' terms that are frequently encountered among those who—to varying degrees—transgress the secular" (2014, 76). The desire lines here echo the utterance of "there must be something else" (Gertrud). Many of my Sufi interlocutors and I are transgressors of the secular and the religious. The Sufi subjects inhabit confluent configurations of the religious with the therapeutic and aesthetic fields. They (have) live(d) diverse forms of secularisms with the gamut of prescriptive religions to reach postsecular Sufism: from the socialist/state atheism (Renate), Catholic and Protestant Christianity (Gertrud, Murshida Ganga, Claire), Turkish secularism (Ayşe), literalist Sunni Islam and Marxist atheism (Nasima) (see also chapter 2).

Some of my older interlocutors had to deal with troubled childhoods of rigid discipline (Gertrud) and discovered the existential imperative of asking important questions (Ganga) in postwar Germany. These lines led these women to a future with various Sufi communities, following the guidance of a sheikh or murshida, and finding everyday healing in their respective intentional communities. Luce Irigaray ([1999] 2005) conceives of such subject formations in non-reductive intersubjective encounters as the "problem of meeting with the other," by not avoiding or explaining but meeting them in the irreducibility of encounter, allowing others to affect ourselves, whoever they are, and whoever we are. The anthropological project of a dual apprentice is not about the claim to fully understand the

other but to allow the other to be part of one's lifeworld. What is not lost in the multiple translations of these narratives is the shared experience of joy, a sense of sustained wonder in the face of precarity and existential crises in the contemporary world, and the worlds we inhabit with their continuous intersections.

The structural inequality and the suffering experienced by the inhabitants of a city like Berlin, often remain unseen. The hegemony of majoritarian Protestantism-inflected secularism and anti-Muslim racism in Germany today exerts an external burden on Sufi wayfarers looking for "the otherwise" (Povinelli 2014) (see Introduction and chapter 6). At the same time, the scriptural and literalist Islamic authorities exercise an internal burden of rejecting Sufi-identified Muslims. The Sufi breather-wayfarers navigate Berlin's urban landscape of healing, carrying the double burden of both secular and religious suffering. Whether framed as Islamic, universalist, therapeutic, or nomadic, Sufism as a phenomenon offers an entangled web of breathing practices (among others) through which Sufis in this city make efforts to "breathe well" to heal such sufferings, with more or less success.

The double burden of secular and religious suffering was reflected in the statements and life stories of my key interlocutors. They expressed this in their apprehension of hegemonic Christianity, often hiding behind a secular public discourse or the wariness in being part of social science research perceived as "dry" and biased against religious imagination (Khidr was fond of repeating these points). Secular suffering carries the lingering trauma of state-enforced-atheism, another form of secularism in former East Germany, albeit differently enacted than in former West Germany (Renate, chapter 2). Secular suffering is also experienced as the hegemonic belittling of spiritual practice in a "cornered landscape" (*eckige Landschaft*) where "something else" (Sufi music in this case) is not welcome (Gertrud). Or, the secular was perceived as a "narrow" "materialist" imagination of the world that went hand in hand with the stifling gender roles in most organized religions, contributing to the double burden of suffering from "religious" restrictions (Claire, chapter 2). Secular suffering is the driving force that led them on the quest for identity and healing beyond being "German" in following a Sufi tradition linked to the country of a migrant father (Hafiz, chapter 3) or in the articulation of a triple burden, suffering from the ridicule of

the "secular Muslims" of Turkish heritage, the structural (and often secularist) Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism in German society as well as the accusations of more scriptural Muslims (Ayşe, chapter 2; Abu Bakr, Introduction and chapter 6).

Healing secular and religious suffering does not necessarily mean an epistemic jump to the obliteration of social suffering. "Suffering and the capacity for suffering [can] become preconditions for the acquisition of power, including the ability to heal" (Bourguignon 2004, 563). My Sufi interlocutors continued to experience the double burden (which was triple in Ayşe's case) of secular and religious suffering. Sufi healing practices do not mark the end of this form of social suffering but equip them with the existential resources to bear with everyday suffering in a society dominated by not only structural inequality but also a hegemonic secular discourse designed to delegitimize the possibility of "the otherwise."

Postsecular imagination of Sufi healing is enacted in the experiential narratives of healing secular and religious suffering in Germany. "What is really important?" "There must be something else!" The answers to the existential quests that Ganga and Gertrud, Ayşe, Renate, Claire, and I have explored in Sufi practices are not universal solutions for human suffering (see also chapters 1, 2). They are not located in the secular or the religious, but in the in-between space from which postsecular subjectivity emerges. In the previous chapter, I discussed the Sufi techniques of transformation, providing a set of answers to the existential quests of my interlocutors. The next chapter is devoted to the discussion of the healing power of breath, words, and things enacted and performed through participation in Sufi healing practices that provide the conditions of possibilities (albeit limited) for answering otherwise to such questions.

Notes

1. Upton (1988, 36). Rabi'a lived and died in Basra, Iraq during the eighth century. In her poems, she articulated the metaphysics of love and longing for the Real, followed up and developed by later Sufis to articulate emotions, sustained sentiments, and structured feelings. The Rabi'a legends reached Catholic Europe as early as the late thirteenth century through Jean de Joinville, the chancellor of the French emperor Louis IX (Dickson and Sharify-Funk 2017, 198; Schimmel 1975, 8).
2. Anamika (2023).

3. Charles Hirschkind (2011) also hinted at this point in his questioning of the secular body. Postsecular features are not only attributed to secularized Christian societies. The notion of postsecularity in Islam is gaining ground but lags behind the oft-discussed postcoloniality (Bahrawi 2011).
4. Talal Asad (2003, 1) differentiated between "the secular" as an epistemic category and "secularism" as a political doctrine.
5. The post-socialist (East) Germany experienced heightened religious activities after a period of state-enforced faith in "scientific atheism" (Froese and Pfaff 2001, 482).
6. Omar Kasmani (2017, 2022) explored the spatial, gendered, and inter-corporeal dimensions of *fakir becoming* resisting the autonomous conceptions of the self in Sehwan Sharif, Pakistan.
7. Özelsel's diary narrated her experience of the forty days of isolated retreat (*halvet*) in Istanbul. Her narrative is an example of a *dervish diary*. Sufi teachers since the eleventh century (Al-Hujwiri [1911] 1998) discussed dervish diaries. For example, the *ṣoḥbetnāme,* a record of conversation and dialogue between a novice and Sufi master, was kept by novices and used as a reflexive learning method in Ottoman Turkey (Kafadar 1989). The European orientalists had written earlier diaries as experiential reports of encounters with dervishes in "the Orient" (Vett [1935] 2005).
8. Michaela Özelsel's (2005) narrative of a "conversion of the heart" was labeled New Age spirituality and neo-orientalism by scholars who undermined her narrative as "pseudo-reasoning" (Wieringa 2009, 218).
9. White fragility is a "state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves" among white people, expressing "anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation," which further "reinstate[s] white racial equilibrium" (DiAngelo 2011, 54). White fragility is a specific challenge that white Sufi seekers must confront and recognize in the inherited configuration of self-centered selfhood (*nafs*) in societies perpetuating white supremacy and colonial racist structures. Germany is one of many such societies that are fraught with anti-Muslim racism. The diary of the Russian-British Sufi seeker and teacher Irina Tweedie (1907–1999) shows the unabashed mixture of white fragility, racist prejudices, and the many troubles of the *nafs* that she struggled with in the company and with the guidance of her Sufi teacher in newly independent India (Tweedie 1986). While non-Muslims and especially white Sufi seekers need to be aware and cautious about engaging in the "cultural appropriation" of Islamic Sufi practices, this book argues against belittling non-Muslim seekers who show the capacity for an intimate longing for and serious engagement with (and even mastery of) Sufi practice. Paying attention to structural inequalities, being committed to social justice, and practicing on the Sufi path, are about recognizing/sharing the humanity of others (Muslims and non-Muslims alike), and not assuming the ultimate truth about the lives and longing of other seekers. Anthropology as a tradition, in my opinion, teaches us a somewhat similar lesson.

10. I did not live with my interlocutors except Roxanne, with whom I shared an apartment in 2013 for eight months.
11. The green movements in the 1970s and 1980s further inflected certain formations of German subjectivity since that period. See Elim Papadakis (1984) for an early description of the green movement in former West Germany.
12. This regime was perhaps not limited to the postwar and "military" households but much more widespread.
13. The Granada therapy network in Berlin consists of healing practitioners from diverse traditions. They are the students of the late Sufi teacher Agha Omar Ali-Shah. See Omar Ali-Shah (1995) for a discussion of Granada therapy.
14. See chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of "the between" or "in-between space" in anthropological theory and as *barzakh* in Sufi discourse.
15. "Western fantasies about non-Western people [are] fantasies that effectively divided the world into chromophobes and chromophiliacs . . . Color for the West became attached to colored people or their equivalents" (Taussig 2009, 16). Sufis (and seekers of "something else") in Berlin often wear brighter colors in comparison to others, perhaps to combat the chromophobia in the city. The German color austerity is rooted in the established collective sentiments about color preference, reason, and the construction of civilization. For example, Goethe's *Theory of Colors* "consolidated an imaginary geo-chromatic world" (bright colors embodying the deviant, savage non-Western subjects). Along with the tradition of Protestant and Calvinistic austerity, and the sustained colonial gaze in Germany, such chromophobia is indicative of how the white European majoritarian gaze struggles with the chromic, aesthetic sensibilities of the people from the colonies and its long aftermath (Calvo-Quirós 2013, 86). However, when white Sufi seekers contrast the chromophobia of their own society by adopting non-white and non-Western traditions and the aesthetic sensibilities of Islamic societies, the danger of "cultural appropriation" lurks in the shadow of their otherwise bright efforts to seek "something else."
16. Elif Shafak (2011, [2010] 2013) mobilized a life-affirming configuration of the postsecular imagination with her rendition of the historical encounter between Rumi and Shams juxtaposing a white US-American woman's quest for meaning. The bestselling novel enacted a global, postsecular imagination of Sufism with its re-enchanted readers contributing to its commercial success.
17. *Maḳbara* (Arabic) is a "cemetery" or "grave" and is mentioned in the Qur'an in its plural form of *maḳbir* (Ory et al. 2012).
18. *Waẓīfa*, in the Sufi context, refers to a repetitive recitation of prayers, invocations, verses from the Qur'an, and the ninety-nine names of Allah (Bosworth and Jong 2012).
19. Ethnographers' articulations of the teacher-student relationship in contemporary Sufi contexts vary according to the nature of interactions, gender perspectives, and the positioning of the anthropologists. Frances Trix

described her interactions over many years with an Albanian Sufi, Baba Rexheb (1901–1995, the founder of the first Bektashi community in the United States), framing the relationship as "attunement" (1993, 145). Attunement is a long process through which the teacher-student relationship becomes an intricate meshwork of intimate interactions. For a contrasting mode of experience, see Katherine Pratt Ewing ([1997] 2006), who articulated the interplay of "desire" and "fear" in her interactions with the Pakistani Sufis who challenged her to "experience that [Pir-Murid] relationship," which she found "tempting and dangerous" ([1997] 2006, 186). See also Bikram Nanda and Mohammad Talib (1992) for an account of the teacher-student relationship in Sufi discourse and Özelsel's emphasis on the matter (1996).

20. Vipassana meditation is a Buddhist-inspired technique of sitting, breathing, and cultivating mindfulness (Selim 2011a, 2011b, 2014).

Chapter 5
Participation in the Real

The Healing Power of Breath, Words, and Things

> Breath is the principal power needed in healing.
>
> —Hazrat Inayat Khan[1]

> Healing is hidden in the effects of healing. But there is one requirement. You have to say, Allah!
>
> —Sheikh Eşref Efendi[2]

> Music, dance, art, therapy, medicine, psychology, and spirituality can find connections with each other. They can enrich each other and support the physical, mental, soul, and spiritual healing process.
>
> —Andrea Azize Güvenç[3]

Once a week, usually on Saturdays, I lay down on my bed, listening to the voice of Khidr, my primary Sufi teacher, guiding me in the practice of the weekly Sufi healing meditation. It is an audio recording that I have been listening to at least once a week since 2013. The instructions are always the same, and the deep-throated booming voice of Khidr is still the voice I knew when he was alive. Yet, every Sufi healing meditation session brings the unique challenges of the day and the past week. Practicing regularly has made it easier for me to concentrate, the moment I put on my headphones. Yet, as I write the final lines of this book, translating a Sufi healing practice for uninitiated (and first-time) readers, remains a challenge:

> Stretch out on the ground or in your bed and relax. Make sure that your spine is straight. Breathe deeply and let go of all tension and stress. You don't have to believe in any part of the following text, but it is required

Figure 5.1. Things and elements arranged for the Inayati healing ritual (*Heil-ritual*), 30 May 2014. © Nasima Selim. The image shows the healing symbols of water (in a glass), life (a freshly plucked flower), earth (amber stone), and air/prayer (an incense stick on the left and the *tasbīḥ*—prayer beads on the top) spread on a golden yellow cloth with the Inayati winged-heart symbol. Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat retreat at Haus Schnede, Salzhausen, Germany.

> that you be open-minded and open-hearted and, above all, willing and clear to use this tool by just listening or reading or both and doing this Sufi healing exercise exactly as indicated and explained here. It is not required to convert to anything. You don't have to become a Muslim, or any type of believer, or enter the Sufi path to do this healing exercise. Just do it! The sole purpose of it is trying to help you with your health. However, for the time of the duration of the exercise, you should be willing to link up with the energy of the Sufi Tradition and the source of all life and allow it to have a positive impact on your body and being. (recorded, 12 October 2013)

Khidr, the postmigrant Sufi healer, offered this Sufi healing meditation for everyone who was "willing to link up with the energy of the Sufi tradition." For a "positive impact" on the "body and being," we must participate and allow the "energy of the Sufi tradition" to

do its work. Whatever may happen in a healing session of this kind, is a matter of intimacy with the Real. As an anthropologist, it is difficult, if not impossible, to articulate what happens in these intimate encounters. But the questions such healing encounters raise, are worth asking.

How are the subtle-material bodies transformed through Sufi techniques? I return to the question raised in chapter 3 to ask: How can Sufi techniques of transformation lead to healing? How do they provide existential resources in dealing with suffering? Sufi healing practices not only involve the enactment of bodies with the techniques of transformation but also implicate a nonhuman being known as *al-Haqq* or the Real. In this chapter, I seek to address the above-mentioned questions by framing Sufi (healing) practices as participation in the Real.

To breathe, move, and dance is human, and music is "humanly organized sound" (Blacking 1973, 10; Hannah 1979). Breathing, dancing, and moving can become a way of being religious, as a form that mobilizes the body in diverse traditions (Gaston and Gaston 2014). However, instead of regarding breathing, sounding, and movements as purely aesthetic forms, we can think of them as techniques of the body that generate the possibilities of inner transformation (chapter 3). Such transformations may lead to postsecular imaginations of healing, cutting across the strict domaining of religion, medicine, and performing arts.

Postsecular Sufi Healing

Most anthropologists consider healing to be different from curing. Healing is a generic term for practices that address various forms of suffering. Healing practices, address the "cognitive-discursive" and "embodied self" to be effective (Seligman 2010, 298). Sufi healing practices are "medicine of the imagination" (Kirmayer 2014, 42), exerting the performative effects of breath, words, sounds, and the things they mobilize for the metaphorical and sensorial transformation of the subtle/material (and mindful) body (Scheper-Hughes and Locke 1987). Quintessential Sufi breathing practices, such as *dhikr,* combine the discursive allusion to the metaphysical (breathing) Heart and its embodied enactments with bodily techniques to create the possibility for healing transformations (chapter 3).[4]

Creating healing conditions requires bodies to be present in the performances of breath/ing, words, sounds, and things. In Sufi healing practices, certain words become materialized sounds imbued with sacred meaning and ardent articulation. These sounds are subtle and fragile. Soon after breathing out, speaking, and hearing words, they evaporate. Even when sounds are recorded and later retrieved, they no longer belong to the same order nor the same material as in their immediate utterance. Repeated participation ensures the retention of breaths, words, and sounds. Objects are matter in space, and there is no questioning their materiality. As soon as certain objects (e.g., sound-making instruments and the *tasbīḥ*/prayer beads) are re-assembled in (Sufi) ritual action, they become energized, enlightened, imbued with subtle/spiritual power drawn from utterances. Repeated participation in the company of these things reveals to the participant that more than the human senses are present in such events.[5] Breaths, words, sounds, and things are mobilized toward healing in the "presence" (Desjarlais 1996, 152) of the Real.

"Things are either spiritual or corporeal, since they may also be *barzakhī*, that is to say, neither spiritual nor corporeal but somewhere in between" (Ibn Arabi in Chittick 1989, 14). While imagination is a faculty that provides meaning to the sensory forms, the imaginal realm is *barzakh*—transforming boundaries and creating diverse conditions of non-dual possibility. The "corporealization of the spirits" and the "spiritualization of the corporeal bodies" happen in a *barzakh* or the imaginal realm (1989, 15). Without imagination and the spiritualization of the corporeal bodies, a healing ritual (*Heilritual*) cannot occur. One must develop the capacity to imagine and ultimately become a subtle/spiritual body receiving healing energy from the transcendental/immanent Real. During *sohbet*, one must learn to listen as much as imagine that the breath, the glance, the words, the movements, the physical presence of the spiritual guide, and the objects one mobilizes are entering one's subtle body, bypassing the mind to reach the "seat of knowledge"—the subtle/spiritual (breathing) heart. Like the human body, breath, words, things, and the sounds the body makes, are both material and subtle/spiritual. All these breaths, words, sounds, and things are assembled in the Sufi healing practices as *barzakhi* entanglements of participatory performances.

Participatory Performances of Healing

Wer die Wesenheit kennt, erkennt die Wahrheit:	Who knows the attributes of Being, recognizes Truth:
mit den Ohren ALLAH hören,	Hearing ALLAH with the ears,
mit den Augen ALLAH sehen,	Seeing ALLAH with the eyes,
mit der Nase den göttlichen Duft riechen	Smelling the divine fragrance with the nose
und mit dem Mund ALLAH sprechen.	And speaking ALLAH with the mouth.

