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The Transcultural Critic:  
Sabahattin Ali and Beyond

herausgegeben von

Şeyda Ozil, Michael Hofmann,  
Jens-Peter Laut, Yasemin Dayıođlu-Yücel,  
Cornelia Zierau und Kristin Dickinson



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Herausgegeben von  
Şeyda Ozil, Michael Hofmann,  
Jens-Peter Laut,  
Yasemin Dayıođlu-Yücel,  
Cornelia Zierau  
und Kristin Dickinson  
in Zusammenarbeit mit Didem Uca

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## Vorwort

Seit der ersten Ausgabe des *Jahrbuches Türkisch-deutsche Studien* ist es unser Anliegen, zu türkisch-deutschen Themen arbeitende Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler sowie Nachwuchswissenschaftlerinnen und Nachwuchswissenschaftler international und interdisziplinär zu vernetzen. An den zurückliegenden sechs Ausgaben lässt sich erkennen, dass dieses Anliegen erfolgreich umgesetzt werden konnte und das Jahrbuch auch außerhalb des deutschen Wissenschaftsraums Resonanz fand. Um noch mehr Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftlern erleichterten Zugang zum *Jahrbuch Türkisch-deutsche Studien* zu gewähren und damit dem in den unterschiedlichen Voraussetzungen in Bildungssystemen begründeten Ungleichgewicht zu begegnen, haben wir uns mit dieser Ausgabe dazu entschieden, das Jahrbuch sowohl online frei zugänglich (open access) als auch weiterhin in Buchform zu publizieren. Als Partner hierfür konnten wir Jens Peter Laut und mit ihm den *Universitätsverlag Göttingen* gewinnen.

Mit Jens Peter Laut und Cornelia Zierau stoßen mit dieser Ausgabe ein weiterer Herausgeber und eine weitere Herausgeberin zum Team, die durch ihre Expertise in ihrem jeweiligen Fachgebiet – der Turkologie und der interkulturellen Literatur und Didaktik – das Profil des Jahrbuches stärken. Wir sind uns sicher, dass wir mit diesen Neuerungen ein international noch größeres Publikum erreichen und dem Anspruch des Jahrbuches noch besser gerecht werden können. Wenn die jüngsten weltpolitischen Ereignisse eines zeigen, dann ist es, dass der transkulturelle Dialog nicht abbrechen darf, auch nicht auf wissenschaftlicher Ebene.

Diese Ausgabe hat einen Schwerpunkt zum türkischen Autor Sabahattin Ali, dessen posthumer Erfolgsroman *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* (Die Madonna im Pelzmantel) zum Großteil in Deutschland spielt. Was sich vordergründig als türkisch-deutsche Liebesgeschichte liest, hat – wie die Beiträge eindringlich zeigen – viel weitreichendere Implikationen. Sabahattin Alis Werk, das in den letzten Jahren immer breiter international rezipiert wird, hat auch über diesen Roman hinaus

einen Deutschlandbezug, was sich unter anderem in dem hier sowohl im türkischen Original als auch erstmals in englischsprachiger Übersetzung abgedruckten humoristischen Reisebericht aus „Cermenistan“ zeigt. Ali war aber auch als literarischer Übersetzer aus dem Deutschen tätig. Kristin Dickinson, die Gastherausgeberin des Sabahattin Ali-Teils, geht in ihrer Einleitung zum Thementeil ausführlicher auf diese Zusammenhänge ein.

Abgerundet wird die diesjährige Ausgabe mit einem Beitrag zu Zafer Şenocaks Essaysammlung *Deutschsein* von Vera Stegmann, einem *Review Essay* zum transkulturellen Lernen mit Bilderbüchern von Serap Atagül und Christian Müller, einem Interview mit dem Autor Selim Özdoğan und einer Rezension zum Band *Bildung in transnationalen Räumen* von Emre Aslan.

Wir danken sowohl *v & r unipress*, wo wir bislang kompetent betreut wurden, als auch unserem neuen Verlag, dem *Universitätsverlag Göttingen*, für den unkomplizierten, fließenden Übergang. Weiterhin gilt unser Dank Katja Korfmann und Didem Uca für ihren anhaltenden Einsatz bei der redaktionellen Mitarbeit.

Şeyda Ozil, Michael Hofmann und Yasemin Dayıoğlu-Yücel

Istanbul, Paderborn  
Oktober 2016

## Sabahattin Ali's Translingual Transnationalism

*Kristin Dickinson*

A seminal author of early 20th-century Turkish literary modernism, Sabahattin Ali's (1907-1948) life and work attest to his multifaceted interests and talents; in addition to poetry, short stories, and novels, Ali published satirical journalistic prose, worked as a literary translator and simultaneous interpreter, and produced a significant portfolio as an amateur photographer. While newly edited volumes of Ali's articles (2009), court documents and prison notes (2004), and letters (2008), together with an exhibition of his photographs (2012) have begun to shed light on the complexity of his career, secondary scholarship on his literary output remains limited.

Following literary critic Berna Moran's lead, scholarship has tended to emphasize Ali's centrality to the development of social realist literature in Turkey (Moran 1990). The 2014 edited volume *Sabahattin Ali: Anılar, İncelemeler, Eleştiriler* offers a welcome array of new approaches to this significant but largely under-researched figure, with contributions on the progressive nature of his female characters, famous settings of his poetry to music, and his satirical contributions to the journal *Markopaya*. This special issue of the *Jahrbuch Türkisch-deutsche Studien* aims to open new avenues of interpretation by situating Ali's life and work in a transnational context, with particular foci on his relationship to German literature and culture, and the centrality of translation and intertextuality to his literary legacy. In exploring precisely these curiously understudied aspects of Ali's oeuvre, this issue also aims to create a new body of criticism around this seminal figure for readerships that are unable to access his texts in Turkish.

In her introductory article for this special issue, Sevengül Sönmez examines Ali's understanding of literature and the arts as agents of social change. Drawing on Ali's interviews and personal correspondence, Sönmez demonstrates his refusal to cater to the public and highlights a crucial shift across the arc of his career from social realism to critical realism. As such, Sönmez provides critical background material for the articles that follow. The remaining articles in this special issue focus on the wider implications of Ali's work for Turkish and German Studies, world literature, and translation theory; in doing so, each article recognizes Ali as both an author marked by the turbulent political context in which he was born, as well as an intellectual who was well ahead of his time. In his youth and adolescence, Ali experienced World War I (1914-1918), the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1923), and the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into the modern Republic of Turkey (1923); in his late teens and early 20s, the newly founded Republic undertook significant legal, political, cultural, and linguistic reforms aimed at modernizing and westernizing Turkish society.<sup>1</sup> Ali was thus of a generation trained in the Ottoman language and its literary traditions, which also actively partook in modernization processes that sought to overwrite them.

While Ali was a seminal author of the early Republican period, his diverse oeuvre attests to his ambivalent stance toward the large-scale cultural reforms at hand. As a committed socialist well read in Marxist literature, Ali's short stories and first novel, *Kıyucaklı Yusuf* (1937), were indeed central to the establishment of social realism (*toplumsal gerçekçilik*) in Turkey. Yet his literature covers a diverse range of subject matters, from the social fabric of rural Anatolian life to the intellectual and bohemian circles of pre-World War II Istanbul. Drawn to social outsiders and lonesome figures on the margins of society, Ali weaves socially critical information into his characters' inner monologues, identity crises and ill-fated love stories, creating a form of social commentary his good friend and fellow author Pertev Naili Boratav described as psychological realism.<sup>2</sup> In this regard, his novels *İçimizdeki Şeytan* (1940) (*The Devil Within Us*) and *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* (1943) (*Madonna in the Fur Coat*), were both central to the development of literary modernism in Turkey.

At the same time, his work critically engages with issues that transcend the boundaries of a national literary canon. Just as Ali utilized his knowledge of German to explore the classics of Russian literature and Greek antiquity, his own literary output attests to the mutual mediation of literatures and cultures through their international circulation and translation. *Madonna* is a case in point. At the time of its serialized publication in *Hakikat* newspaper (1940-41), this novel received little to no critical attention. The novel's initial non-reception was compounded by Ali's mysterious murder on the Bulgarian border in 1948, which led to a ban on the sale

<sup>1</sup> Reforms included but were not limited to the adoption of the European 24-hour day, a new system of secular primary and secondary schools, creation of a family law, increased women's rights, abolishment of the Şeriat courts, and adaptation of the Swiss Civil Code.

<sup>2</sup> For an insightful discussion of this term in relation to Ali's work, see Erika Glassen's afterword to the German translation of *İçimizdeki Şeytan* (2007) (translated as *Der Dämon in uns*).

and further publication of his literature until 1965. This novel has made a recent comeback and has been among the top ten bestselling books in Turkey for the past five years. Recent translations into French (2007), German (2008), Russian (2010), Albanian (2010), Croatian (2012), Arabic (2012), and English (2016) further attest to a noticeable turn in this reception history and a burgeoning international interest in Ali's work.

All contributions to this issue recognize that, as a semi-autobiographical account of Ali's experiences in Weimar Berlin, *Madonna* is significant for understanding Ali's relationship to Germany. With their diversity of interpretations, articles reveal the wide-ranging implications of *Madonna's* cross-cultural love story; due to the subtleties of its form and storyline, which actively reflect on processes of modernization in the Republic of Turkey (Hepkaner) and the ethics of translation in an era of nationalized monolingualism (Gramling / Schwalm), this novel fell through the cracks of state-censorship. As such, *Madonna* provides a refreshing intervention into ongoing debates about the status of 'non-Western' translated texts in a canon of World Literature with a historically Eurocentric basis.

At the same time, contributors prod beyond *Madonna* to explore how Ali's engagement with German language and culture allowed him to critically reflect on the fast-paced restructuring of Turkish society vis-à-vis the model of a monolingual, Western European nation-state. Zeynep Seviner examines the little-known text *Mufassal Cermenistan Seyabatnamesi* (1929) (*The Comprehensive Germanistan Travelogue*),<sup>3</sup> a private letter detailing Ali's first impressions of Germany. Modeled on 17<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman travelogues and composed in the Ottoman *riqa* style, the *Seyabatname* describes an alcohol-ridden New Year's Eve party in Potsdam; Seviner reads this mismatch of form and content as a method of making visible the act of translation, understood not simply as an act of linguistic transfer, but rather as a process of estrangement. Written on the heels of Turkey's alphabet reform—which replaced the Perso-Arabic script of Ottoman Turkish with Latin letters—Ali's letter calls attention to language as an arena of power contest in early Republican Turkey, within which translators functioned as crucial agents of change.

Kristin Dickinson and Zeynep Seviner's English translation of the *Seyabatname* appears alongside Seviner's article in this special issue. With its ironic adaptation of genre conventions and its skillful implementation of word play, Ali's *Seyabatname* is a challenging text to translate. While the English translation cannot always do justice to the linguistic and historical specificities of the original, it does provide a strong metaphorical extension of the interlingual and intercultural elements of the *Seyabatname*. By making this text available to an English-speaking audience, this issue further aims to highlight Ali's witty experimentation with Ottoman literary forms, an aspect of his diverse oeuvre that has received little critical attention to date.

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<sup>3</sup> This letter was first published in transliteration in the edited volume *Sabahattin Ali* (1979).

In contrast to the *Seyabatname*—which was never intended for publication—Ali maintained a highly visible role as literary translator for the state-run translation bureau from 1940-1943. Through a case study of Ali's engagement with Kleist, Dickinson argues that his actual translation practice undermined the dominant paradigm of civilizational transfer that undergirded larger humanist reforms at the time; Ali's legacy thus provides fertile ground for sketching an alternative history of translation in the Republic of Turkey that worked against the official form of culture planning endorsed by the state. In her analysis, Dickinson shows how Ali's translation practice informed and overlapped with his literary production, both of which participated in the humanist reform process, while also critiquing them from within.

### Situating Ali in a Transnational Context

As part of a larger initiative aimed at creating a new Turkish intellectual youth educated in Western European languages, Ali received a four-year government grant to study language, literature, and philosophy in Berlin and Potsdam in 1928 at the age of 21.<sup>4</sup> While Ali broke off his studies in Germany after only one and a half years, his experiences abroad made an indelible impact on his life and work. The German language served not only as a point of departure into German literature and culture; Ali also read the great works of Russian literature—such as those by Gogol, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov and Gorky—in German translation, and translated works of antiquity—such as Sophocles' *Antigone*—into Turkish from the German.

It was precisely Ali's unbridled passion for literature and language learning that gained him a position as a government employee for the fledging Republic of Turkey. Even as he was later imprisoned for his politically critical writings, his German skills did not go unnoticed by the state: he worked as a German teacher in Aydın (1930), Konya (1931), and Ankara (1935), and was often called upon as an expert of German literature for government sponsored projects, such as the *İnönü Ansiklopedisi* (*Inönü Encyclopedia*); he was further employed as a simultaneous interpreter for the German-Jewish exile and dramaturg Carl Ebert at the Ankara State Conservatory, and he was a founding member of the state-funded translation bureau in 1940.

The diverse positions Ali held as a civil servant were enabled by wide-reaching humanist cultural reforms that targeted the publishing and education sectors. Initiated by Minister of Education (*Maarif Vekili*) Hasan Ali Yücel in 1939, reforms included the establishment of village institutes that trained and enabled teachers to establish local schools (1940), a translation bureau (1940), a state conservatory (1941), and a national library (1946). Reforms enacted in the 1940s were preceded

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<sup>4</sup> Ali was one of 15 intellectuals sent abroad; five scholarships were granted for Germany, France, and England, respectively.

by a crucial overhaul of the *Darülfünun* (House of Knowledge, established in 1863), the first institution of higher education in the Ottoman Empire modeled on the European university system. Refounded as İstanbul Üniversitesi (Istanbul University) in 1933, the restructuring of this university to promote the Europeanization of scholarship and disciplinary practices was greatly aided by prominent German-Jewish academic émigrés escaping National Socialism. Significant research has been devoted to this aspect of the reform process; the kind of comparative philological scholarship generated by émigrés and their Turkish colleagues in this time period has been heralded by scholars such as Emily Apter as representative of “transnational humanism or global translatio” (2006: 46) and a foundational moment for the contemporary field of Comparative Literature.

In her detailed analysis of the time period, Kader Konuk nevertheless reveals how the kind of humanism that emerged in Turkey during the 1930s and 40s served primarily national, rather than transnational interests. Transnationalism, she writes, implies “the outcome of an exchange between individuals and communities, independent of the interests of nation-states” (2010: 75), through which individual actors exercise their agency to transgress national borders. On the contrary, the *Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft* (Emergency Association of German Science), which facilitated the hiring of German-Jewish émigrés at both Istanbul University and later diverse institutions throughout Turkey, negotiated directly with representatives of the Turkish nation-state. Throughout this process, German academics were not “rescued” on humanitarian grounds, but rather were often instrumentalized for larger political processes, as they were carefully selected for their academic qualifications and potential to modernize and Europeanize the secondary education system in Turkey (Konuk 2010: 75). Overall, Konuk argues, the humanist reforms

were part of a national agenda that linked its success to its capacity for overcoming cultural differences between East and West. The modernization reforms promoted sameness with Western Europe but simultaneously maintained a notion of national particularity (Konuk 2010: 74).

As the articles in this issue show, Ali's engagement with German literature and culture goes beyond the kind of Europhilia officially endorsed during the time period to offer a critical view of both Germany and Turkey's relationship to it. İlker Hepkaner's article in particular considers the political implications of the complex formal and thematic connections between *Madonna* and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz* (1870). Writing in an ultranationalist context, Ali was frequently imprisoned for his artistic representations of political dissidents or social outcasts deemed to cast the state in a negative light; it is precisely by engaging with the ekphrastic and intertextual elements of *Venus* in relation to *Madonna*, Hepkaner argues, that Ali is able to critique the Turkish government's conflation of art with reality. Amid rampant state censorship, Ali's presumed love-story thus

subtly protests the use of art as a yardstick for measuring one's loyalty as a citizen. In conclusion, Hepkaner considers the stakes of Ali's engagement with German and Austrian literary culture at a time when the Turkish government was openly sympathetic to Nazi Germany.

On the flipside of this discourse, Gramling and Schwalm consider the stakes of reading *Madonna* from a contemporary standpoint, at the interstices of comparative, translation, postcolonial, and multilingualism studies. In their analysis of *Madonna's* oft-ignored frame narrative, they show how Ali's final novel actively theorizes the concept of world literature from its pre-1945 standpoint. Rather than reading *Madonna* retroactively through the lens of postcolonial and globalization studies, they ask how the novel itself theorizes debates regarding world literature and translation as they were still in the process of being institutionalized. This question is implicit in all articles presented here; by reading Ali's translation practice against the grain of the very nation-building process in which it participated (Dickinson), or highlighting the processes of translation and intertextuality that mark Ali's literary legacy (Seviner and Hepkaner), the articles in this special issue press us to critically rethink the categories of Turkish, German, and world literature that Ali worked both within and against.

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# Sabahattin Ali's Views on the Arts and Literature<sup>1</sup>

*Sevengül Sönmez*

A significant amount of scholarship on Sabahattin Ali<sup>2</sup> revolves around his life story, or rather, the sorrowful story of his death. As a result, we still lack a comprehensive study on Sabahattin Ali's corpus as a whole. Additional research on Sabahattin Ali's diverse body of work is thus imperative for our understanding of the contributions he made to, and the changes he affected within, modern Turkish literature. While recent critical editions such as *Sabahattin Ali: Anılar, İncelemeler, Eleştiriler* (2014) have begun to address this lacuna, there is much work left to be done. Within a critical body of scholarship still in the making, special issues such as "Sabahattin Ali's Translingual Transnationalism" play a crucial role in introducing Sabahattin Ali to an English speaking readership and helping us to understand the unique impact Sabahattin Ali had on the field of modern Turkish literature via an emphasis on the transnational aspects of his work. This article offers a broad and comprehensive introduction to Sabahattin Ali's views on literature and the arts in order to provide key background information for the articles that follow.

Sabahattin Ali's close friends tell us that he worked on his novels diligently and that he desired to write a number of additional novels (Ergün 2000). These suggestions are corroborated by the fact that a list of planned novels replete with titles and brief notes was among Sabahattin Ali's possessions when he was murdered.

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<sup>1</sup> This article stems from a keynote given by Sevengül Sönmez at the conference *Transnational Perspectives on the Life and Work of Sabahattin Ali* at New York University in 2015. The keynote was originally given in Turkish; many thanks to Ali Bolcakan and İlker Hepkaner for their translation of this speech into English.

<sup>2</sup> While Sabahattin Ali took the surname Ali, he chose to not use it as such. For this reason, I refer to him with his full name Sabahattin Ali throughout this article.

Even though Sabahattin Ali was never able to bring these novels to fruition, the diverse body of work he did leave behind made a profound impact on the field of modern Turkish literature. Indeed, Sabahattin Ali wrote two novels that changed the course of Turkish literature: Both *Kıyucaklı Yusuf* (*Yusuf from Kıyucak*) and *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* (*The Madonna in the Fur Coat*) take a different approach than previous Turkish-language novels, as their realist narrative and sincere style succeed in capturing their audiences and differentiating the novel from the romance genre. Despite their resemblance to romance due to formal and affective patterns, these two novels can be distinguished from the genre's conventions thanks to the in-depth formation of their characters.

In a limited number of studies, scholars have observed how Sabahattin Ali's perception of literature evolved from social realism to critical realism over the course of his career (Bezirci 1987: 168-171). While this analysis is well-founded for his short stories, we still need new interpretations of his novels. In the following, I draw on Sabahattin Ali's personal correspondences to provide a starting point for this much-needed scholarly work. Throughout his life, Sabahattin Ali read constantly and vocally shared his ideas with others; he openly expressed his ideas on art and literature and answered questions addressed to him regarding this subject with great sincerity. In an interview published in *Varlık* magazine in 1936, for example, Sabahattin Ali clearly explains his approach to the arts: "I have never been a partisan of purposeless arts. The arts have a single and clear reason: elevating people towards the better, more accurate and more aesthetic; awakening this desire of elevation."<sup>3</sup> Two years after this interview, he expressed the purpose of the arts more clearly in a letter he penned for a book that Mehmet Behçet Yazar was preparing:

Since art is aimed, like all other social activities, at society, all future major artists will undoubtedly have a very strong social quality. They will produce artworks expressing important issues, woven with the rich treasures of the past and the present within the depth of their geniuses and within the breadth of their mind. These artworks will strive to give humanity a leap upward and forward. In my opinion, the arts have the duty of teaching people about humanity, life, and their meaning.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> "Ben hiçbir zaman sanatın maksatsız olduğuna kani olmadım. Sanatın bir tek ve sarıh bir maksadı vardır: İnsanları daha iyiye, daha doğruya, daha güzele yükseltmek; insanlarda bu yükselme arzusunu uyandırmak." (Reşit 1936)

<sup>4</sup> "Sanatın gayesi de her içtimai fiil gibi, cemiyet olduğuna göre, gelecek büyük sanatkârların içtimai taraflarının çok kuvvetli olacağı ve mazinin ve halin zengin hazinelerinden toplanarak kendi kafalarının genişliği, dehalarının derinliği içinde yoğuracakları büyük meseleleri insanlığa ileri ve yukarı doğru birer adım daha atıracak eserler halinde ortaya koyacakları şüphesizdir. Benim kanaatimce sanat, insana insanı ve hayatı ve bunların manasını öğretmekle muvazzaftır." (Yazar 1938: 372-373)

Sabahattin Ali viewed both the arts and literature as socially purposeful and political activities: "Literature," he stated, "is also a service and a struggle. And it is a struggle that brings us to the aforementioned goal, to the better and more aesthetic; and it is never for the entertainment of the bourgeoisie."<sup>5</sup> In this same interview Sabahattin Ali also ridicules self-proclaimed authors of the people and the idea of catering to the public. Indeed, the inauthenticity of literati was a major issue for him and he advocated strongly for the production of artworks that take issue with society and create change:

Our most ridiculous authors are the ones who think they are writing for the people. When someone who doesn't suffer with the masses, who neither celebrates nor rebels with the people, who has a totally different heartbeat than theirs, addresses the society with the singular you, it is something beyond ridiculous. We still have novelists who look at the villager from an American tourist's point of view, and see a dark and mysterious soul or a primitive animal in them. We have famous authors who claim to be narrating society while turning them into laughingstocks with stories of cheap and strange humor. There are spoiled charlatans who proclaim themselves "the most read author by the public" based on volumes of wishy-washy novels they wrote for half-educated young girls going through hysteria due to their sexual desires. Are these novelists the ones who will fill the gap between our literature and the masses?<sup>6</sup>

Over the course of Sabahattin Ali's career, he shifted from advocating for social realism to advocating for critical realism, and held a distinct position among authors who thought similarly and wrote for society. Sabahattin Ali describes the difference between social and critical realism as the following: "This prosperity that I see as unnecessary in the arts is perhaps a 'thesis' in a determinate sense."<sup>7</sup> This statement embodies the quality that distinguishes him from his contemporary and successor social realist literati and gives Sabahattin Ali the unique place he holds in Turkish literature.

<sup>5</sup> "Edebiyat da bir hizmet ve bir mücadeledir. Ve yukarıda söylediğim şeye, daha iyiyeye, daha güzele götüren bir mücadele ve hiçbir zaman yüksek ruhlu bay üdebanın gönül eğlencesi değil." (Reşit 1936)

<sup>6</sup> "Kitle için yazdıklarını zanneden muharrirlerimiz ise en gülünç olanlardır. Kitle ile beraber ıstırap çekmeyen, halkın sevinci ile yüzü gülüp onun isyanı ile şaha kalkmayan, nabzı kitenin nabzıyla aynı tempoda atmayan adamın kitleye 'sen' diye hitap etmesi hatta gülünçten de ileri bir şeydir. Hâlâ köylüyü Amerikalı bir seyyah gözüyle seyredip onda ya mistik karanlık bir ruh veya iptidai bir hayvan gören büyük romancılarımız var. Halktan bahsediyorum diyen yabancı ve ucuz esprili hikâyelerle halı maskaraya çeviren meşhur muharrirlerimiz var. Cinsi ihtiraslardan histeriye uğramış yarım tahsilli genç kızlar için yazdığı sulu romanının ciltlerine dayanarak kendisine 'en çok okunan halk muharriri' sıfatını takan şumarık şarlatanlar var. Edebiyatımızla okurlar kitleleri arasındaki boşluğu bunlar mı dolduracak." (Reşit 1936)

<sup>7</sup> "Sanatta bulunmamasını lüzumlu gördüğüm bu hayır, muayyen bir manada belki de 'tez'dir." (Nazif 1938)

For Sabahattin Ali, the arts must be objective, accessible, sincere, and comprehensible. This understanding of the arts put him in a privileged position in another field in which he became successfully involved: photography. In his evaluation of Sabahattin Ali's photography, İsa Çelik explains the similarity between his literary works and his photographs as such:

In his photographs, just as is widely observed in his literary works, we can see that instead of relying on literary artistry, he prioritized the 'marginal benefit' that the reader -the society- will acquire from the social and political analysis of a condition or occasion recounted in simple language.<sup>8</sup>

Taking a clear stance toward the definition and function of literature, Sabahattin Ali made the following statement in an interview he gave in 1935:

Today, we don't have a corpus we can call 'literature.' There are a couple of individuals who write well or poorly, but they are not even affiliated with each other. Whether poetry or prose, I haven't read even a pamphlet in Turkish that can reach out to the public over its author's limited mind and smart-alecky measures, constitute a strength and success regarding form, essence, and thought, and is capable of having an opinionated group rally around it.<sup>9</sup>

In the interview cited above with *Varlık* magazine in 1936, Sabahattin Ali offers a milder view on the contemporary novel and poetry: "We see a few progressive moves in our contemporary novel and poetry. But in the novel or specifically in the epic, there's currently no work that fulfills its responsibilities even partially. It's disheartening, but that's the way it is."<sup>10</sup>

In his letter to the owner of the newspaper *Hakikat (Truth)*, Cemal Hakkı Selek, Sabahattin Ali claims that the serialized publication of his novels in newspapers did not diminish the value of his writings, and that he would never let his ideas be compromised; just because his writings appeared in the newspaper, this did not mean he diverged from his sense of art, and unlike some other novelists, he wasn't writing popular novels to appease the public. Sabahattin Ali composed this letter

<sup>8</sup> "Yazılarında belirgin biçimde görülen, edebi sanatlara yaslanmak yerine yalın, duru bir dille olayın ya da durumun sosyal ve politik çözümlemelerinden okuyucunun—toplumun—alacağı 'marjinal fayda'nın önde tutulması fotoğraflarında da görülüyor." (Çelik 1984)

<sup>9</sup> "Bugün edebiyat denecek toplu bir şeyimiz yoktur. İyi veya fena yazan birkaç şahıs var ki birbiriyle münasebettar bile değiller. Şiir olsun, nesir olsun, yazanın kafasının dar ve ukala hududunu aşabilip halka yükselen ve şekil, ruh, fikir itibarıyla bir kuvvet ve başarıma gösteren ve etrafında bir fikir grubu toplayabilecek olan Türkçe bir forma bile okumadım." (Aygün 1935)

<sup>10</sup> "Bugünkü roman ve şiirimizi ele alınca şiirimizde tek tük ileri hamleler görüyoruz. Fakat romanda daha doğrusu alelumum epik sahada, üstüne düşen vazifeleri kısmen dolsun yapmış bir eser ortada yoktur. Biraz acı ama bu böyle." (Reşit 1936)

on February 10, 1941, after he did not receive payment for his novel *Kürk Mantolu Madonna*, which was serialized in *Hakikat*:

For the first time in my life as an author, I was told that my writings didn't generate interest. Why? Nobody felt the need to investigate this. Was it really just that the novel didn't stick? If it indeed did not, does the fault lie with the novel or with the quality of the readers of *Hakikat* newspaper? Since my work has been publicly available for some time, when you asked me to write for your newspaper, it's perfectly obvious that you wouldn't ask for a novel in the vein of Iskender Fahrettin, Esat Mahmut, Peride Celal, Kerima Nadir and Mükerrerrem Kamil. If the readers of the evening newspapers only like this kind of writing, does the fault lie with me? Did you know what you were doing to someone like me who cares a great deal about his art and takes pains to not turn it into a "commodity that meets demand" when you unabashedly wrote "sadly people didn't care for it."<sup>11</sup>

Not believing that *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* did not attract attention, Sabahattin Ali described readership and the state of the Turkish novel in the following way in an interview from 1938:

I'm not going to try to explain what the novel means. But I will say this; it's not that the novel didn't find a readership in Turkey. A good novel was always able to reach the masses. In Turkey, despite constant attacks on readers by bad writers, there's not a crisis of readership. There's a crisis of work. To be able to say that a good work can't find a readership, it is necessary to produce a good work to begin with. But where is it? Without producing such a work, placing blame on the readership is nothing more than coming up with an inept excuse for our own incompetence."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "Yazı hayatımda ilk defa olarak yazımın tutmadığı suratıma çarpıldı. Neden? Bunu araştırmaya lüzum bile hissedilmedi. Acaba roman hakikaten tutmadı mı? Tutmadı ise kabahat romanda mı *Hakikat* gazetesi karilerinin seviyesinde mi? Benim şimdiye kadar intişar etmiş bulunan eserlerim meydanda olduğuna göre, benden gazeteniz için yazı isterken Iskender Fahrettin, Esat Mahmut beylerden veya Peride Celal, Kerime Nadir, Mükerrerrem Kamil hanımlardan bekleyeceğimiz neviden bir roman istemiş olamayacağımız aşıkardır. Akşam gazeteleri karileri ancak bu nevi yazıları tutuyorlarsa kabahat bende mi? Sanatı üzerine benim kadar titreyen ve bunu "talebe muvafık emtia" haline getirmekten benim kadar kaçan bir insana, eliniz titremeden "roman maalesef tutmamıştır" diye yazarken ne yaptığımızın farkında mı idiniz?" (Sabahattin Ali 2008: 366)

<sup>12</sup> "Romanın ne demek olduğunu anlatmaya çalışacak değilim. Yalnız şunu söyleyeyim ki; roman Türkiye'de kari bulamamış değildir. İyi roman daima hitap edecek bir kitleye malik olagelmiştir. Türkiye'de, kötü muharrirlerin karilerin zevkine her gün yaptıkları suikastlara rağmen bir kari buhranı yoktur. Eser buhranı vardır. İyi eseri kari tutmuyor demek için evvela iyi eseri ortaya atmak lazımdır. Hani? Bunu yapmadıkça kari kabahatli bulmak, acimize pek acemice bir bahane bulmaktan ileri geçmez." (Nazif 1938)

Despite this dismal portrayal of the Turkish literary scene, it is notable that Sabahattin Ali included Nâzım Hikmet in the list of five works that he loved the most and read repeatedly. These included: “Gorky, *Life of Klim Samgin*; Mikhail Sholokhov, *The Quiet Don*; Nâzım Hikmet, *Letters to Taranta-Babur*; Andre Malraux, *Man’s Fate*; Dostoyevsky, *The Idiot*” (Aygün 1935). Nâzım Hikmet himself remarked on Sabahattin Ali’s favorite foreign authors as such:

He was in awe of the German Romantics until the end of his life. He liked French literature, especially the French Realists. But we can’t say that French literature influenced him deeply. His encounter with classical Russian literature, especially with Gogol, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov and Gorky had impacts on not only his literary but also his social activities as well. From the Soviet authors, he loved Sholokhov and considered his works a part of the great Russian classics.<sup>13</sup>

The diverse range of authors with whom Sabahattin Ali engaged point to his deep curiosity for world literature and his passion for reading. Indeed, one of Sabahattin Ali’s most significant characteristics was his fondness of books. One of the most basic realities everyone agreed upon in his life was that he read constantly, and often carried a book in his pocket. Melahat Tolgar, who studied in Germany with Sabahattin Ali, mentions this in her memoirs: “There were always books under his arm, or a thick dictionary... He read ceaselessly. The books under his arms became a running joke among classmates. But this never bothered him; he didn’t even mind the jokes.”<sup>14</sup> Indeed, this joke came to define his life. Years later, in a letter written from Üsküdar Paşakapı Prison in 1947, he asks—in addition to pajamas, old yellow shoes, a bathing suit and some underwear—for his spouse Aliye to bring him the following books: Bros, *Der Pharao*; Ehrenburg, *Der Fall von Paris*; Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*; Lofts, *White Hell of Pity* (Sabahattin Ali 2008: 510). Sabahattin Ali was also murdered while reading a book; among his possessions at the time were a Balzac novel and Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*.

In her memoirs, Filiz Ali recounts visits to bookstores with her father:

As soon as he got his paycheck, he would go to Akba Bookstore in Ulus [Ankara.] I, too, joined him in this festivity of browsing and purchasing books. He would let me go to the children’s section and leave me by myself saying “you pick whatever you want.” Then he would review the books I chose, pick the

<sup>13</sup> “Ömrünün sonuna kadar Alman romantiklerinin hayranı kaldı. Fransızları hele Fransız realistlerini çok severdi. Ama üzerinde Fransız edebiyatının büyük bir etkisi olmuştur denemez. Klasik Rus edebiyatıyla hele Gogol, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Çehov ve Gorki ile tanışması yalnız edebiyat değil, sosyal çalışmaları üstünde de etkili olmuştur. Sovyet yazarlarından Şolohov’u çok sever, onu büyük Rus klasikleri değerinde sayardı.” (Ali-Laslo / Özkırımlı 1979: 13)

<sup>14</sup> “Koltuğunun altında her zaman kitaplar vardı ve çoğu defa kalın bir sözlük... Durmadan okuyordu. Koltuğunun altındaki kitaplar ile kurstaki arkadaşların alay konusu olmuştü. Ama bunlara hiç aldırmaz, alayların üzerinde bile durmazdı.” (Ali-Laslo / Özkırımlı 1979: 63)



useless ones out, but still would say “alright” and buy most of them. By that time my father would have looked at every new book and magazine in German, and couldn't stop himself from buying most of them. Our bookstore adventures would last at least two hours.<sup>15</sup>

When Sabahattin Ali went to Germany in late 1927, one of the most exciting aspects of his trip was learning German and reading books in this language. He became proficient in German within a very short period of time. Reading in German was like a new world for Sabahattin Ali, and once he had cracked the door open, he never closed it. *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* carries traces of his years in Germany and gives us clues about Sabahattin Ali's reading habits. The books Sabahattin Ali read in his boarding house room are the books that Raif Efendi reads in his own boarding house room: “The Russian authors were the ones that influenced me the most;”<sup>16</sup> “I could read Turgenev's lengthy stories to the end in one sitting.”<sup>17</sup>

As Sabahattin Ali's German improved, his interest in German authors increased. Heinrich von Kleist, whose life and death are narrated by Maria Puder in *Kürk Mantolu Madonna*, deeply affected Sabahattin Ali. Upon returning to Turkey, Sabahattin Ali translated Kleist's “The Betrothal in St. Domingo” (Sabahattin Ali 1943). As Bulgarian Turcologist Ibrahim Tatarlı mentions, Theodor Storm (1817-1888) and Jakob Wassermann (1873-1934) also had a tremendous effect on Sabahattin Ali's literature (Tatarlı 2014). Jakob Wassermann's “Der niegeküßte Mund” (A Mouth that Had Never Been Kissed) is among the stories that Raif Efendi reads in *Kürk Mantolu Madonna*.

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1829-1881), a name forgotten in Turkish intellectual circles in discussions of German literature, is an author Sabahattin Ali described as a “genius.” In the foreword to his translation of Lessing's play, *Minna von Barnhelm*, Sabahattin Ali says:

Those who value a thought-provoking smile above empty laughter and strive to find real humans with dignity and virtue in a theater piece will not be able to keep themselves from admiring the genius and artistry of Lessing.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> “Aybaşında maaşımı alır almaz ilk iş Ulus'taki Akba Kitabevi'ne giderdi. Bu kitap bakma ve satın alma şenliğine arada sırada ben de katılırdım. Beni çocuk kitapları bölümüne salar, ‘sen istediklerini seçedur’ diye kendi halime bırakırdı. Sonra da seçtiğim kitapları gözden geçirir, işe yarayan ve yaramayanları ayırır, yine de pek çoğuna peki deyip alırdı. Babam o sırada yeni gelen Almanca kitap ve dergilerin hemen hepsini gözden geçirmiş olur, pek çoğunu da dayanamayıp alırdı. Bizim bu kitapçı serüvenimiz en azından iki saat sürerdi.” (Ali-Laslo / Özkırmılı 1979: 52)

<sup>16</sup> “Üzerimde en çok tesir yapanlar Rus muharrirleriydi. Turgenev'in koskocaman hikâyelerini bir defada sonun kadar okuduğum oluyordu.” (Sabahattin Ali 2005: 55)

<sup>17</sup> “Odamda Turgenev'in veya Theodor Storm'un hikâyelerine kapanacağımı düşündükçe” (Sabahattin Ali 2005: 63).