In the Islamic tradition, one of the ninety-nine names of Allah refers to "the Real" or "the Truth." At the beginning of my fieldwork, I found the above-mentioned poem circulating through the leaflet of an Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat healing seminar (1–3 March 2013). A few months later, the same poem appeared in an announcement for the music-and-movement therapy seminar of Tümata-Berlin (18–20 October 2013). The poem embodies the Real, engaging the senses. The affective, sensuous world of Sufi practice involves breathing in and out, uttering and hearing words and sounds, and making sounds with energized things. They require "tasting" or *dhawḳ*—a technical term for intuitive sensory perception in the classical Sufi discourse. It is the power of such aesthetic perception that moves the heart, with direct experiential knowledge, distinct from discursive knowledge (Ridgeon 2015b, 134; Rahman 2012).[6]

What is considered *dhawḳ* in Sufi discourse has to do with participation in any enactment of Sufism if afflictions and the problems of living (including secular and religious suffering) are to be healed (chapters 2 and 4). In the context of Sufi practice, the ninety-nine names of Allah (*al-asmā' al- ḥusnā*)[7] are tasted as breaths, words, sounds, and things in recitations, spoken words, hushed/silent breathing, and inscribed objects. Finding healing necessitates learning how to resonate with these names. Learning how to participate in the reality of all things may require stepping away from an everyday secularist or prescriptive, literalist confinement of religiosity toward opening up one's body to the healing power of expansive Sufi practice, resonating with the breaths, words, and sounds of the names of the Real.

Ritual healing is often understood as an event belonging to a certain genre, taking place in specific acts, with the rhetoric of persuasion through which the participants come to share the perspective of the ritual leaders (Csordas 1996, 96). Khidr's weekly healing meditation instruction was meant for individuals in the private space of a home, lying in bed. The Inayati healing ritual (*Heilritual*) was performed by the Inayati network in private gatherings, to be practiced alone or collectively. The Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sheikh Eşref Efendi delivered public lectures (*sohbet*) on healing attended by a few members of the network, guests, and outsiders/newcomers. Tümata-Berlin's music-and-movement therapy was a monthly event, accompanied by a few members and occasional outsiders/newcomers. These events are constituted by acts drawing from bodily, sonic, visual, material, and textual repertoires with the inspirational rhetorics of persuasion.

Learning to Feel and Inhabit the Elsewhere: The Inayati Healing Ritual (Heilritual)

The *Heilritual* plays a crucial role among the Inayati Sufis. Spiritual healing is among the five core practical dimensions elaborated by the founder Hazrat Inayat Khan.[8] The *Heilritual*, also known as absent or distant healing, is designated as a "selfless spiritual service" without any financial transaction.[9] When *Heilritual* takes place in its localized embodied sites, it becomes an event that cannot be repeated, although the ritual structure is often repeated.

It was a spring afternoon in 2013. On this particular Thursday evening, a small group of mostly white German women gathered in a local kindergarten after working hours. Sandra, a senior member and dance leader in the network, opened the door and greeted me. I usually attended the practice in Pankow, but hearing that there was going to be a *Heilritual* here in Charlottenburg, I decided to join. Conversations were taking place in German (fieldnote, 16 May 2013).

A few moments of hushed silence hung in the air before Murshida Rabeya led the Inayati invocation in English and German: "Toward the one . . .," ending with *Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir Rahim* (In the name of Allah, the beneficent the merciful). A table was already prepared with water, a freshly picked flower, *tasbīḥ* (prayer beads), amber, and an incense stick standing on a piece of yellow cloth (fig-

ure 5.1). Murshida Rabeya repeated the invocation and read out a text from Hazrat Inayat Khan, titled *Die Reise zum Ziel* (The journey toward the goal). Her voice was low, steady, and calm.

She discussed the basic questions on the path to healing and spoke of the pitfalls resonating with the concerns of the six *murids* (Sufi students) who gathered there. The novices struggle with a lack of patience, and therefore the most important skill to learn is how to keep going (*durchhalten*). Later, the advanced *murid* might experience pride on the way, having made progress in acquiring knowledge of the path, and therefore gratitude and humility are key lessons to learn. As Murshida Rabeya continued to read, we were cautioned of the possibility of falling back to a previous state, either through a lack of patience or too much pride due to achievements on the path. We were told that no one could take anyone along on that path but could only offer meaningful advice. To get a better grasp of the text, I asked if I could read it out again: *Der Beginn auf dem Weg ist immer schwierig und uninteressant. Es ist schwer für jedermann . . .* (The beginning of the path is always difficult and uninteresting. It is difficult for everyone). After I finished reading it out loud, the silence appeared again before dhikr began.

Murshida Rabeya led the following dhikr with *Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir Rahim*, at first slow and monotonous, but later the repetition rhythm became faster and deeper. We passed a huge *subḥa* (rosary of prayer beads; Pl. *tasbīḥ*)[10] connecting our bodies. We were moving the upper parts of our bodies from left to right. Gradually Murshida Rabeya toned down the dhikr, and we followed her lead. Breathing slowed down until there was only breathing in the silence. The next rounds of dhikr were led by someone else in the circle who uttered a few words in Arabic followed by short translations in German: *Subhan Allah – die Reinheit, die Unvermischheit des Göttlichen!* (The unmixed purity of godliness); *Al hamdulillah – Lobpreisen und Danken an den Göttlichen* (Praise and gratitude to godliness); *Allahu Akbar – Gott ist größer als alles andere* (God is greater than everything else). The three phrases were repeated in various scales going up and down. In those early days of fieldwork, I was often breathing unevenly, making sounds out of tune, and struggling to keep up with the others. The round was short. We sat with closed eyes on our respective cushions. The third and final round was a dhikr of *La Ilaha Illallah Hu* with a collective dance.

A few minutes later, we toned down the dhikr and were breathing deeply; a somber and hushed *La Ilaha Illallah Hu* was coming from the deeper parts of our chests and not just from the throat. We ended with a long *Hu* and silence. We were still holding on to the huge string of prayer beads, which was huge enough to be held by everyone in the circle at once like a rope. As we counted and moved the beads, each member uttered what she wished to say that evening. I was not prepared, but when my turn came, I blurted out the first few verses of *Al-Fatiha* (the Opening) from the Qur'an that I had memorized in my childhood. Marianne, a regular participant in the dances, took up the guitar and played a tune to which we joined. Then we took turns to make the sound of Hu again: *Hu Allah—Hu Allah—La Ilaha Illallah!*

It was now time to put ten names of people who were sick on the healing list. Doris, a regular participant in the dances, said she had two sick children. The others entered the names of friends, relatives, and people they knew and cared about. I requested to put the name of my dying aunt on the list and prayed for her peaceful death. We repeated the invocation at first in English. Then a few more times in German, accompanied by a new prayer. Afterward, we sat through a period of silence. I could hear only the sound of shifting bodies, after which each name on the list was uttered slowly with attention, followed by a longer, deeper silence. We were supposed to listen to the names, and allow our bodies to open up healing routes in silence following the utterance of the names. Three of us now uttered a final prayer, *das Heilgebet* (the healing prayer). In gratitude, we repeated another name from the list of ninety-nine names of Allah: *Ya Shakur! Ya Shakur! Ya Shakur!* (supreme gratitude). At the end of the healing ritual, we stood up and went around hugging each other with deep tenderness.

In Pankow, one of my main field sites is where the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat healing rituals take place on Mondays in a small group. Renate, one of my key interlocutors in this Inayati network, was passionately interested in the healing ritual and took part in it often (chapter 2). I asked her to describe how she experienced the ritual. Renate kept saying, "Difficult to say!" Upon my insistence, she described how it was about feeling connected to a "collective energy":

> When one sings with others, one is connected with the others. I feel the connection with others also through the voice, the collective energy, and the collective sound. I find that beautiful! This bodily movement with

each other; yes, I am connected with the others, even when finally I do not know them . . . That is, for me, a totality. (interview with the author, 7 May 2014)

From our conversation that day, I found out that Renate had navigated the path of secular biomedicine in her quest for healing a chronic debilitating illness of the joints for a decade before she began to combine prescription drugs, psychotherapy, and Sufi practice. Renate practiced silent, everyday dhikr uttering "*Ya Shafi*, *Ya Kafi*" (O divine healer, O divine medicine) in the subway on her way to and from her workplace.[11] Breathing in and out of these words, she would feel their healing power. Despite her chronic and often debilitating illness, Renate took part regularly in the collective dances and the healing ritual. She learned not to seek healing only for herself but also for others (see also chapter 2). Like Renate, most Inayati interlocutors practiced the ninety-nine names of Allah in their healing quests.

"Consciously or unconsciously, every being is capable of healing himself or others," Hazrat Inayat Khan ([1989] 2010, 88)[12] emphasized self-healing. The healing ritual, whether it takes place in Berlin or elsewhere, re-enacts these words and the concept of self-healing. Hazrat Inayat Khan placed self-healing at the top of the hierarchy of healing, above the level of being healed by others or using natural remedies. Sufi practitioners must heal themselves by "*iman* or faith" through developing self-confidence, breathing techniques, and concentration practices. These healing methods employ material objects and written forms of sacred words ([1989] 2010, 89).

"[H]umans communicate with a host of nonhuman beings in a world that is itself communicative but not symbolic or linguistic" (Kohn 2015, 314). The nonhuman can be made palpable in reality, in contexts studied by anthropologists. The Real can be conceived as an all-encompassing, nonhuman being, what Ibn Arabi and other Sufi/Islamic thinkers would refer to as the Being/the Real. In the context of Sufi practice, the ultimate and nonhuman Real (Allah) is itself communicative. What is required is to learn how to resonate with the Real, to feel and inhabit the Elsewhere (Selim 2020a; Mittermaier 2011), in the utterance and silence of the *Heilritual*, the dances, the walks, breathing and reciting the names in dhikr, listening to the *sohbet*, allowing the sounds produced by energized things

in *sema* to resonate with one's body, and the active/passive practice of Sufism informed music-and-movement therapy.

During *Heilritual*, the Inayatis sit together in a circle to create a collective body and transmit healing energy from Allah. They dance with simple steps and breathe-recite the names of Allah. What about a practice where words constitute the speech acts that require responsive listening for healing to take place? In the next site of Sufi practice, the Haqqani-Naqshbandi *sohbet*, the healing power of words and sounds invoke the Real in a context where Qur'anic hermeneutics is at the center of inspired speech acts.

Healing Companionship in Conversation: The Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sohbet

> There are words that have so much energy that when you hear them, they stay with you for life . . . That much energy is contained in a word. The word is the secret . . . When you discover this secret, . . . a word like LIVE or BE, *Kun!*[13] How much energy is in that? Indescribable energy! (Timur Efendi on *Hu*, Sufi-Center Berlin, 17 May 2013)

Sohbet is a Sufi devotional practice of "companionship in conversation" (Silverstein 2008, 118).[14] During my fieldwork in Sufi-Berlin, *sohbet* in the Haqqani-Naqshbandi (and Tümata-Berlin) network was simultaneously an oral and aural practice in which the expert (Sufi teacher) spoke to an audience who listened, in private and public settings, in large and small gatherings. *Sohbet* often took the form of questions and answers after the leader/teacher had delivered an inspired, contemplative lecture. During his *sohbets*, I frequently brought up the matter of healing for discussion with Sheikh Eşref Efendi at the Sufi-Center Berlin (2013–2014) and the Haqqani-Naqshbandi retreat (2014) in southern Germany. Conducting a formal interview seemed inappropriate, but asking a question during *sohbet* offered an opportunity to participate in the practice. In that sense, the dual apprentice reworked the Sufi *sohbet* as an ethnographic method (see chapter 1).

Sheikh Eşref Efendi spoke to a large audience about healing.[15] He cited a Qur'anic verse, which was also the epigraph of Sheikh Nāẓim's Book of Healing: *Wenn ich krank bin, heilt mich der Herr* (When I am ill, the Lord heals me, Qur'an 26:80). The sheikh em-

phasized what the ultimate utterances (from the Qur'an) have to do with healing:

> This verse ["when I am ill, the Lord heals me"] can be recited by an authorized person to someone sick . . . We must recognize our limits/boundaries and should not play God. And we should also not pray to the medicine, the surgeon's scalpel, or the physician. They are all media to reach the goal . . . From the beginning to the end, we should pray: "Allah, you are the healer, who heals." (*Sohbet*, 20 April 2013)

This resonates with the utterance of the healing breath meditation of the Inayati Sufis—*Ya Shafi, Ya Kafi*—as well as the Tümata teacher Oruç Güvenç's *sohbet* (see later in this chapter) on the ninety-nine names of Allah and the contemplative utterance of the healing word, *Ya* şifa (invoking healing), as well as the healing phrase that Khidr practiced very often (*Ya Shifa, Ya Salam, Ya Wadud*—invoking healing, peace, and compassionate love). I make this comparative point here to suggest that resonating with Allah as the ultimate healer is not restricted to Sufi Muslim spaces, but cuts across diverse Sufi sites and interlocutors, whether in Inayati places or the more explicitly therapeutic sites, such as Tümata-Berlin or among the nomadic Sufis, like Khidr. Beyond the divine causality of healing, this Haqqani-Naqshbandi *sohbet* also tackled the nagging question of where to locate the healing effects:

> The suggestion for healthy living and healing when you are sick will be provided to you. But you are not supposed to become sick, you should live in health. So learn first to live healthily, so that you do not need to fall sick . . .[16] Whatever you do, . . . when you drink, say before you drink: In your name, O Lord, *Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim* . . . If this is too long, just say Allah and drink! Say Allah and eat! Pray before and after eating! Wash your hands before eating, and also afterward . . . so that everything, all that you eat and drink, makes you heal. Allah has hidden healing in nature . . . You do not need to look for it elsewhere. The healing is in the effects of healing. There is one requirement: you have to say Allah!

The sheikh made a compelling point about tracing healing in the effects of healing. Following the rules of nutrition and hygiene is not sufficient. While one must find healing in fruits, bread, plants, and elements like water and the earth, the sheikh placed the central requirement to be an utterance. Not surprisingly, it is the word "Allah" that appears again.

Figure 5.2. Sheikh Eşref Efendi in conversation with his students during a Sufi retreat in southern Germany, 22 April 2014. © Nasima Selim.

Later I interviewed a few of those who participated in that healing *sohbet*. Their narratives (Ayşe, Abu Bakr) draw attention to the powerful effects of inspired speech acts and attentive listening to a discourse that allows the audience a reiterating relationship, a possibility of being healed, whether they suffer from daily problems of living or chronic illness. During his *sohbets*, whether in Berlin over the weekends or the Easter retreat in southern Germany, on various occasions, the sheikh said, "If you have an illness, first see the doctor and then come see me." However, he always emphasized that the greatest healer was Allah.

One year after the Berlin healing *sohbet*, I was once again listening to the sheikh at a retreat in southern Germany (figure 5.2). The conversation moved from enjoying the elaborate meal (breakfast) to the question of cooking and the importance of "symbolic" cooking. The sheikh often called on someone from the audience and used his or her life example to instruct his crowd about the possibility of healing. I wondered what happened to those who listened to the sheikh's words with such attention, even if their stories did not always become examples of public instruction. What did they learn,

and how? A few months later, an engaged member of the Sufi network, Ayşe, explained to me that one had to learn to listen *with* the heart. If the heart allowed the words of the sheikh to enter, healing could take place:[17]

> Everybody who sits in a *sohbet* with a sheikh . . . hears the words of the sheikh. And many notice what happens with them . . . The heart is operated on, yes, the sick places and the sickness is always in the hearts, says our sheikh. The heart is operated on through the words of the sheikh. (interview, 21 July 2014)

The "ethics of listening" in Islamic contexts of audition (or hearing) has to do with a range of practices that engender the "felicity conditions" for such modes of listening (Hirschkind 2006, 85). If certain conditions are not met, "the listener will not be able to adopt the attitudes, the dispositions of the heart, upon which successful and beneficial acts of audition devolve" (2006, 86). The Haqqani-Naqshbandi *sohbet* in Muslim-minority Berlin and the sermon cassettes on the streets and mosques in Muslim-majority Cairo do not speak to the same audience, and neither do they mobilize similar content. Yet both modes of listening and cultivating constitute what Charles Hirschkind called the "disposition of the heart." The heart discourses that circulate across Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority societies bear family resemblances with Sufi Islamic underpinnings in these healing practices.

The actions of the hearer/listener and the speaker demonstrate "forms of involvement performed by parties within evolving structures of talk" (Goodwin and Goodwin 2004, 222). The *sohbet* utterances require responsive listening. The sheikh becomes present as an inspired speaker, and the audience is present as attentive listeners engaging with the bodily cues that the sheikh initiates, to laugh, to add vocal resonance to his flowing speech, and breathe with him during the dhikr in the beginning and at the end of the *sohbet*.

Most of what the sheikh said during his *sohbets* resonated with the words of his teacher and the leader of the global Haqqani-Naqshbandi network, the late Sheikh Nāẓim. In the first parts of his book, Sheikh Nāẓim recommended concrete prescriptions and their use in the order of illnesses, symptoms, and medicinal substances. As a disclaimer, a medical doctor's testament was published in the book stating that the readers should pay attention to the "spiritual"

doctor (sheikh) with a comment on the limits of the healing knowledge of the physician. The final chapters of the book focus on the spiritual healing substances: Qur'anic verses (for example, *al-Fatiha*) and the ninety-nine names of Allah (the beautiful names, *al-asmā al-ḥusnā*) as "help, refreshment, and healing substance" (Nāẓim 2004, 167). Healing is supposed to happen when humans incorporate the divine qualities expressed in these names.[18]

What is evident from the *sohbet* and the grounding text mobilized by the Haqqani-Naqshbandi network is that there is juxtaposition and de-differentiation of the religious and the medical. As far as the Sufi sheikhs are concerned, they navigate both spaces and do not shy away from combining what they consider physical, mental, and spiritual.[19] According to the Haqqani-Naqshbandi sheikhs, daily living consists of fluid navigation, not rigid boundaries.

"Old Tradition Newly Discovered": Tümata-Berlin's Music-and-Movement Therapy

In Sufi-Berlin and related sites, connecting verbal discourse with practice is done by a skillful assembling of bodies, breaths, things, and sounds. With time and repeated participatory performances of invoking the Real, such arrangements reveal a re-imagined juxtaposition of "Turkish Sufism" and "Central Asian Shamanism" in Sufi healing practices.[20] There is a distinct therapeutic orientation informed by the imagination of a golden age of Islamic medicine and Arab-Ottoman *makam* music therapy.[21] This (indigenous) tradition of music therapy and Central Asian sounds and movement forms has inspired Tümata-Berlin to practice AOM (Ancient Oriental Music-and-Movement Therapy; *Altorientalische Musik- und Bewegungstherapie*), a form of music-and-movement therapy (Güvenç and Güvenç 2009; Bachmaier-Ekşi 2014a, 2014b).