<sup>18</sup> “Düşündürücü bir gülümsemeyi boş kakhahalardan üstün tutanlar ve bir tiyatro eserinde kıymet ve meziyet sahibi gerçek insanlar bulmak isteyenler Lessing'in dehasına ve sanatına hayranlık duymaktan kendilerini alamazlar” demektedir.” (Lessing 1942)

Thomas Mann, a prominent figure in German literature, is also among the authors Sabahattin Ali greatly appreciated and who influenced his work. German Turcologist Otto Spies identified this influence and mentioned it while translating Sabahattin Ali's short stories into German (Spies 1943). Indeed, Sabahattin Ali's interest in German literature never lessened. Throughout his life he translated works by Rainer Maria Rilke, Heinrich Heine, and Gottfried Keller into Turkish.

When discussing their cooperative work in the Translation Bureau, Erol Güneý stated:

His real language was German. He had a deep knowledge of German literature. What amazed me most was his profound knowledge of works that would only be familiar to specialists and his knowledge of other world literatures.<sup>19</sup>

This deep knowledge did not go unnoticed by the state. By the 1940s, Sabahattin Ali had become an important figure whom other people consulted in the field of German Studies. In a letter from 1943, Nahit Sırrı Örik says:

I kindly ask you to come the bureau to discuss the issue of benefiting from your expertise regarding the entries for German literature in the ongoing project of the İnönü Encyclopedia and its focus on important works of Western literature, and preparing a work program for this purpose.<sup>20</sup>

As is evident in the Director of the State Conservatory Orhan Şaik Gökyay's letter from June 19, 1941, Sabahattin Ali's views and evaluations were also often consulted for the repertoire efforts of the State Conservatory:

Attached is the Turkish translation of G.-A. de Caillavet and Robert de Flers' *Primerose: Comédie en Trois Actes*, which has been translated into Turkish as *The Heart has its Reasons*, sent by the General Directorate of Fine Arts. It needs to be determined whether it should be included in our repertoire or not. I respectfully ask the requested opinion to be sent in a swift manner.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> "Esas dili Almanca idi. Alman edebiyatını derinlemesine bilirdi. Beni en çok hayrete düşüren yönü yalnız uzmanlarca yakından tanınabilecek eserlerin ve diğer dünya edebiyatlarının üzerindeki yoğun bilgisiydi." (Ali-Laslo / Özkırmırlı 1979: 13)

<sup>20</sup> "Çalışmaları ilerleyen İnönü Ansiklopedisi için mühim Garp eserlerinin birer madde halinde hazırlanmaları sırasında Alman edebiyatındaki vukufunuzdan istifade edilmek arzusunda bulunulduğu cihetle bu hususta görüşülmesi ve bir çalışma programı hazırlanması için büroya teşekkürlerimi saygılarımla dilerim." (Sabahattin Ali 2008: 391)

<sup>21</sup> "Güzel Sanatlar Umum Müdürlüğü tarafından gönderilen okulumuz repertuarına alınmaya değeri olup olmadığı hakkında mütalaa istenilen (G.A. de Gaillavet ve Robert de Flers'in) dilimize çevrilen *Kalp Mantığı* adlı eseri ilişiktir. İstenilen mütalaanın tez elden gönderilmesini saygılarımla rica ederim." (Sabahattin Ali 2008: 373)

In addition to his engagement with German literature, Sabahattin Ali's stories exhibit numerous literary influences that reach beyond the German cultural realm. His series of writings titled "Shakespeare Meselesi" (The Question of Shakespeare), for example, exhibit Sabahattin Ali's deep knowledge of Western literature, to the extent that he was able to follow and comment on complex discussions surrounding it. After discovering Shakespeare through Lessing, Sabahattin Ali remained in awe of Shakespeare's psychological analyses and artful mastery, and often expressed a desire to write literature in the vein of his works (Sabahattin Ali: 1934b / 1934c / 1934d).

Sabahattin Ali's stories were also influenced by Gorky, to the extent that he was called the "Turkish Gorky." Nurullah Ataç further likens Sabahattin Ali's "Birdenbire Sönen Kandilin Hikâyesi" (The Story of a Candle that Suddenly Burnt Out) in the short story collection *Değirmen* to Edgar Allen Poe's frightful stories such as "The Fall of the House of Usher," "Black Cat," and "M. Waldemar."<sup>22</sup> When "Birdenbire Sönen bir Kandilin Hikâyesi" came out in 1931, Sabahattin Ali was very familiar with Edgar Allen Poe's works. In fact, in his critique of Ahmet Kutsi Tecer's poem "Nerdesin" (Where Are You) he writes, "The desperate cry of 'oh where are you' comes through sleep plagued with nightmares, as is the case for the stories of Edgar Poe."<sup>23</sup>

In addition to these diverse literary influences, I personally believe the author who affected Sabahattin Ali the most was Knut Hamsun. In an essay published by *Varlık* in 1934, he writes about Knut Hamsun at length: "His writings are free of any noise and excess and as expansive as nature. One need not look for anything other than the wide, borderless, and deep human soul when reading his books."<sup>24</sup>

Sabahattin Ali shared his interest in world literature with Turkish readers by way of translation. In addition to the translations of short stories, poems, and essays that were published in magazines, he also translated many books into Turkish. His translation of Max Kemmerich's *Aus der Geschichte der menschlichen Dummheit* (*History of Human Stupidity*) was published in 1936 and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm* in 1942. Sabahattin Ali's translations of Heinrich von Kleist's *Die Verlobung in St. Domingo* (The Betrothal in St. Domingo), Albert von Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihl's wundersame Geschichte* (*Peter Schlemihl's Miraculous Story*), and E.T.A. Hoffmann's "Doge und Dogaresse" (The Duke and the Duchess), appeared together under the title *Üç Romantik Hikâye* (*Three Romantic Stories*) in 1943. Sabahattin Ali furthermore co-translated Friedrich Hebbel's *Gyges and his Ring* and Pushkin's *The Captain's Daughter* with Erol Güney; both were published in 1943.

<sup>22</sup> "Uslier Konağının Yıkılışı, Kara Kedi, M. Waldemar gibi iç ürperten hikâyelerine benzetmektedir." (Ataç 1935)

<sup>23</sup> "Ah nerdesin' sayhası burada Edgar Poe'nun hikâyelerinde olduğu gibi kâbuslu uykular arasından geliyor." (Sabahattin Ali 1930)

<sup>24</sup> "Gürültüsüz, patırsız ve tabiat kadar büyüktür. Kitaplarını okurken orada geniş, hudutsuz ve derin bir insan ruhundan başka bir şey aranmamalıdır." (Sabahattin Ali 1934a)

Sabahattin Ali's translations also introduced a previously unknown author to Turkish readers: in 1943, he translated Ignazio Silone's *Fontamara*.<sup>25</sup> This text, in which Silone criticizes racism with irony, received accolades via Sabahattin Ali's translation. Nâzım Hikmet thanks Sabahattin Ali for his translation in an undated letter:

The language of the translation was magnificent. The language in the romantic stories was also very successful in terms of stylization. I now know how difficult and demanding translation is, so I understand very well the great difficulty you surmounted with great success.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to his knowledge of diverse European literatures, Sabahattin Ali was also familiar with the rules of Ottoman *divan* poetry. Many people who knew Sabahattin Ali well remark that his knowledge of Aruz prosody was so thorough that he noticed a flaw in the meter immediately. He was furthermore able to compose in the *divan* style himself. He began the long and witty poem titled "Terkib-i Bend" in 1928, and later mailed it to Pertev Naili Boratav after finishing it in Germany. Sabahattin Ali's knowledge of Ottoman literary forms also included the *seyahatname*. He penned "Seyahatname-i Sudlice," which is based on a tour of the Bosphorus with friends, as a *divan* in the style of Evliya Çelebi. And, finally, he wrote about his travels to Berlin in the same witty manner and Çelebi-style in a piece called "Mufassal Cermenistan Seyahatnamesi," which Kristin Dickinson and Zeynep Seviner have translated into English for this special issue as "The Comprehensive Germanistan Travelogue."

Finally, it is worth noting the influence of folk poetry on some of the poems in Sabahattin Ali's collection *Dağlar ve Rüzgâr* (*Mountains and Wind*). Moreover, the fact that songs like "Leylim Ley" and "Aldırma Gönül" (Don't Worry My Heart), which have been set to music, have come to be seen as anonymous and an integral part of folk culture attests to this influence. The fable form in "Sırça Köşk" (Glass Pavillion) also demonstrates Sabahattin Ali's proximity to folk literature, a genre which Sabahattin Ali describes as follows:

Folk literature is more beneficial as it indicates its ways of reaching the people. But it's also wrong to take this at face value. There is a strong conservative aspect of folk literature. Most of these works are filled with feu-

<sup>25</sup> Ali translated this work from German. It is notable that Ali was strongly opposed to translating from a secondary language; when introducing *Fontamara*'s author he notes that Silone was a powerful voice of Italian literature and that he wrote and published this work in Switzerland in German (Sabahattin Ali 1941).

<sup>26</sup> "Tercüme dili fevkaladeydi. Romantik hikâyelerdeki dil de istilizasyonu bakımından çok muvaffak. Tercümenin ne zor, ne kadar mesuliyetli bir iş olduğunu tecrübeyle artık bildiğim için ne büyük bir zorluğu nasıl başarıyla yendiğini gayet iyi anlıyorum." (Sabahattin Ali 2008: 398).

dal mentality and the darkness of religion and mysticism. The people who use this material should be those with the ability to discern.<sup>27</sup>

As this citation shows, Sabahattin Ali drew upon folk literature very carefully and consciously, and made an indelible impression on public discourse with his unforgettable verses and heroes.

Throughout this article, I have tried to convey Sabahattin Ali's outlook on art and literature by making use of his own words; through recourse to Sabahattin Ali's interviews and his personal correspondences, I have indicated that Sabahattin Ali was a dedicated follower of world literature, a meticulous translator, and a perseverant author; the works he left us—and, in particular, his translations—should be examined carefully once more and brought to the attention of a contemporary readership. To this end, detailed studies of Sabahattin Ali's works are crucial for showing the reflection of his views on art within his works, and of utmost importance for determining the progress of his artistic development and his place within Turkish literature.

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<sup>27</sup> "Halk edebiyatı ise, halka varabilmek yollarını işaret edeceği için daha istifadelidir. Fakat bunu da olduğu gibi almak yanlıştır. Halk edebiyatının geri tarafları çoktur. Mahsullerinin ekserisi din ve tasavvuf karanlığının, derebeylik zihniyetinin tersleri ile doludur. Bu materyali kullanacak olanlar, ayıklamasını bilen insanlar olmalıdır." (Reşit 1936)

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## World Literature (Already) Wrote Back: Sabahattin Ali after Germany

*David Gramling/Martina Schwalm*

*The age of late neoliberal modernity has prompted new discussions on World Literature and translation, which—but for a handful of classic exceptions—inadvertently tend to exclude literary texts written before 1945 in the Global South, colonial settings, and settings beyond Western / Central Europe and North America. In his 1943 novel, *The Madonna in the Fur Coat*, the Turkish-speaking author Sabahattin Ali critically problematizes the theorization of world-literary translation, as well as such latter-day conceptions as transnational aesthetics. This article sets itself to reveal how Ali, already in 1943, espouses a theory of world literature-in-translation, responds to ambient questions about world literature and the invisibilization of translating, long prior to the political debates on these themes in the 1980s and 1990s. As a novel written in Turkish, and therefore long relegated to the sidelines of anglophone and francophone scholarship on World Literature and translation, the *Madonna* nonetheless anticipates the discourse about World Literature long before the so-called age of globalization, and offers critical understanding about literary translation and monolingualism in the process of nation building.*

The study of world literature can very readily become culturally deracinated, philologically bankrupt, and ideologically complicit with the worst tendencies of global capitalism. Other than that, we're in good shape.

—David Damrosch, in conversation with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (2011)

Nothing on earth was more appalling than being obliged to correct someone else's misjudgment about oneself.<sup>1</sup>

—*The Madonna in the Fur Coat*, Sabahattin Ali (2014 [1943])

Sabahattin Ali's novel *The Madonna in the Fur Coat* (1943) is not post-colonial literature, nor is it in any way properly categorizable under the aegis of "the empire writ[ing] back" (Ashcroft et al. 1989). Composed twenty years after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the founding of the Republic of Turkey, it is a text whose author was nonetheless raised in the twilight of empire, in territories beyond the national holdings of post-1923 Republican Turkey (present-day Bulgaria and northern Greece). When a fellowship from the young republic's Ministry of Education sent him to the (also young) republic of Germany from 1928-1930, Ali arrived there as a citizen of a political entity that differed sharply from the country and territory of his own youth. *Madonna* is thus a novel that confounds not only today's disciplinary boundaries and philological conceptions of national persistence, but one that itself exudes a particular mood of political, linguistic, and narrative chronodiversity (Gramling / Hepkaner 2016).

Against the backdrop of this complex historical setting and production context, the current article sets for itself three related tasks: 1) to understand how the "world literature in translation / *Dünya Edebiyatından Tercüme*" initiatives contemporary to the publication of *The Madonna in the Fur Coat* in 1943 both presage and relativize today's models for world-literary study in comparative literature; 2) to understand how Ali's novel critically intervened, *avant la lettre*, in scholarly discourses about transnationalism, multilingualism, and the (invisibility of the) translator; and 3) to think more broadly about the critical role that novels such as Ali's *Madonna* might play in adumbrating a more historically capacious theory of World Literature, beyond Europe and prior to 1945. How did texts such as *Madonna* offer their own theoretical accounts of concepts, experiences, and predicaments that would be described, a half-century later, under the auspices of hybridity and trans-

<sup>1</sup> "Hiç bir şey beni, hakkımdaki bir kanaati düzeltmek mecburiyeti kadar korkutmazdı." (Ali 1998: 49)



nationalism? What do the specific historical answers to these questions offer toward a rethinking of world-literary presuppositions and models in 2017?

### Theoretical Context

We begin by noting the still habitual temptation to overlook extra-European, early 20<sup>th</sup>-century novels' critical interventions into geopolitical questions, and to view these narratives reductively as representative national portraiture or allegory. As Alexander Beecroft has noted in his essay "World Literature without a Hyphen," prevailing grand models for the study of World Literature have had little to say about non-European literatures prior to decolonization and 1945 (Beecroft 2008: 88). If primarily out of a need to stop somewhere, several leading voices in the reinvigorated 21<sup>st</sup>-century project of theorizing World Literature have even made the era of decolonization an explicit historical limit criterion (Casanova 1999: 62-63). One of the results of this spirit of pragmatism seems to be that most pre-1945 literary texts emerging from Global South contexts, colonial holdings, and Europe's West Asian peripheries continue to remain in the implicit scholarly remand of religious studies, historical anthropology, social history, folklore, and anthropological philology (Hymes 1965)—but do not yet accrue their own load-bearing function in current World Literature models which, as Pheng Cheah has also claimed, now tend to hew to a presentist spatial picture:

[T]he defining characteristic of the world in recent accounts of world literature is spatial extension. It refers to the extensive scope and scale of the production, circulation, consumption, and evaluation of literature. Simply put, "world" is extension on a global scale, where world literature is conceived through an analogy with a world market's global reach. What is worldly about literature is its locomotion or movement in Mercatorian space according to the mathematical coordinates of Euclidean geometry. Where literary history is broached, time is viewed in similarly spatial terms. (Cheah 2014: 306-307)

What Cheah sees as the brisk and vigorous "locomotion" of post-colonial literary texts trafficking across multilingual, transnational frontiers is the result of a regularized translative free market in what Ashcroft et al. described in 1989 as "the empire writ(ing) back." What role literary translators might be seen as playing in this spatialist conception of world-literary markets remains something of an undertheorized question, as the practice and products of literary translating still run counter to some of comparative literature's most deeply held convictions about its own mandate. Prominent voices in Translation Studies have recently been suggesting, for instance, that the contemporary endeavor of comparative literary study "continues to suppress translated texts" (Venuti 2016) by promoting new versions of old prejudices against translated literature in the humanistic disciplines. The stigma

associated with translating in the United States was so strong over the 1980s and 1990s, according to Lawrence Venuti, that: “With rare exceptions, a scholar’s decision to translate or to study translations was likely to jeopardize an academic career.” (Venuti 2016: 181)

When it comes to the structural and epistemological role of translating and translators generally, world literature debates and comparative literature discourses (at least on the Western shores of the North Atlantic) appear to have some explaining left to do. Particularly in relation to non-European literature prior to 1945, comparative literature scholars have only recently begun to set forth theoretical questions about the differential practices that constituted literary translation across the “hard multilingual” borders of—say—Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman courtly poetry prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and what these translingual procedures might reveal about literary study under latter-day conditions of globalization (Noorani 2013). A recent collection edited by Michelle Woods under the title *Authorizing Translation* (2016) offers further indications that translation and translators may indeed be slowly moving out from their back-of-the-house positionality in the comparative literature world—by way not only of massive collaborative projects like Cassin’s *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies* (2004), but also through a critical reengagement with (once or currently) living, working literary translators.

David Damrosch traces these lingering forms of disciplinary *méconnaissance* (Bourdieu / Wacquant 1992: 171-172) back to the bitter objections in 1960 of the Chapel Hill-based, Swiss-educated comparatist Werner Friedrich—once referred to as the “Christoph Colomb du comparatisme américain” (Leonard 2010: 191)—namely, that world literature curricula tend to attract:

bricks [...] flying from the left and from the right, from the solid language departments snorting that this is the flimsiest kind of sheer amateurism, and from the solid comparatists complaining that it is because of such [sweeping survey courses on “The Novel in World Literature”] that Comparative Literature, ever since the 1920s, has gotten a black eye and an ill repute from which it has yet not completely recovered.” (Friedrich 1960: 15)

Such a mood of ill repute, suppression, and multidirectional flying bricks casts a long shadow on today’s debates about the ideal division of labor between world literature, comparative literature, translation studies, literary translation, postcolonial studies, and multilingualism studies (see, for instance, Schwalm 2015, Gramling / Hepkaner 2016, Noorani 2013, Cheah 2014). These questions appear at first glance to be primarily academic dilemmas, of interest to those in the professoriate who tend to participate in discussions ‘about’ world literature and ‘about’ literary translation. What remains to be fully investigated, however, is the extent to which literary texts themselves—and, indeed, those composed prior to 1945—have participated knowingly and presciently in the creative theorization of “world litera-

ture,” as well as of the often rancorously politicized and mercilessly suppressed “task of the translator,” and of the complicated, precarious relationship between world literature, literary translation, and “the worst tendencies of global capitalism.” (Damrosch 2011: 456, see also Damrosch 2005)

### Rendering the Multilingual Translator Visible

As we noted above, *The Madonna in the Fur Coat* was composed by an Ottoman-educated author, amid but somewhat ill at ease with the nation-building efforts into which state actors conscripted his learned and well-travelled imagination. It is an example of a novel that, long ago, before the canon debates of the 1980s, spurned any symbolic duty to “be” national literature on a global market of translated texts, and turned its figural ambitions rather toward a keen-eyed theorization of translation, multilingualism, and hybridity. More than just a tale of border-crossing between Germany and Turkey, Ali’s novel is just as eager to document how translators intervene in the high modern order of parallel nationalisms and nation-building projects as it is in conveying one source culture to an awaiting world-literary public. This meta-national critique would bring great hardship and precarity to Ali over the course of the acutely nationalist 1940s in Turkey, a fact that is foreshadowed in the novel itself. Serialized in 1940–1941 and published in book form in 1943, *The Madonna in the Fur Coat* would indeed be Sabahattin Ali’s last novel of three. His previous, domestic-realist novel *The Devil Within Us* had been ill received among political elites, and he found himself increasingly in the political forcefield of the emerging world-literary translation industry in Ankara, which sought to systematically deliver world literature (in Turkish) to an upcoming generation of republican citizens, the first generation born under the official Westernization programs of post-Ottoman Turkey. Though Ali’s ‘Madonna novel’ has long been a mainstay of literary bibliophilia in Turkey, it bears the uneasy imprint of a fraught relationship with the early world-literary translation projects of Turkish republican cultural programming elites, like Hasan Ali Yücel’s *Dünya Edebiyatından Tercüme* (Albachtan 2013, Aksoy 2010, Yücel 1939, 125, Szurek 2015).

The goal of the *Dünya Edebiyatından Tercüme* (hereafter “DET”) series was to bring as many Western classics to Turkish readers as possible and to Turkify their literary features for domestic accessibility. Ali’s German-Turkish novel irritated that model and its presumed vectors of domestication and representational tutelage. That is, in composing a *transnational* story with volatile and ambivalent allegiances to any national community, *Madonna* competed with the *international* spirit of the DET program, which was nationalist in its incorporative, educational strategies (Aytürk 2004). Ali was thus living and working amid the instrumentalist dynamics of his own era’s world-literature-in-translation debate, one in which he vigorously participated, and one that was itself in the implicit service of domestic nationalization and monolingualization endeavors in Turkey. *Madonna*’s critical attention to the ethical allegiances of the translator-as-citizen and the translator’s

complex stance toward nation-building efforts meant that the novel was unlikely to find eager reception among mid-century political elites, when the ‘Anatolian’ heartland novel genre was gaining in cultural capital.

### The Precarity of the Translator under Conditions of Monolingualism

It is easy to overlook these historical contingencies and contexts for *Madonna* and other pre-1945 novels, because a tendency still prevails to characterize world literature-in-translation as something that comes ‘from’ places like Turkey, rather than as something that a place like Turkey has gone to great lengths to produce, theorize, and criticize for itself in its own (translated) language—pursuant to a worlded, Westernizing, and yet Turkocentric civic sensibility and a domestically consistent cultural politics (Aytürk 2004: 15). *The Madonna in the Fur Coat*, as we shall see in the analysis that follows, ran quite stridently afoul of this kind of instrumental consistency expected of authors writing in Turkish in the third decade of the Republic.

Previous work has sought, in greater detail, to account for the ways in which Sabahattin Ali dealt with his own positionality as a literary translator and author among the quickly shifting sands of Turkey’s early language and alphabet reform endeavors in the 1920s through 1940s (Dickinson 2013, Gramling / Hepkaner 2016). An active member of the state’s Translation Bureau, Ali was intensively involved in the practice, planning, and debate around the endeavor to deliver to Turkish readers, in their own language, the classics of Western belles-lettres. The Minister of Education heading up the initiative, Hasan Ali Yücel, described the mission of the Translation Bureau and Yücel’s DET series three years prior to the publication of *Madonna* in these terms:

Republican Turkey, which aspires to and is determined to become a distinguished member of Western culture and thinking, is obliged to translate into its own language the works of the old and new thinking of the modern world and thus to strengthen its own existence with their perception and thought. This obligation invites us to start a full-scale translation project. (Yücel 1939: 125, see also Aksoy 2010)

Ali—a political dissident, an on-again, off-again state functionary, a multilingual translator from the German, and a legacy of Ottoman humanistic educational traditions—remains throughout his life an ‘unredeemed captive’ of his own translingual, transnational experiences, and appears poised in 1941 to take the occasion of his third novel to intervene critically in the politics of “world literature in translation.” The remainder of the article will canvas these domains by counterposing *Madonna’s* interventions alongside critical questions that have been animating very recent discussions about world literature and translation, amid what are often presumed to be unprecedented conditions of late neoliberal globalized modernity. Ali’s novel will thus not only help us to imagine the subjectivity of translated world

literary texts as they actively renegotiate the theoretical terms of the debates that interpellate them in complicated ways, but will also illustrate how texts such as *The Madonna in the Fur Coat*, speaking to us as they do from the 1940s and prior, can expand our historical awareness about the critical animus at work in texts of earlier periods. How can we better entertain the possibility that so-called world-literary texts from 1945 and prior have their very own ideas about world literature, translatedness, and the institutionalization of both, rather than serving primarily as the retrospective proving ground for others' ideas about the same?

Ali's late novel *The Madonna in the Fur Coat*—'late' because political suppression and violence ended his career before his fiftieth birthday—pursues precisely such a phenomenological account of translated world literature, doing so beyond the cartographic parameters Cheah describes as characteristic of the world literature debate (Cheah 2014). Though the novel appears at first to thematize primarily an axis that contemporary Germanists understand as Turkish-German transnationalism, the narrative is in many ways utterly unconcerned with nationally understood histories or ethnically understood cultures. Its engagement with the historical spectacle of nation-building and its political assemblages is decidedly formal and dramaturgical, lacking any propositional investment in one endeavor of cultural nationalism over another, whether that of (Republican) Turkey, (Weimar-Republican) Germany, or any other. A typical descriptive passage in this regard arises as Sir Raif<sup>2</sup>, the main subject of the embedded narrative that constitutes the last 80% of the novel, describes the histrionic partisan excesses of the cast of characters at his boarding house in mid-1920s Berlin:

An old, once-wealthy lady was bitter at the officer corps, though she'd lost her fortune due to her own sheer avarice. The officers found fault with the striking workers and with the soldiers who'd been no longer willing to keep up the fight. And totally out of the blue, the colonial tradesman cursed the emperor for starting a war in the first place. Even the maid who cleaned my room in the mornings tried to drum up political conversations with me, and she would read her newspaper whenever she had a spare moment. She had her own ardent opinions, and while talking about them, her face would flush red and she'd swing her fist in the air.<sup>3</sup> (Ali 2014: 25)

<sup>2</sup> There are several options for how to translate the main character's nickname "Raif Efendi." "Sir Raif" as Hepkaner and Gramling (Ali 2014) have chosen, has the advantage of connoting not only the old aristocratic order with which Raif is metonymically associated by his age, employment history, and his overall uncontemporary habitus, but also the scornful mockery with which the other employees of Raif's firm treat his special "dominated dominant" status as the firm's translator.

<sup>3</sup> "Para düşkünlüğü yüzünden servetini kaybeden ihtiyar bir kadın, zabıtlere kızıyor, zabıtlere grev yapan ameleleri ve harbe devam etmek istemeyen askerleri kabahatli buluyor, müstemleke tüccarı durup dururken, harp açan imparatora küfür ediyordu. Sabahları odamı düzelten hizmetçi kız bile benimle siyasetten konuşmaya kalkar, boş zamanlarında derhal gazetesini okumaya koyulurdu. Onun da kendine göre ateşli kanaatleri vardı ve bunlardan bahsederken yüzü büsbütün kızarır, yumruğunu sıkarak havada sallardı." (Ali 1998: 53)

Throughout the novel, the frame narrator and Sir Raif's embedded storyline treat nation-building as a comical, spastic sideshow, grasping for attention in settings where deeper aesthetic and epistemological questions are being foregrounded. The narrator's apparent anationalism, or at least ironic agnosticism vis-à-vis national projects, is a remarkable feature for a text composed so acutely within a nation-building ethos and moment, such as that in which Sabahattin Ali found himself circa 1940. Eliding the imperative to do representational work on behalf of the nation in compliance with the controlled forms of heteroglossic diversity that animate imagined communities was itself a strategic political move that incurred for the author and his text a more than disobliging response from his powerful peers in government.

More than mere scene-setting or pathos-building, we contend that these caricatures of contemporary civic posturing (whether in Raif's pension in Berlin or at the frame narrator's firm in Ankara) serve a broader purpose: to reflect on the formal and structural predicaments of multilingual border-crossers and translators amid aggressive mobilizations of national spirit. Ali could have chosen to write a realist novel about either one of these highly dramatic, crisis-fueled national moments, or he could have written a political novel that interwove the two Republican projects into one another. But he did not. To do so may have guaranteed Ali's novel the kind of political legibility and contemporary relevance that would have ushered it into the canon of translated world literature much earlier than the 2000s. *Madonna*, like its main character, is oddly and inexplicably ill at ease with contemporary political commentary and the soaring urgencies of national becoming. Images of Germanness or Turkishness play a muted, even derided role in this novel, which turns its sights to a different sphere of modernity altogether. Rather than the 'subject-becoming-citizen,' *Madonna* is at pains to understand the 'translator-becoming-subject' amid accelerated conditions of modernist nationalism.

### The Purpose of the Frame Narrative

It should be noted that Sabahattin Ali could have entirely foregone the device of a frame narrative, delivering instead what has become the official focus of attention for most literary reception of the novel: the love story between Sir Raif and the Czech-German-Jewish painter Maria Puder, which indeed does well enough as a stand-alone narrative. It is important therefore to ask: What compelled Ali to formulate the first fifth of the novel as a frame narrative, and—more importantly—why did he infuse the frame narrative with such philosophical complexity and social critique of 1930s Ankara, all of which then appears at first tangential to the ensuing embedded narrative? Once the novel cedes its narrative voice to Sir Raif and his notebook manuscript at the threshold between frame and embedded narrative, it does not return thematically to the bureaucratic absurdities that characterized the social ethos of the frame. We readers are left to presumptively grasp the relationship between the two stories as one of vague mutual affinity, banal

happenstance, or pragmatic verisimilitude. Why, after a scathing sketch of Ankara's upwardly mobile clerk classes in the frame narrative, are we—or more importantly, are early 1940s citizens of the young Republic of Turkey—prompted to then read a tale about an old-fashioned, self-effacing translator and his star-crossed, mostly platonic love affair with a German Jewish painter and her mythically aestheticized self-portrait?

The key lies, perhaps, in the habitus of the narrator as he undergoes a transformation from normative citizen to aspiring critic, through a translational mode of cultural defamiliarization. When readers first come in contact with him, the frame narrator is a creative writer down on his luck in an Ankara characterized by commercial ambition, bureaucratic jockeying, and—so the narrator complains—utter social banality. Here is how the frame narrator appears to see nearly all of his contemporaries, with the exception of Sir Raif the translator:

They were not bad people at all. They were just empty, dead-empty creatures. All their inappropriate behavior resulted from that fact. Faced with the ever-growing emptiness of their character, they could only ever find out who they were when they disdained others and took satisfaction from laughing at them.<sup>4</sup> (Ali 2014: 11)

It is among this cast of contemporary republican citizens that the frame narrator happens upon his first interlocutor and benefactor in the novel, the “vice president of a forestry and lumber business that also procured mechanical building materials, and for this he was getting paid quite well indeed.”<sup>5</sup> (Ali 2014: 2) This old acquaintance, Hamdi, is important to the overall theoretical arc of the novel, not merely a device propelling readers into a plausible narrative course to the frame story. Hamdi is, to the frame narrator, and most probably for Sabahattin Ali, too, the ultimate poster-child for republican citizenship—successful in his international commercial pursuits, compliant with the one-party social doctrines of his time, and both dependent on and disdainful of translation, which reminds him of the worldly multilingualism that neither he nor the state can control. One of Hamdi's exemplary triumphs early on in the novel comes to pass in the following, very humorous scene, which is tone-setting for the bureaucratic satires to come:

“I’ve found a job for you!” Then, he stared at my face with his dauntless and important eyes, adding: “I mean, I invented one. It isn’t too taxing. You’ll keep track of our business at different banks, particularly at our own bank... It’ll be like being a communication clerk between banks.

<sup>4</sup> “Hiç de fena insan değillerdi. Yanlış boş, bomboş mahluklardı. Yaptıkları münasebetsizlikler hep buradan geliyordu. İçlerinin esneyen boşluğu karşısında ancak başka başka insanları istihfaf ve tahkir etmek, onlara gülmek suretiyle kendilerini tatmin edebiliyorlar[dı].” (Ali 1998: 28-29)

<sup>5</sup> “Makine vesaire komisyonculuğu yapan, aynı zamanda orman ve kereste işleriyle uğraşan bir şirkette müdür muavini olduğunu ve oldukça iyi bir para aldığı[nı] biliyordum.” (Ali 1998: 13)

When business is slow, you can sit down and do your own thing. Write poetry as much as you want. I talked with the president. We'll get the hiring taken care of...<sup>6</sup> (Ali 2014: 4)

With this triumphal gesture, the lugubrious creative-writer frame narrator is brought back into the fold of commercial and fiscal trade and traffic, as befitting an aspiring republic attempting to strategically incorporate artists and poets. The frame narrator functions as the embodied idiom of inter-bank communication, under the lenient auspices of which he may opt to exercise his freedom to write the occasional poem. The prospective productivity of literature and poetry—the aesthetic and imaginative use of written language—is thus embedded in political economy by way of this invented profession of inter-bank communicator, which itself speculates on the unbridled optimism in the fiscal sector. The empty and infinite promise of literature—“write poetry as much as you want”—finds its temporary refuge and self-justification in the interstices of domestic capital speculation. Less a clerk and more of a fiscal translator himself, the frame narrator realizes he has bargained for more than he has gained. This result is born out in the subsequent behavior of his benefactor, Hamdi, the normative civic subject of the novel, who admonishes the narrator:

“Cut the nonsense, man,” he then told me all about the triumphs of living pragmatically, and insisted that good-for-nothing distractions like literature could only hold you back once you're done with school. Without even considering that I might have a response of some kind, let alone a counter-argument, he just kept holding forth as if advising a child, making no bones about how his confidence in these matters came directly from his own successes in life.<sup>7</sup> (Ali 2014: 3)

### Transnational Aphasias

At the opposing pole of civic subjectivity from Hamdi is the frame narrator's new office-mate, the translator Sir Raif, who—in contrast to the blustery, triumphant capitalist citizen Hamdi, whose “most natural option was to talk bald-faced non-

<sup>6</sup> “‘Sana bir iş buldum!’ dedi. Sonra, yüzüme o cesur ve manalı gözlerini dikerek ilave etti: ‘Yani bir iş icat ettim. Yorucu bir şey değil. Bazı bankalarda ve bilhassa kendi bankamızda işlerimizi takip edeceksin... Adeta şirketle bankalar arasında irtibat memuru gibi bir şey... Boş zamanlarında içeride oturur, kendi işlerine bakarsın... İstedığın kadar şiir yaz... Ben müdürle konuştum, tayinini yapacağız...’” (Ali 1998: 17)

<sup>7</sup> “‘Bırak böyle şeyleri canım!’ diyerek pratik hayatın muvaffakiyetlerinden, edebiyat gibi boş şeylerin mektep sıralarından sonra ancak zararlı olabileceğinden bahsetti. Kendisine cevap verilebileceğini, münakaşa edilebileceğini asla aklına getirmeden, küçük bir çocuğa nasihat verir gibi konuşuyor ve bu cesareti hayattaki muvaffakiyetinden aldığı tavırlarıyla göstermekten de hiç çekinmiyordu.” (Ali 1998: 15)



sense”<sup>8</sup> (Ali 2014: 3)— “was intense, delicate, and very careful”<sup>9</sup> (Ali 2014: 14). Thus begins *Madonna*’s apparently accidental inquiry into the subjectivity of translators who, in the form of Sir Raif, offer the frame narrator an alternative model to Hamdi’s banal commercial nationalism, a counter-model to which the narrator gradually finds he can aspire. This interest does not come easily to the frame narrator, who, in the spirit of Lawrence Venuti’s 1995 interventions on the social invisibility of the translator, is predisposed to find Sir Raif and his ilk “on the whole tedious and irrelevant: he sat there so stiffly that I began to wonder whether he was alive or dead there at the table across from me—translating this or that, reading that ‘novel in German’ hidden in his drawer.”<sup>10</sup> (Ali 2014: 7)

As he grows more curious about the translator with whom he shares his room, the frame narrator comes to understand that the company had long failed to give Sir Raif a raise—despite his seniority and despite institutional profligacy in other areas—primarily because of an underlying suspicion that he, Raif, does not actually know the languages he translates. Raif’s behavior, or lack of behavior, is prejudicially understood around the office in this dismissive way, primarily because he abstains from the social graces presumed of his upwardly mobile clerk contemporaries. Raif foregoes the ostensive cultural labor of (European) cosmopolitanism, adopting an apparently ascetic disposition that rankles those around him in his work environment, who presume such performances of European ‘culturedness’ as the prerequisite for ‘being a translator,’ the experience of which no one in the novel seems eager to understand.

We never heard any foreign words come out of his mouth, we never encountered him talking about his language knowledge, and we never saw a foreign newspaper or magazine in his hands. In short, he had nothing in common with those types who seemed to shout, “We speak European!” with all their being.<sup>11</sup> (Ali 2014: 6)

The narrator appears to be the only person in the novel, among Raif’s coworkers and family-members alike, who “sensed [he] was still harboring a handful of misconceptions about [Raif]”<sup>12</sup>, and this leads the frame narrator to take up a studious

<sup>8</sup> “emin olduğu için pervazsızca konuşuyordu” (Ali 1998: 15)

<sup>9</sup> “çok alıngan, gayet ince görünüşlü ve dikkatliydi” (Ali 1998: 34)

<sup>10</sup> “Karşımdaki masada canlı olduğundan şüphe ettirecek kadar hareketsiz oturan, tercüme yapan veya çekmesinin gözündeki ‘Almanca romanını’ okuyan bu adamın sahiden manasız ve sıkıcı bir mahluk olduğuna kanaat getirmiştim.” (Ali 1998: 21)

<sup>11</sup> “Konuşurken ağzından yabancı bir kelime çıktığı, herhangi bir zaman dil bildiğinden bahsettiği duyulmamış; elinde veya cebinde ecnebi gazete ve mecmuaları görülmemişti. Hulusa, bütün varlıklarıyla: ‘Biz Frenkçe biliriz!’ diye haykıran insanlara benzer bir tarafı yoktu.” (Ali 1998: 19-20)

<sup>12</sup> “[O]nun [...] birçok tezatların bulunduğunu seziyordum.” (Ali 1998: 23)

emulation of his office-mate. “After that, anything about Sir Raif, even his meaningless and negligible actions, provoked my interest.”<sup>13</sup> (Ali 2014: 8)

What we have in this frame narrative, long before meeting the true Madonna in her fur coat, is a scaffolding in which a citizen-national, disheartened at the meager affective affordances of his own nation-building environment’s version of commercial and cosmetic cosmopolitanism, seeks succor and tutelage from precisely that element in the environment (Sir Raif) that most seeks to recede from visibility and structural importance. The translator, a vanishingly self-effacing figure who nonetheless enables the firm to keep up its pace of commercial traffic, turns the normative social world upon itself, becoming the spiritual and critical fulcrum of the novel and ensuring it the world-literary obscurity it would inhabit until the hey-day of Turkish-German revisionist literary history in the 1990s, when it would be brought back into the limelight.

### The Clandestine Subjectivity of the Translator

To summarize so far, the frame narrative serves as more than a social or rhetorical sponsor for the ensuing transnational love story. The frame is arguably a self-standing critique of the relationship between national citizenship and critical translation in contexts of compulsory progressive self-fashioning such as the 1930s Republic of Turkey, amid whose institutions Sabahattin Ali was perennially active. Let us take a further look at the way the novel symbolically encodes the translator into the social world of Ankara around 1940. “The whole household,” notes the frame narrator, “depended on our Sir Raif’s tiny income. The result was that everyone in the house lived high-off-the-hog, except for our miserable old man”<sup>14</sup> (Ali 2014: 12). The political economy of a budding affluent society, as embodied in Raif’s extended family in İsmetpaşa, swells conspicuously on the back of this one mistreated translator. “Although Sir Raif bore all the burden, his presence or absence in the house was almost irrelevant. [...]In the mornings, he was sent off into the street like an inanimate machine with various errands to run, and he returned home at night with his arms full”<sup>15</sup> (Ali 2014: 12).

Through these characterizations, it becomes clear that Ali and his frame narrator are not merely interested in finding out what it is that makes translators desire to translate, nor merely in the details of their craft or vocation. Ali’s novel offers, rather, a political-economic set of conjectures about what kind of translingual labor goes unacknowledged in the production of commercial and political homeostasis

<sup>13</sup> “Bundan sonra Raif efendinin her hali, sahiden manasız ve ehemmiyetsiz olan hareketleri bile, bana merak vermeye başladı.” (Ali 1998: 24)

<sup>14</sup> “Evin bütün masrafı bizim Raif efendinin cılız ücretine yüklenmekteydi. Buna rağmen, evde zavallı ihtiyardan başka herkesin borusu ötüyordu.” (Ali 1998: 30)

<sup>15</sup> “Bütün bu yükleri çeken Raif efendi olduğu halde, evde onun yokluğu ile varlığı müsvi gibiydi. [...] Sanki cansız bir makine sabahleyin birtakım siparişlerle dışarı bırakılıyor, akşamüzeri kolları dolu bir halde dönüyordu. (Ali 1998: 31)

in a monolingualist national society like Turkey in the 1940s. The translator is metonymically linked—due to age, his pleurisy, and his lack of ostentatious Euro-peanness—to the Ottoman past:

Still, the president and our Hamdi would treat him in a manner that boils down to: “Look, we’re not throwing you out, despite your whiny, sickly personality!” They never missed an opportunity to scold him and then sarcastically welcome him back after a couple days’ absence, saying: “How’d it go this time around? Is it over, God willing?”<sup>16</sup> (Ali 2014: 6)

Through watching this violent bullying—and with it, the social suppression of translators and translating despite the profits regularly derived from them—the frame narrator acquires a new dream: to emulate, become, replace, and perpetuate the spirit of Sir Raif, who dies at the end of the frame narrative, forbidding the narrator from viewing and divulging his multilingual, transnational past in Germany. Sitting alone in the office he and Raif used to share, the narrator

opened the lower [drawers of the desk]: the first one was completely empty, the other had some papers and scraps of translations. When I inserted the key for the top draws, I shuddered: I realized I was sitting in Sir Raif’s chair and doing exactly the same thing he used to do at least twice a day.<sup>17</sup> (Ali 2014: 18)

Despite this turn toward emulation in the latter stages of their relationship, the frame narrator does not seek to characterize Raif as particularly special, saintly, or anointed, and he grows to understand Raif’s translator identity and translation practice without resorting to mystical tropes of talent or chosenness. The narrator sees his “counterpart” (“karşımdaki”), an important word throughout both the frame narrative and the embedded love story, as a worker among workers who has chosen a livelihood that his contemporaries respond to apathetically, but one that is hardly worthy of such bafflement. Raif was merely:

a bit distant from this world, a bit puzzled, but still eager to smile when [his eyes] encounter another person. He was no extraordinary man, not by any means. Quite common indeed, with no particular features worth men-

<sup>16</sup> “Buna rağmen müdürün ve bizim Hamdi’nin Raif efendiye karşı muamelelerinde: “Bak, seni şu mızımız, hastalıklı haline rağmen atmıyoruz!” demek isteyen bir şey vardı. Bunu ikide birde yüzüne vurmaktan da çekinmezler, birkaç gün yokluktan sonra her gelişinde adamcağızı: “Nasıl? İnşallah artık bitti ya?” diye iğneli geçmiş olsunlarla karşılarlardı.” (Ali 1998: 20-21)

<sup>17</sup> “Evvvela alttakileri açtım; biri bomboştu, ötekinde birtakım kâğıtlar ve tercüme müsveddeleri vardı. Üst göze anahtar sokarken ürperdim: Raif efendinin senelerden beri oturduğu iskemlede oturduğumu ve onun her gün birkaç defa yaptığı hareketi tekrar ettiğimi şimdi fark etmişim. Acele ile gözü çektim.” (Ali 1998: 41)

tioning. Just one of the hundreds of people you see around everyday without looking at them twice.<sup>18</sup> (Ali 2014: 1)

In this gesture, we may understand the narrator and Ali as undertaking an endeavor to portray translators, multilinguals, and other mediators of anational or transnational experience as an alternate, or oppositional, kind of citizen—unspectacular, unassuming, and utterly capable of existing amid the worldly affordances of autochthonous, suburban life. Everyone, Ali seems to suggest, could be like Raif; everyone could be a translator. This universalizing gesture—added to the political economy of translation and monolingualism laid out in Raif’s workplace and household—suggests that Ali is proposing a general ethics of translanguaging meaning under conditions of what must be regarded as early forms of globalization, a counter-narrative to the performative commercial cosmopolitanisms of his day. Still, the frame narrator is insistent that the multilingual, transnational subjectivity of his counterpart, Sir Raif, amid the prevailing cultural politics of his social and professional life, comes at great cost to him:

Some days he would suddenly go wild, his eyes would shrink and lose all expression, and he would reply to me with a voice that, though soft, rejected any kind of intimacy. At times like this, he also neglected his translation work, glaring at the papers in front of him for hours, his pencil lying on the table. I felt he had retreated behind all distance and time, and that he wouldn’t let anyone through, so I would never try to approach. But I did have one particular concern: I noticed that Sir Raif’s periods of illness usually followed days like this, as coincidence would have it.<sup>19</sup> (Ali 2014: 14)

It is revealed, later in Sir Raif’s own notebook, that this anxiety of multidirectional, multilingual memory indeed brings torment to Raif. The novel certainly permits us to understand this anxiety primarily as that of a person mourning his long lost love or writhing silently in a perpetual state of penitence for failing at his personal responsibilities. Certainly, Raif does feel these things, but the frame narrative allows and indeed privileges a broader reading, one that does not come down to tropes of

<sup>18</sup> “Raif efendinin saf yüzü, biraz dünyadan uzak, buna rağmen bir insana tesadüf ettikleri zaman tebessüm etmek isteyen bakışları gözlerimin önünde canlanıyor. Halbuki o hiç de fevkalade bir adam değildi. Hatta pek alelade, hiçbir hususiyeti olmayan, her gün etrafımızda yüzlercesini görüp de bakmadan geçtiğimiz insanlardan biriydi.” (Ali 1998: 11)

<sup>19</sup> “Yalnız bazı günler birdenbire vahşileşiyor, gözleri bütün ifadesini kaybediyor, küçülüyor ve kendisine hitap edildiği zaman yavaş, fakat her türlü yaklaşmayı meneden bir sesle cevap veriyordu. Böyle zamanlarında tercüme yapmayı da ihmal ediyor, çok kere kalemi yanına bırakarak saatlerce önündeki kâğıtları seyrediyordu. Onun şimdi bütün mesafelerin ve zamanın arkasına çekilmiş olduğunu ve oraya kimseyi bırakmayacağını seziyor ve hiç sokulmak teşebbüsünde bulunmuyordum. Yalnız içimi bir endişe kaplıyordu: Çünkü Raif efendinin hastalıklarının, garip bir tesadüfle, ekseriya böyle günleri takip ettiğini fark etmişim.” (Ali 1998: 34-35)

love and loss alone. Indeed, the frame narrator's characterization of Raif, his commentary on the workplace and the homelife of his "counterpart," and his foregrounding of labor, government, and bureaucracy throughout the first fifth of the novel remind us that Raif is also a remigrant. His experience of the Republican project differs from those of his contemporaries in the office, in that he left Anatolia at the height of the post-Ottoman crisis in 1923-4 and only returned, begrudgingly and forlorn, once the monolingual, nationalizing Kemalist project was well underway. Not engaged in national rebirth and redefinition in the way that Ali's Translation Bureau colleagues were, Raif entered Republican society with a hybridized language, literature, and aesthetic experience that had little in common with the grand challenges of the government and its ministries. The result is a structure of sanction and silence, according to which Raif becomes unable to attend in (Turkish) language to his own subjectivity in Germany. It appears to have taken him ten years to even write down this aphasic, elliptical aspiration:

I want to talk about it, I want to say things, many things... To whom? Is there any other human being wandering on this immense earth all by himself like I am? What can I tell of it, and to whom? I don't recall saying a word to anyone for ten years now. I ran away from people for nothing, I pushed everyone away from me for nothing. But was there any other option? It's impossible to change it now... There's no point anyway... So it must have been meant to be like this. [...] Why did I buy this notebook anyway?<sup>20</sup> (Ali 2014: 22)

With this retreating set of self-characterizations, we come to understand not only the suppression of translation and translators afoot in the social world of this novel, but furthermore the ways in which Raif finds his way into translating, somewhat accidentally and regretfully. He "ends up" being a mediator between cultures and languages, not because he feels a grand intercultural zeal to bring diverse people together, and not even because he loves language and writing, perhaps despite the people who produce them. Rather, translating is something Raif does out of fearful and compulsive self-protection. We discover this first when Raif decides to fail out of art school in Istanbul, precipitating a last-ditch effort at social solvency by way of a soap-manufacturing internship with a Swedish company in Berlin:

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<sup>20</sup> "Söylemek, bir şeyler, birçok şeyler anlatmak istiyorum... Kime?... Şu koskocaman dünyada benim kadar yapayalnız dolaşan bir insan daha var mı acaba? Kime, ne anlatabilirim? On seneden beri hiç kimseye bir şey söylediğimi hatırlamıyorum. Boşuna yere herkesten kaçmış, boş yere bütün insanları kendimden uzaklaştırmışım; ama bundan sonra başka türlü yapabilir miyim? Artık hiçbir şeyin değişmesine imkân yok... Lüzum da yok. Demek böyle olmaı icap ediyormuş. Zaten bu defteri neden aldım?" (Ali 1998: 47-48)

The fear of expressing what was inside me in any fashion whatsoever, along with this senseless and purposeless timidity of mine, proved a hindrance to my writing. Painting was all I continued to do. That activity didn't feel like I was giving away anything inside me. Taking the outside world and reflecting it on a canvas: that just felt like being a mediator. Still, when I understood how much this wasn't the case, I gave it up too... All out of fear...<sup>21</sup> (Ali 2014: 24)

### An Anti-Study-Abroad Novel?

It must be said that the *Madonna* novel does not quite permit a reading in which a dispirited young person, feeling claustrophobic in his own cultural environs, strikes out on an adventure abroad and comes back with brand-new insights on the world. If we are audacious enough to consider this novel an early form of Turkish-German literature—and indeed there are adequate historical connections to make such a claim—we notice that *Madonna* generally foregoes the explanatory idiom of cultural difference, and indeed casts critical light upon it. Raif, shuttled off to Germany for commercial reasons and to take advantage of the exchange rate, isn't particularly interested in cultures and languages themselves, as much as he is poised to survey, in Occidentalist fashion, the raw material that inspired the world-literary figures of his childhood imagination:

In this “Europe”, I expected to learn a foreign language and read its books, but more importantly I'd finally encounter the people I'd only known in novels. Perhaps my waywardness and disaffection toward my surroundings were merely the result of not being able to meet the people I'd so loved and known in books?<sup>22</sup> (Ali 2014: 24)

What he discovers is something much less confirmatory of his imagination and much more compliant with the institutional proportions of international modernity. There is little for him to prospectively ‘translate’ there, in the sense of mediating cultural diversity upon a structuralist grid from source to target culture, or from one national public to another. His gaze upon Berlin is indifferent to its evidentiary or statutory Germanness, and he is confronted rather with two versions of what we might call globalization today. Firstly, Raif encounters equivalent, transposable

<sup>21</sup> “İçimdekileri herhangi şekilde olursa olsun dışarıya vurmak korkusu, bu manasız ve lüzumsuz ürkeklik yazı yazmama mâniydi. Yalnız resim yapmaya devam ediyordum. Bu iş bana, içimden bir şey vermek gibi gelmiyordu. Dışarıyı alıp bir kâğıda aksettirmekten, bir mutavassıtlıktan ibaret görünüyordu. Nitekim işin böyle olmadığını anlayınca bundan da vazgeçtim... Hep o korku yüzünden.” (Ali 1998: 50)

<sup>22</sup> “Bir ecnebi dil öğreneceğimi, bu dilde kitaplar okuyacağımı, ve asıl, şimdiye kadar sadece romanlarda rastladığım insanları işte bu ‘Avrupa’da bulacağımı tahmin ediyordum. Zaten muhitimden uzak duruşumun, vahşiliğimin bir sebebi de kitaplarda tanıştığım ve benimsediğim insanları muhitimde bulamayışım değil miydi?” (Ali 1998: 52)

forms that he expected from his home environment, all of the infrastructural scaffolding necessary for a cognate nationalism:

A city with wider streets—much cleaner, and with blonder people. But there wasn't much about it that would make a person swoon in awe. For my part, I was still back then unaware what kind of a thing the Europe of my dreams really was, and how much the city I was now living in lacked, in comparison to that image... It hadn't yet dawned on me how the mind can conjure the most improbable projections.<sup>23</sup> (Ali 2014: 25)

This insight is important for the broader question of world-literary translation, because it deemphasizes—for the balance of the novel—the notion that translation is primarily a diplomatic activity, linking one linguistically mediated culture to another. In *Madonna*, we observe a more volatile and less instrumental account of what translation is indeed supposed to offer, and this account surfaces most poignantly in an instance of ekphrasis, as Raif—an erstwhile art-student, erstwhile multilingual, erstwhile lover, and now paycheck-to-paycheck translator in a position with no recognition or advancement—renders visible the normative model of Republican citizenship, as embodied in the rage-filled and desperate firm vice-president, Hamdi.

On this palm-sized piece of paper, I could see Hamdi. By way of five or ten masterly crafted lines, he existed there in all his essence. I don't think others would notice the same likeness; maybe if you scrutinized the lines one by one, you could've come to the conclusion that it didn't look like him at all, but for someone who'd just witnessed the man shouting at top of his lungs in the middle of this room, it was an unmistakable likeness.<sup>24</sup> (Ali 2014: 7)

Hamdi's repeated anger at Raif's ostensible tardiness with translating firm documents begins to make sense if we see it not merely as the ill temperament of an irrational tyrant—which is how the frame narrator sees it—but rather as the necessary and logical result of a domestic economy dependent on transnational, translingual traffic and daily indebted to its disciplined instrumentalization. Hamdi is angry at Raif, not because he dislikes him, so much as because Hamdi absolutely

<sup>23</sup> “Sokakları biraz daha geniş, çok daha temiz, insanları daha sarışın bir şehir. Fakat ortada insanı hayretinden düşüp bayılmaya sevk edecek bir şey de yoktu. Benim hayalimdeki Avrupa'nın nasıl bir şey olduğunu ve şimdi içinde yaşadığım şehrin buna nazaran ne noksanları bulunduğunu kendim de bilmiyordum... Hayatta hiçbir zaman kafamızdaki kadar harikulade şeyler olmayacağını henüz idrak etmemiştim.” (Ali 1998: 52)

<sup>24</sup> “Avuç içi kadar kâğıdın üzerinde Hamdi'yi görüyordum. Beş on basit fakat fevkalade ustaca çizginin içerisinde bütün hüviyetiyle o vardı. Başkalarının aynı benzeyişi bulacaklarını pek zannetmem, hatta teker teker araştırılınca belki hiçbir tarafı benzemiyordu, fakat onun biraz evvel odanın ortasında nasıl avaz avaz bağırıldığını gören bir insan için yanılmaya imkan yoktu.” (Ali 1998: 22-23)

needs the propositional content (or what we today would call IP or ‘intellectual property’) in order to meet his own liberal-market benchmarks. The narrator continues, contemplating not only Hamdi, but the civic position he represents in Republican post-imperial commerce and self-making:

I kept coming up with contradictory assessments of Hamdi. I tried to make excuses for him, but mostly I ended up pitying him. I always confused his actual personality with the personality he’d acquired through his stature. Then I tried dissociating them, which always led me to an impasse. Here was Hamdi, manifested in a couple of lines Sir Raif drew—the person I couldn’t see into, though I’d wanted to for so long. [...] What’s more, this picture explained Sir Raif to me.<sup>25</sup> (Ali 2014: 8)

This image is the only ‘translation’ Raif produces at the Ankara office that we readers are allowed to see and assess, over the shoulder of the frame narrator. The way our attention is called to Raif’s capacity to translate critically rather than instrumentally, to render visible an essence, aura, or truth that is hidden from view even in the ‘original’ artifact, is itself the fruit of Raif’s decades-long love- and loss-affair with Maria Puder, whom he has drawn, conjured, and fancied in his dreams since last he was in Berlin. This obsession to translate her has ostensibly been purposeless, ‘pointless’ as Raif says at the end of his life, and impervious to the kind of instrumentalization of translation that reigns supreme in his contemporary environs. Refracting this critical capacity he learned from translating Maria Puder back onto civil society in Ankara, Raif delivers to readers of *Madonna* the one indication necessary to round out an ethics of translation practice and a complex *ars poetica* for translators in the era of modern, nationalized monolingualism.

We hope to have shown in this article how a pre-1945 novel, coming from the post-Imperial contexts of early Republican Turkey, already long ago “wrote back” to the latter-day metropolises of theory-making with a critical intervention about world-literature-in-translation, a question which continues to vex the curricular and theoretical imagination seventy-five years hence. Ali’s novel reminds us of the critical resources that dwell within pre-1945 literary works that, often precisely because of their patent hybridity and translingual bearing, elided attention from their contemporary peers and thus remain underrepresented in world-literary curricula and theorization today. We may regard Ali himself as a theorist not only of both literary translation and its social contexts under heightened conditions of

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<sup>25</sup> “Hamdi hakkında birbirine zıt bir sürü hükümler verip duruyordum. Onu bazan mazur görmeye çalışıyor, çok kere de istihfaf ediyordum. Asıl şahsiyetiyle, bugünkü mevkiinin ona verdiği şahsiyeti birbirine karıştırıyor, sonra bunları ayırmak istiyor ve büsbütün çıkmaza giriyordum. İşte Raif efendinin birkaç çizgi ile ortaya koyduğu Hamdi, benim uzun zamandan beri görmek istediğim halde bir türlü göremediğim insandı. [...] Aynı zamanda bu resim bana birdenbire Raif efendiyi de izah etmişti.” (Ali 1998: 23)



nationalism, but also of the world-literary imagination beyond the confines of the Mercatorian model (Cheah 2014).

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## Intervening in the Humanist Legacy: Sabahattin Ali's Kleist Translations

*Kristin Dickinson*

*Sabahattin Ali's theoretical reflections on translation and his role as German to Turkish translator for the state-sponsored Translation Bureau form a central, but largely overlooked aspect of his literary legacy. This article explores the overlap between Ali's positions as author and translator vis-à-vis the World Literature in Translation publication series (1940-1966) he helped to both shape and execute. As a case study, it examines the relationship between Ali's final novel "Kürk Mantolu Madonna" (1943) (Madonna in a Fur Coat) and his translation of "Die Verlobung in St. Domingo" (1811) (The Betrothal in Santo Domingo). Through an attention to critical narrative gaps in each of these texts, the article calls attention to the subtle manner in which Ali was able to resist dominant paradigms of translation—such as smooth translatability and civilizational transfer—through his position as a state employee. As such, this article documents an alternative history of translation in the modern Republic of Turkey that emerges from within a state-sponsored project of culture planning.*

Derided at work and largely ignored at home, the main character of Sabahattin Ali's final novel, *Kürk Mantolu Madonna*<sup>1</sup> (1943), attests to the invisibility of the translator and the labors of translation. A German to Turkish translator at an Ankara bank, Raif is introverted to the extreme, to the extent that colleagues even doubt the validity of his linguistic skills. Treated as a relic of the past, Raif's seeming invisibility within *Madonna* stands in contrast to a heightened visibility of trans-

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<sup>1</sup> From now on referred to as *Madonna*.

lation at the time of the novel's publication, in which a wide-reaching, state-sponsored translation movement was endorsed and set into motion. With the goal of systematically translating the classics of Ancient Greek, Latin, and contemporary Western European literatures, a *World Literature in Translation* (Dünya Edebiyatından Tercüme) series sought to engender a Turkish renaissance and specific form of Turkish humanism, thereby forging a common cultural repertoire for citizens of the new Republic (Tahir Gürçağlar 2003: 114).

As Ali was a founding member of the translation bureau that headed this endeavor, his own highly visible position as state employee stands in contrast to Raif's hidden translation work. Yet both arguably resisted the premise of smooth translatability that underscored wide-ranging Republican humanist reforms, and that treated modernization, nationalization, and westernization as problem-free processes. By reading Ali's translation of Heinrich von Kleist's *Die Verlobung in St. Domingo* (1811) (The Betrothal in Santo Domingo) together with *Madonna*, this article explores the ways in which Ali's literary production overlapped with his actual translation practice. Incidentally, *San Domingo'da bir Nişanlanma*, which first appeared in the journal *Tercüme* (Translation) in 1940, coincided with the serialization of *Madonna*; both texts were subsequently published in book format in 1943.<sup>2</sup>

Taking the Kleistian references in *Madonna* into account, I ask how *Verlobung*, together with Ali's translation of it, reflects back on the structure of Ali's final novel. In particular, I consider the correspondence between central, unnarrated moments of sexual union in each text. As critical "Leerstellen" (Iser 1975) or gaps, these moments of non-narration both create epistemological uncertainty and actively engage the reader as cross-cultural interpreter. Through the use of a frame narrative, Ali figures the narrator of *Madonna* as one such interpreter, who must fill in the gaps of the main character's life story by 'reading' the diary of his youth.

By pointing to the contradictory nature of its literary underside, I argue that Ali's translation of *Verlobung* works together with his final novel, *Madonna*, to complicate the Republican premise of smooth translatability, and thus also the stable category of the 'West' it presumes. Whereas translation activity was one crucial arena through which Turkey sought to emerge as an independent political entity that identified itself as European, Ali poses the more difficult question of what 'Western' values themselves might be.

## Toward an Alternative History of Translation

Secondary scholarship on the translation bureau has largely treated the systematized form of publishing it supported as an instance of culture planning, defined as the "deliberate intervention," either by power holders or by 'free agents,' "into an

<sup>2</sup> Ali's translation of *Verlobung* was included in the collection *Üç Romantik Hikaye* (Three Romantic Stories) which appeared in 1943; this collection also included Ali's translations of Adelbert von Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihl's Wundersame Geschichte* (translated as *Peter Schlemihl'in Acayip Sergüzeşti*) and E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Doge und Dogaresse* (translated as *Duka ile Karısı*).

extant or a crystallizing repertoire” (Even-Zohar 2008: 278). In her analysis of private publishing efforts in the 1940s and 50s, Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar emphasizes the need to view translation efforts of this time period not simply as processes shaped by pre-determined norms, but also as the result of individual decision-making (Tahir Gürçağlar 2008: 24-25). In doing so, she takes a step back from the institutional framework of the bureau to show how private publishers and translators formed an important counterforce that “resisted the norms offered by the dominant discourse of the planners” (Tahir Gürçağlar 2008: 31). Building on this argument, I ask further: to what extent did voices coming from within the bureau resist dominant translation discourses and norms? As an author who critically engaged with the shortcomings of modernity, and the conception of modernity as a monolithic or Western discourse, Sabahattin Ali is a case in point.

Sabri Gürses situates Ali within a larger, cultural search for a delineated program of translation in the early Republic; as such, Gürses views Ali as central to the formation of an intellectual discourse that utilized translation—understood as a form of cultural transfer (*kültür aktarımı*)—as a means for constructing a national Turkish culture (Gürses 2013: 414). This discourse was dependent on the rhetoric of smooth translatability, which posited a stable category of Western European ideals and values that could be easily transferred to the Turkish context. I argue, on the contrary, that we must read Ali's participation in the larger translation movement as a counterpoint to the concepts of cultural transfer and smooth translatability that emerged in the immediate wake of the translation bureau's founding. While Ali enthusiastically supported the translation of Western European literatures, his writing also reveals a more ambivalent view of the ‘West’ than dominant translation discourse of the time. By pointing time and again to the contradictions and inconsistencies of Western modernity, his work both complicated the very possibility of translation as a form of frictionless transfer and constituted an important countervoice to the kind of Europhilia endorsed at the time.

### ‘Translating the West’

The role of literary translations vis-à-vis the development of the modern Turkish language and the Europeanization of Turkish society were a source of intense public debate in the early Republican period. Following the establishment of the modern Republic of Turkey in 1923, calls for a comprehensive, systematized, and government-funded program of translation began to gain ground throughout the 1930s; a programmatic approach to translation activity was posited as a much-needed corrective to what intellectuals described as the inadequate and erroneous nature of late Ottoman translation movements.

The field of translation became one crucial site from which the newly founded Republic asserted itself over and against its Ottoman predecessor. In particular, following the adoption of the Latin alphabet in 1928, and major language reforms

throughout the mid-1930s, the translation of Western European classics became a crucial means of building a new discursive center for Turkish society. Within the model of modernization as westernization undertaken by the Republican People's Party, translation activity was understood as central to Turkey's immersion within the history of European thought, and its successful participation in contemporary European civilization.

The rhetoric of completion and entirety utilized by seminal theorists of translation was predicated upon the smooth translatability of western European values into the Republican context. This premise was also central to Hasan Ali Yücel's conception of translation as a method of transferring humanist values to Turkey and his underscoring of a communal human spirit (*insan rubu*) across East and West (Çıkar 1997: 62). Shortly after assuming the position of Minister of Education in December of 1938, Yücel took the first major step toward achieving this goal: the First Turkish Publishing Convention (*Birinci Türk Neşriyat Kongresi*) was convened in May of 1939 to develop a detailed and systematic plan for the publishing industry in the years to come.<sup>3</sup>

Yücel envisioned a program of systematized translation through which a distinctly Turkish national identity could emerge that identified itself as European. His call for a comprehensive (*geniş*), and concrete (*muayyen*) program of translation over a period of several years that could serve as the basis for such learning was strongly supported by leading authors and intellectuals of the time; figures such as Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, Yunus Kazım Köni, and Yaşar Nabi Nayır all emphasized the need for state intervention in order to make quality, affordable literature in translation available to an undereducated public with little disposable income.<sup>4</sup>

Sabahattin Ali served as one of 27 members on the translation committee,<sup>5</sup> which took the first major step in realizing Yücel's vision by producing an initial list of 294 works to be translated into Turkish. A permanent bureau was then established in 1940 under the direction of Nurullah Ataç. Sabahattin Ali served as one of seven permanent board members for this bureau, as well as editor and translator of German texts until 1944, when he was put under surveillance for

<sup>3</sup> Committees consisting of authors, intellectuals, journalists, publishers, and educators were established to assess and report on the state of the following seven categories: 1) printing, publishing, and sales 2) petitions 3) copyright for literary works 4) children's and youth literature 5) prizes and propaganda 6) publishing program, and 7) translation.

<sup>4</sup> Ahmet Ağaoğlu was one critical voice who argued against a form of culture planning, which he believed would lead to a standardization of the diverse individual thoughts and feelings that make up an aggregate culture.

<sup>5</sup> In addition to chairman Ethem Menemenciöğlu and reporter Mustafa Nihat Özön, the translation committee consisted of the following members: Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, Ali Kâmi Akyüz, Bedrettin Tuncel, Burhan Belge, Cemil Bilsel, Fazıl Ahmet Aykaç, Fikret Adil, Galip Bahtiyar Göker, Halil Nihat Boztepe, Halit Fahri Ozansoy, İzzet Melih Devrim, Nasuhi Baydar, Nurettin Artam, Nurullah Ataç, Orhan Şaik Gökyay, Rıdvan Nafiz Ergüder, Sabahattin Rahmi Eyüboğlu, Sabahattin Ali, Sabri Esat Siyavuşgil, Selami İzzet Sedes, Suut Kemal Yetkin, Şinasi Boran, Yusuf Şerif Kılıçer, Yaşar Nabi, and Zühtü Uray (Kültür Bakanlığı 1997: 35).

suspicious political activity.<sup>6</sup> Describing this brief window of time as a “beautiful period” (*güzel dönem*) (Togar 2011: 70) of Sabahattin Ali's life, Melahat Togar's recollection of his enthusiasm for the project at large is a reminder that state intervention in the publishing industry initiated previously unthinkable opportunities in the realm of translation; it set into motion the extensive World Literature in Translation series, and established a bureau in which authors came together to grapple with the question of how to translate the great works of world literature into a newly reformed modern Turkish language that was still struggling to establish its own vocabulary and modes of expression.

The existence of such debate suggests that supporting state intervention in the publishing industry did not necessarily preclude one's ability to critique the state and its modernizing institutions from within. While Ali himself described the incommensurability of his identities as government employee and independent author (Ali 2008a: 424), the fact remains that they overlapped during his time at the translation bureau. Written precisely during this time period, *Madonna* passed under the radar of state censorship and continues to be read in a largely apolitical light. By showing how this novel is closely tied to Ali's translation activity for the bureau, I argue, on the contrary, that he utilized his positions as both author and translator to subtly assert disagreement with the modernization project at large.

### Identities in Crisis

Ali was an active translator prior to his involvement with the translation bureau,<sup>7</sup> and by the time of the first publishing convention in 1939, he had clearly established himself as an expert on German literature and culture. While it is impossible to determine the exact role he played in selecting works for the World Literature in Translation series, it is only logical to assume his opinion had significant influence with regard to the German portion of this list. The initial selections from German literature included standard Enlightenment (Goethe, Lessing, Schiller), Romantic (Hoffmann, Chamisso, the Grimm brothers), and Realist (Keller) authors. The inclusion of several works by Heinrich von Kleist is not surprising, considering his canonical status at the time of the publishing convention. Yet the placement of his texts within a translation series meant to generate a comprehensive humanist reform movement in Turkey raises larger discursive questions that are also pertinent to Ali's involvement with the bureau.

In the introduction to all texts published within the translation series, Yücel describes literature as an embodiment of the humanist spirit; here—and in diverse other public statements and publications—he underscores the value of translation activity as a means of participating in humanist civilization, strengthening the Turk-

<sup>6</sup> Additional board members included Nurullah Ataç (chairman), Saffet Pala (secretary general), Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, Bedrettin Tuncel, Enver Ziya Karal, and Nusret Hızır (Tahir Gürçağlar 2008: 70-71).

<sup>7</sup> Among the authors Ali translated throughout the 1930s are: Max Kemmerich, Feodor Mihaylovič Dostoyevski, Heinrich Heine, Friedrich Stendhal, and Gottfried Keller.

ish educational system, and enriching Turkish readers' perception of the world. With an overwhelming number of Western European classics, the World Literature in Translation series nevertheless upheld an understanding of both humanism and civilization as intrinsic to the West.

What would it mean to translate Kleist into both Yücel's idealistic vision and the actual program of translation he endorsed? Although Ali describes Kleist as a Romantic in the introductory remarks to his translation, Kleist's literature does not easily fit into any specific literary movement. His work offers, rather, a provocative and inconclusive exploration of topics central to the experience of modernity, such as the inauthenticity of the self, the psychology of national belonging, and anti-colonial struggle. Kleist's grueling everyday experiences in the Prussian military (1792-1799) exposed him to the contradictions of enlightened humanism at a young age. Two years following his decision to leave the service, his famous 'Kant crisis' (1801) marked a crucial turning point in his career, after which he began to doubt his earlier investment in the Enlightenment ideals of autonomy, reason, and progress, and develop in its place a radically skeptical view of the world (Fischer 2003: 4). Further informed by his experience of the French Revolution, its violent disruption of established power relations, and the period of political instability that followed, Kleist's diverse textual production reveals the tensions and paradoxes of Enlightenment rationalism and 18<sup>th</sup>-century humanist discourse.<sup>8</sup> Thus, whether intentional or not, the inclusion of Kleist's short stories and dramas within the World Literature in Translation series contains the potential to subvert a Republican investment in the ideals of humanist discourse and their presumed value for Turkish society. Among Kleist's texts included in this series,<sup>9</sup> Ali's decision to translate *Verlobung* is further notable for several reasons—from the relevance of the turbulent political context and cross-cultural modes of belonging it evokes, to the subtle, yet unmistakable, Kleistian references within *Madonna*.

Through its focus on the continued practice of slavery in the French colony of Saint Dominique following the French Revolution, Kleist's novella exposes the contradictions of a race-based colonial order.<sup>10</sup> Set at the tail end of the first successful slave revolt in the Western Hemisphere (1791-1804),<sup>11</sup> it problematizes the

<sup>8</sup> Helmut Schneider goes so far as to read Kleist's entire textual production as an ongoing challenge to the project of Enlightenment Humanism (Schneider 2003).

<sup>9</sup> Texts by Kleist included in the original translation list were: the complete short stories, *Der zerbrochene Krug*, *Hermanns Schlacht* (sic), and *Prinz von Homburg* (Kültür Bakanlığı 1997: 278). Texts actually translated include: *Die Familie Schroffenstein* and *Der Prinz von Homburg* (translated by Burhanetin Batman), *Michael Kohlhaas* (translated by Necip Üçok), selected short stories (translated by Melahat Togar), *Die Verlobung in St. Domingo* (translated by Sabahattin Ali), *Der zerbrochene Krug* (translated by Hayrullah Örs), *Penithesilea*, *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*, and *Die Hermannsschlacht* (translator unknown) (Tercüme Listesi 1959: 73).

<sup>10</sup> The story is set in 1803, following General Jean-Jacques Dessalines' decisive defeat of French forces in the battle of Battle of Vertières; under orders of Napoleon the French army sought to reintroduce slavery in Santo Domingo, even though the French National Convention had promised the abolition of slavery in 1794.