One evening in 2013, I went to the music-and-movement (group) therapy session with a bad cold, a persistent feature of my post-migrant battle with Berlin's infamous winter. I entered the rented room around eight in the evening. Several instruments were spread out in the front, waiting to be picked up. Hannah, Halima, and Raphael—three members of the Tümata-Berlin group—were tuning their instruments. Raphael provided a short introduction with basic instructions. In the first passive/receptive phase, he welcomed every-

one and invited us to lie and relax on the floor. Then he began to play a long reed flute (*ney*). A slow, haunting tune came out. I closed my eyes. Fifteen minutes later, he asked us to open our eyes, sit up, and invited us to participate in the active phase.

This time other (string) instruments were accompanying the *ney*: we began to move with the mellower *oud* and the rapid tunes of *dombra*. Hannah accompanied Raphael with the sharper sound of *rebab* while Halima continued to pour water from a small bowl into a much bigger bowl creating ripples and the sound of falling water. Raphael showed the basic movements we followed: placing one hand on the chest and the other stretched with palm upward and turning the face toward it, and a series of movements with shoulders and head in various directions. Halima joined in illustrating these movements.

Raphael did not offer an elaborate explanation of these movements in this session. In Tümata discourse, however, these movements are considered archetypal, sacred, and therapeutic.[22] As in most of the music-and-movement therapy sessions, the first set of active movements in the second phase of AOM was about allowing the different parts of the body to get in touch with each other as "loving and conscious contact between the eyes, the heart, and the hands" (Güvenç 2014, 54). During this phase, in the sitting position, Raphael instructed us to attend to our hands, hearts, and eyes. With the right hand on the heart (center of the chest), we were asked to look at the left palm. That is how the eyes, hands, and the (breathing) heart were to be connected.

Afterward, we changed our positions, placing the left hand on the heart and eyes focused on the right palm. Until the sound of music ended, participants continued to connect the (subtle and material) body and body parts to the sound. The second set of movements was done with closed eyes while sitting, with a circular movement of the head and upper part of the body. The participants hummed the tone played by the musicians. The third set of movements was the same, with open eyes, and gradually increased in tempo, resonating to a waltz-like rhythm of the sounds coming from the instruments.

The fourth set of movements was done by pulling and putting the shoulders up and down in short, fast, gentle turns.[23] The fifth set of movements had to do with relaxing the head and neck. With hands resting on the waist, we were instructed to move the head-neck area

to the front and back, and then from right to left and vice versa. The sixth and final set of movements was about improvisation. Halima stood up and sped up the movements by whirling and making random steps. Raphael picked up the *dombra* and sang ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha. We followed him and ended up in giggles. In the end, we returned to our relaxing position with Raphael calming us down with his *ney* once again.

While writing the last lines of this book, I return to the Tümata-Berlin AOM recordings and listen to our shared breathing, the words we uttered, and the sounds we made together. This helps me to remember the movements and relax the contracted scholar body and allow it to resonate with the sounds. I return to feeling and inhabiting the Elsewhere, "the place of placelessness," where healing occurs by the grace of the teacher and Allah, by invoking the human master (*Pir*) and the Divine Master (Allah), turning around them, and requesting them to send healing (şifa), and then ending the invocation with "Hu" (Güvenç 2014, 26).

The blooming abundance of breaths and sounds mobilized in the music-and-movement therapy sessions are reproduced in other Sufi practices, such as dhikr and *sema* (chapter 3). Some of the bodies that were receiving these sound effects and were moving with these sounds in the (group) therapy sessions were also whirling in other places, at other times. Like the more active breathing bodies in dhikr and *sema*, the bodies in Tümata-Berlin's Music-and-Movement Therapy constituted a breathing-sounding body (*Klangkörper*).

Human sound bodies can take on several positions and effects: bodies and instruments can make sound together, receptive bodies may lie on the floor with closed eyes, and there are rested bodies and active bodies mimicking the movements illustrated by the expert body. Jointly they produce the effects of sounds on their bodies in stillness and motion. The wind instrument, *ney*, as played by Raphael, usually led a session, giving space to the string instrument, *oud*, and the more rapid rhythms played through the strings of the *dombra*. The vertical strings of the *rebab* (played by Hannah), with the accompaniment of the sound of water pouring into water (by Halima), created ripples of waves in the air. The receptive and active bodies were breathing, listening/sensing these sounds, sensing the presence of other bodies, the temperature, and the voiced instructions. In addition to the human body as a (sound-making) instru-

ment, musical instruments shared the human longing for union with the divine with their nonhuman bodies.

Things of Longing, Sounds of Rebab *and* Ney

"Sounds [and things] carry forces which are not only good to think about, but good to feel" (Stoller 1996, 179). The sounds of words (and things) carry their performative healing power in resonance (Stoller 2008, 1997; Stoller and Olkes 1987). The *ney* and the *rebab* were most frequently played in the music-and-movement therapy and during *sema* events. They were portrayed as longing bodies, illustrated with Rumi poems on a flyer of the music therapy seminar:

> *Ney*
>
> A bamboo flute, the seven holes representing [body parts of] humans [two eyes, two ears, two nasal openings, and the mouth]. The *ney* is a bridge between the thoughts and the heart, a balance between thinking and feeling:
> *These tones of the reed flute are not made of wind but fire,*
> *Woe to those who do not possess this fire.*
> *The flute is the friend of all those separated from their friend.*
> *Her melodies tear up our veils.*
>
> *Rebab*
>
> A string instrument, originally from Central Asia, brought to Turkey by the mystic Hazreti Mevlana Rumi.
> *The heart is like the rebab, and love is in the heart of the bow.*
> *The resonance of the heart occurs through the striking of the bow. The sound happens when the bow strikes the strings.*
> *When the string vibrates, no thought can force its way between the bow and the string.*
> *The sound of the Rebab drives sadness away from the heart.*

If one listens carefully, one learns to notice the difference between the basic sounds of these two musical instruments. The listener has to imagine the dual possibilities inherent in such listening. The first possibility lies in sounding the human body by allowing the sound of music to work. The second is in imagining the nonhuman bodies of musical instruments as energized things, filled with longing. The breathing heart learns to resonate with these energized things to be able to participate in the Real. As the poem about the *ney* describes,

its sounds are not made of wind, but fire. With fire, the listener is invited to tear up his/her veils of separateness and forgetfulness.

Listening to the sounds of the instruments, whether playing them or allowing them to work their effects on the human body, requires attunement, and the education of attention (Gibson 1979; Ingold 2013). That is how the instruments (the human body and sound-making objects) become energized and exert their healing power. This kind of education or training is not only receptive. By continuing to attend group music-and-movement therapy sessions, attention can be learned from advanced practitioners. Although it usually requires a lengthy process, at times, these lessons are unexpected, triggered by the serendipitous effects of a singular melody.

In the following year (2014), I was listening to Gertrud, another longtime member of the Tümata-Berlin. It was a bright summer day, and we were sitting in a café, sipping herbal tea. Gertrud was telling me her life story when we hit upon the theme of sound and her engagement with the sound of Sufism in relation to Tümata's music (chapter 4). She remembered an old melody she used to hum as a twenty-year-old. She recognized this melody later when she began to take part in the meditation songs praising Allah (*ilahis*) with Oruç Güvenç.

> Gertrud (G): I have sung a melody where I thought, "What's happening?" It was in the modulation of what we [Tümata] do today . . . I did not know at that time!
> Nasima (N): Where did you hear that?
> G: I just felt I had to sing: I noticed people did not find it amusing. For me, it was just somehow it was important! That was a *Modulation* [musical passage] in my center.
> N: How did that happen?
> G: Like the meditation songs [*ilahis*] that we make with Oruç [Güvenç].
> N: Could you sing it?
> G: I do not have it! That was over in a few weeks. I feel it. But I do not have it in my head . . . But it was there, and I did it, and that was really so! And then I forgot . . .
> N: What did you feel?
> G: I do not know. That was just, that was just my tune [*meine Melodie*]!
> N: Sometimes I have such an earworm!
> G: Yes! That was a tune beyond all that I had [heard] otherwise.
> (Interview, 16 June 2014)

How did the healing power of sound work in this instance? Gertrud said she had never heard such a tune before, but the melody appeared at her body's center. When she heard it in Tümata, she knew it was her tune, her melody. Whether the Tümata melody was really her melody is beside the point. The fact that Gertrud found resonance in the Tümata sound and its version of the so-called oriental Sufi music had to do with the act of correspondence, as "living attentionally with others" (Ingold 2014, 389). In this case, the correspondence is not with another human subject but a modality of sound. At the beginning of our conversation that day, when I asked Gertrud how she came to Sufism, she said it was *Musikverständnis* (knowing of music) (chapter 4). This was not a trained aesthetics of music appreciation but an embodied recognition of the tunes resonating with her center. Gertrud's healing narrative invites the possibility of expanded reasoning and resonating with Sufi-designated sound-making practices. Thereby Sufism, often perceived as a religious tradition, is also rendered as therapy.

Sufism as Therapy: The Healing Sounds of the Ninety-Nine Names

Tümata's music-and-movement therapy (AOM) is offered as a semi-public form of group therapy where illnesses and symptoms are not discussed extensively in public. Participants share their immediate experiences briefly. It is neither a form of talk therapy nor addressed to specific illness episodes but mobilized as a "healing technology" to promote well-being, addressed to relieve everyday stress and melancholy. During one of the sessions in springtime, Raphael addressed the seasonal mood and possible symptoms associated with the head area and disabilities:

> Now we make a short sequence of *makam* music therapy.[24] Today we have selected a *makam* . . . According to the traditional conception, it is dry, warming . . . that is, above all, effective for head-related illnesses, which means headache, facial pain, and shoulder pain. Traditionally it was used for paralysis. It fits the season. It is a warming *makam* and belongs to spring or summer. So now breathe in and out once more. Move your fingers and toes a little bit. And then the musical travel ends. (field recording, 25 April 2013)

These group therapy sessions were open for all. Raphael informed me that he had conducted AOM in his medical praxis for patients willing to try it as complementary medicine. As a physician, he was able to introduce this form of therapy to local hospitals in Berlin, most often as part of intercultural/transcultural psychotherapy and in a rehabilitation clinic. I did not get access to observe these interactions. I heard reports from Halima that she had played in AOM sessions, on occasion, for people suffering from Alzheimer's disorder and a number of disabilities.

In a subsequent interview, the physician and music therapist Raphael did not differentiate between the body and the soul that came together in these practices: "You cannot separate them [spirituality and healing] . . . On one side, there is this aspiration for unity, and on the other side, they [the Sufis] are involved with healing, the *shifa* . . . We do music therapy . . . It is the healing of the soul" (interview with the author, 7 July 2014).

A few weeks later, I traveled to the *sema* in Yalova (Turkey) where Hoca Oruç Güvenç was leading the dhikr of ninety-nine names and explaining the significance of these names in his *sohbet*. The whirling bodies were resting downstairs on the carpet, listening, and joined the collective breathing, repeatedly reciting the ninety-nine names, while others continued to whirl. The *ney* produced a haunting, inviting sound. Soon after, Hoca Oruç Güvenç spoke, reciting a verse from the Qur'an: "To Allah belong the East and the West. Whereso-ever you turn, there is the Face of Allah" (Qur'an 2:115). Drawing from the Qur'anic and prophetic hermeneutics and the discourse of Mevlana Rumi, he continued:

> Allah has beautiful names. Pray to Allah with these beautiful names. In Qur'an, we learn about the ninety-nine names . . . As Hazrat Mevlana [Rumi] says, practicing these beautiful names and understanding these names increase the feeling of love in humans.[25] So, [let us] continue from the dhikr in the morning. [Hoca Oruç Güvenç begins with the thirty-third name] *Al-Azim*—the mighty. *Ya Azim*! (11x) . . . *Al-Ghafur*—the all-forgiving. *Ya Ghafur*! (11x) . . . *Ash- Shakur*—the appreciative. It comes from thankfulness. *Ya Shakur*! (11x) . . . *Al-Ali*—the highest; everything is lower than that. *Ya Ali*! (11x) . . . *Al-Kabir*—the greatest one. *Ya Kabir*! (11x). . . *Al-Hafiz*—the preserver. *Ya Hafiz*! (11x) . . . *Al-Muqit* (the maintainer) . . . *Al-Hasib* (the recorder) . . . *Al-Jalil* (the sublime one) . . .

Al-Karim (the generous one) . . . *Ar-Raqib* (the watchful) . . . *Al-Mujib* (the responsive) . . . *Al-Wasi* (the all-embracing) . . . *Al-Hakim* (the wise) . . . *Al-Wadud* (the loving one) . . .

He continues until he reaches the sixty-sixth name, *Al-Wahid* (the One), and ends with the collective dhikr of *Ya Wahid!* (11x) and sura Fatiha. His *ney* announces the completion of one dhikr and the beginning of another in a circle while the *sema* continues. A female *semazen* shouts, "Ya Hu!" and begins to clap while a huge drum begins to beat in unison with the clapping, and rapid breathing of Ya Hu! Hu! Hu! Hu! Allah Hu! (fieldnote, 17 August 2014, on-site English translation)

Hoca Oruç Güvenç connected the names recited during *sema*, dhikr, and elaborated the importance of chanting the names of Allah in his *sohbet*, combining discourse and collective remembrance to accompany whirling movements. In addition to the recitation of names, Tümata-Berlin's repertoire included combinations of indigenous sound traditions from different parts of Turkey and Central Asia. The hybrid tendencies of the network are also illustrated in the maneuvers to present (Sufi) music as therapy, mobilizing a language of things and the healing power of sounds and words.

Rhetorical persuasion is prominent in practices where sonic/aural participation is vital, as in Khidr's audio instructions for the weekly healing meditation and the Haqqani-Naqshbandi *sohbet*. In the Inayati ritual, the embodied movements and sounds of words are acts of bodies coming together in "apt performances" (Asad [1986] 2009, 20). In Tümata-Berlin's music-and-movement therapy, events are structured not only around rhetorical persuasion but also in the pedagogy of mimesis, in terms of postures and participation in the sounds of instruments and the human voice. Without participation, none of these practices can be expected to exert any healing power.

What Is Sufi Healing? Inhabiting the *Barzakh*

"What is Sufi healing?" I asked Murshid Saadi, a senior teacher in the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat. Instead of a direct reply, he sent me a story about sorting hair: "A man goes to a barber and says, 'I have to go for a job interview. Can you cut all of these white hairs out of my beard?' 'Certainly,' says the barber, and proceeds to cut off the man's whole beard and wrap up the hairs. 'Now take this home. You

can sort out the white hairs for yourself'" (personal communication, 20 July 2013). The story was both instruction and a cautionary note about my analytical assumption behind the question.

Asking "what is Sufi healing?" makes little sense if it keeps the healing dimension separate from the rest of Sufi practice. "There is nothing in existence but *barzakhs*, since a *barzakh* is the arrangement of one thing between two other things" (Ibn Arabi in Chittick 1989, 14). We must learn to take into account the interconnections of all created entities and the uninterrupted nature of connected existence. The Sufi path of breathing, wayfaring hearts requires embodying the traits attributed to Allah (1989, 21). The aspiration of actualizing the qualities (traits of Allah) is enacted in breathing the ninety-nine beautiful names (*al-asmā al-ḥusnā*), uttering these qualities in endless repetitions to open one's body for healing. The *barzakh* in Sufi discourse is akin to the liminal space of "creative imagination, of provocative linkages, . . . of personal empowerment" (Stoller 2008, 6). Human beings, as anthropologists, writers, artists, or Sufis, step into the *barzakh* to invoke and intersect imagination, connection, and empowerment into their bodies and narratives of healing, which show the power of "between" (2008, 6).[26]

Shahab Ahmed (2016) emphasized the importance of labeling Sufi practices as Islamic to help conceptualize "Islam in terms which include and account for the historical and social centrality among Muslims of the physically, psychologically, emotionally, and cosmologically explorative practice(s)" (2016, 288). He proposed that "we must similarly expand ourselves to think in terms *beyond orthodoxy*" (2016, 288). As a dual apprentice of anthropology and the Sufi tradition, I could not agree more. Learning Sufi practices trains the novice to consider the conditions of metaphysical possibilities of healing. It also inspires the analytical capacity of the anthropological repertoire to expand and grow its conceptual vocabulary.

The specific reception and enactment of Sufi practices in Germany are closely related to the "post-secular quest for new forms of religion, spirituality, and healing" (Klinkhammer 2015, 202). In Sufi-Berlin, the postsecular imagination of healing engages with "old traditions newly discovered." Sufi healing is made of techniques and discourses drawn from various repertoires of Sufism in Turkey, Central Asia, India, North America, and Western Europe, and the transhistorical and deterritorialized connections made by Sufi inter-

locutors. Bodily techniques of breath and structured rituals of healing are re-enacted to fit locations and audiences. For example, the translocal line of practice (as in *sema* and music therapy) that connected Berlin with Yalova was intersected by lines that connected music therapy with Sufism, the bodily and the sonic, small town and urban metropolis, imploding the boundaries of a conventional ontology of medicine and religion. Similar tendencies can be traced in the Inayati healing ritual. By opening up one's body to become a healing channel for affliction, a human actor can heal his/her troubled affects and others by sending and receiving healing energies from the Elsewhere to the here and now.

Sufi practices are "humanly organized interaction with the sacred other" (Newell 2007: 653)[27] and materialize the transcendent/immanent Real. When human actors participate, what is activated is the "collective imagination" of the Real. Without a consistent presence of the *barzakh*—transforming boundaries and creating diverse conditions of non-dual possibility—healing cannot happen. It does not matter how compassionate the participants are to a body of distress nor how many wonders the breaths, words, sounds, movements, and bodily presences are presumed to produce. The mobilization of the transcendental/immanent Real (Allah) in Sufi practice connects, infuses, transcends, and transforms boundaries between religion, medicine, and performance arts. Sufi healing illustrates an ontological agility to create diverse conditions of possibility that require participation in a non-dual reality to allow the performative power of the Real to do its work.

Healing practices are always already "embedded in local social relations and forms of embodied experience" (Connor 2001, 3). Healing can take place across two scales: healing as in "relation to the highest reality" and healing when it "addresses the particularities of individual episodes of suffering" (Barnes 2011, 15). Healing practices combine "techniques of changing consciousness to enable participants to experience an expanded state of mind" (Greenwood 2009, 125). Tümata-Berlin, the Haqqani-Naqshbandi, the Inayati networks, and the nomadic Sufis continue to invoke the ninety-nine names of Allah, the transcendent and immanent Real of Sufism (as in Islam). The significance of the ubiquitous presence of these names across these networks cannot be overestimated. Despite differences in identity formations, engagement with Islam, history-making, and

ontological politics, all kinds of Sufi networks come together in their participation in and performance of the Real.