<sup>11</sup> The revolt succeeded in eliminating slavery and led to the establishment of the Republic of Haiti.



categories of race, gender, and nationality within a complex matrix of colonial power relations. *Verlobung* explores these issues from a German perspective prior to the establishment of a nation-state, following the occupation of German lands by France under Napoleon in 1806.

Within this context, Todd Kontje reads *Verlobung* as the reflection of a crisis of German national identity at the time of its publication in 1811 (Kontje 1999). Rather than a patriotic expression of Germanness, *Verlobung* reveals a deep ambiguity regarding what it means to be German at the turn of the century. In his discussion of different forms of “passing”<sup>12</sup> that occur within the novella, Kontje emphasizes in particular Kleist’s use of the Swiss protagonist, Gustav, who fights for the French army. As the citizen of a country that was also occupied by France, Gustav plays a double role: he is both a victim and a perpetrator of French imperialism, and he passes for the enemy within the slave revolt.

Read in this vein, *Verlobung* has subversive implications regarding the historically important role Germany played for key Turkish reformers of the early twentieth century. 19<sup>th</sup>-century German humanism and philology provided an important model for the *Darülfünun*, the first institution of higher education in the Ottoman Empire modeled on the European university system.<sup>13</sup> Worried that the university was becoming too German, professor of pedagogy İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, who later became president of the university, feared a form of foreign infiltration: he warned against the dangers of remaining German (*Alman kalmak*), appearing German (*Alman görünmek*), and working in German (*Almanca çalışmak*) (Konuk 2010: 59).

In contrast, the leading architect of Turkish nationalism, Ziya Gökalp, understood the German model as crucial for both a successful restructuring of the university and the establishment of a Turkish national consciousness. In the 1916 article “Maarif Meselesi?” (The Question of Education), for example, he argues that a German national conscience (*milli vicdan*) came into being via the rejection of French cultural dominance. Just as Germans could not discover their essential character while striving to imitate the French, he argues, neither can a Turkish national literature come into being without excising a lingering Persian and more recent French influence. While Gökalp strictly warns against all forms of cultural imitation, he suggests that Turkish literature should follow the German example, in establishing its own national preferences and tastes (*milli zevk*) (Gökalp 1972: 111-12).

A story such as *Verlobung* thoroughly complicates the idea of what it means to follow a ‘German’ model. While it can be read in response to the French occupation of Germany, it in no way posits an authentic German national character. On

<sup>12</sup> Kontje describes “passing” as an act that “complicates identity politics by highlighting the tension between cultural constructs and biological essence, between convention and nature. The figure who crosses borders between fixed sexual, racial, or national identities provokes what Marjorie Garber has termed a category crisis” (Kontje 1999: 68-69).

<sup>13</sup> *Darülfünun* means House of Knowledge. The institution was established in 1863.

the contrary, its tragic interracial love story—populated by characters who cannot be clearly defined along racial or national lines—engages in processes of cultural translation that undermine its potential to represent a unified understanding of Germanness.

A brief plot summary makes this abundantly clear: Following the defeat of French forces in Saint Dominique by General Dessalines in 1803, a Swiss family attempts to make its way across the island to escape via the city's port. After hiding his extended family in the wilderness, the character of Gustav seeks provisions and shelter from the plantation of Congo Hoango—a leader of the slave revolt who has killed his former master and occupied his house. Here, Gustav encounters the mulatto Babekan and her daughter, Toni. While Kleist refers to Toni as a *mestiza*—or a mixture of European and Native American descent—she is actually part French and part African. This use of the term *mestiza* nevertheless emphasizes a key difference between Congo and Toni: unlike Congo, who was taken from his home on the African Gold Coast and sold into slavery, Toni was born on the island of Haiti. Under the rule of Congo, she is nevertheless subject to a different form of oppression; Congo forces her to lure in white travelers—who are comforted by the relative whiteness of her skin—in order to then trap and murder them.

As hybrid constructions that defy 'black and white definitions' of race, nationality or ethnicity, all of the major characters in *Verlobung* enact processes of cultural translation, understood as “an anti-essentialist and anti-holistic metaphor that aims to uncover... heterogeneous discursive spaces within a society” (Bachmann-Medick 2006: 37). They point to a dynamic concept of culture as a practice of negotiating cultural differences, while at the same time exposing deadly power dynamics at work within the colonial system.

The question of what it means to translate such racial and cultural hybridities into the heightened nationalism of 1940s Turkey takes on new meanings within translation rhetoric of this time period. Anxieties and concerns regarding the problem of imitation were also prominent in early Republican translation theory. Such anxieties were expressed through the wide-spread criticism of late Ottoman translation movements as inadequate, haphazard, and incomplete. In accusing late Ottoman translators of merely copying the West, Republican critics participated in the larger nation-building project by asserting a break with the Ottoman Empire, and upholding the idea that a “complete” translation of Western literature and / or Western culture could be realized in the Republican era (Dickinson 2013: 3). Within this cultural climate, İsmail Habib developed a concept of *tam Avrupa* (Europe in its completeness), which designated a canon of timeless world literary texts. Hilmi Ziya Ülken proposed in turn the concept of *tam tercüme* (complete translation), which perpetuated an image of the West as a fixed, monolithic entity that could be ‘translated’ at face value. Even while attempting to establish an original Turkish identity, such discursive terminology inevitably led to an understanding of the

'West' as originary, in relation to which Turkish translations could only be understood as both derivative and belated.

In this respect, *Verlobung* offers a fascinating case study, as a text that 1) posits a certain hybrid or non-essential aspect of culture and 2) consciously reflects on the potential inadequacy of its Western sources. While there is no evidence that Kleist explicitly condemned the practice of slavery in the French colonies, *Verlobung* does offer a critical portrayal of the slave revolt through tensions between the mode and content of its narration. Ali hints at this aspect of the text in his introduction to the translation. Here he argues that *Verlobung* seems to conform to the popular European portrayals of the Haitian Revolution Kleist consulted while writing the novella; these sources all viewed the slave revolt as an act of brutality against the 'white' population. At the same time, he argues, Kleist does not refrain from exposing the tyranny endemic to white colonials' brutal treatment of the African slave population through the action of his text (Ali 1943: 5). Within this context, Ali's translation of *Verlobung* also suggests the need to consciously reflect on the category of the "West" within the large-scale translation movement of the 1940s.

### 'Engaging' in World Literature

It is within the complex matrix of colonial power relations and racial tensions Kleist lays out in *Verlobung* that the fatal attraction between Gustav and Toni develops. Ordered by her mother to lull this fugitive into a false sense of security, Toni nevertheless sympathizes with and is drawn to Gustav; in an initial attempt to test her loyalty, Gustav also finds himself enamored by Toni's youthful countenance and likens her to his deceased beloved. What follows is a crucial unnarrated moment in which an implied sexual encounter marks a turning point in the story. Toni and Gustav's physical union is marked by a textual absence that simultaneously points to the unspoken speech act of engagement from which the story takes its title:

She went over to him with a sudden movement, threw her arms around his neck, and let her tears merge with his.

There is no need to describe what happened next, as everyone who has come to this point can read it for himself.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Translations mine unless otherwise noted; KD.

Sie folgte ihm mit einer plötzlichen Bewegung, fiel ihm um den Hals, und mischte ihre Thränen mit den seinigen.

Was weiter erfolgte, brauchen wir nicht zu melden, weil es jeder, der an diese Stelle kommt, von selbst lies't. (Kleist 1988: 43)

This moment of non-narration leads to a series of crucial misreadings that ultimately incite Gustav to accuse Toni of prostitution and betrayal; in a moment of confusion he shoots her in the chest just below the cross pendant he had offered her as a sign of their engagement. Upon realizing his mistake, Gustav shortly thereafter commits suicide by shooting himself in the head. In asking what it means to translate a moment of non-narration, I turn to Ali's rendition of this passage into Turkish: "There is no need to say what happened next, because everyone who has come this far can read the subtext for themselves." ("Bundan sonra ne olduğunu söylemeye lüzum yok çünkü buraya kadar gelen herkes alt tarafını kendiliğinden okur.") (Ali 1943: 31) Whereas the idiom *alt tarafı* means 'after all,' Ali's literal use of this phrase carries critical spatial implications. By calling attention to both a literal and a literary 'underside,' it points to the existence of a subtext, or textual layerings that work both with and against one another. As such, Ali's translation also offers a commentary on what it means to read the ambiguous and contradictory nature of Kleist's text as a whole. *Verlobung* is marked by myriad textual inconsistencies; these range from semantic issues (such as missing, misplaced, or open-ended quotation marks), to orthographic differences in character names (Gustav is alternately referred to as August), and contradictory narrative information. Much more than potential mistakes or flaws, such inconsistencies point to a heightened level of semantic ambiguity; they set up situations in which the narrative drives characters' actions on the surface, even while such actions undermine the very meaning of the language in which they are expressed.

The non-narrated sexual union between Gustav and Toni is one critical instance in which the language of *Verlobung* contradicts itself, in that it asks us to read a moment of non-narration. Andreas Gailus analyses this aspect of the text as an "unmooring" of language, or a paradoxical situation in which we are actually asked "to stop reading the text...[and; KD] the semantic and typographical signs of absence and discontinuity the text puts before us" (Gailus 2010: 34). In support of this argument, Gailus argues that we cannot overlook Kleist's use of outmoded typography: the verb "lies't" (in place of *lieset*, to read) contains a contractual elision that marks the very gap the passage asks us to ignore, and thus runs counter to the sentence in which it is embedded.

Wolfgang Iser more explicitly addresses the role played by the reader in such moments through his concept of the *Leerstelle*, or narrative gap. Within his theory of reception aesthetics, Iser examines the changing relationship between reader and text as ever-increasing levels of indeterminacy have become a central feature of literature from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present. The more texts foreground their own incompleteness—by pointing to events outside the frame of narration, or by highlighting moments of contradiction and ambiguity—the more readers are called upon to actively engage in an interpretive process of reading as meaning making

(Iser 1975: 29-31).<sup>15</sup> While Iser's concept of the *Leerstelle* can apply to all levels of a text, *Madonna* could be said to explicitly call attention to the central *Leerstelle* of *Verlobung* through its own use of narrative elision. A line break in the text marks an implied sexual encounter between the main character Raif and his beloved Maria:

I felt her body shivering. She breathed in gasps, saying: "Of course!... Of course! Of course I love you. [...] But why are you surprised? Did you think there was any other way? I understand how much you love me... I, without any doubt, love you just as much..." She pulled my head toward her and buried my face in ardent kisses.  
In the morning, when I woke up, I heard her deep and regular breathing.  
(Ali 2014: 139)<sup>16</sup>

Following a frenzied New Year's Eve celebration, and Maria's sudden declaration of her love for Raif, a moment of textual silence marks both the apex and the temporary breaking point of their relationship. It leads to a second "sessizlik" (Ali 2008b: 118) or silence between the lovers, in which they find themselves at a loss for words in one another's presence. These double silences in the text address a problem of referentiality. Feeling suddenly estranged from Raif, Maria repeatedly attempts, but finds herself unable, to explicitly refer to their moment of sexual union: "I had hoped to awaken this morning to a completely different world" ("Bu sabah uykudan, başka bir dünyaya doğar gibi uyanacağımı sanmıştım") (Ali 2008b: 119); "We can't talk openly as we used to... For what did we sacrifice all this?" (Ali 2014: 144) ("Artık eskisi gibi apaçık konuşamayız ... Bunları ne diye, neyin uğrunda feda ettik?") (Ali 2008b: 120).

In considering the relationship of these sexual encounters to one another, it is notable that *Verlobung* and *Madonna* employ markedly different methods of narration. In his introduction to the translation, Ali accurately describes *Verlobung* as a text that hinges on the power of the event; it is in the carrying out of key events that the complex and contradictory nature of Kleist's characters comes to the

<sup>15</sup> Narrative ambiguity and epistemological uncertainty is a central aspect of Kleist's poetics. The concept of the *Leerstelle* in particular has been utilized to describe the famous dash in Kleist's *Die Marquise von O* (1808, *The Marquise of O*), which stands in place of the marquise's rape by Graf F (Reif 2005: 87). David Roberts has also used this concept in his discussion of *Das Erdbeben in Chili* (1807, *The Earthquake in Chile*) to describe the earthquake as an event that shakes the very basis of society in St. Jago; Roberts builds here on Werner Hamacher's discussion of the novella as "eine Erschütterung... die auch die Logik der Repräsentation ergreift und daher den Begriff der Darstellung als solchen in Frage stellt" (a shock that seizes the very logic of representation, thereby calling the concept itself into question) (Roberts 2000: 45).

<sup>16</sup> "Vücudunun titrediğini hissettim. Kesik kesik nefes alarak: 'Tabii ... Tabii!' dedi. 'Tabii sizi seviyorum [...] Fakat neden şaşırıyorsunuz? Başka türlü olacağını mı zannediyorsunuz? Beni ne kadar çok sevdiğini anlıyorum ... Ben de sizi şüphesiz o kadar çok seviyorum.' Başımı kendisine doğru çekti ve bütün yüzümü ateş gibi buselere boğdu. Sabahleyin uyandığım zaman onun derin ve muntazam nefeslerini duydum ..." (Ali 2008b: 116)

fore.<sup>17</sup> *Madonna* is, on the contrary, a text driven by descriptive detail, long conversational passages, and the psychological development of its main characters. Considering the otherwise divergent nature of these texts, what does it mean for *Verlobung* and *Madonna* to converge precisely on a moment of non-narration?

In answering this question, I argue that *Madonna* also contains an inverted counterpart to the textual elision of Raif and Maria's sexual encounter: the text of Raif's notebook—in which is recorded the story of his youth in Weimar, Berlin, and which we receive word for word as the internal narrative of *Madonna*. At the close of the external narrative that opens the novel—in which the narrator and Raif slowly become friends through their positions at a local bank—Raif becomes deathly ill. After asking the narrator to retrieve this small black notebook from his work desk, Raif then pleads with him to throw it into the fire of his stove. Raif's desire to have this notebook destroyed—an act that would silence his own trans-cultural life story—points us back to the moment of textual silence that marks his relationship with Maria; and yet Raif's fervent desire to have his notebook burned ironically leads the narrator to both keep, and *read* Raif's life story for himself. This act both opens Raif's text to all external readers of the novel, and raises the question of how to *read* Raif's notebook through the silences that mark his character.

Following Iser, I argue that *Madonna* presents this act of reading as an expression of the text's very openness to interpretation (Iser 1975: 249). If the *Leerstelle* constitutes a fundamental *Ansatzpunkt* (point of departure) from which the reader can explore a text's potential meanings (Iser 1975: 235), then the text of Raif's notebook—as a counterpoint to the *Leerstelle* of Raif and Maria's sexual encounter—furthermore figures the act of reading as a cross-cultural encounter: the question of what it means to read Raif's notebook is complicated by his own offhand depiction of it as a German novel (*Almanca bir roman*). While this lie is meant to detract a colleague's attention as Raif hides the notebook deep within a drawer, I argue that *Madonna* asks us to take this claim seriously. To read Raif's life story as a *German* novel is to fundamentally question what it means to be German. It requires an investigation of the intersubjective and intercultural framework of the novel via a mode of reading that engages both its surfaces and subtextual layers.

Ali's translation of another key scene in *Verlobung* is central to my argument here. As mentioned earlier, following their implied sexual encounter, Gustav gives Toni a necklace with a cross pendant as a "Brautgeschenk" (engagement gift); Ali's translation of this term—which attests to an otherwise unspoken engagement—as a "nişan hediyesi" (engagement gift), conveniently plays on the double meanings of

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<sup>17</sup> This does not imply that Kleist's characters lack complexity or serve merely symbolic functions. According to Ray Fleming, "Kleist allows action rather than psychological analysis to present us with the key to understanding the complexity of his black characters and their world. One might object that this is but another example in Western canonical literature of the marginalization of the Other as represented by Congo Hoango, Babekan and Toni, but if this were so the black characters would, typically, only have a symbolic role in the literary work... rather than a structurally and thematically essential role" (Fleming 1992: 309).

*nışan* as both 'engagement' and 'target' (Ali 1943: 31). Indeed, the place where the cross lies on Toni's chest marks the spot where Gustav shoots her later in the story, after misreading her actions as a sign of betrayal.

In my own play on words, I argue that for Ali, translation constitutes one method of engaging with, rather than simply transferring the classics of world literature to Turkey. I develop this argument through recourse to Ali's own reflections in an article written for the journal *Tercüme* (Translation) in March 1941:

The language of a work of art, as opposed to that of other written works, is a living being. In the course of translation and the transfer of its words' meanings, this life perishes, leaving only a chain of dead words behind. The real translator can give this lifeless matter a new life in the language it has been transferred to... (Ali 2012: 104)

The translator must not forget that he has undertaken a debt of consciousness and a serious responsibility toward the author of the work in question, and the public mass he wants to present the work to.<sup>18</sup> (Ali 2012: 111)

Here, Ali figures the initial act of linguistic transfer (*nakil*) as one that literally takes the life of a living work of art. Real translation, he argues, cannot remain at the level of transfer, but must instead enliven the dead words of the literary text; this is the ethical responsibility of the translator toward both the author and the public.

In Ali's own terms, then, to engage with *Verlobung* in translation is to bring this text to life in Turkish; Ali arguably does this by exploring new semantic ambiguities—like those of *alt tarafı* and *nışan*—that highlight the textual surfaces and substructures of Kleist's novella.<sup>19</sup> Just as *Verlobung* asks us to read a moment of non-narration, I argue that the kind of translation Ali endorses is closely tied to the ability to read through the double meanings and potentially contradictory layers within a given text. As such, Ali's translation practice enacts the kind of double dislocation Theo Hermans describes in his concept of "thick translation," whereby concepts in both the source and target languages are unhinged from their apparent meanings. Hermans builds here on Clifford Geertz' notion of "thick description," which resists universalizing tendencies by actively reflecting on the interpretive and

<sup>18</sup> "Sanat eserinin dili, diğer yazılı eserlerden farklı olarak, canlı bir mevcudiyettir... Tercüme esnasında, mütercim kelimelerin manalarını nakil ile kanaat ettiği müddetçe, bu hayat yok olur, ortada sadece birtakım ölü kelimeler silsilesi kalır. Asıl mütercim, bu cansız malzemeye, naklettiği dilde yeni bir hayat vermesini bilen kimsedir..." (Ali 2012: 104)

"Mütercimin hem eserini tercüme ettiği muharrire, hem de bu eseri arz ettiği insan külesine karşı büyük bir vicdan borcu olduğunu ve ağır bir mesuliyet altına girdiğini asla unutmaması lazımdır." (Ali 2012: 111)

<sup>19</sup> I borrow the term "textual substructure" from Roswitha Burwick, who argues that the substructures of *Verlobung* "mirror the unsolved social, political, and racial problems" (Burwick 1992: 321) it addresses.

constructivist nature of the ethnographer's observations. In recognizing that acts of translation, interpretation, and description play out in the same discursive space, Hermans' concept of "thick translation" resists the imposition of categorical definitions. In working from the bottom up—rather than from the top down—"thick translation contains within it both the acknowledgement of the impossibility of total translation and an unwillingness to appropriate the other through translation even as translation is taking place" (Hermans 2003: 386-387).

### Civilized Encounters, Impure Mixtures

Following the implied sexual encounter in *Madonna*, and Maria's expression of her inability to love another human being, Raif wanders blindly through the streets of Berlin until he reaches the southernmost limits of the city. In a key turning point for the novel, he finally takes notice of his surroundings: on the shore of Berlin's *Wannsee*, he recognizes the spot where Kleist and his lover, Henriette Vogel, had committed suicide in 1811 (Ali 2008b: 123), a date that incidentally also marks the publication of *Verlobung*.

This famous murder-suicide pact—in which Kleist first shot his lover and then himself—does not serve as a clear point of reference for Raif and Maria's relationship, but rather as a bitter point of inversion. In contrast to Maria's assertion that two people can never really become one,<sup>20</sup> Raif imagines the lovers Heinrich and Henriette with a bullet through the temples and chest, respectively, their blood streaming into a single pool at his feet: "Like their destinies, their blood had also mixed with one another." ("Mukadderatları gibi kanları da birbirine karışmıştı") (Ali 2008b: 123). In a self-deprecating fantasy, he imagines first calling Maria, then shooting himself in the head, so that he might listen to her saying his name as he lies, dying, in a pool of his own blood. Only in this way, "she would understand that she would never forget me until the end of her life, and that I had bound myself to her memory with my blood." (Ali 2014: 151) ("ömrünün sonuna kadar beni unutamacağı, kendimi kanla hatrasına bağladığımı anlayacaktı.") (Ali 2008b: 125)

The manner in which Kleist committed suicide is also eerily reminiscent of the suicide in *Verlobung*, in which Gustav first murders Toni by shooting her in the chest, and then kills himself out of remorse with a bullet through the head. Indeed, Raif's bitter fantasy also recalls the image of Toni writhing in her own pool of blood at the close of Kleist's novella. This intertextual reference, together with Ali's multiple visual references to blood, lead me to question the stakes of Raif and

<sup>20</sup> Maria expresses this idea in the following quote: "Demek ki insanlar birbirine ancak muayyen bir hadde kadar yaklaşabiliyorlar ve ondan sonra daha fazla sokulmak için atılan her adım daha çok uzaklaştırıyor. Seninle aramızdaki yakınlaşmanın bir hududu, bir sonu olmamasını ne kadar isterdim. Beni asıl, bu ümidin boşa çıkması üzüyor..." (So, people can get close to a certain extent, and then, every step taken to become closer makes them more distant. I wish very much that our convergence had not had such a boundary, an end. What really disappoints me is this unfulfilled hope.) (Ali 2008b: 120)



Maria's intercultural relationship in *Madonna*. While this novel is consistently read as a tragic love story, scholarship has not sufficiently addressed the significance of Raif and Maria's specific backgrounds for the development of the narrative. Yet, in one of their first excursions together, Maria brings Raif to the Botanical Gardens in Berlin, where she compares the strange (*garip*) and uprooted (*sökülmek*) plants it houses to her Jewish ancestors (*ecdai*) (Ali 2008b: 91-92). Through this conversation, we learn that Maria's father was a Jew born in Prague who converted to Christianity before she was born. It seems no coincidence that Maria shortly thereafter describes her mother as "a Protestant of pure German blood" (Ali 2014: 131) ("halis Alman kanında bir Protestan") (Ali 2008b: 110). This reference to "pure" German blood highlights National Socialist discourses on race, according to which Maria would have been categorized as an interracial child.

Maria's racial background is arguably tied to the mixing of blood in the crucial scene in which Raif envisions Kleist's suicide. Here, Raif's fantasy of his own union with Maria—in which she becomes bound to him in memory by blood—is also the projection of an impure mixture and serves as commentary on the kinds of hybridities and interracial couplings Kleist employs in *Verlobung*.

Ali's recourse to the rhetoric of purity offers a clear reference to the racial politics of National Socialism at the time of *Madonna's* publication in the early 1940s. Raif's notebook is furthermore composed in the summer of 1933, a year that marked both the official end of the Weimar Republic and Hitler's systematic consolidation of power. With regard to these historical implications, I return again to the question of what it means for Ali to translate the key moment of non-narration in *Verlobung*, which marks the implied sexual union between Toni and Gustav. In addition to the text of Raif's black notebook, I suggest that this moment of non-narration finds a second inverted counterpart at the close of *Madonna's* embedded narrative through the event that finally leads Raif to document his life in Berlin: A chance encounter with Frau von Tiedemann, the owner of the boarding house where Raif lived in Berlin, leads him to discover the existence of his ten-year-old daughter. Described as thin (*zayıf*), of pale complexion (*soluk benizli*), and well behaved and silent (*huylu ve sessizdir*), this girl serves as a ghostly physical testament to Raif's relationship with Maria, who he now learns passed away shortly after giving birth (Ali 2008b: 152-156).

The *Leerstelle* that marks both Gustav and Toni's, as well as Raif and Maria's, sexual encounters is translated into the silence of this small child. Whereas the love story in *Verlobung* reveals a crisis of German identity prior to the establishment of the German nation-state in the face of French imperialism, Ali gestures through this child to the colonial power structures within which Raif's relationship to Maria is embedded in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Frau von Tiedemann—who is, incidentally, Maria's cousin—reveals that she is traveling through Ankara *en route* to Berlin along the Bagdad Railway. Her Prussian husband, whom she describes as a colonial merchant (*müstemleke tüccarı*) (Ali 2008b: 152), is now involved in the date trade in Iraq. Recalling her husband, Herr Döppke's, previous experience with the date trade in

the German colony of Cameroon, Raif notes perplexedly that Bagdad is not a German colony. To this Frau von Tiedemann replies: “my husband specializes in the produce of warm countries.” (Ali 2014: 187) (“kocamın sıcak memleket mahsulleri üzerinde ihtisası var”) (Ali 2008b: 152).

In conclusion, I argue that it is precisely this kind of categorical cultural essentialization against which Kleist works through the hybrid identities and semantic ambiguities in *Verlobung*. Ali’s translation of *Verlobung*, then, works together with the intertextual references in *Madonna* to underscore the deep irony of a project meant to transfer European humanist values to Turkey at a time when these very values were being destroyed by fascist governments in Europe or put into question via the European colonial imposition of slavery following the French Revolution, respectively. While Ali did enthusiastically support both the translation project and other humanist reforms instated by Hasan Ali Yücel throughout the 1940s, I argue that both his translation practice and his fiction suggest that translating the ‘West’ involves a careful consideration of the contradictions and potentially negative aspects of Western civilization.

As such, these texts also challenge depictions of civilization within translation rhetoric of the early Republican period: Hilmi Ziya Ülken proposes the concept of a universal civilization that is nevertheless situated in the West; Turkey’s entrance into it is thus aligned with what he views as the Ottoman goal of Westernization (*garphlaşma*), which he states can only be fully realized with the systematic program of translation in the Republican era. İsmail Habib Sevük argues along similar lines that textual participation in European civilization is premised on the ‘entire’ translation of Western antiquity, suggesting a positive ideal of European civilization that is complete in and of itself. Both of these authors strongly believe in the possibility of transferring otherwise vaguely defined values of Western civilization to Turkey.

By pointing to the contradictory nature of its literary underside, I argue that Ali’s translation of *Verlobung* works together with his final novel, *Madonna*, to complicate the Republican Turkish premise of smooth translatability—and thus also the stable category of the ‘West’ it presumes—upheld by scholars such as Ülken and Habib. Whereas translation activity was one crucial arena through which Turkey sought to emerge as an independent political entity that identified itself as European, Ali poses the more difficult question of what ‘Western’ values themselves might be.

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# The Political behind the Fur Coat: Sabahattin Ali's *The Madonna in the Fur Coat* and Leopold Sacher-Masoch's *Venus in Furs* in an Intertextual Context

İlker Hepkaner

## Abstract

*In his final novel Kırk Mantolu Madonna (1943, The Madonna in the Fur Coat), social-realist author Sabahattin Ali deployed multiple intertextualities with Leopold Sacher-Masoch's novel Venus im Pelz (1870, Venus in Furs). At a time period when Turkey's ruling government did not shy away from occasionally cooperating with the Nazi regime and allowing Nazi infiltration, Ali's references to a German-language novel carry political repercussions. In this article, I argue that Ali intentionally deployed intertextuality in order to take a political stand and critique his contemporary context. In particular, I show how the layered intertextualities between Madonna and Venus relate to Ali's political and judicial struggles at the time of Madonna's publication. I conclude the article by demonstrating the urgent importance of recognizing the multifarious political aspects of Madonna in order to reevaluate the novel's current bestseller status in Turkey, and the specific marketing strategies adopted for its English publication with Penguin Classics in 2016.*

“The Fact that *The Madonna in the Fur Coat* is Plagiarized” reads a title on the popular e-dictionary *Eksi Sözlük*, which has functioned less as a dictionary than as a cyber public space where young people share information and discuss a myriad of

issues since the early 2000s.<sup>1</sup> In 2014, one user wrote a long entry describing striking plot parallels between Sabahattin Ali's novel *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* (1943) (*The Madonna in the Fur Coat*, hereafter referred to as *Madonna*)<sup>2</sup> and Leopold Sacher-Masoch's *Venus im Pelz* (1870) (*Venus in Furs*, hereafter referred to as *Venus*) and concluded that Ali had plagiarized the core of his novel.<sup>3</sup>

Against such accusations of plagiarism, I argue that Ali intentionally deployed intertextuality in order to take a political stand and critique his contemporary context. *Madonna's* intertextualities have been discussed by a number of scholars including myself since 2011.<sup>4</sup> In particular, Kristin Dickinson has shown how the novel questions the Turkish modernization project through its engagement with both

<sup>1</sup> For a succinct description of *Ekşi Sözlük*, see Gürel / Yakın (2007). In the last nine years, the discussion over the website has intensified but its main tenets, as explained in this article, stayed more or less the same. The original title reads “*Kürk Mantolu Madonna'nın Çalntı Olması*”, accessible at: <https://eksizozluk.com/kurk-mantolu-madonnain-calinti-olmasi--4610794> [Last accessed: 01. 06. 2016]. All translations in this article are mine unless noted otherwise.

<sup>2</sup> An English translation of the novel by Maureen Freely and Alexander Dawe was published in May 2016 under the title of *Madonna in a Fur Coat*. However, here I use the unpublished translation that David Gramling and I completed in 2011. We called the novel *The Madonna in the Fur Coat*, because we believe Sabahattin Ali used *Madonna* in a definitive manner and this version of the title satisfies the urgency to reflect such anchorage in the novel. The relationship between the novel's main characters Raif and Maria develops in a specific manner. Raif first sees Maria's self portrait, makes meaning of it through his and an art critic's cultural repertoire, and struggles with Maria's elusive image for a while before they start their friendship. Maria's image and persona concretizes throughout the novel for Raif, and achieves a definitive and fundamental meaning for him. We therefore think the title “The Madonna in the Fur Coat” reflects this exponential meaning making inside the novel better than the title “Madonna in a Fur Coat.”

<sup>3</sup> As a follow up, another user referred to a 2012 entry, which had identified some elements of Gogol's short stories in *Madonna* and had claimed that Sabahattin Ali “summarized” Gogol's stories in *Madonna*, accessible: <https://eksizozluk.com/entry/27525680> [Last accessed: 01.06.2016]. In this article, I focus on Ali's intertextuality with Sacher-Masoch's *Venus* because I look at the intertextuality of the novel by considering its author's time in Germany, expertise in the German language, and active role in the state-run modernization projects as a German teacher and translator. My focus is not his association with Russian literature or the reasons behind the novel's intertextuality with Gogol's stories. However, his fascination with Russian literature was no secret, and the impact of Russian literature on Ali's authorship was noticed by İbrahim Tatarlı. For a detailed survey of Ali's works and thorough analysis of his authorship, see Tatarlı (1979).

<sup>4</sup> Although there is no concrete evidence in Ali's personal documents on his engagement with Sacher-Masoch's novel, the parallels that have been explored by other scholars and that will be discussed in this article point to striking similarities with Sacher-Masoch's work. The fascination over the parallel between Ali's *Madonna* and Sacher-Masoch's *Venus* is nothing new, and indeed predates discussions in the online forum *Ekşi Sözlük*. In our personal conversations, comparative literature scholar Kristin Dickinson and German literature scholar Barbara Kosta suggested that there might be an important intertextuality between Ali and Sacher-Masoch. I followed their suggestions and explored the intertextuality between the two novels in my master's thesis defended in 2013. For this please see (Hepkaner 2013). Kristin Dickinson wrote on the intertextuality between two novels in her dissertation (Dickinson 2015). Separate from these discussions, Onur Kemal Bazarkaya published an article on the hypertextuality between the two novels in 2015 and their interpretation according to Derrida and Foucault's theories on representation and sexuality. Unlike Bazarkaya, I don't delve into different intertextualities of Gerard Genette's typology in this article, rather I explore possible political undertones in the connections Ali establishes with other texts. For such discussion, please see Bazarkaya (2015).

Weimar surface culture and revolutionary Turkey's cultural practices.<sup>5</sup> In this article, I build on Dickinson's argument by highlighting the key role intertextuality plays within *Madonna* as a mode of political critique.<sup>6</sup>

On the concept of intertextuality, I draw on literary theorist Julia Kristeva's definition of the term. Kristeva brought Saussure's linguistic theory together with Mikhail Bakhtin's literary theories in her works in the 1960s. In her article "The Bounded Text," Kristeva argued that "the text is [...] *productivity*" and in addition to its redistributive relationship to the language, the text is also "a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another" (Kristeva 1980 [1969]: 36). In this article, I look at what type of texts left their mark on *Madonna* through its author, and how these texts' intersection can be read as a political critique.

I explore the intertextuality of *Madonna* on two levels. Firstly, I argue that Sabahattin Ali incorporated intertextual references into his novel as a formal principle. By enriching *Madonna*'s plot and characters these references simultaneously situate *Madonna* and question its place within a Turkish society undergoing cultural transformation. Secondly, I explore the specific intertextual relationship between *Madonna* and Sacher-Masoch's *Venus*, a novel that also employed intertextuality as a formal principle. In closing, I emphasize the urgent importance of recognizing the political nature of Ali's intertextual aspects to *Venus* in order to reevaluate the novel's current bestseller status in Turkey, and the specific marketing strategies adopted for its English publication with Penguin Classics in 2016. In doing so, I emphasize that Ali's engagement with German culture in *Madonna*—broadly conceived here to include the *fin-de-siècle* Austrian novelist Sacher Masoch—carried real political repercussions at the time of *Madonna*'s publication. In 1941, when *Madonna* was first serialized, and 1943, when it first appeared as a novel, Turkey's ruling government did not shy away from allowing Nazi infiltration and occasionally cooperating with the Nazi regime.<sup>7</sup> While *Venus* seems far removed from this political

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<sup>5</sup> For an elaborate analysis of Sabahattin Ali's critique in *Madonna*, please see Dickinson (2013). Also, İbrahim Tatarlı argued for the political insights in the novel. For more on this, please see Tatarlı (1979: 263).

<sup>6</sup> Intertextuality is not the only strategy that Ali used to criticize his contemporary context in *Madonna*. David Gramling and I explored how Sabahattin Ali's stance towards translation and the language engineering practices in the early years of the Turkish Republic, which 'purified' the language by eliminating Arabo-Farsi vocabulary in favor of European and Turkic lexicon, was reflected in *Madonna*. In this piece, we argue that Sabahattin Ali used different linguistic registers for the framing narrative and the story of Raif and Maria. The framing narrative has shorter sentences, and more 'purified' language whereas the enclosed narrative has more complex sentence structures and definitions of situations and emotions. Sabahattin Ali may have deployed this difference as a critique of the language reform which affected his writing directly. For more on this topic, see Gramling / Hepkaner (forthcoming 2017).

<sup>7</sup> There are a number of scholarly works dealing with the connection between the Turkish government and the Nazi regime in Germany until the end of the Nazi era. I list a few here which, based on concrete evidence, delineate this close relationship between two countries: (Konuk 2010; Baer 2013; Guttstadt 2013; Ihrig 2014).

context, I argue on the contrary, that *Madonna's* intertextuality with *Venus* carries important political overtones.

Ali establishes an intricate intertextual relationship with *Venus* through similarities on the level of plot, character, and narrative form. These multilayered intertextual references to *Venus* in *Madonna* relate to Ali's political and judicial struggles at the time of its publication. Ali's political adversaries considered his literary works incriminating evidence that proved his harmfulness to the state;<sup>8</sup> ultra-nationalists in particular utilized Ali's literary work to declare him a traitor of the state and homeland. *Venus*, as a work in which characters constantly cross the line between art and reality, thus proves relevant for reflecting back on Ali's own life and literary career.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, *Venus* provided Ali an excellent canvas with which to subtly criticize his political adversaries, who could not dissociate literature from reality.

### The Purpose of Intertextuality in *Madonna*

Beyond the clear references to *Venus* within *Madonna*, I argue that intertextuality as a formal principle is crucial to the novel's narrative strategy, in that it complicates the love story at its core. For example, Ali uses two short literary texts in order to explain the novel's main characters', Raif and Maria's, personalities and life trajectories in the narrative. Ivan Turgenev's *Klara Milic* and Jakob Wassermann's *Der niegeküsste Mund* (*The Mouth that Never Was Kissed*) are mentioned in the text by name and briefly summarized. Raif mentions these stories in the novel in a way that foreshadows the characters' destinies. Turgenev's Klara Milic is projected as someone who "falls in love with a rather simple student, but even without breathing a word of it to anyone, she falls victim to her astonishing obsession, merely out of the shame of loving such a simpleton" (Ali 2014: 59). This is a hint at Maria and Raif's own destinies and deaths in the novel. Wassermann's story about "a teacher who was never loved by anyone and grew old while constantly expecting love or some human affection, though he never confessed as much" (Ali 2014: 159) is a direct reference to the circumstances surrounding Raif's death.