"Healers neither repudiate nor maintain allegiance to the ontological boundaries of biomedicine or scientifically defined and bureaucratically controlled forms of traditional medicine" (Langwick 2011, 235). Healers transgress the domaining of separated fields to "articulate a space outside of biomedicine, marking its limits," while they also rework the knowledge and tools of clinical medicine "to formulate new techniques for discerning the matter of maladies, of bodies, and of the range of entities that sustain and threaten life" (2011, 235). Langwick described how postcolonial healing "challenges ethnographers to find ways to describe healing in all its diversity without fixing difference in a priori assumptions about what is material or physical and what is immaterial or conceptual" (2011, 236).

Postsecular Sufi healing practices differ significantly from the postcolonial contexts of healing practices elsewhere. Yet, there are family resemblances between their boundary-crossing moments. Therapeutic authority in secular modernity rests on the figure of the biomedical physician (Dole 2012). Ritual healing is not as systematized as biomedicine and "recalcitrant to standardization" (Sax and Basu 2015, 13).[28] The religious, the medical, and the aesthetic – their boundaries are transgressed in Sufi practice. In Berlin, Sufi healing practices challenge taken-for-granted secularist ontologies of medicine, religion, and aesthetic performance.[29]

Healing practices do not necessarily result in ending (secular or religious) suffering but can provide the frames of reference to live with suffering (Barnes 2011, 15). Religious/spiritual practices make human suffering "sufferable" because one problem of suffering is "not how to avoid suffering but how to suffer physical pain, personal loss, worldly defect, or the helpless contemplation of agony [as] something bearable, supportable—something, . . ., sufferable" (Geertz 1973, 104). So far in this book, I have foregrounded the experiential, the sensuous, and the existential conditions of possibilities to "breathe well." Without the political implications of Sufism, however, the story of breathing, wayfaring Sufi subjects, bodies, and healing practices remains incomplete.

Sufism has not always been an explicitly political formation. But, considering Sufism to be apolitical is a grave analytical oversight, in spite of the insistence by many Sufis that they are "not political."

For the uninitiated, such a statement might seem to be a profoundly anti-political announcement. Yet, politics is integral to Sufi practice, since Sufis are people who learn to feel (and inhabit) the Elsewhere as much as they engage in the here and now. What, then, are the notions of politics and political action that can be derived from the enactments of Sufism and healing in Berlin? What does it mean to "breathe well" as Sufis in a place where Islam is increasingly marginalized? In the next chapter, I elaborate on the political implications of breathing, wayfaring practices, reflecting on the emergent notions of politics and political action in Sufi-Berlin, engaging Sufism and public anthropology.

Notes

1. Khan ([1989] 2010).
2. Efendi, interview with the author, 20 April 2013.
3. Güvenç (2014, 65).
4. Such healing transformations have been discussed across diverse Sufi contexts of healing, predominantly in Muslim-majority settings and rarely in Muslim-minority societies (Pandolfo 2018; Abenante 2013, 2017; Abenante and Vicini 2017; Basu 2014; Clarke 2014; Frembgen 2012; Flueckiger 2006; Werbner and Basu 1998; Van der Veer 1992; Sidky 1990).
5. The performative dimensions of healing often emphasized the "presence of the senses in the rites and the extent to which ritual performances change how people feel" (Desjarlais 1996, 152). For earlier discussions of ritual healing as performance, see Turner (1967), Schieffelin (1976, 1985), and Laderman and Roseman (1996).
6. Paola Abenante (2017) discussed how the words and experience of *dhawq* (taste) are enacted as pathways of connection to the divine, combining religious aesthetics and *Gestalt* psychology, in a contemporary Egyptian Sufi network with branches in Europe.
7. The practice of invoking the names of Allah with the help of the ninety-nine beads of the *subḥa* (collections of *tasbih*) is drawn from a Qur'anic verse (Qur'an 7:180) and a number of *hadith*. The conventional list of ninety-nine names does not exhaust all the names/attributes mentioned in the Qur'an. See Gardet (2012b) for a theological discussion of these names. The leading figures in the Haqqani-Naqshbandi and Inayati networks published several texts about the names of Allah (Nāẓim 2004, 167–172; Douglas-Klotz 2005; Meyer et al. 2011)
8. In addition to spiritual healing, there are four core dimensions of Inayati practice: the universal worship, brotherhood/sisterhood, the inner (esoteric) school, and spiritual ecology/symbology. Sufi teachers in the Inayati lineages later added diverse elements and practices, but the above-mentioned dimensions remain central to Inayati practice.

9. Murshid Hakim Sauluddin, who leads the Dervish Healing Order of the transnational Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat network, considered the healing ritual to be something used as a tool in addition to the other "practices of breathing, visualization, healing meditation, and a close reading of the [Inayati] literature on healing" (conversation, May 2014).
10. *Subḥa* (in Arabic) refers to a rosary, and in the plural, it is known as *tasbīḥ* (also in Farsi), *tesbīḥ/tespih* (in Turkish). In the non-Arabic-speaking world, the *tasbih* often refers to a singular collection of beads. Most Muslims use the *tasbih* during regulatory and supererogatory prayers (Bearman et al. 2012b). For Sufis in Berlin, the *tasbih* assists in dhikr. During my fieldwork, I observed numerous variations of the *tasbih*, with eleven, thirty-three, and ninety-nine beads (occasionally nineteen), and made of wood, glass, and stone. I came across a 999-bead *tasbih* (with one extra bead for the all-encompassing name Allah) during a collective dhikr.
11. *Ya Kafi* is usually translated as the Sufficient or Sufficing One. Murshida Rabeya explained "Ya Kafi" as "O divine medicine, not more or less than we need" (*Du göttliche Medizin, nicht mehr, nicht weniger, als wir brauchen*) (conversation, 28 February 2018). Inayati Sufis occasionally visited the towers of Berlin with the same utterance, mobilizing their efforts to "heal the city" and its past traumas (Selim 2015b).
12. Like all other books by Hazrat Inayat Khan, this volume is based on the transcripts of his lectures during the years 1918 to 1926.
13. *Kūn* in Arabic means "Be." Timur referred to the imperative "Be" in Qur'an, with repeated reference to the divine creative act (Qur'an. 2:117; 3:47,59; 6:73; 16:40; 19:35; 36:82; 40:68), indicating the way all things are brought into existence through the Word, and specifically through the imperative *Be!* (Nasr 2015, 666).
14. Through such conversations and companionship, in the context of a contemporary Turkish Naqshbandi order, "morally structured dispositions" were cultivated in the audience, which can be understood as "disciplines of presence" (Silverstein 2008, 118).
15. Abu Bakr taught me how to whirl during his Sunday workshops at the Sufi center. When I asked him about healing, he directed my attention to a healing *sohbet* by Sheikh Eşref Efendi. The center recorded the *sohbet* and displayed it on its website for public access.
16. This begs the question of whether sickness and suffering might be perceived as an individual's failure to live healthily.
17. Suffering from chronic depression, it was not until Ayşe became involved with the Sufi Muslim community that she was able to begin her healing process. For her, the Sufi Center Berlin was a welcoming space, supporting her pursuit of flourishing with an alternative set of healing practices, grounded in Sufi tradition, that Ayşe described as "spiritual psychiatry" (Willen et al. 2021, 3; see also chapter 2).
18. The Sufi healing discourses in the Haqqani-Naqshbandi *sohbet* and published texts draw extensively from the *Book of Sufi Healing* (Chishti 1991), which in turn derived from the *Canon of Medicine,* an encyclopedic text

by the eleventh-century Muslim physician, philosopher, and polyglot Ibn Sina/Avicenna. The five volumes of Ibn Sina's *Canon of Medicine* consist of the theory and practice of medicine, a treatise on hygiene, and surgical and pharmacological elements (Eckart [1990] 2005, 54). Once translated into Latin, it was used as the main textbook of medicine in Europe for centuries (Bynum 2008; Magner 2005). The students of the Unani system of medicine in many parts of the world still use Ibn Sina's canon.

19. Sheikh Nāẓim (2004) was critical of biomedicine to the point of rejecting it. In contrast, Sheikh Eşref Efendi did not seem to reject biomedicine but focused on its limited healing power.
20. Shamanistic practices were reinterpreted and integrated with Sufi Islam between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries in Turkey and Central Asia (Zarcone and Hobart 2013; Zarcone 2013b, xxiii). Like many other currently Muslim-majority societies, the Islamization of these regions happened through contacts with the traveling Sufi masters and the presence of both literalist, prescriptive (*shari'a*-oriented), and heterodox (more or less antinomian) trends within the Sufi tradition (Zarcone and Hobart 2013).
21. The early development of the Arabic maqam music therapy is attributed to the Arab (Iraqi) physician-philosopher in the Middle Ages, Al-Kindi (c. 800–873 CE, Latinized Alkindus), who made the initial connections of the four strings of the Arab lute with particular body parts, within the broader configuration of the humoral medicine (four humors) practiced at that time (Bachmaier-Eksi 2014a, 86–90). Al-Farabi (870–950 CE) contributed to the theory, and Ibn Sina (980–1037) used Al-Farabi's *maqam* theory for treating patients (Yöre 2012, 267). Later, during the thirteenth century, Ṣafīyyedīn al-Urmawī (d. 1294), a famous musicologist and councilor of the last Abbassid Khalifa, published his system of twelve major *makams* (Bachmaier-Eksi 2014a, 120–23), which forms the basis for the *makam* therapy, widely practiced at medieval hospitals in the Islamicate societies. See Peregrine Horden (2000) for a detailed history of music therapy. See Peregrine Horden and Elisabeth Hsu (2015) for historical and ethnographic studies of humoral theories.
22. Andrea Azize Güvenç, an occupational therapist and a leading figure in Tümata, explained the movement of hands as the drawing of the word Allah in Arabic, keeping the alphabet in imagination (Güvenç 2014, 54).
23. In explaining the sacred function of the human shoulders, Andrea Azize Güvenç drew attention to the Islamic discourse on the presence of angels on each shoulder, one writing up the good deeds and the other the bad (2014, 60). She also discussed the anatomical significance of the human shoulder and its possible pathologies in terms of sustained contraction caused by everyday stress. In her text, she provided sacred and (secular) medical functions of the AOM movements.
24. During the Selçuk and Ottoman periods, *makam* music was played in hospitals as a form of therapy (Shefer-Mossensohn 2009).

25. Sufi practices (e.g., dhikr and *sema*) are "designed to articulate a special semiotics of love" (Netton 2013, 13). Discussion of "love" is prominent in Sufi discourse but lies beyond the scope of this book.
26. The notion of the liminal is a classical term extensively discussed by anthropologists (Turner 1967; Van Gennep 1961). See Paul Stoller (2008) and Vincent Crapanzano (2003) who engaged with the Akbarian notion of the *barzakh* in Sufi discourse to discuss the liminality and power of "between" in anthropological theory. See Amira Mittermaier (2011) for a more recent discussion of the Akbarian *barzakh* as an "in-between space" (2011, 30) akin to the poetic notion of "*Zwischenwelt*/In-between world" (Anamika 2023) that I discussed in chapter 4. While the *barzakh* or "in-between space" relates to the Elsewhere, the notion of Zwischenwelt or "in-between world" relates to the here and now, in between multiple worlds.
27. Sufi practices in the South Asian context have the collective memory of a long history of engagement with the Islamic tradition and Sufi modes of expression. In Sufi-Berlin, such collective memory is neither stable nor uniform but dispersed in an assortment of practices, persons, and traditions. The sense of a coherent symbolic cultural self is not evident in Berlin, but the deployment of symbolic and multisensorial imaginaries is at play when Sufism is enacted in practice. What James Newell perceived in the South Asian context as the "symbolic, unseen reality" (2007, 655), however, resonates with the Real in my research context.
28. William Sax and Helene Basu (2015) argued how the interventions of the modern, secular states are invested in discouraging, eliminating, and often criminalizing ritual healing practices. Ritual healing continues because these practices respond to human needs, be it in East and South Asia, the African Continent, or a postsecular city like Berlin. Here, it is not only biomedicine that is systematized but complementary and alternative medicines as well. Sufi practices inhabit and exceed such rigid systematization, navigating ritual healing across the religious/spiritual, aesthetic, and therapeutic fields.
29. See Vincanne Adams, Mona Schrempf, and Sienna Craig (2013) for the entanglements and translation processes between science and religion in Tibetan medicine. See Dorothea Lüddeckens and Monika Schrimpf (2018) for the constitution of medical discourses and practices beyond the Tibetan context.

Chapter 6
"The Right-Wing Attacks Our Mosques and Our Muslim Brothers Do Not Consider Us to Be Real Muslims!"

The (Anti-)Politics of Breathing Hearts

> *Unpolitisch sein heißt politisch sein, ohne es zu merken!*
> (Being nonpolitical is to be political, without noticing it!)
> —Attributed to Rosa Luxemburg (1879–1919)

> Politics "from below": Politics of man [and woman], not of the apparatus. Politics growing from the heart.
> —Václav Havel[1]

In the autumn of 2015, a group of nomadic Sufis gathered in Khidr's apartment. It was a small gathering, five of us seated in a circle that included Khidr, Abdullah, Sophia, Idris, and me. We discussed possibilities for engaging with the material world and navigating perpetual crises while walking the Sufi path. Khidr suddenly asked: "What if you knew that in one week, I would be dead? What would be the last question you would ask me now?"

My mind, for reasons unexplainable to me, went completely blank, perhaps because of the shock at the possibility of considering a dear friend and teacher leaving our world permanently. I quietly said, "I don't know!" Idris was the next person to respond. He said he would ask, "What shall I do?" Everybody laughed, including Idris himself, at the apparent absurdity of the question. Khidr's long-term companion and collaborator Abdullah asked, "Why not?" to which Idris did not answer. We were curious about what Sophia thought.

Figure 6.1. "God loves you; it does not matter which one [which God]." Joachim's T-shirt makes a statement at the Inayati Order universal worship ceremony in a Protestant church of Kreuzberg, 4 May 2014. © Nasima Selim.

She said she would ask Khidr, "Were you happy?" Watching the apparent perplexity on our faces in reaction to Sophia's question, Khidr laughed and told us what he had asked his teacher in a similar circumstance: "How could I be more effective in transmitting the *baraka*?" His teacher answered him back, "The answer is simple. You must put it in the intention."

Such an intention to be effective in the material world requires the (political) practice of stepping away from supremacist ideas of "we are the best." Khidr explained,

> There is the truth, but how could (that) truth be the best? Like what Rumi said, "The lamps are different, but the light is the same." . . . The idea of the Divine, and I can call it Allah or Khuda or whatever. That is, for me, a reality. I see him, it, her, whatever, genderless. It is a friend. It is in me, outside of me. And I have a lovely relationship with it.

On that evening, Khidr framed the question and answer as a teaching moment to explain what is known in Sufi parlance as "die

before you die," detachment from the material world while acting and engaging with it as a constant process of "breathing in (the Divine) and breathing out" (fieldnote, 12 November 2015).

"God loves you* . . . *it does not matter which one [God]!" Joachim was wearing a slogan on his T-shirt at the Petriplatz peace protest. In the aftermath of an escalating Israel-Palestine conflict in 2014, he joined a demonstration with several members from the Inayat-Khan-inspired Sufi-Movement and Inayati Order (Inayatiyya) networks. They read out a peace prayer composed by Hazrat Inayat Khan. Joachim's T-shirt displayed the symbols of the Abrahamic traditions: the Cross of Christianity, the Star of David of the Jewish religion, and the Crescent Moon and Star of Islam (figure 6.1). Joining a protest or demonstration for peace is not necessarily a remarkable political action and neither is it always effective in creating change. Yet people gather to demonstrate in Berlin. At times religion/spirituality (or the reference to it) plays a role in demonstrations conceived by Sufis as political acts.

When I met Joachim, he said, "I have remained true to my mystical direction." As a *cherag* (leader of the prayer) in the local Inayati Order (Inayatiyya), Joachim organizes the "universal worship" (*Universeller Gottesdienst*) every month. There, he recites and contemplates with his friends the verses from the sacred books of major world religions. Joachim is concerned with the (anti-)politics of peace. Sufis and other postsecular subjects keep practicing their prayers, whether for healing or peace. Organizing universal worship in a society torn by interreligious conflicts could be considered a courageous act, a profoundly political action. Bringing together diverse traditions in Berlin's laissez-faire religious/spiritual landscape—are they examples of life-affirming political action or only emblematic of rampant cultural appropriation?[2] What kinds of politics are made possible with postsecular Sufi practice? This chapter addresses these questions bringing contemporary Sufi practice in dialogue with various notions of politics and political action.

How Do Breathing Hearts Talk Back to Power?

"The nonpolitical image of Sufism is illusory" (Ernst 2003, 108). There is no univocal Sufi approach to politics. Sufis have engaged themselves in sustaining an ethical vision of Islam across its global

history (Milani 2018; Green 2012; Heck 2009, 2007b). Sufi practices are not without political consequences under the shadow of nationalism, literalist and reformist religion, and secularist hegemony. Instead of preaching postsecular Sufi practice as an example of life-affirming political action or dismissing it as cultural appropriation, the more important question is: How does Sufism talk back to power?

"Wherever people gather together, it [the body politic of people] is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily, and not forever" (Arendt [1958] 1998, 199). Sufis, with their breathing hearts, gather to form local collectives, like other seekers of alternatives to the dominant arrangements. Contemporary Sufis in Berlin imagine a non-anthropomorphic Real Being beyond human norms and orientations, an entity that "begets not; nor was begotten" (Qur'an 112:3). What kinds of power can be generated with Sufism with such imaginations, and what kinds of politics?

Sufis in Berlin gather to pray for the afflicted (healing ritual), to repeat and resonate their breaths with the ninety-nine names of Allah (dhikr), to whirl around one's axis toward the heart (*sema*), to embody the prophets, saints, and Sufis (Dances of Universal Peace and walks), to allow Sufi sounds to work on the body (music-and-movement therapy) and to listen to inspired utterances (*sohbet*), cultivating attention. In mobilizing the subtle and material bodies, Sufism provides techniques for transforming a self-centered ego (*nafs*). Polishing the breathing, metaphysical heart (*qalb*), Sufism teaches one to expand the capacity to feel compassion and learn to feel and inhabit the Elsewhere (Selim 2020a; chapters 3 and 5).

The Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sufi-Center Berlin enacted a vision of communal hospitality in opening their space to marginalized communities, including the homeless, people with severe mental health conditions, refugees, and new migrants of Color. Their persistent efforts to foster German-Turkish relations in a "parallel society" engendering joint leadership (with white Germans and Turkish-German members of Color on the board of its association) and organization of diverse activities at the center, illustrated a coming together of "the Germans" and those who are perceived as the "non-German others." The leaders of the transnational network are known for expressing monarchist (neo-Ottoman) sympathies, conservative gender norms, and conversion efforts (Stjernholm 2015, 2009; Bax 2014; Böttcher 2011; Schleßmann 2003; Yavuz 1998). Irrespective of an affinity

toward past monarchies, there are lessons to learn about charity, conviviality, and sharing of community resources from the sustained hospitality they express toward marginalized others.

Yet, the Haqqani-Naqshbandi discourse keeps repeating that they are "not political."[3] On the one hand, their expressed vision of benevolent monarchy creates a visceral discomfort in those who believe in the ultimate value of liberal democracy. On the other hand, the antipolitics of their peace work and community engagements foster interreligious relations in the city. These acts talk back to the powers exerted by German nationalism, dominant secularism, and anti-Muslim racism, as well as the anti-Sufi literalist, prescriptive formations within Islam.

"Everything that you do becomes part of yourself," Sufi dancer Claire said with the lightness of not belonging to a definitive tradition (interview with the author, 24 April 2013). The lightness of not belonging is another feature of postsecular subjectivity, signaling a nomadic wariness of the fixation on identity in resistance to domaining. Such resistance is not necessarily an inability to cultivate/deepen sensibilities in a particular tradition, although the dangers of cultural appropriation and whitewashing are potentially lurking in these moves. In Berlin, not all Muslims belong to the literalist/prescriptive enactments of Islam. Not all Sufis identify themselves as Muslims. Not all those who practice Sufi techniques even call themselves Sufis. The Sufi Islam practiced by the Haqqani-Naqshbandi, is this *really* Islam? If not restricted to the Islamic tradition (the Inayatis draw from multiple traditions), are they *really* Sufis? Tümata-Berlin's juxtaposition of Sufi *sema* and music-and-movement therapy, are they *really* medicine? These questions can be better addressed with the notion of ontological politics, as the *politics of what*.

Ontological Politics of Sufism in Germany

"Politics are not just about what governments say, or states do" (Mittermaier 2011, 237). Writing about Sufi-Islamic dream practices in contemporary Egypt, Mittermaier emphasized that a "serious engagement with other imaginations, rather, is itself a political act" (2011, 20). Mittermaier invoked Hannah Arendt in that politics are about the everyday practices of individuals, resulting in actions with

short and long-term political predicaments, in a domain that lies beyond labor and work (Arendt [1958] 1998, 7).

Sufi practice in Berlin is neither labor nor work in that sense but action that enacts the possibility of the otherwise,[4] talking back to some of the power arrangements in a society that claims to be diverse and pluralistic. The options between the different versions of Sufism (Islamic, universalist, therapeutic, and nomadic) might clash in some places while depending on each other in other spaces as an interlaced phenomenon. They are not performed out of spontaneous, individual choice but in dialogue with existing traditions of religiosity and secularity. Destabilizing a foundational focus on human actors, ontological politics focuses on how political actors may be implicated in how they are *enacted*.

Ontological politics, in this regard, enable us to ask, "*where* such options might be situated and *what* was at stake when a decision between alternative performances was made" (Mol 1999, 74). "Articulating alternative metaphysical commitments and doing things differently" is about "doing another sort of politics—ontological politics where we discuss if and how we might make explicit our metaphysical commitments and so interrupt and create possibilities for considering re-rendering our worlds" (Verran 2007, 36). Ontopolitics is not diagnostic of a problem but resonates with the hermeneutics of (affective) pedagogy, insisting on the cultivation of abilities to learn from situated practices. Attending to ontopolitics also brings to mind German media debates about Sufism and its ontology.

"Why Is Sufism Not At All So Peaceful?" The Problem of Fixing Ontologies

In the summer of 2016, one of the widely distributed German newspapers, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (*SZ*), published a short article on Sufism. The author used a handful of historical examples to argue "why Sufism is not at all so peaceful" (*Warum Sufismus gar nicht so friedlich ist*) (Weidner 2016). A few days later, a fiery response appeared in another major German newspaper, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (*FAZ*).[5] In the latter, the author argued why "Sufism is the biggest enemy of Islamic extremism" (*Sufismus: Der größte Feind des islamischen Extremismus*) (Trojanow 2016).[6]

The German media landscape is involved in a divisive fight for Sufism's ontology around a question this book also asks: What is Su-

fism? But the three positions (Weidner's, Trojanow's, and mine) generate different answers: Stefan Weidner and Ilija Trojanow went in opposite directions, and yet both presented Sufism as "Islamic Mysticism," a definition they fixed, either in past militancy (Weidner) or in a timeless peaceful presence (Trojanow). Weidner focused on nineteenth-century anti-colonial resistance in Algeria as an example of the non-peaceful ontology of Sufism. He referred to the history of clashes between Salafism and Sufism in Muslim-majority societies. He questioned the motives of "Westerners" interested in practicing Sufism, wondering whether these interests were about consumerist lifestyle changes.

Weidner reprimanded well-known German-speaking authors—Peter Handke, Navid Kermani, Christoph Peters, and Ilija Trojanow—for their explicit sympathy with Sufism. In response to Weidner's article in the SZ, Trojanow focused on a radically different depiction of Islamic mysticism in the *FA*Z. He pointed out the political significance of Weidner's postulates with "the intellectual weapon of humor," a witty rendition of Mullah Nasreddin/Nasruddin. In his retelling of the widely traveled story, Nasreddin was questioned about his religious dogma, and he responded with scathing humor, "That depends . . . on which heretics are currently in power!" (Trojanow 2016). Trojanow considered Weidner's comments politically dangerous since Sufis faced increasing violence from anti-Sufi radical Islamists globally, and the Sufi spirit of inquiry in Muslim-majority societies was going through a difficult period. Trojanow proposed Sufism as one of the best ways to ensure *peaceful coexistence* in the Islamic world, where, according to him, secularization was not going to take place anytime soon.

As much as I am irked by Weidner's reductive analysis of the vast assemblage that hangs together in the name of Sufism, I do not fully agree with Trojanow, who argued that Sufism would invariably lead to peaceful coexistence. The lessons from my fieldwork and engagements with the histories of Sufi/Islamic tradition make me assert another, anthropologically informed perspective. The answer to the question of what Sufism is will always depend on the kind of Sufism and how that kind of Sufism is practiced, when, and where. In practice, Sufism becomes a religion, medicine, performance art, or politics (or all that), leading to variable consequences under variable circumstances.[7]

The Sufis (in Berlin and elsewhere) do their ontological and existential politics often as anti-political politics (therapeutic and peace-oriented), at times at odds with democratic, liberal capitalism due to their monarchist agenda (Haqqani-Naqshbandi). At other times, Sufis are at odds with secularist biomedical hegemony because of their therapeutic politics centered around complementary, alternative medicine, and religious/spiritual healing (Inayati and Tümata-Berlin). Contemporary Sufism often yields an explicit anti-political discourse when interlocutors emphasize being "not political," deepening a spiritual versus political dichotomy.

In the medieval period of the Common Era, *tasawwuf* emerged as a movement in Islamicate societies in opposition to the literalist Sunni statist regulation of Islam, supported and persecuted in turns, depending upon the sympathy or antipathy of the monarchist regimes. Sufism is historically situated within the Islamic tradition. In its global history, Sufism shifted its directions to the so-called left, the right, and the center of conventional politics, depending on "which heretics . . . [were] currently in power" (as Mullah Nasreddin might say, Trojanow 2016), the human actors who embodied the politics of their times and places (Milani 2018; Mercier-Dalphond 2017; Muedini 2015a, 2015b; Heck 2009, 2007b).

In the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonialized Muslim world, Sufi Muslims were involved in a range of anti-colonial political movements (Muedini 2015a).[8] A common trope about Sufi politics in regions such as the South Asian subcontinent, scarred by the communal tension between Muslims and other religions, is that Sufism promotes "communal harmony" (Banu 1991, 215). Throughout history, practitioners of Sufism were involved in promoting political visions of social justice in Islam and did not always shy away from violence (Milani 2018; Muedini 2015a; Heck 2007b). A strict dichotomy between peaceful, experiential, mystic Sufis versus militant, conservative Sufis is historically untenable.

Sufi politics in a Muslim-majority society differ from that in a Muslim-minority society (Germany) fraught with anti-Muslim racism. Framing the politics of Sufi practice also depends on the politics of knowledge-making, the kind of scholarship one chooses to adopt, and the questions with which one guides the object of inquiry. The double hermeneutics of pedagogy inherent in dual apprenticeship (learning from two traditions) and affective pedagogy (learning from

the senses and emotions) are neither nonpolitical nor transhistorical (Selim 2020a).[9] With this approach, the politics of breathing, wayfaring hearts can bring together anthropology's sensuous, affective, existential, and ontological traditions with the (possibility of) life-affirming politics of Sufi practice.

Those who practice Sufism may proceed in radically opposed directions: working toward progressive peace or violent militancy; liberal democracy or a return to monarchy; preaching restrictive gender (and sexuality) norms or inclusive participation and female leadership; the strict enforcement of literal interpretations of Islamic law or opening the avenues for exploring creative possibilities in-between. In the presence of the sheer diversity of ethnographic evidence,[10] labeling Sufism as either militant (Weidner) or peaceful (Trojanow) is to foreclose its ontology as an unchangeable phenomenon.

The example of the (German) media struggle for Sufism's ontology invites the question: what can anthropology contribute to this contested public domain? Anthropologists are equipped to explore the ontological possibilities of a phenomenon (here Sufism) by tracking it in practice. An ontological exploration (the question of what is) synergizes with anthropology's epistemological goals (the question of how we know each other) not by claiming Sufism as inherently peaceful (Trojanow) or militant (Weidner), but by being aware that Sufis (and others) can engage Sufism as one among many possible solutions to the deployment of radical and brutal Islamism and anti-Muslim racism perpetuated by conservative and far-right forces (in Germany).

The 2016 media portrayal of Sufism is symptomatic of the condition of "liquid fear" against "terrors of the global" (Bauman 2006) as much as it is emblematic of anti-Muslim racism in Germany, where Sufism is often perceived and portrayed as "good Islam." Liquid fear is "the name we [liquid moderns] give to our *uncertainty*: to our *ignorance* of the threat and of what is to be *done*—what can or can't be—to stop it in its tracks—or to fight it back if stopping it is beyond our power" (2006, 2). In the shared milieu of proliferating liquid fear, it is necessary to open diverse paths of inquiry, rather than fixing ontologies with a polemical argument about what a phenomenon (Sufism) is or is not. Sufi interlocutors mobilize diverse ontologies in their engagements facing liquid fear, whether such fear manifested against the terrors of the global (radical Islamism) or Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism in a Muslim-minority society.

The Conundrums of Being a Sufi Muslim in Germany

"It is easier to be a Sufi than a Muslim," Abu Bakr said with a saddened smile. "My basic experience has been that!" I stared at him expecting to hear more, and said, "You told me once that Sufis were attacked from both sides, the right-wing and other Muslims" (see Introduction). I asked him if he still felt this way, more than a year after our first conversation at the Sufi center in Neukölln. It was 2014 and my second year of fieldwork. Abu Bakr nodded affirmatively and said he was tired of the divisive fight among Muslims about what (true) Islam is. With visible discomfort, he changed the direction of our discussion. In a second conversation, he detailed the paradox of being a Sufi Muslim in German society.

"The media talks about it [Sufism] nicely . . . Rumi and the whirling dervishes!"[11] Abu Bakr said with a sense of irony. According to him, Sufism is not just a way of the heart, but "Sufism is the *heart* of Islam." He understood (Sufi) Islam as disciplining the self-centered ego ("ego-training"), adhering to the Islamic regulations, and ethical practices (*adab*) as well participating in the supererogatory practices of dhikr, *sema*, and *sohbet*. Discussion of his breathing, wayfaring path soon turned to a discussion of fear. Abu Bakr framed the (radical Islamist) terrorists and the war-waging presidents (e.g., George Bush) of "the West" as people "without faith" (*Ungläubige*). He argued that understanding the connection between (Western) militarism and (Islamic) fundamentalism helps drive out fear from the hearts of common people. According to him, fundamentalism was not an integral part of Islam, and (Western) militarism was not Christian. In his narrative, everyday life was filled with fear of the other from both sides: "Muslims also have a fear of the Christians . . . Our sheikh says, 'Do not make things difficult!' . . . For a long time, we had no permission to grow a long beard . . . He [sheikh] has a small beard . . . In Europe, people are afraid [of the long beard]" (interview with the author, 13 July 2014).

The public (media) representation poses Sufis in a bright light while Muslims become suspects. What Abu Bakr also referred to is the kind of fear that is "liquid" in nature, proliferating with the ebb and flow in multiple directions in a milieu that nurtures that fear while others resist and offer counter-narratives that configure these liquid fears (Bauman 2006). The (liquid) fear of radical Islamist ter-

ror is conflated with and fueled as a fear of Islam (hence the need to resist) propagated by the populist and right-wing nationalists and structural anti-Muslim racism in Germany and the rest of Europe (Jünemann 2017).

Abu Bakr's comments describe the conundrum of being a Sufi Muslim in German society. He paradoxically praised and criticized the media for a favorable portrayal of Sufism. In an earlier encounter, he focused on the precarious position of a Sufi Muslim, poised between his Muslim brothers who think [Sufis] are not "real Muslims" and the German right-wing attacking the mosques (conversation, spring 2013; Introduction). Abu Bakr's dilemmas and German media discourses exemplify the struggle around the ontology of Sufism. These ontological politics of breathing hearts revolve around the anti-political politics of peace and therapeutic politics.

The Anti-political Politics of Peace and Therapeutic Politics

In June 2014, news of the victorious march of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) into Mosul made headlines in German media. The news dominated everyday discussions in Berlin. A few weeks later, in the aftermath of an escalating Israel-Palestine conflict, a pro-Palestine demonstration took place in Berlin, with more than a thousand people marching against the Israeli military intervention. At around the same time, pro-Israel demonstrations took place in the same neighborhood.

During such heated local/global moments, the Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sheikh Eşref Efendi often chose to address the issue of violence in his evening *sohbet*. It was the month of Ramadan, and he looked exhausted. After a collective breathing practice (dhikr), the sheikh spoke to the audience invoking a popular hadith:

> If you see injustice, fight with your hands. If that is not possible, protest with your mouth. If even that is not possible, then feel it in your heart and protest injustice. The two angels are sitting on both sides of your shoulders and are writing down everything. Do not forget to be human. Where is the true human being? (fieldnote, 25 July 2014)

The sheikh promoted a politic of peace incumbent upon him in a time of Islamist terror. The predicament of Muslims in German

society, whether Sufi or not, is that they must always explicitly articulate statements of nonviolence as if an explicit politic of peace is the requirement for their right to exist.

The conundrums of Sufi Muslims show how anti-Muslim racism in German society and the dominance of literalist and reformist Sunni Islam's rejection of Sufism may push Sufi Muslims to the margins. On one hand, white German Sufis and non-Muslim Sufis do not share the deadly predicament of structural anti-Muslim racism with their Black Muslim and Muslim of Color counterparts. On the other hand, non-Muslim Sufis are often perceived as pseudo-Sufis and, along with their white German companions, are especially prone to "predatory (cultural) appropriation" (Furlanetto and Shahi 2020, 174). The importance of understanding Sufism as being Islamic, whether one identifies as Muslim or not, is a critical step toward avoiding (cultural) appropriation.

Sufi healing practices are also vulnerable to criticism in the secularist imagination in Germany. Despite sustained, widespread interest in alternative healing practices in German therapeutic cultural history (Heyll 2006; Jütte 1996), the canon of secularist biomedicine and the public/private health insurance authorities of the German state marginalize alternative healing. Alternative healing practices are ridiculed as "magical thinking" (*magisches Denken*) or "esoteric ideas" in contrast to the assumed superiority of evidence-based medicine (Danzinger and Egger 2013, 4–5; Grüter 2010; Harder 2007). The therapeutic politics of Sufi healing talk back to these discourses of secularist, biomedical hegemony.

Therapeutic politics (Stein 2011, 188) engenders the possibility of resistance within the wider therapeutic culture;[12] Berlin is a case in point. Tümata-Berlin and its local leader, Raphael, were keen on popularizing the music-and-movement therapy combining sounds drawn from Central Asian Shamanism, Turkish Sufism, and the Turkish/Arabic tradition of pentatonic *makam* music (chapter 1, 5). Ayşe articulated Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sufism as spiritual psychiatry, juxtaposing the religious and the therapeutic in her quest for healing with many others who came to Sufi-Center Berlin, among them many with a history of mental illness and substance abuse (chapter 2). Renate's pathway to healing included a pragmatic concoction of biomedicine, complementary and alternative medicine, and Inayati healing practices (chapter 2). Claire spoke of the healing arts from

the living archive of Sufi techniques (chapter 2). All three Sufi networks and nomadic Sufis draw resources from available repertoires to conflate the religious and the therapeutic (Selim 2020a; 2015a, 2015b; chapters 2–5).

In the critical discourses/practices regarding advanced capitalist and late modern societies, there is a habitual critique that such therapeutic culture is narcissistic, borne out of "therapeutic individualism" and the flourishing "technologies of the self (hood)" (Stein 2011, 188). A popular argument is that alternative medicine and healing practices have depoliticized society and diminished the hitherto strong political culture to transform oppressive structures (2011, 188). The notion of therapeutic politics moves this discussion beyond an easy dichotomy of therapeutic individualism versus political collectivism. Contrary to a secularist imagination, such therapeutic cultures politicize identities, generate critiques of social inequalities, and address power imbalances (2011, 191). Life-affirming politics are also made possible by therapeutic cultures calling "for the 'breaking of silence,' and for the proliferation of talk about that which was unspeakable" (2011, 191).[13] If postsecular Sufi subjects are allowed to speak, their critiques, practices, existential quests, and anti-political politics transgress the silence imposed by the prescriptive traditions of religion, secularism, and nationalism.

Articulating healing with resources drawn from different kinds of Sufism pushes the inherent, secularist logic of biomedicine toward the otherwise. The postsecular city of Berlin connects the spaces of Sufi healing and other secularized techniques of family resemblance (for example, Yoga, Vipassana, and Qigong—in all of which breathing occupies a central place, including Sufi practice). Sufi practices—in terms of the techniques of transformation, alternative healing practices, and the human subjects implicated in these practices—circulate in and out of the religious and therapeutic marketplaces. But their mobilities and modes of exchange cannot be reduced to the logic of a market of religions (Zinser 1997) or the economic model of a religious-therapeutic marketplace. Sufis inhabit the breathing hearts aiming to "breathe well" in the context of anti-Muslim racism, not simply and only as consumers. Limiting the understanding of Sufism to a product of contemporary market forces, whether regulated or unregulated, is to fall for economic determinism (Stark and Finke 2000).