<sup>8</sup> *Yapı Kredi Yayınları*, the publishing house of *Yapı Kredi* published a volume on Ali's struggles against the political court cases that were opened against him in order to curb his political dissidence. Documents such as letters, court decisions, expert witness reports, and defense scripts give a succinct picture on how court cases were used against Ali's authorship and dissidence (Ali 2004).

<sup>9</sup> In their foreword to *Venus*, Lotringer and Kraus argue that such erasure of boundaries between art and reality was on purpose. They list a number of similarities between Sacher-Masoch's life and that of *Venus's* characters. They even argue that "[i]n *Venus in Furs*, reality and fantasy aren't just intertwined, they're indistinguishable." For more on this, see Lotringer / Kraus (1989). I don't know if Sabahattin Ali knew exactly the autobiographical elements of Sacher-Masoch's life in *Venus* and picked this novel for this reason. Unsurprisingly, there are a number of autobiographical elements in *Madonna*, and many authors have noted this in various occasions. For a thorough explanation of Ali's contemporaries' take on the novel, its political undertones, and autobiographical elements, see: "Açıklamalar" (Arsever 1985). For autobiographical elements in his other novels, see Sönmez (2013). Despite the plethora of autobiographical elements, I argue that the conflation between reality and art in *Venus* was more important for Ali's political agenda than imbuing autobiographical elements in the novel.



By playing an integral role within the narrative, these texts establish organic connections between Ali's novel and other European literatures. Such narrative sophistication is in line with the cultural revolution's broad terms in early Republican era Turkey, in which state-run cultural revolution projects aimed to connect Turkish literature and culture with a European heritage.<sup>10</sup> By engaging intertextuality as formal principle, Ali positioned *Madonna* beyond the confines of contemporary Turkish literature and the generic restrictions of a romance novel.<sup>11</sup>

Nazım Hikmet's letter of May 1943 further attests to the novel's sophistication. Praising the social realist aura of the frame narrative yet lamenting the lack of this same social realist dimension in the inner narrative, the prominent poet calls the story of Raif and Maria "an experience [that] was necessary not only for [Ali] but also for Turkish literature." Ali defended the sophistication of his novel many times in the face of criticism by fellow intellectuals and those involved in the publication of the novel. For example, when Cemal Hakkı Bey, the owner of the *Hakikat* newspaper, which had serialized the novel, refused to pay Ali's fees because "the novel did not sell at all," and was comparable in quality to other romance novellas of the time, Ali defended his novel's quality with rigor, arguing that it was not geared towards popular demand.<sup>12</sup>

Apart from adding sophistication, the novel's intertextual form intensifies Ali's critique of the political and cultural conditions in Turkey at the time. Before writing *Madonna*, Ali was already a prominent player in the state-run cultural incentives that connected European literatures to the Turkish literary scene through translation and education.<sup>13</sup> Deemed a social realist author even before he published *Madonna*, Ali often expressed his utmost belief in using the arts to change people's lives.<sup>14</sup> With its intertextual form, *Madonna* was no different than his previous and

<sup>10</sup> The following scholarly works investigate this cultural revolution in a myriad of realms: (Lewis 1999; Tahir Gürçağlar 2008; Ertürk 2008; Konuk 2010).

<sup>11</sup> In an article he penned for M. Behet Yazar's "Edebiyatlarımız ve Türk Edebiyatı" (Our Literary Men and Turkish Literature), Ali explained the dangers of being locked to one's own cultural references in literature as follows: "A literary tradition that is stuck in its own frail and blind self instead of encompassing all humanity and the universe has no other virtue than being subject to psychopathology studies. Arts should contain life with all its details, and it should awaken inside people the desire, and even the need, to live, to live as human beings, to live by running towards the better, the higher, and the purer." (Bütün bir beşeriyeti ve bir kainatı içine alacağı yerde kendi cılız ve âmâ benliğine saplanan bir edebiyatın, bence, pskiopatoloji etüdlerine mevzu olmaktan başka bir meziyeti yoktur. Sanat bütün tefeerruatıyla hayatı ihtiva etmeli, insanda yaşamak, insan gibi yaşamak, daha iyiye, daha yükseğe, daha temize doğru koşarak yaşamak arzusunu, hatta ihtiyacını uyandırmalıdır.) For the entire article, see Ali Laslo / Özkırımlı (1979: 241-242).

<sup>12</sup> For the entire letter, please see: "Letter to Cemal Hakkı Bey dated November 10, 1941" in Ali (2008: 365-367). Ali defends the literary quality of his novel in this letter, and this is one of the reasons why I don't refer to *Madonna* as a romance novella in this article, although some of his contemporaries have done so.

<sup>13</sup> For an elaborate discussion of Ali's role in the state-run cultural initiatives, see Dickinson (2013).

<sup>14</sup> For a number of articles and interviews Ali penned on the role of arts and social realism, please see (Ali 1998). For a concrete example in which Ali states his social realist stance: "Literature, actually generally the arts, is the expression, generalization of an idea or emotion thought and felt by the artists, so, it is a kind of propaganda. I have never been a partisan of purposeless arts. Arts have one

subsequent works. The novel even represented some of the cultural contentions of its time. In the following, I address a central encounter in the text through which intertextuality mocks the state-run mode of cultural change.

In the internal narrative of the novel, Raif struggles with contending dichotomy of meaning-making mechanisms of the so-called ‘East’ and ‘West’ when he tries to understand the content and qualities of Maria Puder’s classical self-portrait. Raif describes his first impression of Maria Puder’s self-portrait on his own terms:

Although I knew from the first instant that I had not seen this face anywhere, any time, I felt that there was some relation between us. And yet this pale face, this dark brown hair, that expression that reconciled innocence with volition, a boundless ennui with a brazen character: the combination could be nothing but familiar to me. I knew this woman from the books I had been reading since age seven, and from that realm of dreams I’d constituted since age five. Pieces of her came from Halit Ziya’s Nihal, from Vecihi Bey’s Mehcure, from Chevalier Buridan’s lover, from the Cleopatra I’d read about in history books, and even from Amine Hatun, Muhammed’s mother, as I envisioned her while listening to the mevlits. She was the amalgam, the combination of all the women of my waking dreams. (Ali 2014: 61)<sup>15</sup>

Raif overcomes his amazement by making sense of this painting’s effects on him through the books he has read. Yet after reading a newspaper article, his interpretation changes. In this article, the author offers a different yet definite explanation of the portrait:

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clear and sole reason: Advancing people towards the better and more correct, and instigating the desire of this advancement. I want the arts, and our subject here the literature, to develop in this vein. In this regard, we need to turn away from individualism as much as possible and turn toward life to acquire many things from our environs and give back plenty. The first condition for this is to allow the author to be realist.” (“Edebiyat, hatta alelumum sanat, bence sanatkarın düşündüğünü ve duyduğu bir fikrin ve bir hissin ortaya atılması, tamim edilmesi demektir; yani bir nevi propagandadır. Ben hiçbir zaman sanatın maksatsız olduğuna kani olmadım. Sanatın bir tek ve sarif maksadı vardır: İnsanları daha iyiye, daha doğruya, daha güzele yükseltmek, insanlarda bu yükselme arzusunun uyandırmak. Sanatın, ve burada mevzuumuz edebiyat olduğuna göre edebiyatın, bu manada gelişmesini isterim. Bu takdirde de endividüalizmden mümkün olduğu kadar hayata, muhite dönmek, muhitten birçok şeyler almak ve muhite birçok şeyler vererek yazmak lazımdır. Bunun yapılabilmesinin birinci şartı ise, muharrirre realist olmak müsaadesinin verilmesidir.”) (Ali 1998: 19).

<sup>15</sup> “Bu çehreyi veya benzerini hiçbir yerde, hiçbir zaman görmediğimi ilk andan itibaren bilmeme rağmen, onunla aramızda bir tanışıklık varmış gibi bir hisse kapıldım. Bu soluk yüz, bu siyah kaşlar ve onların altındaki siyah gözler; bu koyu kumral saçlar ve asıl, masumluk ile iradeyi, sonsuz bir melal ile kuvvetli bir şahsiyeti birleştiren bu ifade, bana asla yabancı olamazdı. Ben bu kadını yedi yaşımdan beri okuduğum kitaplardan, beş yaşımdan beri kurduğum hayal dünyalarından tanıyordum. Onda Halit Ziya’nın Nihal’inden, Vecihi Bey’in Mehcure’sinden, Şövalye Büridan’ın sevgilisinden ve tarih kitaplarında okuduğum Kleopatra’dan, hatta mevlit dinlerken tasavvur ettiğim, Muhammed’in annesi Amine Hatun’dan birer parça vardı. O benim hayalimdeki bütün kadınların bir terkibi, bir imtizacıydı.” (Ali 2004 [1943]: 56-57)

[The author of the article] claimed that, given the strange equivalence of posture and facial expression, the woman looked so much like the depiction of Mother Mary in Andreas del Sarto's painting 'Madonna delle Arpie' that it could actually give someone chills. With this, the author half jokingly wished this "Madonna in a Fur Coat" great success, and then moved on to another artist. (Ali 2014: 63)<sup>16</sup>

With this explanation, the German critic places the portrait in its contemporary German context, and draws a parallel with an artwork from the Renaissance era. The German critic furthermore authoritatively names Maria's self-portrait, Raif's image of Maria, and—though indirectly—the novel. In the following paragraph, convinced by the critic's intervention, Raif admits the similarity when he looks at a replica of 'Madonna delle Arpie.'

Given the political dimensions of the novel, I argue that the tension between the meaning-making mechanisms of the German critic and Raif, and the critic's definitive answer to Raif's puzzlement, are politically charged intertextualities that represent and critique the cultural revolution that Ali along with his fellow countrymen experienced. Unlike Ali's characters in *İçimizdeki Şeytan* (1940) (*The Devil Within Us*, hereafter referred to as *Şeytan*)—which represents real-life ultra-nationalist intellectuals—the characters of *Madonna* are not directly drawn from Ali's contemporary Turkey, yet the conflict between various meaning-making mechanisms they experience is strikingly similar to the one his contemporaries faced.<sup>17</sup>

The decision to place his characters outside of a Turkish context can be read as a strategic move in relation to the political and social hardships that Ali underwent as author. Right before the publication of *Madonna*, Nihal Atsız, the most prominent ultra-nationalist intellectual of the time, considered the publication of *Şeytan* as a personal attack. Indeed, the publication of *Şeytan* marks a pinnacle in the two intellectuals' disagreements,<sup>18</sup> following which Atsız called for a nationalist outrage towards Ali and openly threatened Ali's life. In the aftermath of such vehement reactions to Ali's previous work the owner of *Hakikat* newspaper, Cemal Hakkı Bey, asked Ali to write "a riveting love story not involved in politics."<sup>19</sup> Contrary to the heated reaction and scrutiny *Şeytan* attracted, *Madonna* did not face any such

<sup>16</sup> "[T]ablodaki kadının, duruşu ve yüzünün ifadesi bakımından, tuhaf bir tesadüf eseri olarak, Andreas del Sarto'nun Madonna delle Arpie tablosundaki Meryemana tasvirine insanı şaşırtacak kadar çok benzediği iddia ediliyor ve yarı şaka bir ifade ile bu 'Kürk Mantolu Madonna'ya muvaffakiyetler temenni edilerek başka bir ressamdan bahse geçiyordu." (Ali 2004 [1943]: 58)

<sup>17</sup> İlker Aytürk gives an excellent example on how some intellectuals of the period coped with the issue of contending repertoires in the field of linguistics (Aytürk 2004).

<sup>18</sup> Nihal Atsız wrote a disturbing pamphlet in which he publicly attacked Sabahattin Ali and his book *İçimizdeki Şeytan* (*The Devil Within Us*). Atsız's pamphlet is called *İçimizdeki Şeytanlar* (*The Devils Within Us*); it is a close reading of the novel in which he concludes the characters are from real life. In addition, Atsız argues that Ali is pseudo-Greek (and he means this as an insult), completely crazy, and a megalomaniac, and Atsız openly threatens Ali by saying that "their problem will only be solved by blood." This pamphlet is accessible on the website *Ulu Türkçü Nihal Atsız Otağı*: <http://www.nihal-atsiz.com/yazi/icimizdeki-seytanlar-h-nihal-atsiz.html> [Last accessed: 30.11.2016].

<sup>19</sup> For more on this, please see Azamet Arsever's note (Arsever, 1985).

reaction from the ultra-nationalist circles. Due to the subtlety with which *Madonna* represented the cultural challenges Ali and his contemporaries faced, *Madonna* was never a subject of state oppression, whereas Ali's works before and after were sanctioned by the state.

It is no coincidence that Germany and the German cultural context were the literary havens with which Ali chose to imbue his critique of the Turkish context. Ali's past in Berlin and his fluency in German were certainly important reasons behind his thematization of Weimar Berlin. However, I argue that there is more to his critique than this. From Ali's private correspondence and political engagements in the 1940s, we know that the German / Nazi context of the time and its connections with Turkey were prevalent in Ali's life. At a time in which Ali's disagreements with Nihal Atsız were revolving around issues of nationalism and fascism, for example, Atsız sent Ali a postcard from Germany in 1939. Atsız signed the postcard with the words "To you and your wife, greetings and love from Berlin." From Atsız's pamphlet and Ali's other correspondences, we know that Ali and Atsız were heading towards a rocky chapter in their relationship by the end of the 1930s. More than Atsız's words, the image on the card offers clues about what Germany could have meant to Ali in the 1930s. The card bears Hubert Lanzinger's famous painting of Hitler, 'Der Bannerträger' (The Standard Bearer), and the following words by the fascist leader: "Whether in good fortune or bad fortune, whether in freedom or captivity, I remained faithful to my own banner, which is today the State flag of the Germans."<sup>20</sup>

Considering the elements in *Madonna* that hint at the Nazis coming to power, and the fact that Ali wrote this novel while enlisted in the army for a second time due to World War II, receiving Hitler's image from his soon-to-be nemesis suggests that the choice of Weimar Berlin as the setting for his novel was not arbitrary.<sup>21</sup> The card and its message gain poignancy with the knowledge that Ali was

<sup>20</sup> "Ob im Glück oder ob in der Freiheit oder im Gefängnis, ich bin der Fahne, die heute des Deutschen Reiches Staatsflagge ist, treu geblieben."

<sup>21</sup> In *Madonna*, Raif describes one of the guests at his pension in Berlin: "This last guest was a trader who'd been forced to leave behind his life in the German colony of Cameroon after the Armistice and had found shelter back in his home country. He was now leading a rather modest life with the money he had been able to smuggle back, and he spent most of his days at political meetings, which were quite numerous at the time, and related his ideas about them at night. He often brought back this or that freshly discharged and unemployed German officer he'd just met, and they would debate for hours. Though my understanding could have been faulty, these guests of his seemed to be of the opinion that Germany could survive only if a man with an iron will like Bismarck were to lead the country, and that injustices needed to be corrected with a second war, for which the only adequate preparation was immediate and rapid armament." (Ali 2014: 55) ("Bu sonuncusu Almanya'nın Kamerun müstemlekesinde ticaret yaparken mütarekeden sonra her şeyini bırakarak vatanına sığınmış, bir adamdı. Kurtarabildiği bir miktar parasıyla oldukça mütevazı bir hayat sürüyor, gününü, o sıralarda Berlin'de pek bol olan siyasi toplantılara gidip akşamları intibalarını anlatmak suretiyle geçiriyordu. Çok kere, yeni tanıştığı terhis edilmiş, işsiz Alman zabıtlarını da yanında getirir ve onlarla, saatlerce münakaşa ederdi. Benim yarım yamalak anladığıma göre Almanya'nın kurtuluşunu Bismarck gibi demir iradeli bir adamın işbaşına geçmesinde ve hi. vakit geçirmeden silahlanmaya başlayarak ikinci bir harple haksızlıkları düzeltmekte buluyorlardı.") (Ali 2004 [1943]: 53) When Raif talks about the ongoing political discussions in the pension, he even gives hints about an infamous gesture that was al-

repeatedly tried by the state on treason charges during the 1930s. Ali's political dissidence, connections to socialist circles of the time, and his works' social realist undertones made him an easy target for such allegations.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, Nihal Atsız was not prosecuted for his publications that were openly anti-Semitic in the 1930s.<sup>23</sup> Such inequality between two intellectuals with different takes on nationalism and fascism must have been a matter of concern and critique for Ali.

Ali's preoccupation with the Nazis' impact on humanity was not limited to his personal life. After the war, he was publicly vocal about the connections between the Nazi and Turkish governments and their enduring legacy. For example, following his incarceration under the state of siege in 1944, he penned a letter to the Judges of 1. İstanbul Sıkıyönetim Mahkemesi (Istanbul First Court for State of Siege).<sup>24</sup> In the letter, after comparing the Central Police Station in Istanbul to the Bastille Prison of pre-revolutionary France, he named bureaucrats who built the station after their visits to Nazi Germany. He criticized the lingering legacy of Nazi Germany in Turkey with the following words: "[T]he methods of humanity's biggest enemy, German fascism, are still being used in a secret manner, and kept from the public, in Turkey shaped by the Atatürk revolution."<sup>25</sup>

In this light, when contextualized within Ali's personal and political problems as well as the conditions and horrors of World War II, *Madonna's* engagement with issues relating to Nazi Germany arguably renders the intertextual connections between *Madonna* and *Venus* even more political.

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ready legible for the reader of the 1940s: "Even the maid who cleaned my room in the mornings tried to drum up political conversations with me, and she would read her newspaper whenever she had a spare moment. She had her own ardent opinions, and while talking about them, her face would flush red and she'd swing her fist in the air." (Ali 2014: 56). ("Sabahları odamı düzelten hizmetçi kız bile benimle siyasetten konuşmaya kalkar, boş zamanlarında derhal gazetesini okumaya koyulurdu. Onun da kendine göre ateşli kanaatleri vardı ve bunlardan bahsederken yüzü büsbütün kızarıp, yumruğunu sıkarak havada sallardı.") (Ali 2004 [1943]: 53)

<sup>22</sup> I haven't seen Ali's response to this card, if there is any, among the published documents from his life. During the research workshop "Transnational Perspectives on the Life and Work of Sabahattin Ali" organized by the Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies at New York University in March 2015, Sevgül Sönmez, the editor of most of these published documents, stated that all the publishable material from the personal archive of the author has been published by *Yapı Kredi* Publishing House. Some of the material was left out because they contain family secrets. I have not been able to locate a personal archive of Nihal Atsız that could have contained the other half of this correspondence, if there is any. To learn about the two intellectuals' later legal battles, see Ali (2004).

<sup>23</sup> For more on the topic of how Nihal Atsız and intellectuals and state officials who disseminated German anti-Semitism with no judicial consequences, see Rifat N. Bali: "Antisemitism in Turkey in the Single Party Period: 1923-1945" (Bali 2013).

<sup>24</sup> "Belge 27" in Ali (2004).

<sup>25</sup> "[İ]nsanlığın en büyük düşmanı Alman Faşizmi metodları bugün Atatürk İnkılabı Türkiye'sinde halkın gözünden gizli olarak tatbik sahası bulmaktadır." After this sentence, this letter continues by documenting the conditions and timeline of Ali and others' incarceration. Ali gives excruciating details about the inhumane conditions in the police station before providing a complex account of torture-ridden interrogation they had to endure in the station. His style of writing is very dry except occasional references to how the state practices do not live up to the modern standards set by the Kemalist revolution. I argue that such references are textual strategies in which Ali aimed to allure to the judges state-centric sensibilities. For more, please check "Belge 27" in Ali (2004).

### Key intertextualities of *Madonna* and *Venus*

*Venus* was published in 1870, whereas *Madonna* was first serialized in *Hakikat* newspaper in 1940-1941, and then published in book format in 1943. *Madonna* gained bestseller status in the early 2010s in Turkey and has sold over 1 million copies.<sup>26</sup> It has since been translated into a number of languages including French, German, Macedonian, Arabic, and English.

*Madonna* and *Venus* are both novels in which the main story is embedded within a frame narrative. This internal / external narrative structure is one of the intertextualities between the two novels. *Madonna* begins in 1940s Ankara with the story of the narrator's relationship with Raif, a translator and coworker. Despite their cold start, Raif's fatal illness brings the two unlikely colleagues closer. Due to their rapprochement, the narrator reads Raif's "novel in the German language" (*Almanca bir roman*), a notebook which Raif had kept hidden from everyone at his office, just as Raif dies. This 'novel' is then revealed to be Raif's autobiographical story. Similarly, *Venus*' frame narrative is the tale of an unnamed narrator receiving a manuscript from his servant, Severin, who has also kept it inside a drawer. The embedded narrative of *Venus* tells the love story between Severin and a woman named Wanda. This is the same framework Ali employs in *Madonna*, with the internal narrative detailing a love affair between Raif and the German-Jewish woman, Maria.

The two novels' plots are also intertextually related. In the internal narrative of *Madonna*, Raif narrates his stay in Berlin in 1924, where, with his father's financial support, he spends some time learning how to modernize his family's soap business in Havran, Turkey. As young Raif learns German through literature and wanders around Berlin, he comes across "Kürk Mantolu Madonna" (The Madonna in the Fur Coat), a classical self-portrait at an exhibition of modernist artists. The

<sup>26</sup> There are several theories why *Madonna* became a bestseller 70 years after its first publication. For a TV program on the summary of these theories, see 5N1K Kanal D Youtube Channel: *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* neden bu kadar çok okunuyor / Why is *The Madonna in the Fur Coat* a Bestseller: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4H-W-KP\\_N9g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4H-W-KP_N9g) [Last accessed: 01.08.2016].

Interviewees on this program focus on the sincerity of the love story and the lack of such feelings in the contemporary times for the bestselling status. In this program, Sevengül Sönmez also argues that the fact that Sabahattin Ali was killed had an impact on people's interest, and by reading his works the Turkish public is actually apologizing to one of the victims of the first political murders in Republican history. Sönmez also considers the book as a milestone in Turkish literature as it brings 'eastern' and 'western' elements together. I don't delve into the reasons behind the novel's success in the last decade in this article. However, I should add to the reasons above that *Madonna* gained its best-selling status after *Yapı Kredi Yayınları*, the Publishing House of *Yapı Kredi (YKY)*, one of the biggest banks in Turkey, started publishing Ali's works in 1997. YKY has also published a number of volumes on the life and works of Sabahattin Ali. I personally believe *Yapı Kredi*'s effective network with book retailers might have laid the ground for the novel's success. In addition, in 2005, the Turkish Ministry of Education has published a list of *100 Fundamental Works (100 Temel Eser)* for primary and secondary education. They included Sabahattin Ali's *Kuyucaklı Yusuf* in this list. I believe a comprehensive study on the politics of culture of big banks in Turkey and the impact of the government's efforts in canonization can answer *Madonna*'s success. I would like to thank Ash Iğsız for her remarks on this issue, which helped me immensely in thinking about this late success of *Madonna*.

painter of this portrait is Maria Puder, a half-Jewish artist and cabaret singer. Their relationship begins in the midst of Raif's admiration for Maria's self-portrait, then turns into a friendship, and gradually also a love affair. The rules of their relationship are determined solely by Maria. In *Venus*, Severin and Wanda also establish their relationship within Severin's fascination with Wanda, and their master-slave relationship is completely determined by Wanda.

Maria's illness and Raif's family problems ultimately tear them apart. Deflated by the impossibility of keeping in touch with Maria upon his return to Turkey, Raif gives up on love and life, and blames Maria for his unhappiness. This confusion lasts until a surprise encounter in Ankara ten years later, when he discovers that Maria had died after giving birth to their child. This shocking news forces Raif to finally write down his story. This leads to an ending similar to that of *Venus*: In the final pages of *Madonna*, the narrator states that he had the chance to get to know Raif better through his 'novel in German.' When the narrator receives the news of Raif's passing, he begins reading the story anew. Within *Venus*, Severin and Wanda's relationship also comes to an abrupt end, following which Severin returns home to help with his family business, only to hear from Wanda years later in a letter. The novel ends with a brief dialogue between the narrator and Severin on the moral of the story.

### *Venus in Madonna*

In Ali's contemporary context, the intertextual relationship between Ali's *Madonna* and Sacher-Masoch's *Venus* carries crucial political undertones. I argue that Ali's use of intertextuality as a formal principle effectively blurred the lines between the Turkish and European cultures and literatures that preoccupied intellectuals of the time. Given the interconnectedness of the two contexts that Ali experienced in his life, together with select depictions in the novel that downplay any differences between Europe and Turkey, the intertextual relationship between *Madonna* and *Venus* that translates as shared structures and components become additional critical commentary on the cultural revolution, which aimed to transcend the lines between the so-called separate worlds of Europe and Turkey. The Turkish context, with its cultural and political revolution, was not independent from the developments beyond the country's borders, and *Madonna*'s formal intertextuality and its intertextual relationship with *Venus* reflect (upon) this.

While Ali never explicitly refers to *Venus*—unlike other texts with which he establishes intertextualities—he does hint at a connection between Raif's story and a novel in German in the text. When asked, Raif Efendi refers to his notebook, in which the story of Maria and himself is written, as “a novel in the German language” (*Almanca bir roman*) although he wrote it in Turkish (19). As the text of Raif's diary, this notebook / novel also comprises the text of *Madonna*'s internal narrative. Due to the myriad intertextual similarities I have outlined above, I propose that one way to read Raif's notebook / novel is in reference to *Venus*. This

argument is strengthened by the fact that Raif Efendi does not call his notebook ‘a German novel’ (*bir Alman romanı*) but rather “a novel in the German language” (*Almanca bir roman*), which underscores *Venus*’s status as an Austrian novel written in German.

In the narrative, Raif Efendi writes the novel in 1933, when Austria was a country of its own. When Sabahattin Ali started to write the novel in 1941, the *Anschluss* had already happened. Ali never explicitly mentions *Venus* as a source for *Madonna*, yet the political context of the time, in which the Nazi state was taking over other countries with the aim of erasing any cultural difference to theirs, rendered *Venus*, a novel written by an author whose country was erased from the political maps of the time, a powerful signifier of the political destruction that reflected the destabilized linguistic and cultural contexts of Europe at the time.

Ali establishes intertextuality between the two novels most clearly by adopting *Venus*’ plot line and using an internal / external narrative. In addition to this, the use of intertextuality as a formal principle deepens the political aspects of the relationship between two novels. In both novels, the characters are described through art and literature, and the male characters are unable to separate art from reality. Such adopted strategies in form help Ali to elucidate the over-arching conflation between art and reality in *Madonna*, a central tenet of the critiques Ali voiced at this time.

Ali constructs *Madonna* as an intertextual novel in a manner similar to how Sacher-Masoch constructed *Venus*. Both authors describe people or events through historical or literary characters. For example, Sacher-Masoch describes Venus, who appears in the first segment of the framing story in a dream sequence, as follows:

Opposite me by the massive ‘Renaissance’ fireplace sat Venus; she was not a causal woman of the half-world, who under this pseudonym wages war against the enemy sex, like Mademoiselle Cleopatra, but the real, true goddess of love. (Sacher-Masoch 1989 [1870]: 53)<sup>27</sup>

Sacher-Masoch’s description of Venus references Cleopatra, just as Raif does in his description of Maria Puder’s self-portrait. In reality, Venus is a painting in front of the narrator, but in his dream, Venus is alive and speaks to him. Another striking parallel is apparent when Sacher-Masoch mentions the books his characters read. During the dream sequence, the narrator is holding a book by Hegel, who penned the seminal text on the master-slave dialectic, the very theme of *Venus*. In another example, when Severin questions Wanda’s reasoning on a matter in the embedded narrative of the novel, Wanda replies with the following:

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<sup>27</sup> “Mir gegenüber an dem massiven Renaissancekamin saß Venus, aber nicht etwa eine Dame der Halbwelt, die unter diesem Namen Krieg führte gegen das feindliche Geschlecht, gleich Mademoiselle Cleopatra, sondern die wahrhafte Liebesgöttin.” (Sacher-Masoch 1980 [1870]: 9)



From my cradle onward I was surrounded by replicas of ancient art; at ten years of age, I read Gil Blas, at twelve La Pucelle. Where others had Hop-o'-my-thumb, Bluebeard, Cinderella, as childhood friends, mine were Venus and Apollo, Hercules and Lackoon. (Sacher-Masoch 1989 [1870]: 76)<sup>28</sup>

Wanda marks her intelligence through the books she has read and the artworks that surrounded her. Raif's self-definitions are similar. Very often, he names the books he read and their impact on him in order to explain one of his own character traits. In the narrative, the books the characters read, as mentioned earlier, even foreshadow the course of their fates. This interconnectedness between the characters and literary works lays the groundwork for Ali's discussion of the blurred line between the arts and reality. Both novels offer a commentary on the conflation of art with reality, but when Ali imbues this into his novel, this confusion becomes a part of his critique. Notably, both Raif and Severin are profoundly affected by the paintings that surround them, and at times conflate art with reality.<sup>29</sup> Ali's treatise on Maria Puder's self-portrait and the portrait's emotional impact on Raif—which also causes the ambiguity between art and reality in *Madonna*—is parallel to Sacher-Masoch's treatment of art. For example, just as Raif confuses Maria with Madonna, Severin often confuses Wanda with Venus, and uses the terms interchangeably:

In the middle of the night there was a knock at my window; I got up, opened it, and was startled. Without stood, "Venus in Furs," just as she had appeared to me the first time.

"You have disturbed me with your stories; I have been tossing about in bed, and can't go to sleep," she said. "Now come and stay with me."

"In a moment."

As I entered Wanda was crouching by the fireplace where she had kindled a small fire. (Sacher-Masoch 1989 [1870]: 95)<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> "Ich war von der Wiege an mit Abgüssen antiker Bildwerke umgeben, ich las mit zehn Jahren den Gil Blas, mit zwölf die Pucelle. Wie andere in ihrer Kindheit den Däumling, Blaubart, Aschenbrödel, nannte ich Venus und Apollo, Herkules und Laokoon meine Freunde." (Sacher-Masoch 1980 [1870]: 28)

<sup>29</sup> I would like to thank Kristin Dickinson for pointing out the image-making aspect common to both novels.

<sup>30</sup> "Mitten in der Nacht klopfte es an mein Fenster, ich stand auf, öffnete und schrak zusammen. Draußen stand Venus im Pelz, genau so wie sie mir das erstmal erschienen war.

'Sie haben mich mit Ihren Geschichten aufgeregt, ich wälze mich auf meinem Lager und kann nicht schlafen', sprach sie, 'kommen Sie jetzt nur, mir Gesellschaft leisten.'

'Im Augenblicke.'

In *Madonna*, Raif also confuses Maria Puder with her self-portrait. Raif uses Maria and “Madonna in the Fur Coat” interchangeably:

“Maria!” I said. “Maria! My Madonna in the Fur Coat! What happened so suddenly? What have I done to you? I promised not to want anything further. Haven’t I kept my promise? Look at what you are saying, at a time when we are supposed to be closer than ever!” (Ali 2014: 109)<sup>31</sup>

Raif continues to conflate the image and its painter, and does not force himself to dissociate one from the other. Indeed, Raif refers to Maria as “Maria, the Madonna in the Fur Coat” many times in the novel, especially as the two characters bond more closely.

This relation between *Madonna* and *Venus* underscores the politically charged connotations of intertextuality between the two novels, although we don’t have hard evidence that suggests Ali purposefully wrote *Madonna* based on *Venus*. The conflation of art and reality was indeed the main reason why Atsız launched a public attack on him—he considered the characterizations of ultra-nationalists in Ali’s novel *Şeytan* a personal attack against himself and the movement to which he belonged. In a similar vein, the state punished Ali with severe measures for his literary works, conflating what was in his literary works with his behavior as a citizen. In a context where representation is taken too seriously, Ali writes an intertextual novel rife with the conflation of art and reality. In a politically dire environment for himself, he writes a politically subversive novel criticizing its own Turkish context, disguised as a love story set in Weimar Germany. I thus argue that *Madonna’s* connection with *Venus* points to Ali’s multilayered political critique of his contemporaries and the context in which he lived.

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Als ich eintrat, kauerte Wanda vor dem Kamin, in dem sie ein kleines Feuer angefacht hatte.” (Sacher-Masoch 1980 [1870]: 44)

<sup>31</sup> “‘Maria’ dedim. ‘Maria! Benim Kürk Mantolu Madonnam! Birdenbire ne oldu? Sana ne yaptım? Hiçbir şey istemeyeceğimi vaat etmişim. Sözümü tutmadım mı? Birbirimize her zamandan ziyade yakın olmamız lazım gelen bu anda neler söylüyorsunuz?’” (Ali 2004: 121)

## Repoliticizing *Madonna*

Reading *Madonna*'s multifarious intertextualities as mere coincidence or even plagiarism ignores both the developments in Ali's personal life and the contemporary context in which he wrote. *Madonna* takes place in pre-war Berlin and was published during World War II in a cultural environment that underwent a turbulent state-run revolution while maintaining close contact with Nazi Germany. Sabahattin Ali remained a vocal dissident throughout his life, and the intertextualities in *Madonna* provide us with enough evidence to include Ali's last novel within his body of works that voice social and political critique. *Madonna* was subtly vocal about its contemporary context, and it is crucial to recognize this aspect of the novel as it enjoys its persistent spot on the bestseller lists in Turkey.

Such recognition is important for two reasons. First, it shows that criticism of the turbulent cultural and political landscapes of Turkey was indeed possible despite oppressive state policies in the 1940s. The subtlety of Ali's persistent criticism in this novel invites us to question the limits of the Turkish state's oppression at the time. It suggests a new timeline in understanding literature's stand against the dominant ideology of early republican Turkey. It also shows that intellectuals did not wait until after World War II in order to question the connections of the Turkish government with Nazi Germany and its ideologies. In short, *Madonna* is far from merely a romance novel or a plagiarized novel. Its intertextualities crystallized a number of discussions within the intellectual circles of its time.

Secondly, recognizing the political aspects of *Madonna* is important for today's readership. It challenges and transforms the depoliticized consumption of the novel, which has been the driving force behind its revalorization in contemporary Turkish public and visual spheres.<sup>32</sup> The last decade's 'Madonna-mania' in Turkey goes hand in hand with the novel's bestseller status 70 years after its publication.<sup>33</sup> The saturation of social media with images of people reading or quoting from the book without including or acknowledging intrinsic discussions of the novel may assume new meanings by recognizing the political stance that Ali took with *Madonna*. Maybe this will also give new ideas to publishers who market various versions of the book as a love story, which is precisely what Sabahattin Ali opposed. Indeed, *Madonna* is much more than a romance novel, and there is ample evidence for us to recognize the sophisticated socio-political critique that lies both behind its cover and 'behind the fur coat.'

<sup>32</sup> For an example of failing to recognize the political in the novel, please see Lichtig (2016).

<sup>33</sup> I would like to thank Rüstem Ertuğ Altınay for pointing out the proliferation of the novel's images on social media. After our conversation, one of the marketing pieces for the English version by Freely and Dawe mentioned this saturation of images. See: *Hürriyet Daily News*, 2.12.2016: "'Madonna in a Fur Coat' makes a glorious comeback", accessible at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/madonna-in-a-fur-coat-makes-a-gloriouscomeback.aspx?pageID=238&nID=98840&NewsCatID=386> [Last accessed: 1.06.2016]. The reason behind the abundance of *Madonna*'s images on the social media is beyond the scope of this article. However, it cannot be thought apart from its current bestseller status.

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## **Between Languages: Translative Acts in Sabahattin Ali's *Comprehensive Germanistan Travelogue***

*Zeynep Seviner*

*Renown for his works focusing on the social reality of his time, Sabahattin Ali's care for language often takes a second position to his political engagement in the scholarship. He was nonetheless concerned with intricacies of language, which he knew to be an indispensable device for creating the literary reality he has been praised for. One can find traces of this care throughout his life: his service as a German language teacher, involvement in the First Turkish Publishing Congress (Birinci Neşriyat Kongresi) of 1939, as well as in Hasan Ali Yücel's Translation Bureau (Tercüme Bürosu).*

*This article focuses on the translative acts in Ali's best-selling novel *Madonna in a Fur Coat* (Kürk Mantolu Madonna), and posthumously published private letter entitled "Comprehensive Germanistan Travelogue" ("Mufasssal Cermenistan Seyahatnamesi") to comprehend his stance toward language and national identity in the wake of the Turkish language reform. While thinking of translation as a means to cultural transfer across modes of intelligibility, this approach complicates binary attributes, such as old-new and local-foreign, thereby posing Ali's engagement with language and interlinguality as a way to tackle Ottoman literary past as well as concepts such as humanism and worldliness that dominated the political discourse of the time.*

In *Madonna in a Fur Coat* (*Kürk Mantolu Madonna*, published in 1943, henceforth *Madonna*), Sabahattin Ali introduces his protagonist Raif Efendi as follows:

He was not exceptional by any means. He was, rather, one of those men without any particularity of whom we see hundreds and pass by every day without looking. There surely is nothing worth one's curiosity in the apparent and hidden parts of their lives.<sup>1</sup>

Yet, Ali would go on to tell Raif's life story as if peeling the layers of an onion, painstakingly revealing a life story that is nothing short of extraordinary. His early life in Germany, his talent for painting, and his passionate love affair with Maria Puder, all discovered through an unauthorized reading of his private journal by the impudent yet sympathetic narrator, stand in dramatic contrast with how the old Raif appears to his immediate entourage, and with the tiresome mediocrity of his unappreciative family.

Raif Efendi is a character (the protagonist of the novel no less) who comes into prominence through his apparent ordinariness, in what he hides rather than what he reveals. No wonder that the original title Ali had intended for his novel was *Lüzumsuz Adam* (unnecessary man) (Gürses 2013: 405). Noting the tentative title that never materialized, Sabri Gürses observes that it reflects Ali's anxiety in the face of "the Western world, foreign languages and the act of translation" (Gürses 2013: 408). According to Gürses, for Ali, the fear of winding up "the unnecessary man" would mean becoming as invisible as Raif Efendi, and remaining a provincial young boy who would never be taken seriously and whose work would never be translated into other languages. Building on Gürses's observation, I argue that it is indeed no coincidence Raif Efendi is a translator, and that this choice on the part of the author hints at a general observation on the act of translation, just as much as it channels a personal frustration, one that engages the intensive policy implementations at this time surrounding issues of language, translation, and culture by the young Turkish state.

Raif's invisibility as a translator echoes Lawrence Venuti's milestone monograph, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, where he criticizes the transparency inflicted upon the act of translation, which equates "successful translation" with "the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities [thus] giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text" (Venuti 1995: 4).<sup>2</sup> Objecting to Norman Shapiro's

<sup>1</sup> The original reads: "Halbuki o hiç de fevkalade bir adam değildi. Hatta pek alade, hiçbir hususiyeti olmayan, her gün etrafımızda yüzlercesini görüp de bakmadan geçtiğimiz insanlardan biriydi. Hayatının bildiğimiz ve bilmediğimiz taraflarında insana merak verecek bir cihet olmadığı muhakkaktı." (Ali 2004: 11). All quotations from the novel are my translation.

<sup>2</sup> Venuti remarks, "[t]here is even a group of pejorative neologisms designed to criticize translations that lack fluency, but also used, more generally, to signify badly written prose: 'translate,' 'translationese,' 'translatorese.'" (Venuti 1995: 4)



perception of an ideal translation as “a pane of glass,” only noticed “when there are little imperfections—scratches, bubbles,” Venuti argues that such idealized transparency dangerously conceals

“the violence that resides in the very purpose and activity of translation: the reconstitution of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs and representations that preexist it in the target language, always configured in hierarchies of dominance and marginality, always determining the production, circulation, and reception of texts” (Venuti 1995: 18).

This concealment is by no means inconsequential. The initial impression Raif the translator makes as a blatant failure is symbolic of this error in judgment, which the entire rest of the novel works very hard to undo. Similarly, translation as an act of intercultural transfer maintains the right to such recognition, as Ali hints at through Raif's remarkably rich life story. The narrator gently warns us, even at the very beginning, of the deceptiveness of external appearances: “[...] we only look at the exteriority of these men we judge and never take into consideration that they too have a head and a mind inside of it, one that works even when they don't want it to, and, as a result of all this, an internal world.” And he adds, “if we were to become curious about this world [...] and look into those that it does not easily give away, we would perhaps see things we did not hope for, to encounter a kind of wealth we did not expect.”<sup>3</sup>

For those who move past appearances, the act of translation reveals the hidden worlds of both languages involved. It does so through the sense of estrangement it creates when one looks at one's own language (or a language with which one is familiar) rendered in another language and realizes just how strange it looks now. It is in the safekeeping of differences while attempting interlingual transfer that translation reveals the odd in the familiar. As such, the impact of translation is not just in transferring one language into another and thus rendering the content intelligible in the target language, but also in the alienating effect of hearing the well-known in the foreign. To explain this phenomenon, Venuti argues that

[t]he translator is the secret master of the difference of languages, a difference he is not out to abolish, but rather one he puts to use as he brings violent or subtle changes to bear on his own language, thus awakening within it the presence of that which is at origin different in the original (Venuti 1995: 307).

<sup>3</sup> The original reads: “Fakat bunu düşünürken yalnız o adamların dışlarına bakınız; onların da birer kafaları, bunun içinde, isteseler de istemeseler de işlemeye mahkûm birer dimağları bulunduğunu, bunun neticesi olarak kendilerine göre bir iç âlemleri olacağını hiç aklımıza getirmeyiz. Bu âlemin tezahürlerini dışarı vermediklerine bakıp onların manen yaşamadıklarına hükmedecek yerde, en basit bir beşerecessüsü ile, bu meçhul âlemi merak etsek, belki hiç ummadığımız şeyler görmemiz, beklemediğimiz zenginliklerle karşılaşmamız mümkün olur.” (Ali 2004: 11)

By thus unveiling the structural violence embedded in the act itself, translation invites attentive readers to look for differences while reflecting on the reasons why these differences exist and what they can make of them in order to understand what they had previously thought to be their very own.

Looking at Sabahattin Ali's life through the lens of translation reveals remarkable similarities with that of his protagonist Raif Efendi. They both spend some time in Germany in their early youth (Ali in Potsdam and Raif Efendi in Berlin), learn the German language, and work as translators back home. More interesting, however, is the fact that Raif's invisibility is matched by a lack of emphasis in the scholarship on the 'translational' aspect of Ali's work, which is instead referred to as a strong example of the social realist movement in Turkey. Yet, Ali's entire career is immersed in a period of intensive linguistic engineering orchestrated by the young Turkish nation-state of the 1920s and 30s, the most dramatic being the swift Alphabet Reform of 1928, which sought to craft a new communicative medium for the new republic and distance its cultural trajectory from its Ottoman predecessor. Having returned from Germany in the wake of the reform, Ali took an active part in this process. He participated in the First Turkish Publishing Congress (*Birinci Neşriyat Kongresi*) of 1939 and became one of the seven founding members of the newly-founded Translation Bureau (*Tercüme Bürosu*), where he both translated literary works and wrote theoretical pieces on translation for the Bureau's periodical, *Tercüme*<sup>4</sup>.

During his stay in Potsdam to learn the German language on a government fellowship in 1928-9, Ali had already begun to reflect on how translation can be a useful tool to grasp the centrality of language as a site of conflict between opposing interests, particularly during periods of fast-paced transformation. One example of this is a private letter he sent from Potsdam to Pertev Naili Boratav and a number of his close friends, including Orhan Şaik Gökyay, Ekrem Reşit Rey, and Nihal Atsız.<sup>5</sup> Entitled *Mufasssal Cermenistan Seyahatnamesi* (Comprehensive Germanistan Travelogue, henceforth *Seyahatname*), and written less than a year after the Alphabet Reform of 1928, this letter is a strangely humorous amalgam of the traditional *seyahatname* (travelogue) form with its old-fashioned expressive spectrum, and the 'indecent' content Ali provides, depicting an alcohol-ridden New Year's party in Potsdam. This provocative mismatch invites the reader to pay attention to the connections between language / form and content.

Through a close reading of this letter, I propose that Ali's trip to Germany and engagement with the German language and culture were vital to this reflection on language and translation, one that ultimately sheds light both on the significance of the act of translation (thus making it 'visible again') and on the linguistic reforms

<sup>4</sup> Other members were Nurullah Ataç (chairman), Saffet Pala (secretary general), Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, Bedrettin Tuncel, Enver Ziya Karal and Nusret Hızır (Fahir Gürçağlar 2008: 70).

<sup>5</sup> The letter was never published until 1979 when it appeared in *Sabahattin Ali* (edited by Filiz Ali Laslo and Atilla Özkırmımlı).

currently underway in his home country, thus emphasizing the connection between language and politics. The effect of estrangement created by translation parallels and reinforces the physical displacement of the author, his move away from home in order to be able to look at it with a fresh set of eyes. To use Emily Apter's term, remaining in a "translation zone" (Apter 2006) where more than one language factors in the fulfillment of his quotidian needs enables him to establish different and conflicting ways of perceiving the outside world.

In making this argument, I embrace a more inclusive definition of the term 'translation,' one to which Walter G. Andrews draws attention when he confesses that the more he translates, the more confused he gets on what translation really means: "The result—quite strangely—has been that I am no longer confident that I know what it means to translate," he ponders, "or more accurately, where translation ends and something else begins" (Andrews 2002: 15). Translation is then best described as a spectrum of activities which serves the general purpose of rendering a set of ideas or information from one to another system of intelligibility. In a similar vein, Even-Zohar defines translation as the movement of meaning between cultural repertoires, which are by no means "generated by our genes, but need to be made, learned and adopted by people, that is, members of the group" (Even-Zohar 1997: 378). This looser and larger definition does justice to the centrality of the act to everyone's daily operations and also, as Emily Apter argues, renders "self-knowledge foreign to itself," and thus serves as "a way of denaturalizing citizens, taking them out of the comfort zone of national space, daily ritual, and pre-given domestic arrangements" (Apter 2006: 6). Ali's *Seyahatname*, a letter of humorous self-mockery addressed to a close group of friends, engages with issues of estrangement, foreignness and denaturalization through translation, right at the historical juncture between the Ottoman Empire and the young Turkish Republic, and seeks to make translation visible anew during a period in which it is so central, it cannot afford to be overlooked.

### Toward an Alternative History of Translation

Secondary scholarship on the translation bureau has largely treated the systematized form of publishing it supported as an instance of culture planning, defined as the "deliberate intervention," either by power holders or by 'free agents,' "into an extant or a crystallizing repertoire" (Even-Zohar 2008: 278). In her analysis of private publishing efforts in the 1940s and 50s, Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar emphasizes the need to view translation efforts of this time period not simply as processes shaped by pre-determined norms, but also as the result of individual decision-making (Tahir-Gürçağlar 2008: 24-25). In doing so, she takes a step back from the institutional framework of the bureau to show how private publishers and translators formed an important counterforce that "resisted the norms offered by the dominant discourse of the planners" (Tahir-Gürçağlar 2008: 31). Building on this argument, I ask further: to what extent did voices coming from within the

bureau resist dominant translation discourses and norms? As an author who critically engaged with the shortcomings of modernity, and the conception of modernity as a monolithic or Western discourse, Sabahattin Ali is a case in point.

Sabri Gürses situates Ali within a larger cultural search for a delineated program of translation in the early Republic; as such, Gürses views Ali as central to the formation of an intellectual discourse that utilized translation—understood as a form of cultural transfer (*kültür aktarımı*)—as a means for constructing a national Turkish culture (Gürses 2013: 414). This discourse was dependent on the rhetoric of smooth translatability, which posited a stable category of Western European ideals and values that could be easily transferred to the Turkish context. I argue, on the contrary, that we must read Ali's participation in the larger translation movement as a counterpoint to the concepts of cultural transfer and smooth translatability that emerged in the immediate wake of the translation bureau's founding. While Ali enthusiastically supported the translation of Western European literatures, his writing also reveals a more ambivalent view of the 'West' than dominant translation discourse of the time. By pointing time and again to the contradictions and inconsistencies of Western modernity, his work both complicated the very possibility of translation as a form of frictionless transfer and constituted an important countervoice to the kind of Europhilia endorsed at the time.

### An Oddity of Language: Ali's *Seyahatname*

In this text intended as a private letter, Ali narrates his trip from Istanbul to Potsdam and his first days as a visiting student there. Written in *riq'a* (a prominent handwriting style for personal correspondence) the year following the Alphabet Reform, when the utilization of the Arabic script was prohibited in all public documents and generally stigmatized, the letter plays with the notion of translation on two complementary levels in order to reveal what its author seeks to accomplish: first, there is the intralingual and diachronic play with language in which Ali uses the seventeenth-century Ottoman language of the *seyahatname* genre to talk about a New Year's party in 1929, when this communicative system is quickly becoming unintelligible to native speakers of Turkish; second, there is the interlingual and synchronic play with language in which Ali speaks of a celebration taking place in Germany, far outside the geographic realm of the language he is using, and of rituals that are not readily intelligible to those who have not traveled west of the new nation-state's borders. In other words, this letter displays three important cultural-linguistic elements; Ottoman Turkish, the main means of communication; German, the main supplier of content (i. e. the tradition of New Year's parties); and modern Turkish, a language under construction at the time, and the supposed means of communication between the writer and his readers, which is present in its unexpected absence.

As I show below, Ali creates an estrangement effect through two major techniques. First, he shows how language has a direct impact on the nature of the given message, or how when the language itself changes, the content changes, even when the same person talks about the same subject, inviting readers to reflect on how their own native tongue plays an active role in their perception of the world. Second, he treats German proper nouns as if they were made of Turkish subparts, equating signifiers of one language with those of another (unrelated) one.

### An "Ottoman man" in Potsdam: Ali's Encounter with Exotic Germany

As mentioned earlier, by adopting a certain set of lexical preferences that are deemed 'old-fashioned' and, thus, 'foreign' to the contemporary language, Ali demonstrates how a linguistic shift to express ideas transforms those very ideas. This becomes manifest through a comparison of descriptions of the German urban landscape in *Seyahatname* and *Madonna*: while Raif Efendi's Berlin is not so different from any other big city, Sabahattin Ali's Potsdam is nothing but strange and alien. Raif Efendi observes, "[u]ltimately, this was just another city. A city with wider streets—much cleaner, and with blonder people. But there was nothing about it that would make a person swoon with awe."<sup>6</sup> This stands in stark contrast with Ali's description of his personal experience in Potsdam.

Following the church bells, all stores opened their doors and the intoxicated inhabitants of this grand town - both men and women - went out half-naked, sporting peculiar outfits. This humble servant soon joined the crowd and began to wander along the long string of shops, with the noble intention of acquainting himself with European manners and advancing his knowledge of the subject. What a scenery it was, akin to Judgment Day... And yet the girls walking around would make one think it were Paradise instead...<sup>7</sup>

Lusting after two beautiful girls he met in the crowd, and clearly enjoying the party where young people are dancing and celebrating the new year, Ali nonetheless chooses not to betray the stylistic framework of his letter and legitimizes his be-

<sup>6</sup> The original reads: "Burası da en nihayet bir şehirdi. Sokakları biraz daha geniş, çok daha temiz, insanları daha sarışın bir şehir. Fakat ortada insanı hayretinden düşüp bayılmaya sevk edecek bir şey de yoktu." (Ali 2004: 53) For more on the representation of urban space in this novel, see Dickinson (2013).

<sup>7</sup> The original reads: "Bu çanların akabinde mesakin, ticaretgah makûlesi yerlerin cümlesinin babları küşade edilüp Kasaba-i kebirinin zükur u nisa bütün ta'fesi nim-üryan, eşkal-i garibede, mest-i şarab olarak huruc eyledi. Aciz de, adab-ı Frengi kesb-i vukûf ile tezyid-i ma'lumat eylemek arzuy-i ulvisiyle bu güruha iltihâk eyleyüp esvâk -ı bi-nihayede geşt ü güzara mübaşeret eyledim. Amma bir manzara ki Yevm-i Kıyamet misal... Ve lakin bir duhterler dolaşur idi ki insan bu manzara-i Kıyameti Cennet zann eylemekten kendini men' eyleyemez..." (Ali 1979: 352) All English language citations are from Dickinson and Seviner's translation, which appears in this volume of *Jahrbuch Türkisch-deutsche Studien* as *The Comprehensive Germanistan Travelogue*.

friending the German girls in terms of a Muslim's duty to show them 'the right path.' He narrates,

[t]his spectacle offended my Islamic zeal; I wanted to help make the hearts of these girls as pure and illuminated (enlightened) as their beautiful faces, filling them with Islamic wisdom and moral values. I was just searching for an appropriate candidate for this mission when I heard a nightingale-like voice call forth something that implied 'Blessed New Year!' on my left side.<sup>8</sup>

One can trace this narrative style, illustrating, with humorous irony, the connection between form and content, and between language and meaning, all the way to the end of his little story when he ends up kissing one of the girls and setting up a date with them for the following day in a Catholic Church, of all places.

The deliberate mismatch between his language-discourse and his acts (therefore, between the narrative style and content) becomes even stronger when the Ali walks into the church the next day. Unable to find the girls and guessing that he has been stood up, Ali nevertheless remains in the church and fully participates in the religious ceremony, crossing himself, kneeling down and praying to Jesus, and singing along with the crowd. "I felt very pleased thinking that I was doing all this to lead these blasphemers into the path of true religion," he explains, and his joy is not diminished even when he confirms that the girls are not there: "my *gaza*, which consisted of waiting in the cold and being involved in a few blasphemous acts, was nothing compared to that of others, who have displayed acts of heroism and given their lives in the name of *jihad* and the true religion of Islam."<sup>9</sup>

The *seyabatname* form adopted in this letter is certainly a central element in the production of estrangement, in that it freezes the narrative time somewhere in or around the seventeenth century, while the content clearly belongs to another era. It precludes any other way of accounting for the events other than that which the form allows, and determines the way the author grasps the world around him. The rules of the narrative were set at the very beginning, when Ali describes his journey through the Balkans in a mocking, yet nostalgic tribute to the newly deceased empire, the antagonist par excellence of the republic: "as the train moved forward," he writes, "places like Plovdiv that used to be filled with Muslims made us remi-

<sup>8</sup> The original reads: "Bu manzara hamıyyet-i islamiyyeme dokunup bu duhterlerin vech-i dilberleri gibi kalblerini de pak, münevver eylemek, hikmet-i islamiyye, faza'il-i ahlakıyye ile memlu kılmak isteyüp irşada muvafık kimesne taharri eylemekte idim ki canib-i yesarımda andelib misal bir sedanın 'senc-i cedide mübarek ola' me'alinde bir cümle sarf ettiğini guş eyledim." (Ali 1979: 353)

<sup>9</sup> The original reads: "Bunları hep ol bi-dinleri din-i hakka imale için yaptığımı düşündükçe bir hayli müsterih olurum. [...] Amma te'essürüm füzun olmadı, çünkü din-i mübin-i İslam için bu denli cihadlar yapıp kahramanlıklar gösterilür, canlar erzan kılınurken bir müddet ayazda beklemekle, bir miktar tekeffür etmekten ibaret olan benim gazam tabii ha'ız-i ehemmiyet olamazdı." (Ali 1979: 355)

nise about the old Ottoman state with longing.”<sup>10</sup> As his current-day experiences are translated into historical narrative, the equivalence between the absent modern text and the present pre-modern one is deliberately distorted to make the reader aware of the historical gap between the real time of experience and the ‘fake’ time of narration.<sup>11</sup> In other words, the ‘translation’ of his experiences into a historical genre in Ottoman Turkish exposes and challenges the ‘function’ of translation, defined as “the potentiality of the translated text to release diverse effects, beginning with the communication of information and the production of a response comparable to the one produced by the foreign text in its own culture” (Venuti 2004: 5). Of course, here, Ali aims for the opposite effect, and uses the texts to show how he perceives and reflects events differently, merely because he operates in a different historical register of the same language.<sup>12</sup>

This deliberate play with the act of translation as a means to reveal the often concealed centrality of language in the perception of reality is in line with how translation was perceived in Ali’s own time, the first decades of the twentieth century. Rooted in German Romanticism, hermeneutics and existential phenomenology, translation theorists and practitioners thought of language as constitutive of reality and translation as reconstituting the reality of the original text in the target language. In “The Task of the Translator” (1923), for example, Walter Benjamin speaks of the “afterlife” (*Überleben*) of the foreign text in the target language, a new life informed by how the text is perceived in the translated version, or, in other words, as part of a different system of intelligibility (Benjamin 2004: 16). Similarly, in the 1930s, José Ortega y Gasset argues that translation is “a literary genre apart, with its own norms and its own ends” (Ortega y Gasset 1992: 109). As a result, translators engaged in meta-translative acts, such as translation through literalisms, aiming to render translated text foreign to its target language, in order to emphasize both the act itself and the qualities of the original language (Venuti 2004: 11). In fact, the second way in which Ali creates linguistic estrangement in *Seyabatname* has to do with a play on literalism, defining a German proper noun in Ottoman Turkish.

<sup>10</sup> The original reads: “Tiren ilerüledikte Filibe ve saire gibi bir vakıtlar Müsliman ile memlu olan kebir şehirler Devlet-i kadime-i Osmaniyyeyi yad-ı tahassürümüze getirmekte idi.” (Ali 1979: 349)

<sup>11</sup> Venuti explains, “Equivalence has been understood as “accuracy,” “adequacy,” “correctness,” “correspondence,” “fidelity,” or “identity”; it is a variable notion of how the translation is connected to the foreign text. Function has been understood as the potentiality of the translated text to release diverse effects, beginning with the communication of information and the production of a response comparable to the one produced by the foreign text in its own culture” (Venuti 2004: 5).

<sup>12</sup> In the subject of intralingual translation, Jakobson points out, for example, that “synonymy, as a rule, is not complete equivalence: for example, every celibate is a bachelor, but not every bachelor is a celibate” (Jakobson 2004: 114). This is certainly more marked in the difference between the diachronic versions of the same language.

### Potsdam or “O Mother Mary, hide the idols!”: Ali’s Play on Words

Ali prefaces his first descriptions of Germany and German people with the definition of the word ‘Potsdam’ where he was to stay for the upcoming months; he explains that the word is made up of three separate words (in Ottoman Turkish): “put,” “sedd,” and “üm,” the first meaning “images and idols Christians (infidels) worship,” the second, “to conceal, to hide,” and the third, “mother.” He concludes, “All together, by means of cubism, it means: ‘O Mother Mary, cover the idols!’ This meaningful wish is indeed granted, as the eternal God covers the aforementioned city with a coat of white snow, concealing all statues in public parks and gardens.”<sup>13</sup> Taken to the extreme, this phonocentric literalism causes the interlingual transfer to end in absurdity, again rendering the act more visible than it would have been otherwise.

Remarking on the preservation of original spelling for foreign proper nouns in modern (latinized) Turkish, translation scholar Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar argues that the alienating effect of this decision “is a strictly ‘foreignizing’ strategy, interfering with the text’s fluency, [...] inviting the reader to ponder it as a mediated work, i. e. translation” (Tahir Gürçağlar 2008: 204). Such moves indeed carried remarkable strategic weight during this period of intense linguistic transformation, as the new Turkish state needed to firmly (re)define what was considered ‘foreign’ in order to understand what ‘national’ meant. During the early 1930s, right on the wake of Ali’s return from Germany, the level of linguistic experimentation seems to have reached an all-time high; on July 12, 1932, Mustafa Kemal founded the Society for the Study of Turkish Language (*Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti*; later, *Türk Dil Kurumu*, henceforth TDK), an establishment that intensively engaged in creating neologisms in ensuing years in an attempt to ‘clean’ the Turkish language of foreign (particularly Arabic, Persian and French) influence.

Native speakers of the language expectedly joined in this process of re-creation, albeit in unofficial terms, sometimes to take the initiative to judge the effectiveness of the new words, and other times to mock some of the official decisions. In *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success*, Geoffrey Lewis comments on public engagement during reformative moments and points out how it has, at times, been a disruptive force against the nation-building project, since people cared more about the utility of words than their historicity:

<sup>13</sup> The original reads: “Potsdam kelimesi, iştikâkıyyun -ı zamandan Hayrullah Molla Beyin tefsiri üzere ‘Put’, ‘sedd’, ‘üm’ kelimelerinden mürekkeb olup, ‘Put’, ma’lum olduğu üzere kena’is-i Küffarda mevcut Hristos tasaviri ile heyakıl makuulesi esnamdır; ‘sedd’, kapamak, örtmek, setr eylemek; ‘Ümm’, valide, burada Meryem Ana manasınadır. Cümlesi toplu olarak, kübizm üzere, ‘Meryem Valide, esnamı setr eyle!’ demek olur. Bu temenni’-i pür ma’na elhak müstecab olup Huda-yı lem yezel medine-i mezkureyi bir setre-i sefid-i berf ile ruz u şeb setr eylemekte ve bağ u besatin-i miriyyede mevcut bilcümle heyakıl dahi örtülmektedir.” (Ali 1979: 351)



Although people with a feeling for language may not have liked the new words," they soon found themselves obliged to use at any rate some of them if they wished to communicate. But [...] few knew or cared anything about the origins of the words they used, which is why one hears bölgevî for 'regional' and önemiyet for 'importance', both being Öztürkçe [pure-Turkish] words with Arabic suffixes (Lewis 2002: 144).

This tendency continued well into the later years of the republic; for example, during the 1960s, TDK had to issue a disclaimer for some of the humorous public coinages, among which were "gök konuksal avrat" (sky guest-ish dame) for "uçak hostesi" (air hostess), "öz itirimli götürgeç" (self-propulsional carry-thing) for "otomobil" (automobile), and "ulusal düttürü" (clannish ditty) for "milli marş" (national anthem) (Lewis 2002: 160).

The disclaimer suggests that those witty public suggestions were taken to be official by some, pointing to the experimental nature of the process. Lewis comments that "[t]he reason why unsophisticated people thought these were genuine TDK products is that they found them no different in kind from some of the Society's own creations; how can one tell that a grotesque parody is a parody when the original is itself grotesque?" (Lewis 2002: 160) The early 1930s constitute a peak time for this type of neological activity, in an attempt to quickly, yet effectively engineer a new language that would reflect the spirit of the new republic. As many cultural historians of the early republic point out, the discourse on the linguistic reform emphasized an essential, yet dormant national core that needed to be rediscovered as it was to be an indispensable element of the emergent nation-state. Yet, despite the emphasis on the archaeological nature of the reform, this linguistic project was very much a feat of engineering to create an epistemological revolution, one to which Ali humorously draws attention as he 'disguises' himself as an Ottoman man through his play with linguistic conventions in flux.

If, in the words of Walter Andrews, "it is actually impossible to translate, transmit, or disseminate between epistemic domains until words and meanings can be assumed to exist in the target language, which embody the 'unthought' assumptions of the source language," Ali's letter manages to expose the contemporary epistemological shift by staging an awkward turn in narrative style, from 1930s informal language to seventeenth century Ottoman travel writing (Andrews 2002: 27). Like the neologisms that did not stick, his linguistic choices sound comical because they do not reflect the conventions of the time; yet they also create the effect of alienation that jolts the reader into the realization of the historicity of the moment in which they live.

## Turkey in the 1930s: Debates on Humanism and the Birth of Comparative Literature

Why should anyone care about a personal letter, one might ask, especially considering that it was not in any way intended for publication to begin with? Though unpublished until the late 1970s, Ali's humorous *Seyahatname* speaks to an important issue of the era, one that fuels the foundation of the TDK in 1932 and of Hasan Ali Yücel's Translation Bureau (*Tercüme Bürosu*) in the early 1940s, the preparation of various dictionaries, grammar books, attempts at vocabulary collection from various registers of the language, and so on: the question of, 'Who are we, really?' This question was central to the first few years of the new republic; in fact, in the first issue of the magazine *İnsan* (Human) published in 1938, editor-in-chief Hilmi Ziya Ülken conceived of the entire idea of a 'Turkish Renaissance' around it. Ülken argued that "[t]oday, we are engaged in a Renaissance in the truest sense: We are joining the world anew. Western methods will guide us in *re-discovering ourselves*" (Tahir Gürçağlar 2008: 64).

Here, as in the state policy in general, "re-discovering ourselves" implied a path towards self-discovery (or, the discovery of the national identity) through westernization. Seemingly counter-intuitive, this stance was nonetheless in line with the attempts to become a part of the European civilization by way of discovering a sense of common humanity through works of art, and, thereby, to override what they perceived as the casting of the European as the civilizational 'Other'. In the words of Hasan Ali Yücel speaking in the late 1930s, "one nation's repetition of other nations' literature in its own language, in other words, in its own understanding means raising, reviving and recreating its intelligence and ability to understand accordingly" (Berk 2004: 154). Therein stood the gist of the linguistic reforms that highly emphasized the act of translation. Not surprisingly, Hilmi Ziya Ülken stated in 1935 that "he expected translation activity to lead to westernization," and İsmail Habib Sevük, that "the way to become 'fully European' went, not through learning foreign languages, but through translation." To Sevük, translation was "a great ideal, the mission of all missions, our greatest flag" (Tahir Gürçağlar 2008: 101).

It follows from this deliberate emphasis placed on translation, that translators were the very agents shaping the Turkish language anew. This, of course, is not an exclusively modern phenomenon. Writing about premodern literary traditions in Turkish, Zehra Toska calls attention to how "[t]ranslating scientific and literary works from such sophisticated languages as Arabic and Persian, using patterns of expression in oral Turkish literature, was evidently difficult," and that thus "[t]he translators were at the same time the creators of the language of Turkish literature" (Toska 2002: 62). A twentieth century instance of the same phenomenon is manifest in the words of Ali's contemporary and colleague Azra Erhat, who notes that "this was a period when Turkish had not yet been established properly," and that she did not have any problem understanding the notes she was given in German;

the major problem to her was translating them into Turkish, with the appropriate terms still non-existent (Berk 2004: 142).

At this historical juncture, Ali's *Seyahatname* becomes all the more important in that it provokes one to reflect on where Ottoman literary language stands in relation to the process of linguistic reengineering. In an attempt to create a *Kultursprache* that would reflect the expressional habits of the majority of its speakers and that would thus be an essential part of this *self-rediscovery*, the pre-republican literary language (in all its temporal and stylistic variations) was cast as a *lingua non grata*, an artificial, imitative and inauthentic entity that had been hiding a dormant essence. As a result, most of the Ottoman literary heritage (including most recent texts) was left 'untranslated.' But it also meant that the system of education had to go through a dramatic process of 'translation' from the old into the new Turkish. Ali's generation, as the young adults of the Alphabet Reform, was particularly caught in the middle of this transition. The perils of this forced linguistic change were foreseen by some dissident voices, such as Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, who advocated allowing the language to follow its own natural dynamics, or Refîk Cevad Ulunay, who argued that eastern classics, which influenced Ottoman literary culture, should also be translated into Turkish (Tahir Gürçağlar 2008: 58, 120).

During the 1930s, the questions 'Who are we?' and 'Which texts would help us find ourselves?' were by no means particular to the young Turkish state. As Kader Konuk extensively elaborates in her book *East West Mimesis: Auerbach in Turkey*, prominent Jewish scholars escaping the Nazi regime, including Erich Auerbach and Leo Spitzer, took refuge in Turkey, forming sizable communities in its major urban centers.<sup>14</sup> Interestingly, Turkey served as a space for them where values of western humanism could be salvaged from a war-torn Europe and constructed anew. As Apter observes,

[a] fascinating two-way collision occurred in Istanbul between a new nation's ideology dedicated to constructing a modern Turkish identity with the latest European pedagogies, and an ideology of European culture dedicated to preserving ideals of Western humanism against the ravages of nationalism (Apter 2006: 50).

Swiss pedagogue Albert Malche introduced a supplementary course on comparative literary studies into the university curriculum to encourage the establishment of humanistic thinking, Spitzer wrote an article on "Learning Turkish" in 1934, complicating the paradigms of linguistic (and thus literary) comparison and illustrating "how linguistic estrangement becomes a way of negotiating the experience of deportation, of emigration, and of the foreignness of adoptive cultures," (Spitzer 2011: 765) and Auerbach, a Romanist by training, wrote *Mimesis: The Repre-*

<sup>14</sup> Some of the other scholars situated in Turkey at the time were mythographer Georges Dumézil, Leon Trotsky, Romanist Traugott Fuchs, philosopher Hans Reichenbach, philologist Georg Rohde, Carl Ebert, and Henri Prost (Apter 2006: 51).

*sentation of Reality in Western Literature* (1946), a founding text of comparative literature. In fact, as many have pointed out, Auerbach and Spitzer have come to be seen as the founding fathers of this field, in no small part due to the work they produced and their émigré experiences in Turkey.

What Spitzer, Auerbach and Ali had in common was that they were located in a ‘translation zone,’ in-between languages and (thus) epistemological spheres, allowing them to question the operative principles of the world they lived in: while Auerbach and Spitzer had to escape their native Europe to recreate, ironically, the values of western humanism within the borders of a budding nation-state, Ali traveled to Germany to receive education in a European language and culture with an aim, at least on the part of the financing institutions, to help the nation-building project. All parties had, albeit reluctantly at first, a chance to position themselves in-between, to learn a different language, to become estranged from their home cultures and to reevaluate it ‘from the outside.’ Self-discovery through comparison lies at the heart of their experiences, as it does at the center of comparative literature. As Apter states, “[i]n naming a transnational process constitutive of its disciplinary nomination comparative literature breaks the isomorphic fit between the name of a nation and the name of a language” (Apter 2006: 243). An existence in the ‘translation zone’ is certainly more likely when one is ‘in exile,’ that is, physically separated from one’s native tongue.

### Conclusion: Translation’s Successes, Failures, and the Tragic Ending to Raif’s Love Story

The impact of translation as a cross-epistemological act is larger than it immediately seems, incorporating the relationship not only between Turkish and western languages but also between old and new registers of the same language, as expressional possibilities radically differed among the last two as well. The act of translation entails a re-arranging of the target language to create the necessary epistemic domains that provide a destination for ‘foreign’ notions. In *Seyahatname*, Ali illustrates that this process is not smooth by any means, and possibly requires physical and temporal displacement on the part of the translator outside of and away from her/himself. A number of scholars have already pointed to both the difficulty and the potential of transcending boundaries and moving into other linguistic spaces, among whom are Emily Apter, who argues that “[t]ranslation failure demarcates intersubjective limits, even as it highlights that ‘eureka’ spot where consciousness crosses over to a rough zone of equivalency,” (Apter 2006: 6) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who states that “[t]he translator who attaches himself closely to his original more or less abandons the originality of his nation, and so a third comes into existence, and the taste of the multitude must first be shaped towards it” (cited in Venuti 1995: 99). The act of translation as interlingual movement is thus also an agent that works even, at times, against the nation and the national language. As Benedict Anderson observes, “seen as both a historical fatality and as

a community imagined through language, the nation presents itself as simultaneously open and closed," since "language is not an instrument of exclusion: in principle, anyone can learn any language" (Anderson 1991: 134, 146).

Despite the central role of translation as a cognitive agent that builds communities while, at the same time, constituting the amount of intercommunal porosity that they allow, some of the best translations are often deemed to be among the most invisible. Nothing could be further from the truth; processes of translation thus need to be exposed, and Ali suggests this precisely that in both *Seyahatname* and *Madonna*. In that respect, one should see these as texts of meta-translation, illuminating how languages are, despite their kinship, historically embedded in their particularities, and how this historicity can only be discovered in comparing them, both synchronically, as in the case of Turkish and German, and diachronically, as in the case of pre-republican and republican Turkish. This realization, in turn, allows one to understand the real impact of the sudden changes inflicted onto languages by political authorities, without necessarily isolating these events as the only times when the linguistic and the political converge. The fate of Raif and Maria's love affair in Ali's best-selling novel arguably presents an instance of this impact: One could speculate that one of the reasons why Raif was never informed of Maria's sudden death and of the fact that they had a baby together was that the final letters Maria sent to Raif never reached their recipient, as the envelopes Raif had prepared in advance for Maria were inscribed with Raif's address in Arabic script, banned shortly after Raif's return to his home country. While there is no evidence in the storyline that would positively confirm this scenario, it nonetheless remains a possibility that would indeed make the Alphabet Reform, in the words of Geoffrey Lewis, "a tragic success."