The financial exchange is a relatively delimited dimension of the enactments of Sufism. Intentional Sufi communities of practice thrive with "non-market forms of sociality" (Palmer 2011, 569). The market metaphor here refers not only to exclusively financial relations but to the wider supply and demand structures within a neoliberal economy. I do not claim that the supply-demand structure is absent in Sufi-Berlin. Paid workshops by Sufi teachers and collective self-organization of community events collecting donations take place side by side. Sufi networks are open to newcomers (tourists, visitors, consumers) from time to time, but long-term and committed teacher-student relationships are key to becoming a Sufi.

The therapeutic politics of Sufi interlocutors inhabit an in-between place, enabling them to not only be producers and consumers in the religious, therapeutic marketplaces, but something else. Their practices are part of a gift economy where voluntary exchange of breath, words, sounds, movements, prayers, and conversations takes place in the context of teaching and learning. In Sufi seminars, the attending public pay in return for pedagogic instructions (e.g., Inayati healing seminars, Tümata-Berlin music therapy seminars, and *sema* ceremonies). At regular meetings of these communities, donations of money, time, and labor are expected from participants. Financial exchanges are tacitly or explicitly obligatory in fostering and sustaining social relations (Mauss [1925] 2016), but profit-making is not their central concern.

In contrast to money, the question of power embodied in charismatic authority is central. Although ultimate power belongs to Allah, Sufi breather-wayfarers aspire to incorporate Allah's attributes as humble actors. The Sufi teachers embody and exert the authorized power of sacred leadership. They assert pedagogic and therapeutic power by invoking genealogies (*silsila*) and retelling stories about past authority figures and by exercising their performative skills of participating in the R/real (chapter 1, 5). Such power is co-constituted by students pledging allegiance to the lineage in various degrees by negotiating commitments or nomadic navigation. In the case of nomadic Sufis, the power of the techniques may take precedence over human authority.

The political economy of Sufism is not my main object of inquiry in this book. My work explores the ontological and existential, sensuous, and affective dimensions of Sufism in the context of

anti-Muslim racism in Germany. Ontological and anti-political politics matter more in Sufi-Berlin than the logic of the market economy. Disillusionment with conventional politics in terms of parliamentary elections and resistance to the hegemonic governmental power may lead to anti-political statements, such as, "I am not political." Anti-political politics is neither utopian nor an absolute disillusionment with (formal) politics.[14] As a concept, it opens a space to understand the declared-not-political (yet political) engagements of Sufi actors.

The Anti-political Politics of Inayati Sufism

In Sufi-Berlin, explicit references and affiliations to conventional, formalized politics were avoided, often with common utterances, such as "I know it is not my path to become a politician" (Murshida Ganga) or "We are not political" (Abu Bakr). These remarks mirror other interlocutors who said "I am not religious" or "Sufism is not a religion" (Renate). The politics of Sufism are not only about mobilizing ontologies, peace, or therapeutics but also about the unintended effects of actions not evidently, officially politics, if politics is linked to the state, the government, and policy reforms. The explicit articulations of such politics have to do with the practical morality of "anti-political politics" (Havel [1984] 1992, 269): "[P]olitics not as the technology of power and manipulation, of cybernetic rule over humans or as the art of the utilitarian, but politics as one of the ways of seeking and achieving meaningful lives, of protecting them and serving them."

"Where do I put my energy? I know it is not my path to become a politician," Murshida Ganga said, with her characteristic bright smile, in response to my question, "what about politics?" We were sitting at her home in north Berlin, sipping herbal tea. She rightly sensed a certain irritation and urgency in my voice and replied calmly:

> For me, it is a question of energy. Where do I put my energy? I know it is not my path to become a politician. I can see the whole world and everything that is going on. It is like a theater. It is happening in the world, and there are many levels of consciousness. I sympathize, and I embrace all this. In my seminars, we always include prayers of peace. To Ukraine. To Syria. Sending peace and love. Whatever that does, I do not know! (interview with the author, 2 May 2014)

In hindsight, my question emerged from the hermeneutics of suspicion I shared with scholars critical of anti-political statements. There are, however, many alternatives to think and practice resistance against the late modern consumer capital, exceeding the secularist narrative or its counter-figure in the literalist, reformist religious calls to return to the origin.

However, the Sufi techniques of transformation (breathing, among others) do not, by default, lead to the critical politics of resistance unless these politics are cultivated as structural, collective mobilizations for "breathing well." The ontological and anti-political politics of contemporary Sufi practice must come together in solidarity around the common causes that affect their non-Sufi counterparts. Sufi action is not only about feeling and inhabiting the Elsewhere but also about serving the practical reason in the here and now, mobilized as peace prayer, healing action, and refugee support work.

Peace Prayer, Healing Action, and Refugee Support Work

In 2015, Germany went through the so-called refugee crisis when the arrival of refugee newcomers, primarily from Syria and the Middle East, but also from Central Europe and Africa, reached a peak (BAMF 2015). More than six hundred refugees were getting themselves registered daily in Berlin (Schönball 2015). The refugee newcomers faced considerable challenges due to the rigid, discriminating German laws and administration. While an astonishing number of *Willkommensinitiativen* (welcome initiatives) were springing to life in support of them, the right-wing and conservative forces reinvigorated anti-Muslim racism in Germany (like post-9/11 United States), accusing Muslims of not integrating into "German culture," placing refugee Muslims at the center of public blame for the repeated ISIS-inspired attacks in Western Europe (2015–2017).[15]

Soon afterward, in the wake of the brutal terrorist attack in Paris (November 2015), the Inayati networks were engaging in collective healing prayers. I received an email from Murshida Rabeya who had sent a request to all *murids* (students). She wrote that we were all affected by the "refugee crisis" as much as what happened in Paris. She invited everyone to daily prayer for peace at noon, irrespective of geographical region and time zone, to recite and breathe with an

intention of peace (email, 15 November 2015). Around that time, I got involved in the newly formed *Engaged Anthropology Collective* at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Freie Universität Berlin. Among various initiatives that included ethnographic research by the university students,[16] our collective initiated a series of conversations with Syrian and Iraqi refugees living in the local camps.

I sent emails to the Sufi networks with an invitation to collaborate in terms of supporting the newcomer refugees. Tümata-Berlin members have been involved in refugee support work individually. As a group, they immediately responded with enthusiasm to the idea of organizing a welcoming concert. Together with the Sufi musicians and their teacher the late Rahmi Oruç Güvenç (who happened to be visiting Berlin at that time), a few anthropologist colleagues, newcomer refugees, and activists took part in an engaged intervention in the form of a concert that resulted in an experimental collaboration and writing (Selim et al. 2018). This event was a spin-off of ideas emerging from discussions in the newly formed collective at the Institute and the Sufi networks, an instance of rapprochement between engaged Sufism and public anthropology. While the collaborative article focused on sustained engagement in the aftermath of the event, the next section will describe the event that inspired our subsequent collaboration.

Affective Politics, Engaged Sufism, and Public Anthropology

"How do emotions work to align some subjects with some others and against other others" (Ahmed 2004, 117)? Affective politics in the "refugee crisis" hinged on the mobilization of emotions in the everydayness of racism and the resurgence of white supremacist narratives.[17] In the affective politics of fear (Ahmed [2004] 2014) in Europe, emotions like love and hate are both constituted of the fear associated with the "figures of the asylum seeker and the international terrorist" (Ahmed 2004, 119). Emotions do not reside within or outside but circulate between "bodies and signs" (2004, 119) with narratives of love and hate. What about the (counter-)affect of politicized compassion that mobilizes solidarity with the otherwise feared figures of the (Muslim) refugee in a society fraught with anti-Muslim

racism? What about the affective politics that accommodates the life-affirming possibilities while fully acknowledging that emotions are always mixed and ambivalent?[18]

Love does not necessarily reside within or outside of an individual body. It is not always negative or life-affirming in its formation. Love and other emotions can be cultivated and engaged in the diverse forms of politics, and not only in the emotional rhetoric of populist and right-wing nationalist formations against the figure of the refugee. They can be distributed along the other sides of the spectrum of cultivated emotions and structured sentiments in solidarity with the refugee newcomers. Affective politics become the life-affirming labor of sensuous, affective pedagogy and engagement, mobilizing love/compassion as one trajectory of engaging the politics of breathing, wayfaring hearts.

In contemporary Sufi practice, the term *engagement* "points to that necessary but dangerous moment when love goes public" (Shaikh and Kugle 2006, 10). "When spiritual values cultivated in private . . . demand expression in wider fields of life," sociopolitical engagement becomes crucial (2006, 10). *Engaged Sufism* owes its genealogy to a plethora of traditions of engaged spirituality (Falk 2001), such as the Christian liberation theologies and engaged Buddhism (Luzbetak 1988; Queen 2013, 2000). Contemporary Sufi authors who argue for this term (engaged Sufism) talk back to materialistic (secularist) modernity, anti-Sufi Muslims, and anti-Muslim racism (Hammer 2006). A quest for knowledge and longing for love inspire the impulse of engaged Sufism to "know what to love and what love asks of us" (2006, 36).[19]

How did Berliner Sufis engage amid the so-called refugee crisis in 2015? Like many other Berliners, the Sufi networks, for example, collected money and things to deposit in LaGeSo (Landesamt für Gesundheit und Soziales),[20] the central administrative unit for health and social support, in the Wedding district of North Berlin. And long before the 2015 "crisis," the Haqqani-Naqshbandi network was active in refugee support work. They collected funds to assist war-torn Syria and organized food and shelter for newcomers.[21] Refugees and new migrants of Color frequently gathered at the *dergah*. In the Inayati and Tümata-Berlin networks, I got acquainted with a few spirited individuals (Andrea and Minar, for example) who were also actively involved in the welcoming initiatives. Later I came to

know that many Inayati members participated in welcoming initiatives (conversation with Murshida Rabeya, 28 February 2018). Murshida Ganga, for example, had been involved with an initiative for the East European refugees after the Bosnian war.

The "refugee crisis" in Berlin challenged me to rethink the conventional notion of the field beyond ethnography, as a field of sociopolitical engagement. Sufi breather-wayfarers helped to organize and participate in a collaborative event as part of the audience. It was a messy attempt to bring together the diverse ways of living and doing Sufism and public anthropology in times of social crises.

Coming Together in Refugee Support Work: Tümata Concert at Refugio

Refugio, a local welcome initiative (supported in part by the Protestant city mission), hosted the event. On the appointed day, Tümata-Berlin members arrived early and decorated the stage. We waited for the refugee newcomers to arrive in significant numbers. The Refugio representative addressed the crowd with pledges of welcome. Mahmud, a photographer, cook, translator, and Syrian refugee, shared stories from his journey.

"Do not ask me where I come from. Ask me where I am going!" During the event, I retold a story attributed to Nasruddin, considered to be a trickster Sufi figure.[22] The logic of dual apprenticeship enabled me to provide a taste (*dhawq*) of Sufism, with performative storytelling, while adding a critical note about Sufism (object of inquiry) to make the anthropological tradition public and engaged:

> For those of you who have not heard anything about Sufism, let me offer you a very short summary of a global practice that dates back more than a thousand years. Sufism is usually defined as Islamic mysticism or Islamic spirituality. But many Sufis argue that it is not necessary to be a Muslim to practice Sufism. They prefer to call it a way of the (breathing) heart. There are many Sufi techniques. Storytelling and music are just two of them that you will be experiencing today. (excerpt from public talk, 31 October 2015)

Writing a minuscule version of a diverse, global tradition is always difficult. Delivering a public talk to a mixed audience has other difficulties. The conundrum of translating my talk from English to German and Arabic added up to a long list of challenges, both

epistemological and linguistic. It was a tight-rope balancing act of being both a Sufi student (*murid*) and a doctoral student of urban anthropology.

After the story and the speeches by the Refugio representative and Mahmud, Tümata-Berlin began their public performance. They played musical pieces in Turkish, Arabic, and Dari. At one point, the audience was invited to perform by making (what they perceived to be) animal sounds and enacting/imitating any animal. Immediately the rattling of drums and the sounds of the human voice mingled in a sonic cacophony. On the left side, Gertrud was playing the drum with light taps. She happily mimicked the sheepish *baa* in regular sequence. From the other side of the stage came the bovine *moo*. The late Oruç Güvenç, the founder of Tümata, rang the cowbell from time to time. The audience responded with laughter, joining the Sufi musicians with an orchestra of human and para-human sounds. The cacophony continued for a few minutes before it stopped. The ringing of the cowbell from an imagined time/place in Central Asia faded into the distance. We returned to the hall, back to Berlin.

On this occasion, Tümata-Berlin also performed several rounds of dhikr with the public (figure 6.2). The crowd followed their invitation to breathe differently and recite the names of Allah. Not only Sufis but also the non-Sufis in the audience joined the collective breathing, rocking their bodies from front to back, reciting and resonating with the musicians. Hafiz and Zafar (chapters 1 and 3) were also at the event. They began to whirl in the space between the stage and the public. Gertrud and a young man from the Haqqani-Naqshbandi center joined them. It was an unplanned, spontaneous *sema*.

What was the political relevance of such solidarity action? "Was this *really* refugee support work?" Fellow anthropologists challenged the organizers and me to be explicit about our motivations, the ethical implications, and the practical use of such welcome concerts. Ontological politics was again at play in these challenges. What makes the coming together of Sufi musicians, anthropologists, refugees, and refugee activists refugee support work? What turns such forms of refugee support work into political action?

Affective politics cannot be disentangled from affective pedagogy. If one considers the Tümata-Berlin event to be a "form of experiential pedagogy,"[23] it will not sit easily with the secularist assumption of aesthetic, spiritual practice being ineffective. Neither will it gain

Figure 6.2. Tümata-Berlin with the late Oruç Güvenç playing Sufi-designated music at the concert in Refugio, 31 October 2015. © Nasima Selim.

approval from the conservational articulation of what Sufism is supposed to be, and what the Sufis should be doing in times of social crisis. One cannot expect that a singular event would create waves of change as far as the plight of refugee newcomers is concerned, yet the politics of the otherwise extends a hopeful "social aesthetics" (Highmore 2010, 135). The same event could also be read as cultural appropriation and/or the mobilization of postsecular politics, depending upon who is interpreting and from which vantage point, implicating what.

Mobilizing Postsecular Politics

Postsecular politics offers both negative and life-affirming possibilities. The analytical choice is to differentiate between "which kind of politics and which kind of religion" (Sigurdson 2010, 33). Postsecular politics of religious/spiritual plurality may de/stabilize a nationalist identity as the primary identification point for citizens, and either resist or intensify the divisive identity politics within Islam. The question is: what did the Sufi music concert for the refugees/

newcomers in the city communicate? Was it a politicized event so far as it reached its limit in expanding the "communicative pedagogy" (2010, 33) of the "multicultural" music, stories, languages, and the kind of people it brought together?

In some ways, the event did not achieve its goal of bringing refugee newcomers to the event in large numbers. "Only a few refugees came . . . I think certain points in the preparation could be worked out, such as the location or the design of the announcement or the theme," Minar, a young *oud* player and Tümata-Berlin member, wrote to me a few days later. "[But] just by recognizing that, the concert was a success. The effects [among the audience] of our music encourage us in this work. However, personally, I can still learn a lot as a beginner (whether musically, textually, or in terms of presentation technique)" (email, 8 November 2015). Despite his multiple tasks of playing *oud* and translating Güvenç's talk from Turkish to English on the stage, Minar managed to tap into the mood of the audience. He noticed how the mood changed slowly from vague interest to intense involvement: "The mood lightened up. I especially remember the affirming whispering when we announced the song that the women sang at the Prophet's (peace be upon him) arrival in Medina. Afterward, some people spontaneously joined the *sema* when we changed from the pentatonic melody to other tones" (email, 8 November 2015).

Minar and Tümata-Berlin members involved most of the audience with the gradual intensification of a collective mood. They invited the audience to participate in the Sufi practices of breathing and resonating with Allah (dhikr), whirling their bodies collectively (*sema*). The not-immediately-recognized-as-Sufi gesture of imitating animal sounds emphasized that their "caravan" was composed of humans and nonhumans. Drawn from the Central Asian Shamanic repertoire, these animal sounds mingled with the drumming, rattling, jingling, and varied tones of the human voice to enact a caravan on the way.

Following the late Oruç Güvenç's biographical and spiritual lineage, the Tümata network is invested in bringing together Turkish Sufi music and Central Asian Shamanic music. The Allah-infused Sufi sounds from the Turkish tradition and the Shamanic sounds from parts of Central Asia enacted a postsecular imagination that could not be traced back to a singular time, place, people, or prac-

tice. According to Tümata's internal logic, their repertoire belongs to older traditions newly discovered and represented.

"Could it be that some people were intimidated by the religious elements of the event?" Johanna, a fellow anthropologist, was curious about the impressions of the public. "There was a cross and an altar saying, *Danke* (Thank you)" she said. "There were Sufi musicians. There was bowing. There was Allah in the songs!" Johanna and her Colombian friends loved the gathering, "The unobtrusive way of joining people in what was a very spiritual act of dancing, playing music, being together. Was this too much for some [secular Germans]?" (email, 2 November 2015). Johanna was surprised that some of our white German peers tended to classify religion as a strictly separated realm from other domains, such as politics.

A secularist analytical approach restricts religion to a separate domain while excluding it from anthropological ways of knowing (Fountain 2013). But anthropology can also play a role in interrogating the separation between the religious and the secular (Lambek 2013; Milbank 2006). Such an approach and role for anthropology was challenged and re-negotiated by organizing the event with Sufi musicians. Reproducing the secular-religious dichotomy while locating the religious as a definable object of study, anthropology can be, and is often, positioned on the secular side of this distinction (Fountain 2013). Although (old and) new approaches challenge this dichotomy and the secularist standpoint of anthropology, this disciplinary heritage continues to impact anthropological scholarship.[24]

The distinction between the religious and the secular was complicated by the collaborative approach in the event's aftermath. Other than doing anthropology in a separate religious space, this event led to a multiplication of roles and solidarity actions (Selim et al. 2018). My fieldwork transitioned from the sites of documenting Sufi practice to engaged Sufism. The Tümata-Berlin concert became a parallel site[25] of anthropological engagement with an epistemic partnership among anthropologists, Sufi musicians, refugee activists, and refugee newcomers. The event conjured an assemblage of Sufi practice, refugee support work, and public anthropology. And I asked myself: Why should there be a separation between the field of ethnographic documentation and sociopolitical engagement in the first place?[26]

Concluding Remarks

In writing this book, I was often plagued by the political relevance of my work. Colleagues and friends have questioned my hesitation to emphasize Sufism as always-already Islamic mysticism. Fellow scholars criticized my insistence on exploring other dimensions beyond Sufism's political economy. In this chapter, I addressed some of these concerns, articulating the kinds of politics that emerged from practice: ontological, anti-political, therapeutic, and life-affirming affective politics.