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## Translators' Introduction to *The Comprehensive Germanistan Travelogue*

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Sabahattin Ali's short stories and his first novel, *Kıyucaklı Yusuf* (1937) (*Yusuf of Kıyucak*), are widely recognized as pioneering texts for the genre of social realism in the early Turkish Republican period.<sup>1</sup> More recent scholarship has also acknowledged the central roles Ali's final two novels, *İçimizdeki Şeytan* (1940) (*The Devil Inside Us*) and *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* (1943) (*Madonna in a Fur Coat*), played in the development of literary modernism in Turkey. Our decision to translate Sabahattin Ali's little known *Mufassal Cermenistan Seyahatnamesi* (1929) (*The Comprehensive Germanistan Travelogue*) aims to shed light on another, largely under-researched aspect of Ali's literary career: his experimentation with and satirization of Ottoman literary forms. By making this text available to an English-speaking audience, we aim to further complicate our understanding of Ali's identity as a writer and his profoundly diverse contribution to the literary landscape of modern Turkish literature.

Ali composed the *Mufassal Cermenistan Seyahatnamesi* as a private letter during his stay in Potsdam, Germany between the fall of 1928 and spring of 1930, for his close friends Pertev Naili Boratav, Orhan Şaik Gökyay, Nihal Atsız, Ekrem Reşit Rey, and a few others who were active in the literary circles of the time. In it, Ali narrates his multi-day journey on a train through the Balkans and Eastern Europe into Berlin, and then Potsdam, his first impressions of these two cities, German culture in general, and an adventurous New Year's party he attended while in

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<sup>1</sup> The early Republican period represents the single party period of the Turkish Republic and the first four years of the multi-party system (1923–50).

Potsdam. Originally composed in 1929, the letter remained unpublished until it appeared in 1979 in a collected volume of his oeuvre, entitled *Sabahattin Ali* and edited by Filiz Ali Laslo and Atilla Özkırımlı. Despite its publication in transliterated form, no scholarship to date has examined the significance of this text within the larger scope of Ali's life and work.

As a text steeped in the intricacies of language, Ali's *Mufasssal Cermenistan Seyahatnamesi* poses two major challenges for translation: (1) on the level of genre and its linguistic conventions, and (2) due to Ali's subversion of these conventions through word play. Firstly, the *seyahatname*, or book of travels, is a premodern literary form within the Perso-Ottoman literary tradition, making it not only a curious choice for Ali's purposes, but also difficult to render into English in both its historical and geographic specificity. Examples of the *seyahatname* form can be found throughout the Middle Ages within the Islamic world, yet the form crystallized in the late seventeenth century in Evliya Çelebi's (d. 1682) ten-volume work where he narrates his impressions of Anatolia, parts of Mesopotamia, Transylvania, Central Asia, North Africa and Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> Even though Evliya's text is a later example of the form and reflects the sensibilities of its time through a mixed use of the colloquial Turkish and ornate style (characterized by Perso-Arabic vocabulary and grammar), it has become the ur-*seyahatname*, the first (and often only) text that comes to mind at the mention of the form, following its 1848 publication by the Bulaq Press in Cairo.

Because of its take-all canonicity, Ali must have tried to mimic Evliya's text in particular. Indeed, Ali's distortion of facts for comic effect is one key way in which he plays off of the style of Evliya's work, which employs inventive fiction, hearsay and exaggeration to appeal to his readers. The irony in *Cermenistan Seyahatnamesi*, which Ali constructs through a mismatch between form and content, thus depends in large part on the reader's recognition of Evliya's text as much as of the *seyahatname* form in general, including the praise to God in the beginning, and the utilization of antiquated vocabulary and syntax. Because this reliance on the reader's particular cultural knowledge is impossible to replicate in English, we decided against translating the formalities of the Ottoman into another, also historically specific, form of old English.

At the same time, we have chosen to maintain historic place names, such as *Asitane*, *Der-i Sa'adet*, and *Der-i Aliyye*, which mean 'The Imperial Threshold,' 'The Gate of Prosperity,' and 'The Sublime Porte,' respectively. While these descriptive terms for the capital of the Ottoman Empire were not yet antiquated in 1929, they did serve as markers of the past following the establishment of the modern Republic of Turkey in 1923 and the establishment of Ankara as the new capital of the

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<sup>2</sup> Parts of Evliya's *Seyahatname* were translated into various languages, including English. See, for example, the most recent translation by Robert Dankoff and Sooyong Kim, entitled *An Ottoman Traveller: Selections from the Book of Travels of Evliya Çelebi*, (2010), London.



nation state. Rather than provide descriptive translations, we have chosen to maintain these original place names precisely because they are not immediately recognizable to an English-speaking reader. As such, they resonate as a site of linguistic difference within the modern language of the English translation.

Ali also employs antiquated place names to refer to Germany throughout his letter. *Frengistan* (Frangistan), for example, was used in the Ottoman Empire as late as the 17th century to refer to western or Latin Europe. Literally meaning 'the land of the Franks,' it did not denote a specific geographic area, but was rather used to describe any land perceived as Christian. Ali's decision to refer to present-day Germany as *Frengistan* is central to the humor of his pseudo-historical travelogue, which describes the 'modern' celebration of New Year's Eve in Potsdam, Germany through recourse to outdated vocabulary and a genre rooted in the Ottoman literary past.

Ali's titular neologism, *Cermenistan*, offers a playful counterpart to the actual word *Frengistan*. Derived from *Cermen*, meaning Germanic, and the Persian suffix *-stan*, meaning 'land', Ali describes the present-day inhabitants of Potsdam through reference to the Germanic peoples who inhabited northern Europe from approximately the 3rd through the 9th century. This fictionalized name pokes fun at the essentialization of contemporary cultural identities through recourse to medieval historical predecessors. Our decision to translate this term through the neologism 'Germanistan' maintains the jarring usage of the *-stan* suffix to describe a Western European country. At the same time, our translation sacrifices the ironic historicity of the word *Cermen*. Rather than utilizing an older French word such as *Germain*, or the English term Germania, we have chosen to maintain a phonetic similarity to Ali's original title. In doing so, we engage in a form of phonetic translation that Ali himself later employs in his letter.

The most notable instance of phonetic translation in the *Cermenistan Seyahatnamesi* is Ali's phonetic reconstruction of the place name Potsdam as *Putseddüm*.

According to Hayrullah Molla Bey, a contemporary etymologist, the word Potsdam consists of the words *put*, *sedd*, and *üm*. *Put* as is known, is a shrine found in the churches of infidels in the form of Christian portraits and statues; *sedd* means to close, cover or conceal; *üm*, or mother, here means the Mother Mary. All together, by means of cubism, it means: "O Mother Mary, cover the idols!" This meaningful wish is indeed granted, as the eternal Allah covers the aforementioned city with a coat of white snow, concealing all statues in public parks and gardens.

To a certain extent, our English rendition of this passage replicates the processes of translation at work in the original. By maintaining the original Ottoman words *put*, *sedd*, and *üm*, we have nevertheless transformed instances of intralingual (Ottoman-Ottoman) translation into interlingual (Ottoman-English) ones. As a result, the translation of this passage downplays Ali's emphasis on Turkish as a language

in transition amidst large-scale linguistic and cultural reforms. The medium of English nevertheless calls attention to the interlingual translation of Potsdam into a collection of Ottoman words. In this way, the English reader finds herself 'learning' new Ottoman / Turkish words within a text that also thematizes Ali's own learning of German.

In a second instance of phonetic translation, Ali describes a group of young Germans engaged in a humorous 'dance' (*rakı*), which he terms "pat bi-naz." This word is a phonetic play on *patinaj*, the Ottoman term for ice skating, which is itself derived from the French word *patinage*. In Ali's comic rendition of this word, 'pat' serves as an onomatopoeic sound which expresses a thud or fall to the ground. Through use of the Persian preposition 'bi,' which is commonly used with a noun to produce a negative prepositional phrase, the term 'bi-naz' literally means without conceit. Together, the phrase "pat bi-naz" offers a comic description of inexperienced but unassuming ice skaters.

More than an instance of witty word play, Ali's neologism adds to the ironic tone of his letter. As a European form of entertainment, ice skating had become a sign of modernity and progress in turn-of-the-century Istanbul, in that it provided a new form of public social interaction between men and women. At the same time, the relative in/ability to skate served as a metaphor for one's adaptability to the 'modern' era.<sup>3</sup> Ali's depiction of clumsy German skaters in 1929 turns this rhetoric on its head, raising the larger question of whether 'modern' values are necessarily engendered by Western Europe.

Our translation of "pat bi-naz" as "ease-skidding" maintains a phonetic play on words with ice-skating, and expresses a sense of clumsiness through the phonetic similarities of skate/ skid. This form of English-English wordplay nevertheless loses the additional reference to *patinaj* as a French loan word, which underscores the importation of ice skating to the late Ottoman Empire from Western Europe.

Together with instances of word play such as "pat bi-naz" and "Cermenistan," the historic specificity of Ali's travelogue has made its translation a difficult but also rewarding process. In this brief introduction, we have tried to outline the major issues at stake in translating Ali's *Cermenistan Seyahatnamesi* into English. For a more in-depth discussion of the text, please see Zeynep Seviner's article in this special issue, "Between Languages: Translative Acts in Sabahattin Ali's *Comprehensive Germanistan Travelogue*," which further situates the linguistic playfulness of Ali's letter within its specific historical context.

Despite the specificities of Ali's original text that do not carry over into English, the very act of translation serves to metaphorically extend the interlingual and intercultural play Ali had begun in the wake of significant linguistic and cultural transformations in Turkey. As such we hope that this translation will both bring

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<sup>3</sup> For an insightful discussion of ice skating in the late Ottoman Empire, see chapter VII of Palmira Brummett's *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908-1911*, (2002), Albany, NY.

new attention to, and help scholars to 'unearth' a hitherto unexplored dimension of Ali's work, namely his literary engagement with Ottoman forms and conventions.



# The Comprehensive Germanistan Travelogue\*

*Sabahattin Ali*

*Translated by Kristin Dickinson and Zeynep Seviner*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

## The Reason for the Composition of the Travelogue

Following boundless gratitude to Allah the everlasting, the worship of whom is a necessity, the reason for the composition of this lengthy travelogue is to be proclaimed. That is to say, in the beginning of year 1346 Hijri and 1928 Gregorian, this flawed writer of foolish lines, Sabahaddin Ali, was busy educating young minds in Yozgad, the city of cities. With the sudden arrival of the season of wandering also called vacation, he took on his back his saddle-bag and embarked on the road toward Asitane.<sup>1</sup> Since his weak shoulders did not allow him to carry a large load, he had left most of his weight in that location; as it was particularly weighty, he had donated his debt to the creditors.

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\* Printed by courtesy of Filiz Ali via ONK Agency Ltd.

<sup>1</sup> Literally meaning 'threshold,' *Asitane* is a word that was used to refer to the capital city of the Ottoman Empire (present-day Istanbul).

On the road, I first stopped in the sweet town of Engüri, and while conversing with old friends and loved ones, I happened to tell an esteemed acquaintance among the high officials of the Ministry of Education that I did not intend to return to Yozgad, as I would likely be beaten or even killed by the creditors. When that person asked: “What do you intend to do?” I responded, “Allah knows, but I desire to set out for Moscow and look for my destiny there.” Then that person said, “Oh, for goodness sake! This is not reasonable. You are an intelligent person. There are good deeds this state and nation desires you to do. Never consider such frivolity. But if going to the land of infidels is your ultimate desire, it is our duty to help you realize it with ease.” His words, at times reprimanding, at others complimenting, convinced this humble servant to delay the realization of his desire for a while longer. Yet, unlike other friends, he kept his promise; within a month he announced my participation in an examination available in Der-i Aliyye<sup>2</sup>. In a letter most kind he urged me to make every effort to avoid embarrassment in this regard, even though, he added, the result of the examination would surely be to my advantage. As for me, as already known by my friends and acquaintances, I took the examination and following a positive outcome, began to wait and hope for some money to compensate for travel expenses. Although the wait was far too long, a generous amount—three hundred republican Liras to be exact—poured into my pocket like rain of mercy. No need to elaborate, as my friends know all of this already; in short, I finished all preparations, and we gathered in Sirkevi, the grand train station, in order to set out for the land of decadent infidels. It is not possible to write about the state of friends who were present there to see me off, since this humble servant, overcome with an excess of sadness, was not in a position to see what was around him; I was rushing to attend to four different corners at a time, and thinking “I certainly hope I don’t leave without seeing each and every one of my friends.”

We then exchanged kisses of farewell and shed emotional tears with friends present there, whom I love more than my own precious life. Meanwhile, I promised to send them detailed news from Frangistan. This promise, which I made without considering my own insufficiencies, left a knot in my heart during my first month and a half in the land of infidels, torturing me with words like, “You ungrateful schmuck! How could you so quickly throw friends in a corner of oblivion? What happened to the news from here? What has become of the long letters you were going to send?” At last a letter of the same reproving opinion arrived from Pertev Hodja, which encouraged me to compose this travelogue. Despite my excessive ineptitude, which would certainly lead to an outcome as inscrutable as the affairs of the Ministry of Education, I was convinced that no apology would be necessary for sending it to friends who have surely perceived my various mistakes with a forgiving gaze thus far.

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<sup>2</sup> *Der-i Aliyye*, meaning Sublime Porte, is a metonym for the central government of the Ottoman Empire.

This letter was composed for my dear brother Pertev Naili Mullah, his partners Orhan Şa'ik, Nihal, Münir, Ekrem Reşid, Ziya, and Tahsin mullahs, and our dear sister Mehpare. And so that the reading is not overly taxing, I have made every effort to avail myself of simple language. With a final request for the reader to forgive the hastily composed nature of this work, which even lacks connections between sentences, let us embark on the writing of the travelogue. May Allah grant it benevolent success. Amen!

### The Pain of Departure and Incidents of the Road

Even though I am not among the lucky ones blessed with a love of the homeland, as we departed the Sirkevi station waving our handkerchiefs and wiping our eyes, tears of emotion rolled down my trifling eyes for this country that I would not be able to see for six, seven years, maybe even for eternity. Just as we traversed Yenikapı onto the Gardens of Langa—which I perceived even though it was not visible in the dark—my cries of separation became excessive and I was sent back to my car with the helping hands of friends. I decided to tolerate my fate in silence, recalling that it is useless to divert tears of emotion. I desired to lay down, thinking that sleep would have a calming effect, but some kind travel companions protested as there would not be enough space left for them. So we began to nap ‘bitter almond’ style,<sup>3</sup> sitting up in our seats. The expression *şekerleme kestirmek*, ‘to take a sweet snooze,’ would not be appropriate here. There’s no use in elaborating any further; in short, until we passed through Edirne and reached the Bulgarian border, I remained on the wooden couch, paralyzed by the cold weather and lack of sleep. Once we transferred to Bulgarian locomotives at the Bulgarian stations, however, a stove-like invention that was new to us, but old to these lands was added to our cars; these so-called radiators brought us a bit of warmth.

The land of the Bulgarians was no different than ours; one could tell that it had once belonged to us, looking at the signs of destruction that were still apparent. In fact, Bulgarians are no better than us in their vulgarity, and different only in their working hard like a miller’s horse.

As the train moved forward, grand places like Plovdiv that used to be filled with Muslims made us reminisce about the old Ottoman state with longing. We arrived in the city of Sofia at nightfall, and upon touring the city we were all agape with wonder. We were doubly astonished by the monuments built to bolster the only nascent national pride of a three-and-a-half-day-old State of Bulgaria. The smallest of these monuments was so much more graceful and majestic than even the most pleasurable of monuments in our homeland.

In the morning of the following day we saw the grandiose city of Belgrade. But during the previous night a small incident occurred that is appropriate to tell here: At one point, with sleeplessness piercing my soul, I became the ridicule of my

<sup>3</sup> This is a literal translation of the phrase *acıbadem*.

companions as I began to unwittingly sway right in the spot where I was standing. Suddenly a thought occurred to my humble mind and I began to take all the pieces of luggage from the *porte-bagage* above us and place them on the floor. I then went up to that place and managed to get some tranquil sleep. But right in the middle of my sweet sleep, as I was on the cusp of a second dream, my right leg—which was hanging downward because it didn't fit on the luggage rack—began to swing up and down like a suction pump. After a good deal of time, when I opened my eyes and righted myself, I saw that a Serbian train official was reprimanding me to get down. Even though I snapped at him and went back to sleep, he kept on mumbling in a language I did not understand. Finally, when he started to yell, "*Billet! Billet!*" I gave him my ticket thinking he wanted to punch it. But he just shoved it in his pocket and walked away. As the heart of this humble servant was overcome with apprehension, I thought: "Woe is me! What shall I do if that man doesn't return my ticket?" And sitting up in a panic, my sleep was spoiled. Indeed, the fellow held onto my ticket until the following morning. As we passed the border from Serbia to Hungary, he gave it to the Hungarian officers and they returned it to me with the utmost kindness.

At the border to Hungary, upon fully comprehending that we were in Europe, we began to admire the signs of civilization. Around noon, we entered the Great Hungarian Plain. Though my pen cannot do justice to the description, let it suffice to say that our train pursued the straightest of routes, traveling for six hours on end without encountering the smallest rise or fall in elevation, or taking the slightest of swerves to the right or the left. Without exaggerating in the slightest, I can say that we were all astonished by the flatness of this landscape. Toward the end, as we began to pray and exclaim: "My God! Let us turn just a finger's width to the right or the left!" we finally pulled into a beautiful station with one fantastic turn. Upon arriving in Pest, we toured the city as usual. This was also a fantastic place with particularly magnificent bridges. Upon realizing that this city was once under our administration, one cannot help but feel the pang of a memory deep inside.

Early the following morning we passed through Prague, the city of cities; in the afternoon we arrived in Dresden, the first train station after the German border. Here we had left the gothic style of architecture behind; red-walled buildings with slated roofs came into view, followed by uniform rows of pine and beech trees, all resembling one another... then came the surrounding Elbe River with its orderly wharf... And in the evening we arrived in the city of light they call Berlin.

Because I have already recounted a bit about the situation in Berlin in my previous letters, please allow me to give an abbreviated account here: it would be appropriate to say that if one gathered all the large open squares and wide streets in one place that would be the city of Berlin. And its orderly buildings must certainly also be mentioned—above all the department store called Wertheim. Looking at it from one side, you can't see the other; it is an object bigger than a neighborhood, and, according to reliable rumors, 5,000 employees are housed within... May Allah protect it!



After staying here for 15 days I had spent everything at my disposal. As I was left empty handed, the embassy sent me to Potsdam out of pity. And they didn't forget to admonish me, saying "Quick, quick! Pick up the German language like a parrot!" I have been busy with German language courses for a month now. May Allah grant me success!

### On the Qualities of Potsdam

According to Hayrullah Molla Bey, a contemporary etymologist, the word Potsdam consists of the words *put*, *sedd*, and *üm*. *Put*, as is known, is a shrine found in the churches of infidels in the form of Christian portraits and statues; *sedd* means to close, cover or conceal; *üm*, or mother, here means the Mother Mary. All together, by means of cubism, it means: 'O Mother Mary, cover the idols!' This meaningful wish is indeed granted, as the eternal Allah covers the aforementioned city with a coat of white snow, concealing all statues in public parks and gardens. And yet the intensity of the cold air fails to reassure us that we are safe from solidifying into blocks of ice one day, just like these statues. The lakes and rivers surrounding this town are all frozen, and on their frozen surface—Allah forbid!—half-naked German boys and girls were performing a dance they called 'ease skidding.' In line with the name of the dance, they would skid to the ground with a thud, only to reemerge with ease and hasten toward an unknown direction.<sup>4</sup> The most curious part was that some among our cohort were also eager to learn this dance, and they made fools of themselves by constantly skidding to the ground from lack of experience. The temperature hovered between fifteen and seventeen degrees below zero, though at times it reached a high of five or six degrees below zero out of undue generosity on its part. In this kind of weather, we abandon ourselves to the reality of the cold road to school, reaching an extreme degree of self-renunciation for the sake of acquiring knowledge.

From time to time there are changes in the monotonous passing of our sorrowful lives, one of the most important of which was what they called 'Weihnacht'—the celebration of Christmas and the New Year. Let us now conclude this travelogue by recounting the night of New Year's Eve.

### The Events of New Year's Eve

That night I had gone to the embassy in Berlin to discuss an important affair. Around nine o'clock, as I was leaving to return to Potsdam, I was startled to see all of the coffeehouses and taverns more crowded than usual. Upon asking a local at the train station, who responded, "It is in preparation for the New Year's celebra-

<sup>4</sup> The original name of this 'dance' is "pat bi-naz," which is a phonetic play on *patinaj*, the Ottoman term for ice skating (derived from the French *patinage*). 'Pat' is an onomatopoeic sound which expresses a thud or fall to the ground, 'bi-naz' literally means without conceit.

tion at midnight,” I returned nonetheless to the town of Potsdam with the utmost of haste, as I would have nothing to do with such affairs. The distance between the city of Berlin and the town of Potsdam is, however, rather long, and as I was walking through the market in Potsdam, headed with the utmost decorum towards my house, I began to hear all the bells from the churches and monasteries of the infidels breaking into a clamor. And what a clamor! ... No words could describe it. One would need a His Master’s Voice gramophone to do it justice. Following the church bells, all stores opened their doors and the intoxicated inhabitants of this grand town—both men and women—went out half-naked, sporting peculiar outfits. This humble servant soon joined the crowd and began to wander along the long string of shops, with the noble intention of acquainting himself with European manners and advancing his knowledge of the subject. What a scenery it was, akin to Judgment Day... And yet the girls walking around would make one think it were Paradise instead... Fireworks, sparklers, and firecrackers of all sorts painted spirals on the snowy skies, then fell onto the snow-covered ground where they continued to burn for a good while, reflecting their red and green glows onto the people around, and making the space seem like a fantasy world.

Even those girls of the town whose stature, behavior, fancy outfits, and pretty faces suggested they were from well-to-do families walked around drunk, bewildered, and full of laughter, exposing their naked arms to slowly falling snowflakes. The young men who ran into these girls ignored their protests and gave them quick New Year’s kisses. Yet in their drunkenness, the girls barely noticed, and their legs trembled as they fell into yet another’s arms. And if one of them yelled too much, the police officers on duty would tell her to calm down, and would turn their backs if they complained about the boys.

This spectacle offended my Islamic zeal; I wanted to help make the hearts of these girls as pure and enlightened as their beautiful faces, filling them with Islamic wisdom and moral values. I was just searching for an appropriate candidate for this mission when I heard a nightingale-like voice call forth something that implied “Blessed New Year!” on my left side. When I turned to look, I saw a *hourî* with ruby-red lips and hair the color of amber, smiling with eyes as bright as the radiance of this light-filled night. She welcomed my attentive gaze, and, smiling anew, extended her delicate hand to wish me a blessed new year. She had a girlfriend with her. We exchanged a fraternal handshake and continued walking together. During our walk, I gave Allah— may His Name be exalted—my gratitude for sending me such a priceless beauty in order to guide me to the right path; I thought to myself that her heart must surely match her face, which looked very much like this humble servant’s cruel lover, his unloving beloved in *Der-i Sa’adet*,<sup>5</sup> a fact that made me feel strange inside.

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<sup>5</sup> *Der-i Sa’adet* is another descriptive name meaning ‘Gate of Prosperity,’ which was used to refer to the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

Convinced that silence would not be appropriate, I began to talk. Our conversation was worth listening to; I knew no more than a few sentences that I had memorized, as for her, she did not speak any language other than German, which she now spoke in a funny way because she was intoxicated... In any case, we made do with body language, some words from French and so on. Just to make conversation, this humble servant uttered the sentence "Was ist das?" meaning "What is this?" in that Frankish tongue. They laughed, saying "Isn't this the New Year?" Just then, I saw her wobble from the alcohol; I immediately grabbed her arm and made her lean towards me, in order to show the infidels the altruism of the Turks. She then joined her girlfriend and we began to walk and talk. She uttered long sentences, but failing to grasp her words, I said: "I don't understand!" She responded: "Are you a foreigner?" "Yes, I am." "Are you Italian?" "No, I am Turkish." A military officer walking by us right then heard us speak and suddenly gave me a hug. He wouldn't let me go, and he uttered this sentence in Frankish: "Wir kriegen zusammen!" (The officer actually used this verb in the past tense. But as I haven't learned that in depth, I wrote it like this. Let brother Orhan know it is not a mistake.) And then he kissed me on the cheeks. But this was nothing—when the pure girls whom I had with me for the purpose of enlightening and putting on the right path also received hugs and noisy kisses, I involuntarily began to recite the Islamic confession of faith. After walking around for a while longer, I judged the time of enlightenment to have come and decided to talk about the harms of alcohol consumption. I said:

"You have drunk too much alcohol," (because I didn't know any names in Frankish for other intoxicating drinks. I should have learned these words before anything else but I didn't have the time.) She answered:

"No. We just drank a little bit."

"But drinking alcohol is not good for you."

They both smiled and leaned further onto my arms. In the end, this ravishing blond who had first talked to me proceeded:

"Look, we aren't tipsy, and we aren't unconscious... How can you tell we are drunk?"

I said: "Oh my charming beauty. I knew it because of the smell coming from your lovely mouth."

"It's not true," she responded, and in order to prove my claim, I said: "Would you blow toward my face?" She turned to me and exhaled rapidly. However, because my sense of smell was reduced by the intense cold, I said, "Please, do come closer." She approached me further, until the distance between us was reduced to a space of four fingers and exhaled anew. I failed to sense anything, and asked her to move towards me a little more. However, the damned libertine, in her cunning ways, just came too close and made this humble servant commit a sin as he never had before. As if this were not enough, she kissed my cheeks, now red with shame, and broke out in immodest laughter. She then sidled up to me and whispered into my ear: "This new year is rather lovely, isn't it?" In a voice coarsened with shame

this humble servant responded, “Yes, oh, yes, it is very lovely!” After wandering around a little more, we went back home as it was getting late. Upon parting, I asked them when we were to meet again, out of my still unfulfilled duty of enlightening them. They promised they would be in the grand Catholic Church in the outskirts of the city tomorrow. I went back to my house and immersed myself in sweet sleep...

In the evening of the next day, I turned to go to that blasphemous place of worship, but despite waiting under the snow, in fifteen degrees below zero, I never encountered them. Thinking they might be inside the church, I decided to enter. Not aware of Christian customs, I followed the example of an elderly person passing in front of me. I put my hand in the holy water and made the sign of the cross along with him. I went down on my knees and prayed to Jesus. I felt very pleased thinking that I was doing all this to lead these blasphemers into the path of true religion. Yet, despite being tortured with all kinds of prayers and quietly participating in the songs of Christianity, somehow I never caught a glance of those women. When it was time to leave I quickly went to the door and scrutinized each person as they left, but I still could not find them. Then I finally sensed that the wretched girls had caught an inkling of my benevolent intentions and had not accepted my invitation, or that, in layman’s terms, I had been ‘ditched.’ But my grief was not excessive, because my *gazı*,<sup>6</sup> which consisted of waiting in the cold and being involved in a few blasphemous acts, was nothing compared to that of others who showcased acts of heroism and gave their lives away in the name of jihad and the true religion of Islam. Eternal Allah, what happiness it would bring if you were to forget a portion of my sins for this *gazı*!

As no other event worthy of recording has since caught my eye in the town of Potsdam, this travelogue thus comes to an end.

Allah has spoken the truth.

Warning: Only Pertev Naili Mullah shall decide who can read this worthless letter. And because the backs of the pages have been left blank, the prohibition of drawing pictures there is also entrusted upon him. By the time this humble servant realized that he had wasted paper, it was too late.

It has just come to my attention that this travelogue ends on page thirteen. But since our *Effendis* are not Christians, they would not think it inauspicious.

15 Kanun-ı Sani (January) 1929

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<sup>6</sup> *Gazı* is a term used to denote a holy war waged on behalf of Islam. Unlike *jihad*, *gazı* is still part of non-religious contemporary Turkish-language usage.

# Mufassal Cermenistân Seyâhatnâmesi\*

*Sabahattin Ali*

Bismillâhi'r Rahmâni'r-Rahîm

Sebeb-i tahrir-i Seyâhatnâme

Hudâ-yı dâ'im ül vucûd ve vâcib üs-sücûda hamd-i bî nihâyeden sonra bu seyâhatnâme-i mutavvelenin sebeb-i tahririnin beyânına şürû' edildi. Şöyle ki: Hicrî 1346 ve mîlâdî 1928 senesi evâ'ilinde Yozgad şehr-i şehîrinden, ta'lîm ü terbiyye-i sıbyân ile meşgûl iken, ta'til ta'bir olunan mevsim-i âvâregî nâgihân hulûl edivermekle bu sutûr-ı bi-mâ'nânın muharrir-i pür kusûru Sabahaddîn Ali dahi ol medineden heybesini sırtlayup cânib-i Âsitâneye revân oldu. Düş-ı za'îfî hamûle-i kesîre nakline müsâ'id olmadığından bir aded sagîr çantadan gayrı ağırlığını ol mahalde terk eylemiş, ve bilhassa, fazla ağır olduğundan dolayı, borçlarını da alacaklılara bağışlamıştı.

Esnâ-yı râhda birinci konak olarak Engüri belde-i şîrinine konup ehîbbâ ve eviddâ-yı kadîme ile sohbet edilegemekte iken erkân-ı ma'âriften bir yâr-ı kesîr ül-î'tibâra, bir dahi Yozgad'a dönmek niyyetinde olmadığını, dâyinler tarafından darb edilmek, hattâ fevt olmak bile muhtemel olduğunu söylemiş bulundum. Ol zât: "Ne eylemek niyyetindesin?" deyü su'âl eyledikte: "Hudâ bilir, ammâ Moskov diyârına azm edüp kismetimi orada aramak arzusundayım," deyü cevâb ettim. Ol

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\* Cermenistan Seyahatnamesi Onk Ajans aracılığıyla Filiz Ali'nin izniyle yayımlanmıştır.

zât ise: “Bre amân! Bu akıl kârı değildir. Sen zekâvetmend bir kimesnesin. Dahi bu Devlet ve milletin senden dilediği maslahatlar vardır. Sakın ola ki böyle bir hiffette bulunasin. Eğer Küffâr diyârına gitmekliğin mutlakâ ârzûn ise kolayına bakmak borcumuzdur,” deyü bu âcizi gâh itâb, gâh taltif ile bu ârzûsunu bir muddet te’hîre sevk eyledi. Ammâ sair ehîbbâ misillü sözünde durmamazlık eylemeyüp bir mâh mürûrunda Der-i aliyyede küşâd edilen bir imtihana duhûlümü, netîce-i imtihânın lehimde olması muhakkak ise de ol tarafta bâdi-i mahcûbiyyet olmamak için bir mikdar sa’y ü ikdâm eylememizi bir keremnâme ile bildirdi. Biz dahi, yârâna, ehîbbâyâ mâ’lûm olduđu vechile imtihâna duhûl, ve netîce-i imtihan lehimizde zuhûr eylemekle yol masârîfî için intizâr-ı dînâr ü pul eyledik. Gerçi bu intizâr füzûn oldu ise de netîcede üç yüz lirâ-yı cumhuri gibi bir meblâğ-ı mezbûl, bârân-ı rahmet misillü cebimize nüzûl eyledi. Ehîbbâ cümlesini bildikleri için tatvîli bî-mâ’nâdır, hulâsa cümle tedârükümüz tamâm eyleyüp bir ahşam Sirkevi nâmındaki kebîr şimendifer konağında Küffâr-ı hâkisâr diyârına hareket için cem’ olduk. Ol mahalde teşyî’imiz için hâzır bulunan ehîbbâ ahvâline dâ’ir yazmak mümkün olmaz, çünkü âciz ol esnâda kemâl-i te’essüründen etrafi görebilecek halde olmayup yalnız telâş ile dört cânibe şitâb ile, “olmaya ki bir ehbâbı görmeden hareket eylerim” deyü düşünürdüm.

İmdi orada hâzır bulunan cân-ı azîzimden ziyade sevdiğim yârân ile vedâ’ bûseleri te’âti eyleyüp dümû-i te’essür rizân eyledik. Ammâ bu esnâda kendülerine mufassal Frengistân havâdisi dahi vereceğimi va’d eyledim. Killet-i bidâ’ama bakmayarak etmiş bulunduğum bu va’d Frengistânda müddet-i ikâmetim olan bir buçuk aydan beri derûnumda bir ukde gibi durup: “Bre kadir nâ-şinâs! Ehîbbâyı böyle çabuk mu küşe-i nisyâna atacak idin? Kanı onlara bura havâdisi? Kanı onlara mutavvel mektûblar?” deyü beni ta’zib eylerdi. En sonra ol cânibden Pertev Hocanın mektûbu vürûd eyleyüp bu minvâldeki tahti’aları ol dahi tekrar eylemekle bu Seyahât-nâmenin tahririne şürû’ edildi. Kemâl-i acimizden her ne kadar eyü bir eser meydana çıkamayup Ma’ârif Vekâleti umûru kadar müşevveş bir nesne olacağı vâreste-i iştibâh ise de bilcümle hatâyâmıza nazar-ı afv ile baktıkları müsbet olan ehîbbâyâ irsâlinde bir mahzûr olmadığı neticesi zihnime mülâyim geldi.

Bu ceride, birâder-i cânım Pertev Nailî Molla ile şürekâsı olan Orhan Şâ’ik, Nihâl, Münir, Ekrem Reşîd, Ziyâ, Tahsin mollalar ve Mehpâre isimlü ablamız için tahrir edilmiştir. Ve kırâ’ati mûcib-i sudâ’ olmamak için mümkün mertebe lisân-ı sâde istîmâline gayret olunmuştur. Bir çırpıda çıktığı için cümleleri arasındaki irtibât bile bir hayli noksan olan bu eser için mütâlî’ inden bir daha taleb-i afv eyleyerek Seyahât-nâmenin tahririne mübaşeret kılındı. Hudâ muvaffak-ı bi’l-hayr eyleye, âmîn!

### Iztırâb-ı hareket ve vuku’ât-ı râh

Sirkevi konağından mendiller sallayup gözleri silerek ayrıldığımızda her ne kadar vatan muhabbeti ile mühesassis olan bahtiyârândan değil isek de belki altı yedi sene, belki de il’el’ebed göremiyeceğimiz bu memleket için çeşm-i hakîrimizden bilâ

ihtiyâr dümû'-i te'essür rizân oldu. Hele Yenikapu'yu geçüp Langa Bostanlarına gelindikte – karanlıkta görünmezdi, lâkin ben hissederdim – girye-i hicrânımız füzûn olarak chibbâ dest-i i'ânetinde vagonumuza irsâl edildik. Eşk-i te'essürün isâlesinin bî-fâ'ide olduğu hâtıra hutûr etmekle sükûnetle kaderimize tahammüle karar verdik. Bir mîkdâr uyumak bâ'is-i teskin olur deyü uzanmak arzu edildikte rüfekaa-yı kirâm mâni' olmağıla – çünkü kendilerine yer kalmıyordu – oturduğumuz yerde acıbâdem kestirmeğe başladık. 'Şekerleme kestirmek' ta'biri burada münasebet almazdı. Tatvîl-i kelâm fâ'ideyi hâvi değildir, hulâsa ertesi gün Edirne'yi geçüp Bulgar hududuna gelinceye kadar uykusuzluktan ve soğuktan meflûc bir hâlde tahta kanepelerde kaldım. Ancak Bulgar istasyonlarında Bulgar lokomotifleri geldikten sonra vagonumuza kalorifer dedikleri – bize göre nev'icâd buralara göre atık – soba bozması ilsâk edilüp bir mîkdar tesahhun mümkün oldu.

Bulgar memâliki bizim arâziden farksız olup bir vakıtlar yedimizde olduğu hâlâ izâle edilemeyen âsâr-ı tahrîbden belli idi. Zâten Bulgarlar dahi kabalıkta pek bizden aşağı olmayup yalnız dolap beygiri biri çalışmalarını fazladır.

Tiren ilerüledikte Filibe ve saire gibi bir vakıtlar Müslimân ile memlû olan kebîr şehirlere Devlet-i kadime-i Osmâniyyeyi yâd-ı tahassürümüze getirmekte idi. Ahşam üzeri Sofya'ya muvasalat olunup şehir, berâ-yi müşâhede devrân edildikte cümlemiz engüş ber-dehân-ı hayret olduk. Üç buçuk günlük Bulgar Devletinin gayr-ı mevcûd olan mefâhir-i milliyesi için rezk eylediği âbidât bilhassa hayretimizi dübâlâ eylerdi. Bu âbidâtın en küçüğü, en zevksizi bizim memlekette rezk edilen âbidâtın kat be-kat lâtif ve heybetlü idi.