As much as we live in a milieu of liquid fear and anti-Muslim racism in German society, humans as liturgical animals are capable of living and co-creating healing communities even in a place fraught with such tensions. The politics of breathing, wayfaring hearts mobilize resistance and solidarity in creating a world of possibilities, not only in crisis and response but in a healing mode, invoking a non-anthropomorphic entity if and when necessary.

For my Sufi interlocutors in contemporary Berlin, the business of life goes on. Sufism does not promise a permanent respite from the problems of living and existential struggles. It may lead to the possibility of living otherwise. It may not. The German media debate (Weidner versus Trojanow) speaks to the local Sufi discourses, and similar discourses circulate in the global media. In the discussion on Sufism in "the West," the phenomena of sponsored Sufism, whitewashing, and cultural appropriation are the elements of broader, ontological politics that any student of Sufism and/or anthropology must be aware of. Without such awareness, the politics of breathing hearts remain uninformed, unbridled, and uncritical optimism. What is required from the scholars studying Sufism in its multiple enactments is an attunement to such politics, not only but also inhabiting clear positions in the discussion of Sufism beyond orientalism and fundamentalism (Ernst 2003).

Beyond questions of ontology, whether Sufism is peaceful or militant, we must be aware of the more conventional politics of state-sponsoring and modes of appropriating Sufism, and the questions they confront us with (Muedini 2015b; Ernst 2003, 1997). National elites might support or criticize Sufism out of governance interests, as they might promote, marginalize, or disregard other for-

mations. Privileged white non-Muslims might (culturally) appropriate Sufism, stripping its historical and hermeneutic grounding in the Islamic tradition.

The political danger of the possibilities of a not-so-Islamic Sufism is that it appropriates what rightfully belongs to the Islamic tradition, albeit practiced and learned by Muslims and non-Muslims. The readers must not assume that Sufi practices open the (however limited) conditions of possibility, and Islam does not. Such an assumption will deepen the dichotomy of "Good Muslim, Bad Muslim" (Mamdani 2002, 766), implying that Sufi Muslims are good and other Muslims are bad (Safi 2011).[27] If Sufi practice at times seems not to mobilize a Muslim identity or a religious discourse, matters could get even worse. One might then argue that Sufism is good, and Islam is bad.

Why should (ontological) political possibilities force the scholars of Sufism to be conservational (invested in conserving what is assumed to be disappearing) about the diverse manifestations of Sufism by fixing its ontology always-already in the past, ignoring its contemporary formations? There are definite political pitfalls in discussing Sufism in terms of (non-)Islamic ontologies. But adopting the conservational politics of fixing Sufism's ontology as only (Islamic) mysticism is not the solution. The lessons I embodied as a dual apprentice during fieldwork and ongoing engagements have taught me something else.

The point is not to argue about what Sufism is or is not, but what it can become. The ontological, anti-political, and therapeutic politics, formulated as the politics of breathing hearts, offer the imperative to take a stand, situate oneself, and engage in the hermeneutics of (affective) pedagogy. Such politics encourages the argument that Sufism, like any other phenomenon, becomes what it is, only in practice. My task in this book was to tell a version of Sufi-Berlin in the company of anthropological methods, engaging with the Sufi breather-wayfarers, to trace their desire lines, the lines of transmission, to participate (and describe) the transformative techniques, healing practices, and the reflection of political possibilities of "breathing well." In the next, concluding chapter, I re-iterate the interventions *Breathing Hearts* makes, drawing on the lessons and limitations of this work, and mapping the unchartered terrains for future inquiry.

Notes

1. Havel ([1984] 1992, 271).
2. Michel de Certeau (1984) argued how (cultural) appropriation is part and parcel of everyday life, where ordinary people appropriate objects, ideas, and institutions without adequately knowing about their situated trajectories. In white supremacist societies, such unknowing is often symbolic of white ignorance and a blatant refusal of the dominant white majority to educate themselves about non-Western traditions and that of the marginalized BIPOC communities. Attribution of "cultural appropriation" is often criticized in the mainstream media of Germany as divisive identity politics, but such criticisms (of identity politics) end up in an oversimplification of cultural appropriation (Distelhorst 2021; Franzen 2020). See Hans Peter Hahn (2011, 2012) for a discussion of recent debates about cultural appropriation in terms of unequal power relations, transformation processes, and the re/definition of traditions. See Noah Sow (2011) for a more critical approach and examples in the German context.
3. Ludwig Schleßmann (2003, 131) described the Haqqani-Naqshbandi members defining themselves as "nonpolitical."
4. Amira Mittermaier (2014) extended Elizabeth Povinelli's notion of "the otherwise" (2014) in understanding the ethics of giving in a Sufi *khidma* (literally meaning "service," a space near a Sufi shrine that provides guests with a place to rest, serving food and tea) in contemporary Egypt. She argues that such acts of immediacy invite the anthropology of "the otherwise" although the *khidma* is disinterested in the social, political, or economic change in the longer term (Mittermaier 2014, 54–56).
5. An estimated 75 percent of the population in Germany still read daily newspapers (Pürer and Raabe 2007, 314).
6. Another prestigious newspaper, *Zeit*, also published a guest article titled "Sufism: The Strongest Weapon of Islam Is Love" (*Sufismus: Die stärkste Waffe des Islam ist die Liebe*) (Rizwi 2017), receiving 147 comments from avid readers.
7. Ethnographers must be cautious about supporting the claims made by their interlocutors. A recent example is the controversy around the Sufi-designated Fethullah Gülen movement that brought Sufism and Islamism together in its promotion of religious education and missionary activities in Germany and Tanzania (Wagenseil 2016; Dohrn 2014). See S. J. Thomas Michel (2005) for an earlier discussion of the Gülen movement's contested relationship with Sufism.
8. In the nineteenth century, Sufi networks were involved in military resistance against European colonial powers, for example, during the colonial period on the Indian subcontinent against the British, in North Africa against the French, and in North Caucasus against the Russian colonial powers. And when post-colonial states tried to force secularization, Sufi networks participated in rebellions, for example, against the early Turkish Republic and pre-1982 Syria (Heck 2009; Muedini 2015a).

9. As an illustrative example, Matthijs Van den Bos (2002) argued that Sufi teachers were often subservient to the political establishment in Iran from the later Qajar era to the Islamic Republic. He criticized the phenomenological approach for being nonpolitical and transhistorical.
10. Fait Muedini (2015b) detailed the divergent politics among Sufi-inspired groups and governmental politics of supporting Sufism to stay in power. Paulo Pinto's work (2010, 2004) also provides a nuanced discussion on the spectrum of socially engaged Sufism and the production of the public sphere in pre-civil war Syria. For historical precedence of Sufi militancy, see Manuela Ceballos (2014). See Milad Milani (2018) for a recent discussion of Sufi political thought.
11. Islamic studies scholars also share this sentiment. *Sufis genießen hier einen guten Ruf!* (Sufis here enjoy a good reputation!) Riem Spielhaus, an Islamic studies scholar, expressed this opinion in an interview (Wierth 2009).
12. Therapeutic culture refers to the "intensification and proliferation of [psycho-]therapeutic ways of thinking [and practice]" that characterize contemporary societies in "the West" (Swan 2010, 3).
13. Since the 1970s and 1980s, movements like the socialist patient-collective (*Das sozialistische Patientenkollektiv*) have been an integral part of the political and therapeutic subcultures in Germany (Huber 1987). Explicitly politicized, such self-organized patient collectives inhabit the same therapeutic culture spectrum as the explicitly anti-political healing communities. A persistent focus on healing does not necessarily diminish the political cultures of a society but produces diverse kinds of politics and political action.
14. Václav Havel (1936–2011), the Czech dissident writer and politician, articulated the notion of *hope without optimism*: "It is not the conviction that things will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out" (Havel 1991, 181). See Patrick Deneen (1999) for a discussion of the politics of hope with Havel's reference to the "elsewhere" as the source of hope, both secular and transcendental.
15. Scholars have discussed opposing and ambivalent public emotions in the *welcome culture* (feelings of compassion) and "xenophobic" attitudes (feelings of fear) (Jünemann 2017). Anti-Muslim racism is a historical and structural phenomenon in German society, and thereby, it is not a matter of harboring "xenophobic" or "compassionate" sentiments alone. See Aleksandra Lewicki and Yasemin Shooman (2020), who discussed the structural roots of anti-Muslim racism in post-unification Germany. See also Yasemin Shooman (2014) and Iman Attia (2009, 2007) for a detailed historical discussion of anti-Muslim racism in Germany.
16. See Dilger et al. (2017) for a (self-) critical account of the structural limitations and ethical, and practical challenges of ethnographic research about refugee newcomers in emergency shelters.
17. See Claus Leggewie's (2015) discussion on the rise of populism in German politics in terms of the politics of feelings, challenging the dichotomy of

rationality and emotionality in politics. See Catherine Lutz and Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) for an earlier discussion of the politics of emotion.

18. See Mary Holmes (2012) for a discussion of the emotional reflexivity in the feminist political process, where she analyzed the narratives of tolerance and love.
19. Muslim Feminists in the German context have argued for an Islamic "ethics of *rahma*" (radical compassion) (Naqshband 2022, 54) that stands in solidarity with the ethics of radical love proposed by Black feminists (see hooks 2000). Unlike secularist white feminists, Islamic feminism argues for the radical possibilities in feminist *ijtihad* (critical thinking) and *tafsir* (interpretation) from within the Islamic tradition (Sirri 2017; Kynsilehto 2008). The proposed ethics of *rahma* includes Islamic principles of reciprocity and care, radical softness/love, equality, justice, and inclusion (Naqshband 2022, 54–55). It resonates with the politically engaged Sufi ethics of love (Hammer 2006; Shaikh and Kugle 2006). The Islamic ethics of *rahma* in German decolonial scholarship can extend the preceding discussions on how the so-called mystical orientation and social responsibility could be brought together in contemporary Sufi practice (Wagner 2009, 133; Hemmati 2009, 65).
20. LaGeSo was where the refugee newcomers had to undergo an initial health check-up and registration.
21. In 2017, the center supported local refugees with food and community participation and collected donations for a soup kitchen led by Sheikh Ibrahim in war-torn Damascus. Displaying a short video on its website, the Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sufi-Center urged the Sufi Muslims to fulfill their Islamic duty of charity, in the forms of *fitre* (one-time donation from everyone with income, fifteen Euros for Germany in 2017) and *zekat* (2.5 percent or 1/40 of one year's savings) for the people stranded in Syria, who are in dire need (Sufi-Zentrum Rabbaniyya 2017). Since 2008, the SZR has collaborated with the local non-governmental initiative, *die Offene Tür* (the Open Door), to organize and celebrate festivals with Muslim and Christian refugees (Feride, interview with the author, 2 February 2018).
22. Nasruddin/Nasreddin Hodja/Hoca (also known as Mullah Nasruddin) lived and died in the thirteenth century (Lesmana 2014; Gurkas 2012). The popular perception of Nasruddin is that of an "oriental" man with a big turban sitting on his donkey, telling jokes. In Sufi-Berlin, Nasruddin is respected as a teacher of paradox. Nasruddin tales were frequently cited and narrated by the Berlin Sufis, for example, during the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat Summer School (2013) and a storytelling event by the Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sheikh Hassan Dyck at the *Werkstatt der Kulturen* in Neukölln (2014).
23. Minar later added that "the concert was a teaching situation for the performing musicians/students. In this way, Oruç Güvenç taught on multiple levels" (email, 16 September 2017). He also informed me that Tümata-Berlin collaborated with a local church in Munich to perform in a welcoming concert for refugee newcomers in the following summer of 2016 (conversation, 3 February 2018).

24. Edward E. Evans-Pritchard (1960) criticized the personal (anti-)faith of his colleagues who believed that "religious faith is a total illusion, a curious phenomenon soon to become extinct" (1960, 110). This inherent secularist position is still a dominant mode in anthropology.
25. Hadi Nicholas Deeb and George E. Marcus encouraged anthropologists to bring the field of documentation and engagement together, arguing that the juxtaposition of documentation and engagement in the field enacts "a mutual shift in stance from researcher–subject to epistemic partnership" (2011, 51).
26. Tim Ingold (2014) distinguished between the documenting function (ethnography) and the encounters with the world and corresponding with it (anthropology). The broader tasks of anthropology expand beyond ethnographic documentation to include political engagement, teaching and learning, writing fiction, and making art, among others.
27. I thank Fait Muedini for helping me articulate this point (email, 11 September 2017).

Conclusion
Lessons from the Breathing, Wayfaring Hearts

> O you who seek knowledge of the things as they are in themselves . . . you will gain what you seek through tasting, while you become acquainted with it through unveiling.
>
> —Ibn Arabi[1]

> "[T]hings as they are" have no stable or essential "isness" or "selfhood," but appear and emerge quite differently for us depending on our situation, interest, and perspective.
>
> —Michael Jackson and Albert Piette[2]

What is Sufism? What role does healing play in Sufi practice? What does it mean to "breathe well" along the Sufi path in a place where public expression of religiosity is constrained, and Islam is increasingly marginalized? These questions do not aim to articulate any stable or essential "isness" of Sufism. Classical and contemporary Sufi discourse and practice may claim otherwise in the name of the Real or Real-Truth. There is apparent incommensurability between Sufi thought (embodied in the first quote) and the analytical commitments of ethnographers (expressed in the second quote).

Sufi discourse and practice invoke the reality of existence here and now and the Elsewhere simultaneously. Sufis emphasize direct insights through unveiling, tasting, and preparedness to know "things as they are in themselves" while announcing that such privileges can be granted only by the Real (Allah). Anthropologists, however, avoid fixing the essence of a phenomenon and emphasize the contingencies of attempting to know things as they are. "[L]ife is irreducible to the terms with which we seek to grasp it," therefore,

"truth and understanding, like well-being, are never securely possessed, and human existence always implies a vexed, imperfectly realized relationship between what is given and what is aspired to, what is within and outside our reach, what can be comprehended and what cannot" (Jackson and Piette 2015, 9).

Breathing Hearts has not restricted Sufism to its historical ontologies nor to a singular, truth-claiming authority of what Sufism is supposed to be. This book does not resolve the incommensurability between Sufism and anthropology. None of these traditions of inquiry have monolithic, unchanged, singular identities. Islam is mostly contested and only partially accommodated in the German landscape of postsecular imagination. This book has offered some of its formations, extensions, and intersections visible as Sufi Islam, and universalist, therapeutic and nomadic Sufism in Berlin. In this concluding chapter, I will summarize the lessons from the breathing, wayfaring hearts, combining Sufi healing practices and politics.

In Berlin, Sufism is multiple. Its tastes vary from network to network, from one site to another, and from practice to practice. These formations co-occupy space, inhabiting the diverse spectrum of the (historical) Sufi tradition with practical, experiential, and hermeneutical engagements with Islam, enacting explorative authorities. In the contemporary discussions on global Islam and its media portrayals, the most common designation of Sufism is still Islamic mysticism. *Breathing Hearts* does not take that definition for granted. I, as an ethnographer, describe the internal diversity of Sufism encountered in the field and add a critical angle in the company of anthropological theory. Rather than only Islam or mysticism, Sufism aspires to an excess of something else. In *Breathing Hearts,* body techniques, participatory performances, experiential narratives, and potentially life-affirming politics are the dimensions that enact Sufism in practice as something more than only Islamic mysticism.

Sufism, Anthropology, and the Postsecular Condition

In sum, *Breathing Hearts* contributes to contemporary theoretical and political concerns in several ways. First and foremost, it offers the first book-length account of Sufi (healing) practices in Berlin

as enactments of contemporary postsecular imagination of healing, where "breathing well" is central. This book describes breathing lessons as an entry point to invite the readers to the possibility of breathing otherwise, to argue how the ethnographer's breath can be put to analytical use. Second, breathing is central to Sufi practice. While (Sufi) breath/ing remains marginal in anthropological scholarship, this book has made its presence known from the beginning, addressing its epistemic potential for the discipline.[3] Sufis reconfigure the line of transmitting breath in the presence of Sufi teachers, their students, and others who accompany them. The techniques of Sufi body prayers and healing practices center around body movements and breathwork, words and sounds, enlightened things, and postsecular imagination. These techniques create the conditions through which everyday secular, materialist bodies could be transfigured into subtle/material bodies.

Third, the postsecular Sufi subjects inhabit an in-between world to navigate the religious, therapeutic, and aesthetic fields in their efforts to "breathe well" by seeking "something else" in a society fraught with anti-Muslim racism. Sufi healing practices cannot promise to resolve everyday secular and religious sufferings but equip the breather-wayfarers with the existential resources to bear them. The healing dimension cannot be separated from the political implications of Sufi practice in German society. Sufi action is not only about feeling and inhabiting the Elsewhere but also about serving the practical reason in the here and now. *Breathing Hearts* responds to the political challenges posed by German secularism and everyday anti-Muslim racism; and talks back to the prescriptive, literalist formations of Islam that might seek to inhibit the explorative, expansive enactments marked by the epistemic openness with which Islam intersects with other traditions.

Fourth, this book takes postsecular Sufi practice and subjectivity seriously. It does not reduce Sufism to the products and consumers of a religious/therapeutic marketplace in late liberal capitalism, nor does it push the Berliner Sufis to the margins as "pseudo-Sufis" or "New Age" Sufis, or perpetrators of predatory "cultural appropriation" alone. By representing Sufis as breather-wayfarers following their desire lines of breathing-becoming, their presence talks back to the secularist belittling of the otherwise in German society and anti-Sufi trends within Islam.

The fifth and final contribution of this work is methodological. I propose dual apprenticeship as a method for early scholars and students, articulating an agile condition of possibility in ethnographic practice. Learning to be affected, but not overwhelmed, by the field is essential to an anthropological project. Dual apprenticeship extends the tradition of apprenticeship—through which many anthropologists before me have combined their lessons from the field—by taking a dual learner's position in terms of disciplinary practices and the practices in the field.

Sufism is named the "way of the (breathing) heart," among many other names. The term "Sufism" is saturated with the discourse of academic and popular, affirmative orientalism. In Berlin, Sufism follows its unique historical wayfaring trajectory. In the contemporary rendition of Sufism, the metaphysical heart (*qalb*/*Herz*) remains a central metaphor, similar to and yet different from the classical Sufi discourses. Berlin Sufis resonate with Allah by participating with the breath, words, sounds, and things to mobilize their healing power. Tasting (*dhawq*) Sufi experiences is crucial for human subjects, as their existential desire lines lead to Sufism in dialogue with the secular and the religious, intersecting with medicine and performing arts.

Breathing Hearts does not claim to offer a holistic ethnography of Sufi-Berlin or a comprehensive account of the Sufi networks that the ethnographer has encountered during her fieldwork. The book focuses on the practices and politics of Sufi healing in Berlin and connected sites. Sufi networks have provided the entry points to approach the internal diversity of Sufism in practice. Selections from the enormous diversity of these practices were necessary for simplification, articulation, comparison, contrast, and clarification. The limitations and gaps in this book are unchartered terrains that offer plenty of opportunities for future inquiry.

The Unchartered Terrains

Breathing Hearts might have told a different story if it had focused exclusively on the dimension of prescriptive authority in Sufism. "Sufism is generally perceived as being spiritually focused and about the development of the self" (Milani 2018, 1). The historical roles of Sufi networks as civil and political actors, describing Sufi par-

ticipation in interfaith dialogues and political challenges to dominant prescriptive traditions, are only partially explored in this book. Following Milad Milani, future research can examine how political power is conceptualized and exercised in Sufi-Berlin. How do Sufi networks live up to their discursive, practical aspirations of transcending self-centered interests? What are their political affiliations in terms of formal participation in a liberal democracy? These questions further destabilize the non-political ontologies of Sufism and contribute to the growing literature on the intimate connection between Sufism and politics.

Breathing Hearts has discussed the scope of imagining and inhabiting the human body through Sufi healing practices. Healing the problems of living may require participation in the Real, but what happens when there is a failure to heal? Farida Pirani, Rena Papadopoulos, John Foster, and Gerard Leavey (2008) discussed failure, the possibility of accepting failures, and the search for healing in a Sufi shrine in Pakistan. Transferred to the German context, the question of how Sufi seekers of healing might be blamed for continued suffering is pertinent. While Sufi practices create the conditions of the possibility of healing, failures are also likely to happen. Future inquiries can address the question of to what extent religious and secular suffering might be perceived as failing to heal or achieve the aspired state of being according to the standards of Sufi practice. The assumption of taking for granted that the body is always able, that one can simply choose to open up, needs to be interrogated as well. How would Sufi body prayers accommodate the transformation of non-normative bodies and varying degrees of ability?

The conditions of possibility lie at the heart of this book, but the conditions of structural limitations are significant elements to examine further. Future paths of inquiry can draw lessons from not only how Sufism can create conditions of possibilities but also which possibilities are foreclosed by becoming a Sufi and practicing Sufi healing. While charting the pathways of becoming Sufi, one could also follow other (desire) lines of flight and ask, how and why people leave Sufism or shift their allegiance from one network to another.

Both dual apprenticeship and affective pedagogy are routes that emerged through my fieldwork and guided me throughout the writing process. I learned to be more attentive to my sensuous affective engagement, and the role affect (and related phenomena) plays in

Sufi practice. This book recognizes affect as a key ingredient of Sufi practice/experience. However, following ethnographic studies on Sufi performances of emotions and affects in other regions (Kasmani 2022; Werbner and Basu 1998), future research can center on a wide range of Sufi affects specifically to pursue the role of emotions, feelings, and sentiments with the epistemic positioning of affective pedagogy of the Elsewhere (Selim 2020a). For example, how is the key sentiment of love in classical Sufi discourse/practice cultivated and articulated in the contemporary "linkages of knowledge and love" (Ernst and Lawrence 2002, 15)? Beyond the words of ecstasy in classical Sufism (Ernst 1985), what are the new and perhaps old affect-laden terms mobilized for emotions in Sufi practice within Muslim-minority societies? What are the socio-material arrangements promoting and limiting such cultivation and articulation of affect in Sufi healing practices?

In terms of methods, this work has not exhausted the opportunities offered by the diverse social media as research tools. The interrelation between social media and Sufi sociality is left open. All Sufi networks had a virtual presence during my fieldwork, especially during the recent COVID-19 pandemic (see Epilogue). But the degree to which the interlocutors in each network engaged in social media varied considerably. Recent studies show a radical increase in internet use, not only as a mode of diffusion of Sufi content but also in producing virtual Sufism (Alatas 2017; Piraino 2016). The use of the internet and social media is significant for the broader presence of Sufi teachers through online courses, live transmission, and a reaffirmation of lived Sufi experience in digital space. Combined with the classical ethnographic mode, digital ethnography can provide tools to pay attention to the expanding social worlds of Sufism, examining the offline and virtual dimensions as a continuum.

"The soul has no race and no [human] language!" Sophia, one of my best friends and a companion on the Sufi path, told me during the so-called BLM (Black Lives Matter) Summer in Berlin when there seemed to be a renewed racial reckoning in German society (Selim 2023a, 2023b; Selim and Albrecht 2020). "Easy for you to say as a white woman, a native German speaker!" I retorted. Sophia was not immune to white fragility, but I was harsh in judging my fellow companion with whom I have shared my efforts to "breathe well" for a decade. Confronted with the white privilege and the lack

of racial reckoning among many (white) German Sufis, I often harbored angry thoughts and engaged in a series of outbursts. Beyond their active involvement in resisting anti-Muslim racism, I desired from my fellow (white) wayfarers a substantial political commitment to anti-racism as privileged white subjects in a white supremacist society that racialize Muslims. The harsh accusatory tone provided a necessary catharsis for my everyday frustrations as a postmigrant woman of Color and non-native German speaker in a society filled with structural inequalities at the intersection of racialized identities and language fluency (among others) that many fellow Sufis of Color face. But, the hardening of the heart and the harshness of the breath are counterproductive in a collective fight against anti-Muslim racism in Muslim-minority Germany.

Breathing Hearts is not a systematic study of anti-Muslim racism. This book has attempted to situate Sufi practices and politics in the context of anti-Muslim racism in German society to widen the understanding of Sufism and healing in this particular setting. The interstices of race-class-gender-sexuality (and other indices of marginalization) constitute the epistemic and political struggle of the ethnographer to find lines of agreement somewhere between the more privileged (white) Sufi breather-wayfarers and the more marginalized breather-wayfarers of Color. The analytical (and political) battle I choose to fight in this book stands in solidarity with other battles to "breathe well" against racist structures in Germany (Selim 2023b; Selim and Albrecht 2020).

Breathing Hearts aims to talk back to the hegemonic discourses of German secularism as a political doctrine and the prescriptive, literalist traditions within Islam that seek to suppress the expansive, postsecular imagination of Sufi practice. Furthering an analytical focus on racialized identities would have allowed the exploration of white privilege and the marginalization of the Sufis of Color in German society. My aim in this book, however, is to facilitate an understanding of the dynamics the Muslim and non-Muslim Sufis face together, as they are caught between political secularism and the prescriptions of literalist Islam in the context of anti-Muslim racism in Germany.

In Sufi-Berlin, class-race-gender distinctions do not miraculously disappear. Experiencing varying degrees of privileges and marginalization, Sufis in Berlin express a metaphysical commitment to step

away from material, political conditions of limitations that human bodies are subjected to, with more or less success. *Breathing Hearts* provides a foundation for and underscores the necessity of pursuing an analytical focus on racialization and cultural appropriation for future ethnographers of Sufi practice.

Sufism in anthropology is an object of inquiry, an assemblage of breathing, wayfaring practices, and experiences. Anthropology for Sufis might seem like a textual practice of knowledge-making, a dry habit of framing/reducing the rich phenomena of the Real. *Breathing Hearts* attempts a hermeneutic/epistemic bridge between these two traditions of inquiry. If anthropology enables us to examine Sufism critically, Sufism talks back to us, challenging anthropology to learn how to learn. Both Sufism and anthropology can perhaps realize their critical potentials as forces of living the otherwise, enabling us to resist anti-Muslim racism, and the trivialization of the postsecular imagination. As a dual apprentice of both traditions of inquiry, my book concludes with this appeal.

Note

1. Chittick (1989, 245)
2. Jackson and Piette (2015, 11–12).
3. I have argued and demonstrated how central Sufi breathwork is to the tradition in a recent public anthropology lecture performance at a prestigious exhibition hall in Berlin, Martin-Gropius-Bau, and previous publications (Selim 2023a, Selim 2020a). See Selim (forthcoming, 2022a, 2022b) for the arguments I have made elsewhere for ethnographers to focus on breathing epistemologies in anthropological theory and practice.

Epilogue
Sufi Breathing in the Pandemic Ruins of (Anti-Muslim) Racism

Whatever is breathing you, makes your heart beat!
—Khidr, sometime in the spring of 2014

#COVID-19

11 March 2020. A year had passed since defending my doctoral dissertation. I moved from Sufi breathing to examining the explicit formations of breathing inequalities from Western Europe to a South Asian city. Following the desire line that began with my earlier interests in breathing practices, I traveled to Kolkata, one of the so-called air pollution capitals of India. In this country, the ruling far-right BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) fueled anti-Muslim sentiments, making it impossible for Muslims (and other marginalized communities) to "breathe well" in India. During my brief stay in Kolkata, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the spread of COVID-19 a pandemic. Catching an emergency flight, I returned to Berlin, finding the vibrant city I had left, standing in pandemic ruins (Selim 2022a, 2022b, 2021).

During the first wave of the pandemic in the spring of 2020, I received an email from Minar, a member of the Tümata-Berlin network. He was a frontline worker in an emergency healthcare team and sounded utterly exhausted. We briefly met to walk and talk together later in the summer, sharing our wayfaring lessons along the Sufi path confronting everyday anti-Muslim racism, postmigrant life after the Hanau terror attack, and the new pandemic reality. We

also discussed how the future of Sufi healing practices remained contested in a place where biomedicine reigned supreme (for good reasons in the pandemic, but its unquestioned dominance was something to be concerned about). I noticed his exhaustion, and it made me wonder how other Sufi breather-wayfarers were coming to terms with the pandemic and the reckoning of (anti-Muslim) racism in German society.

Since March 2020, Inayati teachers have offered digital self-care and healing seminars via Zoom online. In their conversations, I sensed a growing ambivalence due to the unequal socioeconomic effects on individual members and divergent views regarding the pandemic. At around the same time, I received disturbing news from southern Germany, where the Sufi Haqqani-Naqshbandi network of Berlin had relocated in 2014. Feride (a Sufi Muslim woman of Color) informed me that the predominantly white (and Catholic) village (where they moved to) vehemently rejected the neighborhood support that the Sufi Muslim network had offered to elderly neighbors during the pandemic. Anti-Muslim racism seemed to have taken a new turn in pandemic times.

My primary Sufi teacher Khidr passed away in the pre-pandemic year (November 2019; chapter 1). His students and I continued our weekly meetings on Thursday evenings. But the pandemic forced us to shift the gathering to Zoom. In the first pandemic year (2020), these meetings were short, without the cooking/eating together and collective breathing practice. Besides reading Sufi texts that invited us to take refuge in the Elsewhere, our political reflections revolved around the tumultuous events happening in the here and now (the Hanau terror attack, BLM, and the pandemic being recurrent themes of these discussions). We made consistent efforts to transform the Zoom window into an intimate space of breathing companionship during the second and third pandemic years (2021–22). We expanded our meetings by sharing our virtual breath by doing the dhikr together, each taking turns to lead the virtual circle in our efforts to "breathe well."

#breathingwell

"Breathing well" in the pandemic ruins of (anti-Muslim) racism in Germany requires many more interventions other than Sufi breath-

ing practices. Such interventions involve individual and collective decisions, inflecting (social) scientific imagination with speculative and metaphysical imagination practices, enhancing the struggle for social justice, and ensuring equal access to resources and care, including vaccines, which Sufis in Berlin were able to receive (unlike many other parts of the world where vaccine availability was a matter of grave concern) (Selim 2022a, 2022b, 2020b). Not all of my Sufi interlocutors were immune from the recurring waves of vaccine anxieties and the circulation of conspiracy theories. Although the leaders of all three Sufi networks and the nomadic Sufis generally favored vaccination, opinions varied among individual interlocutors.

The long era of COVID-19 heralded the beginning of an uncertain track of Sufi healing practices in Berlin. Much more can be discussed regarding what it means to "breathe well" in the pandemic ruins. Doing justice to this topic would require further ethnographic attention. As we move closer to a post-pandemic era (until the next pandemic arrives), and with my research and political interests shifting elsewhere, it is necessary to announce a formal closure of my anthropological project about the practices and politics of Sufi healing in Berlin (2013–2021).

"Who is a Sufi?" Reaching the end of this book, I return to the question I asked Pir Zia Inayat-Khan back in 2013, a question with which I began my ethnographic fieldwork, a question with which I started writing this book. "A Sufi is someone who breathes well," Pir Zia answered. In 2023, amid the global catastrophe of breathing troubles and suffocating atmospheres of (racial and) social injustice that do not allow Muslims to breathe well in Germany (and elsewhere), the question "who is a Sufi?" invites an expansive response centering on social justice. Sufis, like the rest of us, must consistently make efforts to breathe otherwise, regardless of their material circumstances, and in the company of others. Amid the pandemic ruins of (anti-Muslim) racism in Germany, "breathing well" requires *something else* apart from only learning to feel and inhabit the Elsewhere. For Sufis and non-Sufis alike, the imperative is to continue co-creating intersectional conditions of possibilities for and with others; however fragile these conditions for "breathing well" may be.

Glossary

adab. Informal rules of etiquette and manners with which Sufis are expected to behave in the company of fellow human beings.

al-asmā' al-ḥusnā. The most beautiful names of Allah, referring to the ninety-nine attributes.

bāul/baul. A tradition of composing and performing songs drawing from Sufi Islam, Vaishnava Hinduism, and Tantric Buddhism in the Bengal region of South Asia.

bandīr/bendir. A framed drum used in traditional Turkish, Central and West Asian, and Middle Eastern music. It is a common accompaniment in Sufi ritual practice.

barzakh. The term refers to something that separates two entities, inhabiting the in-between space, combining the qualities of both.

chakra. Subtle energy centers of the body in yoga discourse.

dargāh/dergāh. A portal or threshold. The term also denotes a Sufi establishment built in the memory of a saint.

darwīsh/dervish. A poor mendicant. In the medieval Sufi tradition, the term often refers to someone who practiced material detachment and renunciation.

dẖawḳ/dhawq. Tasting, direct experience, intuitive and aesthetic appreciation.

dhikr. Remembering or reminding oneself. The term exists in many languages of Islamicate societies. In Turkish and Bangla, it is often pronounced as *zikir*. In English and German, the word is often pronounced as *zikr* or *zikar*.

Haqqani-Naqshbandi. A branch of the Naqshbandiyya, one of the largest Sufi networks globally. This branch is named after the late Sheikh Nazim al-Haqqani. See also SZR in the *List of Abbreviations*.

ilāhī/ilahi. A genre of popular poetry inspired by religious sentiments, sung either solo or in chorus, with and without instrumental accompaniment.

khānḳāh/khanekah. A composite term for a place found throughout the Islamicate world where Sufis gather and practice. *Tekke* and *zāwiya* refer to similar establishments.

laṭīfa (pl. laṭā'if). Subtle centers or substances imagined and enacted in dhikr.

maḳām/maqam (pl. maḳāmāt/maqamat)/ makam (Turkish.). A place, a stage, or a station. In Sufi discourse, the term generally refers to a stage of development. In *makam* music, it refers to the model system corresponding to various body parts.

mevlana. An honorific term for the thirteenth-century Sufi, *Ḏjalāl al-Dīn Rūmī*, popularly known as Mevlana Rumi.

mevlevî/mevlevi. Thirteenth-century Sufi network established by followers of Mevlana Rumi in (Turkish) Anatolia.

murīd/murid. Someone who seeks and desires to learn. It is a term for students or disciples of a Sufi teacher.

murshid/ murshid. The one who provides the right guidance. It is a term for Sufi teachers. See also *pīr* and *shaikh.* Female teachers are known as *murshida.*

nafs/nufs. Ego or self-centered self. The term is also translated as the human soul or spirit.

ney/nāy. A long reed flute, a central instrument in *Mevlevi* rituals and *makam* music, and one of the basic instruments used in receptive AOM.

pīr. An elder. It is a term for Sufi teachers. See also *murshid* and *shaikh.*

qalb. The metaphysical heart is an organ of superior reasoning in Sufi/Islamic discourse, related to the anatomical heart but imagined distinctly in relation to a subtle heart center (*laṭīfa qalbiyya*).

rabāb/rebab. A generic term for any string instrument played with a bow. More specifically, it refers to one of the basic instruments used in receptive AOM.

samā'/sema. Audition or listening, denoting that which is heard. The term refers to a Sufi ritual practice with dhikr, music, and whirling movement.

semazen. Practitioners of *sema*.

shaikh/sheikh. An elder. It is a term for Sufi teachers considered to be advanced practitioners of Sufism. Also used for leaders and authority figures. See also *murshid* and *pīr*.

silsila. A chain. The term refers to a lineage, connecting the leaders of a Sufi network back to the founder and significant figures in the past.

sohbet. Spiritual lecture by a Sufi teacher to an audience that has gathered to listen. The term is also translated as spiritual companionship.

subḥa (pl. tasbīḥ)/tesbīḥ/tasbih. Collection of prayer beads compared to a rosary. In widespread usage, tasbeeh, refers to a handheld string of beads of variable number and length.

Sufismus. Sufism.

Sufitum. A less popular term for Sufism in German.

tarīḳa/tariqa (pl. ṭuruḳ). A way or a path. The term refers to the organized Sufi networks often framed as brotherhoods or orders.

taṣawwuf/tasavvuf. The common Arabic term for Sufism.

taṣawwur. The term refers to the embodiment of the teachers through practices with which the Sufi novices aspire to be attuned to their teachers, as an intermediary step on the quest for absorption and subsistence in Allah.

Tümata. Türk Müziğini Araştırma ve Tanıtma Grubu (Traditional Turkish Music Research and Promotion Society) founded by the late Rahmi Oruç Güvenç.

waẓīfa. Repetitive recitation of prayers, invocations, and verses from the Qur'an.

zikar/zikir/zikr. See dhikr.

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