Ertesi gün sabahleyin Belgrad şehir-i mu'azzamı gördü. Lâkin bu gecenin ufak bir vak'ası vardır ki hikâyeti münâsibdir: Uykusuzluk gayrı tâ cânımıza tâk etmekle bî-ihiyâr olduğumuz yerde sallanur, rüfekânın mûcib-i istihzâsı olurduk. Nâgihân zihn-i hakîrânemize bir fikir hutûr eylemekle fevkımızdaki 'portebagaj'dan bütün bavulları zemîne ilkâ' ederek ol mahalle çıkup bir hâb-ı asûdeye kavuştuk. Tam hâb-ı lâtûfin evâsıtında, rü'yâyı sâninin mebâdisinde idim ki, 'portebagaj' istî'âb eylemediği için, aşağıya doğru sallanan sağ bacağım, emme basma tulumba kolu gibi inüp çıkmağa başladı. Bir hayli müddet mürûrunda gözümü açup doğrulduğumda Sırbiyeli bir tiren me'mûru olup aşağı inmeme ihtâr eylemekte bulunduğunu gördüm. Kendüsünü tersleyüp tekrar yattım ise de ol bî-ebed hâlâ bilmediğim bir lisana söylenür dururdu. En nihayet "bilyet, bilyet!" diye bağırınca zımbalayacak zanniyle biletimi verdim. Lâkin o cebine attığı gibi yürüdü, gitti. Âcizin yüreğini bir evhâm istilâ edüp: "Vay! Bu adam bizim bileti vermezse ne eylerim?" deyü kemâl-i telâş ile doğrulup uyku çeşmime harâm oldu. Hakikaten herif bileti i'âde eylemeyüp beni tâ be-sabâh arkasında gezdirdi. Sırb hududundan Macar hududuna geçerken Macar me'mûrlarına verüp onlar da kemâl-i nezâketlerinden bana i'âde eylediler.

Macar hududunda Avrupada olduğumuzu tamamiyle idrâk edüp etrafımızdaki âsâr-ı umrâna hayran olurduk. Öğleye doğru büyük Macaristan Ovasına girdik. Ta'rîf için kalem âcizdir, şu kadar söyleyeyim ki tirenimiz en ufak bir yokuş ve işe tesâdüf etmeden, sağa sola en küçük bir inhirâf bile yapmadan tam altı sa'at

mütemâdiyyen hatt-ı müstakim istikâmetinde koştı. Zerre kadar hilâf olmayup bu düzlük dahi cümlemizin ta'accübünü bâdi olmuştur. Sonlarına doğru: "Aman yâ Rabbi! ya sağa, ya sola bir parmak mîkdârı sapalım!" deyü du'aya başlayup en nihayet enfes bir büküntü ile güzel bir istasyona geldik. Peşte'ye muvâsalat olunup bermu'tâd şehir dolaşıldı. Burası da hârikul'âde bir yer olup köprüleri bilhassa mu'azzam şeylerdi. İnsan buraların bir zamanlar yine idâremizde olduğunu tasavvur eyledikçe derununda derin bir hâtıranın sızladığını hisseyliyor.

Ertesi sabah erkenden Prag şehir-i şehîrine, ve öğleden sonra da Alman hududunda ilk istasyon olan Dresden'e geldik. Burada gayrı gotik tarzda binalar başlayup kırmızı duvarlı, arduvaz çatılı evler, hep birbirine benzeyen muntazam çam ve kayın ağaçları... Etrafı muntazam rıhtımlı Elbe nehri göründü... Ve ahşam üzeri Berlin dedikleri belde-i nûra dâhil olundu.

Evvelki mektuplarımda Berlin ahvâlini bir mîkdâr hikâyet eylediğimiz için ihtisâr ile bu şehri ta'rîf edecek olur isek: geniş caddelerle büyük meydanları bir yere topla, Berlin şehri meydana gelir, demek münâsib olur; mu'azzam binaları da tabii ilâve eylemelidir... Hele bir mağazası var ki nâmı Wertheim'dır, bir ucundan bakıldıkta öbür ucu görülmez, bir mahalleden kebir bir nesnedir; rivâyât-ı mevsûkaya göre derûnunda 5000 müstahdem mevcûd imiş... Hudâ muhâfaza eyleye!

On beş gün mîkdar burada kalup elimizdeki avucumuzdakini bitirince makâm-ı Sefâret bizi merhameten Potsdam şehrine i'zâm eyleyüp: "Çabuk, papağan misâli lisân-ı Alamanı elde edesiz!" deyü tenbîhâtı da nisyân eylemedi. İmdi bir aydır burada ta'allüm-i zebân-ı Cermân ile meşgûlüz. Hudâ muvaffak eyleye!

### Der vasf-ı medîne-i Potsdam

Potsdam kelimesi, iştikâkıyyûn-ı zamândan Hayrullah Molla Beyin tefsîri üzere 'Put', 'sedd', 'ümm' kelimelerinden mürekkeb olup, 'Put', ma'lûm olduğu üzere kenâ'is-i Küffârda mevcûd Hıristos tasâvîri ile heyâkil makûlesi esnâmdır; 'sedd', kapamak, örtmek, setr eylemek; 'Ümm', vâlide, burada Meryem Ana mânâsınadır. Cümlesi toplu olarak, kübizm üzere, 'Meryem Vâlide, esnâmı setr eyle!' demek olur. Bu temennî-i pür ma'nâ elhak müstecâb olup Hudâ-yı lem yezel medîne-i mezkûreyi bir setre-i sefid-i berf ile rûz u şeb setr eylemekte ve bûğ u besâtîn-i mîriyyede mevcûd bilcümle heyâkil dahi örtülmektedir. Ammâ bunun neticesi olan şiddet-i burûdetten bizlerin de bir gün işbu heyâkil misillü incimâd edüp kas katı kesilmeyeceğimiz mü'emmen değildir. Kasaba-i mezkûrenin etrâf ü cevânbini ihâta eden enhâr ile göller tamamiyle buz tutup üzerinde – Hudâ hızf eyleye! – genç Alman kızları ile oğlanları nîm-'uryan 'pat bî-nâz' dedikleri raksı icrâ eylemektedirler. Ve raksın ismine muvâfık olarak 'pat' diye yere yuvarlandıkları halde 'nâz' etmeyerek kalkup tekrar bir istikâmet-i mechûleye şitâb etmektedirler. Garîbi şu ki: bu acâ'ib raksa bizim rüfekâdan da râğıb olanlar bulunmakta, ve mübtedîliklerinden mütemâdiyyen yuvarlanarak etrâfı kendilerine hande-nisâr eylemektedirler. Derece-i harâret 'ale-l'ekser that es-sıfır on yedi ile on beş arasında



raksân ise de ba'zen kemâl-i kereminden taht es-sıfır beşe, altıya çıktığı da vâki'dir. Biz ise bu havalarda dahi mektebimizin râh-ı bürüdet iktinâhına kendimizi terk eyleyerek tahsîl-i ilm için ferâgat-i nefsin mertebe-i kusvâsına varmaktayız.

Hayât-ı pür ıztırâbımız hayli yeknasak mürûr eylemekte ise de ara sıra değışiklikler olup bunların en mühimmi 'Weihnacht' dedikleri Noel yortusu ile yılbaşı idi. Yılbaşı gecesini burada hikâyeye eyleyerek bu seyâhatnâmeye de nihâyet verelim.

### Vukunât-ı leyle-i sene-i cedîde

Ol gece bir mes'ele-i mühimmeyi müzâkere için Berlin'e, sefâret cânibine revân olmuşum. Sâ'at zevâli dokuz raddelerinde oradan çıkup Potsdam'a avdet eylemekte idim ki bilcümle kahvehânelerin, harâbâtların haddinden fazla memlû olduğunu görüp tahayyür eyledim. İstasyonda bir âşinâyâ sorup: "Nısf ül-leylde vâki' olacak sene-i cedîde â'id hazırlıktır," cevabını alınca zinhâr böyle işlerle alâkam olmadığından kemâl-i isti'câl ile kariyye-i Potsdam'a avdet eyledim. Lâkin, medîne-i Berlin ile kariyye-i Potsdam arasındaki mesafe vâfir mıkvarda uzun olduğundan tam Çârşû-yı Potsdam'da, kemâl-i te'eddüle hâneme revân olurken bilcümle deyr ü kenâ'is-i Küffârın nâkuusları velvele-endâz olmağa başladı. Ammâ ne velvele!.. ta'rîfi kalem ile edilmez, bir adet 'Sahibinin sesi' gramofon lâzımdır. Bu çanların akabinde mesâkin, ticaretgâh makûlesi yerlerin cümlesinin bâbları küşâde edilüp Kasaba-i kebîrenin zükûr u nisâ bütün tâ'fesi nîm-üryân, eşkâl-i garibede, mest-i şarâb olarak hurûc eyledi. Âciz de, âdâb-i Frengi kesb-i vukûf ile tezyîd-i ma'lûmat eylemek ârzû-yi ulvîsiyle bu gürûha iltihâk eyleyüp esvâak-ı bî-nihâyede geşt ü güzâra mübâşeret eyledim. Ammâ bir manzara idi ki Yevm-i Kıyâmet misâl... Ve lâkin bir duhterler dolaşur idi ki insan bu manzara-i Kıyâmeti Cennet zann eylemekten kendini men' eyleyemez... Havâî fişenkler, mâhtâblar, gûnâ-gûn el'âb-ı nâriyye semâ'yı berf-efşânda halezûnlar resm eyleyüp zemîne, karlara sukuut eylemekte, orada da bir müddet yanarak civârında dolaşan kesânı kırmızı, yeşil renklerde gösterüp pür hayâl bir âlem-i diğerk manzarası vermekte idiler.

Asîl ül-â'ile oldukları vaz u etvârlarından, kisve-i kibârânelerinden, çehre-i melîhlerinden ayân olan duhterân-ı belde dahi mest ü bî-hûş, pür-kahkaha, üryân kollarını âheste âheste rizân olan kara verüp dolaşmakta idiler. Şehir delikanlıları, bunları, her karşılaştıkça sene-i cedîde şerefine, feryâdlarına bakmayarak birer kerre bûs eyleyüp bırakırlardı. Ammâ onlar şiddet-i mestîden pek farkına varmazlar, lerzân bacaklarıyla bir az sonra diğerk birinin âğûşuna düşerlerdi. Ba'zıları fazla feryâd eyledikleri zaman ortalıkta dolaşan polisler sükût eylemesini emr eyleyüp o, kendisini yakalayan ferzendlerden şikâyet edecek oldukça arkalarını çevirirlerdi.

Bu manzara hamîyyet-i islâmiyyeme dokunup bu duhterlerin vech-i dilberleri gibi kalblerini de pâk, münevver eylemek, hikmet-i islâmiyye, fazâ'il-i ahlâkiyye ile memlû kılmak isteyüp irşâda muvâfık kimesne taharrî eylemekte idim ki cânib-i yesârımda andelîb misâl bir sedânın "sene-i cedîde mübârek ola!" me'âlinde bir cümle sarf ettiğini gûş eyledim. Dönüp baktığımda kehrübâ misâl kumral saçları,

la'l misâl lebleri, bu leyl-i pür-nûrun envârından daha ışıldak gözleriyle etrâfa hande-nisâr olan bir hûrî olduğunu gördüm. Ol benim bu dikkatli nazarım altında tekrar tebessüm eyleyüp sene-i cedîdemi bir dahi tebrik ile dest-i nâzikini uzattı. Yanında bir refîka-i melîhası dahi var idi. Onunla da bir musâfaha-i biraderânededen sonra birlikte yürümeğe devâm eyledik. Ben esnâ-yı râhda Allâhü te'âlânın irşâd için bana böyle bir hüsn-i bî-bahâ göndermesinde hamd eylüyor, elbette kalbi dahi çehresi gibidir, diyordum. Çehresi ise âcizin Der-i sa'adette mevcut olan yâr-ı cefakârına, ma'suka-i nâ-âşikasına hayli müşâbih olup bu hâl dahi derûnumu bir tuhaf eyler idi.

Sükûtun münâsib olmayacağını teyakkun ile kelâma mübâşeret eyledim. Lâkin mükâlememiz istimâ'a şâyân olup ben ezberlediğim bir kaç cümleden mâ'adâ bilmezdim, ol dahi Almancadan gayrı lisâna âşinâ bulunmazdı, bu lisânı dahi sâ'ika-i mestî ile bir hoş telâffuz eylerdi... Biz gayrı, lisân-ı hâl, kelimât-ı Franseviyye ve sâire ile idare eyledik. Âciz, laf olsun deyü, ilk defa Frenkçesi "was ist das?" olan: "Bu nedir?" cümlesini savurduğumda "Bu yeni sene değil mi ya?.." deyü güldüler... Ol esnâda, kendisinin kesret-i küülden sallandığını görüp, hemen kolunu alup kendime ittikâ ettirdim, tâ ki Küffâra diğer-endîşî-i Türkîyi ayân kılam. Ol dahi, arkadaşı ile yürümeğe başlayup, hem yürür, hem konuşurduk. O bir çok mutavvel lâflar etti ise de ben anlamayup şöyle dedim: "Anlamıyorum ki bunları!" Cevâb etti: "Siz ecnebî misiniz?" "Evet, ecnebîyim." "İtalyan mısınız?" "Hayır, Türküm." Bunu yanımdan geçerken duyan bir zâbit hemân boynuma sarıldı. Beni bırakmayup "Biz beraber harb eyledik" me'âlinde olan şu cümle-i Frengiyi vird eylerdi: "Wir kriegen zusammen!" (Zâbitin söylediği bu fiilin mâzîsi idi. Ammâ ben Almanca'yı daha o kadar derin öğrenemedim. Böyle kayd ediyorum. Orhan Ağabey yanlış demesin.) Ve dahi yanaklarımı bûs ederdi. Bu bir şey değildi, ve lâkin, sırf irşâd ve ikâz için yanımda gezdirdiğim iki duhter-i pâki de der-âgûş ile birer bûse-i pür-velvele aldığında gayr-ı ihtiyârî kelime-i şahâdet getirdim. Bir mîkdâr daha yürüdükte artık zamân-ı irşâdın geldiğini anlayup evvelâ küülnün mazarratından bahs eylemeğe niyyet edüp dedim:

"Siz çok alkol nûş etmişsiz." (Çünkü alkolden gayrı müskirâtın Frenkçe isimlerini bilmezdim. Her şeyden evvel öğrenmek icâb eylerdi, ammâ vakit müsâ'id olmadı.) Ol cevâb edüp:

"Yok! Bir az almışız," dedi.

"Fakat alkol içmek eyü değildir."

İkisi birden bir hande edüp koluma daha yaslandılar. Nihayet, sarı saçlı olan ve benimle evvelâ görüşen âfet-i devrân etti:

"Biz sallanmazız, bî-hûş değiliz... İçtiğimize kandan hüküm eylesin?"

Dedim: "Aman letâfetüm! Fem-i lâtîfinizden çıkan râyihadan bildim."

"Sahih değildir," dediğinde, isbât-ı müdde'a için:

"Hoh der misiniz?" dedim. Ol bana dönüp "Hoh!" dedi. Lâkin şiddet-i burûdetten şammem dumûra uğradığından: "Az takarrüb eylesiniz," dedim. Ol yaklaşup, aramızda dört parmak mesâfe kaldığında bir dahi "Hoh!" dedi ise de ben yine hisseylemeyüp az daha sokulmasını rica ettim. Lâkin fâcîre-i mel'ûne bunu sù-

i tefsîr edüp haddinden fazla takarrüb eylediğinde fakîre müddet-i hayâtında işlememiş olduğu günâhı işletti. Ba-dehu, kâfi değilmiş gibi, hicâbından al al olan ruhlarımı bûs edüp, bilâ te'eddüb bir kakhaha dahi attı. Arkasından hafif hafif kulağıma sokulup: “Yeni sene pek güzel, değil mi?” deyü su'al eyledi. Fakîr ise kemâl-i te'essürümden kısık kısık: “Pek güzel, ah!.... Pek güzel!” deyü cevâb ettim. Bir müddet dahi gezindikte gayrı vakıt ilerleyüp hanelerine ayrıldılar. Esnâ-yı müfârakatta, bu ahşam ikmâl edilemeyen vazife-i irşâdi itmâm için bir dahi nerede buluşacağımızı su'al eyledim. Onlar dahi şehrin kenârındaki kebîr Katolik Kilisesinde ertesi ahşam hâzır olacaklarını va'd eylediler. Ben hâneme gidüp bir hâb-ı lâtife müstağrak oldum...

Ertesi gün ahşam üzeri ol ibadetgâh-ı pür dalâle gidüp kar altında taht es-sıfır on beş derecede beklediğim halde onlara müsâdif olamadım. Belki dâhil-i deyrdirler, deyü içerü girmek istedim. Âdâb u erkân-ı Nasârâya vâkif olmadığımın önümden giden bir ihtiyâra teba'iyet eyledim. Anınla berâber mâ-i mukaddese parmağım daldırup istavroz ihrâc eyledim. Diz üstü gelüp Hıristos'a du'a eyledim. Bunları hep ol bî-dînleri dîn-i hakka imâle için yaptığımı düşündükçe bir hayli müsterîh olurudum. Lâkin dâhil-i deyrde envâ'-i ibâdât ile mu'azzeb olup taganiyyât-ı hristiyaniyede pes perdeden iştirâk eylediğim halde bir dürlü ol hatunlar müsâdif-i nazarım olmazdı. Hengâm-i hurûcda herkesten evvel kapunun yanında gidüp çıkanları birer birer tedkik eyledimse de tesâdüf eylemek mümkün olmadı. Ol zaman, mel'ûnelerin niyyet-i hayr-hâhânemi istişmâm eyleyerek da'vete icâbet eylemediklerini, ta'bir-âmiyanesiyle 'atladığımı' hissettim.. Ammâ te'essürüm füzûn olmadı, çünkü dîn-i mübîn-i İslâm için bu denlü cihâdlar yapılp kahramanlıklar gösterilür, canlar erzân kılınurken bir müddet ayazda beklemekle, bir mîkdâr tekeffür etmekten ibâret olan benim gazâm tabii hâ'iz-i ehemmiyet olamazdı. Hudâ'yı lem-yezel günahlarımdan bir kısmını bu gazâ için nisyân eyleyse ne mutlu!

Bu vukuu'âtan berü Potsdam kariyyesinde şâyân-ı kayd vak'a görölmediğinden Seyahâtname'miz böyle reside-i hadd-i hitâm oldu.

Sadaka'llah ül-'azim

*İhtar:* Bu cerîde-i bî-i'tibârın kimlere kırâ'at ettirilebileceği yalnız Pertev Nailî Mollanın re'yine terk edilmiştir. Ve dahi bu sahifelerin arkası boş olduğundan ol mahalle not yazılıp resim yapılmasının men'i de yine kendisine mevdû'dur. Âciz, bu işin sonradan farkına varup kâğıd ziyân eylediğini anlamışsa da iş işten geçmişti.

Bu Seyahâtname'nin on üç sahifede hitâm bulduğu şimdi müsâdif-i nazarımız oldu. Lâkin Efendilerimiz Nasâradan olmadıklarından teş'eüm buyurmazlar.

15 Kânûn-ı Sâni 1929



## ***Deutschsein: Zafer Şenocak's Poetic and Enlightened Vision of a Cosmopolitan German Identity***

*Vera Stegmann*

*Zafer Şenocak's recent essayistic publication, *Deutschsein: Eine Aufklärungsschrift*, appeared in 2011, in the year of the 50th anniversary of Turkish immigration to Germany, a year that also coincided with the 'Integrationsdebatte' in Germany. As part of the book's subtitle, the term 'Aufklärung,' marginally present in Şenocak's earlier essay collection *Das Land hinter den Buchstaben* (2006), becomes a central metaphor in *Deutschsein*. The Enlightenment serves as a guiding idea in his discussions on contemporary German identity in a nation of immigrants. Şenocak's view of the Enlightenment is a moderate and tempered one, informed by the values of Alexander von Humboldt, but also by Horkheimer / Adorno's *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. Şenocak sees dangers in radical rationalism and Enlightenment fundamentalism, both in the German and Turkish context, and he couples his view of the Enlightenment with Islamic mysticism and with certain elements of German Romanticism. His vision of an enlightened German identity is an aesthetic one, defined by language, poetry, and music. Finding a language, even a broken German language that helps citizens come to terms with a traumatic national past, is an essential step toward creating an open, welcoming society. Musical metaphors also abound in Şenocak's book, i.e. when he proposes to replace 'tonal' traditional societies with 'atonal' multicultural ones. Poetry and music inform Şenocak's highly humanistic concept of a cosmopolitan view of *Deutschsein*.*

The Turkish-German essayist and poet Zafer Şenocak is a Berlin-based author who has become a leading voice in the discussions on multiculturalism, and national and cultural identity in Germany. Born in Ankara in 1961, Zafer Şenocak spent his early childhood in Ankara and Istanbul, before his family moved to Germany in 1970. He lived first in Munich and has lived in Berlin since 1989; he has frequently acted as a mediator between Turkish and German culture. As a widely published poet, essayist, novelist, journalist and editor, Şenocak has won numerous literary awards in Germany, such as the Prize of the *Literarische Colloquium* in Berlin in 1988; he assumed the position of “poet in residence” at the Universität Duisburg-Essen in 2007; and, most recently, in 2016, he received the *Hamburger Gastprofessur für Interkulturelle Poetik* at the Universität Hamburg, where an international conference was devoted to his works in July 2016. He has also written feuilleton articles for German newspapers and journals across the entire political spectrum, including *taz*, *Tagesspiegel*, *Die Welt*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Tagesspiegel*, and *Die Zeit*. Şenocak considers himself politically neither left-wing nor right-wing, but rather a “discerning free spirit” (Gropp 2012). Şenocak is well known in American academic circles, since he has frequently visited the United States, as *Max-Kade Distinguished Visiting Professor* (M.I.T. 1997), and as writer-in-residence at several universities and colleges in the U.S. (Dartmouth College 1999, Oberlin College 2000, UC Berkeley 2003, Washington University 2013, Dickinson College 2013, among others). Among Şenocak’s many book publications are his essay collections *Atlas des tropischen Deutschland* (1992), translated into English by Leslie A. Adelson (2000), and *Das Land hinter den Buchstaben: Deutschland und der Islam im Umbruch* (Prosa, 2006); the novels *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft* (1998), *Der Errotomane: Ein Findelbuch* (1999) and *In deinen Worten: Mutmaßungen über den Glauben meines Vaters* (2016); and the poetry collections *Übergang* (2005) and *Türsprachen – Door Languages*, published in 2008 in a bilingual German-English edition with translations by Elizabeth Oehlkers-Wright.

Şenocak’s recent publication *Deutschsein: Eine Aufklärungsschrift*, an essayistic treatise on contemporary German identity, was published by *edition Körber-Stiftung* in 2011, the year of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Turkish migration to Germany. This Turkish-German anniversary coincided with the so-called “Integrationsdebatte” (integration debate), provoked by the August 2010 publication of Thilo Sarrazin’s *Deutschland schafft sich ab*, which dominated journalistic discourses in Germany during the years 2010-2012. Although Şenocak never mentions Sarrazin by name, subtle references to the ‘integration debate’ occur frequently in his book (D 49, 144<sup>1</sup>). *Deutschsein* almost appears as a response, or a counter-model, to Sarrazin’s thesis that Germany is abolishing itself, as Sarrazin’s title translates into English.

Karin Yeşilada calls *Deutschsein* a “great, much respected essay” (Yeşilada 2012: 162). Her own ground-breaking book on Turkish-German poetry, *Poesie der Dritten Sprache*, mentions Şenocak’s essay only briefly and in reference to his lyrical work.

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<sup>1</sup> Citations from Şenocak’s *Deutschsein* are indicated by ‘D’ and the page number.

But indeed, *Deutschsein* has been debated frequently in the many public readings given by the author, and the book was reviewed widely in German journals and newspapers: Alan Posener published an interview with Şenocak in *Die Welt* (2011), Jörg Lau reviewed *Deutschsein* for *Die Zeit* (2011), Christiane Florin discussed his essay in detail for *Deutschlandfunk* (2011), as did Monika Stranakova for C.H. Beck's forum on "Literaturkritik" (2011) and Lewis Groppe for the Goethe Institut forum on "Migration und Integration" (2012), to mention a few examples. The Turkish-German poet Nevfel Cumart placed a review of Şenocak's book on his website. In academic literature, *Deutschsein* has been discussed primarily by two critics: David Coury's article on "Enlightenment Fundamentalism" (2013) offers an overview of recent European political and cultural discussions on the Enlightenment and on Enlightenment fundamentalism, in which he contextualizes Şenocak's *Deutschsein* and Navid Kermani's *Wer ist Wir?* (2012). Saniye Uysal Ünalın's book *Interkulturelle Begegnungsräume* (2013) is situated in the field of intercultural literary studies and focuses on Turkish-German constructions of identity in Şenocak's *Deutschsein* and his novel *Der Pavillon* (2009), as well as Feridun Zaimoglu's play *Schwarze Jungfrauen* (2006) and his novel *Liebesbrand* (2008). In her analysis of *Deutschsein*, Uysal Ünalın explores the connection that Şenocak draws between the past and the present in Germany: Şenocak shows how the country's broken relationship to its Nazi past affects its perception of contemporary minorities, how debates on migration and integration become debates on national identity in Germany. Uysal Ünalın also analyzes how Şenocak's espousal of the values of tolerance and civilization is indebted to both the European Enlightenment and to Islamic mysticism (Uysal Ünalın 2013: 75-85).

Language and literature strongly influence Şenocak's highly humanistic view of a cosmopolitan form of *Deutschsein*. I will explore how the 'Aufklärung,' the concept and the historical movement of the Enlightenment, serves as a guiding idea and a metaphor throughout his book. Following Karin Yeşilada's thesis that Zafer Şenocak is, "above all, a poet" (Yeşilada 2012: 162), I will then consider the importance of poetry and music in an essayistic work like *Deutschsein*.

### An Enlightenment Tempered by its Dialectic

The title *Deutschsein: Eine Aufklärungsschrift* (Being German: An Enlightenment Essay), already offers a guide through Şenocak's main arguments. Like a musical leitmotif, the word 'Aufklärung' weaves itself through his writing, and different interpretations of the literature and philosophy of the Enlightenment appear throughout Şenocak's book. Enlightenment thought becomes a model for a more open and inclusive German society that integrates immigrant citizens, especially from Muslim countries. Şenocak proposes that each generation needs to learn and create its own form of Enlightenment, since the Enlightenment is not part of our genetic composition, our "Erbmasse" (D 46), an inherited condition that we can take for granted. He notes that frequently there is a gap, even an abyss between the En-

lightenment as a formula or etiquette, an empty convention or code of behavior, and its genuine, heartfelt application in society in our engagements with other religions or ethnicities (D 46).

In looking at the history of the German Enlightenment, Şenocak observes that Islam and the Enlightenment actually share a common history in Germany:

Especially in regard to the German Enlightenment and Islam, there is a long and intensive history of contact. Oriental Studies as an academic subject is above all a German creation. It not only led to an exotizing of a world that was perceived as foreign, but also it actually created a close vicinity.<sup>2</sup>

‘Orientalistik,’ 18<sup>th</sup> century German-language academic research on Asian cultures, began during the period of the Enlightenment. For Şenocak, “Orientalistik” did not only create a sense of exoticism in perceiving Asian and Muslim cultures, as Orientalism, the style of rather colonialist and stereotypical Western depictions of the Middle East, seems to suggest. While he acknowledges the existence of orientalist representations of the East, he emphasizes that the German discipline of ‘Orientalistik’ did create a genuine understanding of different Eastern cultures in Germany. In this context, Şenocak refers to Goethe, Lessing, and Friedrich Rückert, poet and translator who researched, spoke, and translated works from 44 oriental languages into German. Şenocak also writes about the Muslim angel images in Rilke’s poetry (D 106, also 33), which he does not explain in detail, although he is probably referring to the *Duineser Elegien*. Germans carry more of the Orient in themselves than they are aware, Şenocak summarizes (“Die Deutschen haben mehr Orient in sich, als ihnen bewusst ist,” D 55).

In order to achieve a truly enlightened society, Şenocak proposes to replace the German concept of ‘Kultur’—especially in its occasional degradation as ‘Leitkultur’—with the more universal idea of ‘Zivilisation’ (D 61). It is interesting to note that in his distinction between culture and civilization, a complex subject, Şenocak relies on an originally conservative thinker, Thomas Mann, who later became profoundly democratic and anti-fascist. Şenocak’s role model is Mann in his later phase, after he distanced himself from his early nationalistic writings, such as *Geist und Kunst* and *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*. In these early writings Mann had favored culture over civilization and defined the distinction between culture and civilization as that between mind and politics (“Geist und Politik”), or between soul and society; and he had characterized his brother Heinrich Mann critically and

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<sup>2</sup> “Dabei gibt es gerade in Bezug auf die deutsche Aufklärung und den Islam eine lange und intensive Berührungsgeschichte. Die Orientalistik als akademisches Fach ist vor allem eine deutsche Kreation. Sie hat nicht nur zur Exotisierung einer als fremd wahrgenommenen Welt geführt, sondern auch viel Nachbarschaft geschaffen.” (D 106) All subsequent translations from Şenocak’s *Deutschsein* and other German language texts in this article are mine.



pejoratively as a “Zivilisationsliterat,” a writer who dedicates his literature to revolutionary political causes. Later, Thomas Mann revised his views and came to espouse a more tolerant, democratic, and universal notion of civilization. It is debatable and not proven that this change of mind occurred already in 1922 during his Berlin speech “Von deutscher Republik,” as Şenocak claims (D 69); but it happened at the latest during his exile years in the United States. Unlike the more nationalist concept of culture, as Mann had defined it earlier, the idea of civilization incorporates pluralism, diversity, and cosmopolitanism. Thomas Mann's path from a German nationalist novelist to a German “Weltbürger” in the spirit of Alexander von Humboldt (D 69, 104), to a citizen of the world whose identity is no longer based on national culture but rather founded on the principles of civilization, is a path that Şenocak recommends to many Germans. This shift to the more universal and enlightened idea of civilization is one he finds missing in contemporary German debates on integration, where the term “Kultur” once again seems to predominate (D 61).

He perceives that, historically, the Enlightenment had a different effect on French or American society than on the German one:

Modernity divided Germany deeply. The dark soul on the one hand, the technological achievements on the other. The Enlightenment did not result in an upheaval of power relations, as in France or the United States, but in a splitting of the mind.<sup>3</sup>

While France and the United States had their revolutions, the Enlightenment in Germany produced a split consciousness, torn between the awareness of rapid technological innovations and a mystical, dark soul that distrusted modernity, looked inward, and emphasized tradition, especially during 19<sup>th</sup> century German Romanticism. However, he evaluates the present situation differently: Şenocak believes that now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Germany has an advantage over other European nations like France, the Netherlands, or Great Britain, whose societies are overshadowed by their long colonial history. Compared to England and France, which Şenocak seems to know well, the integration of immigrants in Germany seems to be in a splendid state (“nahezu glänzend” D 39). While this could be an idealistic assessment, the absence of a colonial burden in Germany may genuinely enable the possibility of eye-to-eye, egalitarian conversations “auf Augenhöhe” between Germans and Turks (D 165).

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<sup>3</sup> “Die Moderne spaltete Deutschland tief. Das dunkle Gemüt auf der einen, die technologischen Errungenschaften auf der anderen Seite. Die Aufklärung mündete nicht in einen Umsturz der Herrschaftsverhältnisse, wie beispielsweise in Frankreich oder in den USA, sondern in eine Spaltung des Bewusstseins.” (D 60)

Such conversations that are looking for an intellectual and emotional exchange with ‘the Other’ (“den anderen”) should begin with a mindset that allows self-criticism:

A glance at the other that is not broken through the prism of self-criticism will always be distorted. [...] Today we witness a continuous affront toward our own intellectual history, in which the Enlightenment is centrally located, when we lose the capacity of self-criticism and define ourselves only by our exclusion of the other. The incompatibility of Islam and modernity, of democracy and Muslim culture, is a dictum of both Islamic fundamentalists as well as Western opponents of Islam, who invoke the Christian roots of their culture and thereby conceal the history of the Enlightenment.<sup>4</sup>

Communication with another individual or cultural community that isn’t filtered through the lens of self-criticism will not produce mutual understanding. Şenocak observes a creeping fundamentalization of the sense of identity (“schleichende Fundamentalisierung des Selbstverständnisses,” D 44) not only on the part of certain Islamic fundamentalists, but also on the part of Western radical opponents of Islam, who believe that Islam is incompatible with Western European values. These “Enlightenment fundamentalists” (Coury 2013: 140-143), or ‘vulgar rationalists,’ to use a term by Navid Kermani (“Triumph des Vulgärrationalismus,” 2012), are as similarly narrow-minded and intolerant as Islamic fundamentalists themselves.

In his appeal for a more open and enlightened German identity, Şenocak also considers philosophers that were critical of, or skeptical toward, Enlightenment discourse. The catastrophes of the twentieth century have taught us that humans are not exclusively rational beings:

The schools of thought up to the 1980s, the Frankfurt School by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, philosophers like Michel Foucault and Emmanuel Lévinas represent in their work a perception of the complex human being and undermine a cartesian understanding of human and social existence.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> “Ein Blick auf den anderen, der nicht durch das Prisma der Selbstkritik gebrochen ist, wird immer verstellt bleiben. [...] Wir erleben heute einen ständigen Affront gegenüber unserer eigenen Geistesgeschichte, in deren Zentrum die Aufklärung steht, wenn wir die Fähigkeit zur Selbstkritik einbüßen und uns nur noch durch die Ausgrenzung des anderen definieren. Die Unvereinbarkeit von Islam und Moderne, von Demokratie und muslimischer Kultur, ist ein Lehrsatz sowohl der islamischen Fundamentalisten als auch der westlichen Islamgegner, die sich auf die christlichen Wurzeln ihrer Kultur berufen und dabei die Geschichte der Aufklärung verschweigen.” (D 107-108)

<sup>5</sup> “Die Denkschulen bis in die 1980er Jahre, die Frankfurter Schule von Max Horkheimer und Theodor Adorno, Philosophen wie Michel Foucault und Emmanuel Lévinas stehen mit ihrem Werk für diese Wahrnehmung des komplexen Menschen und untergraben ein cartesianisches Verständnis menschlicher und gesellschaftlicher Existenz.” (D 43)

While philosophers like Horkheimer, Adorno, Foucault, and Lévinas held a complex view of the enlightened human and understood the dialectics and dichotomies of enlightenment discourse, Şenocak observes an increased tendency toward simplification in public conversations since the 1980s (D 43). He notes that there has been a regression since Frankfurt School thinking, a “Rückfall hinter die *Dialektik der Aufklärung* der Frankfurter Schule” (D 49). The *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, first published in 1944 and again in a revised version in 1947, shaped twentieth-century discussions on the Enlightenment, but it seems to be no longer present in public discourses. Some conservative pundits in the integration debate assert the supposed superiority of Western European civilization because it underwent the historical period of the Enlightenment, and believe that Muslims who have not internalized such an Enlightenment period cannot participate in a modern, enlightened Western European society (D 46). These same critics, however, ignore the arguments of the Frankfurt School that Enlightenment is also a dialectical process and could not stop fascism and anti-Semitism in Europe, for example. The same rationalist world view could lead first to the creation of democracy and modernization, and later also to the brutal destruction of war and genocide in the twentieth century:

The Dialectic of the Enlightenment [...] still reminds us today that rationality can change quickly to blindness toward rationality when it believes it can fully explain the complex human being, that modernization and rationalization are not protected from evil if they are considered neutral and purely instrumental.<sup>6</sup>

In this context, Şenocak looks at the society of his origin, and he notes that Turkey also underwent a historical period that can be viewed as an equivalent of the European Enlightenment. It is possible to see the radical transformations and modernizations that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk created with the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, as a form of Enlightenment. Şenocak believes that Kemalism, one of the great cultural revolutions of human history (“eine der großen Kulturrevolutionen der Menschheitsgeschichte” D 144), can easily be compared to the achievements of the European Enlightenment. At the same time, Kemalism is characterized by its own dialectic, and this rational process of Turkish modernization also coincided with nationalism and violence in Turkey:

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<sup>6</sup> “Die Dialektik der Aufklärung [...] mahnt auch heute daran, dass Vernunft schnell in Vernunftblindheit umschlagen kann, wenn sie meint, das komplexe Wesen Mensch ganz und gar erklären zu können, dass Modernisierung und Rationalisierung vor dem Bösen nicht gefeit sind, wenn sie wertneutral und instrumentell gedacht werden.” (D 178)

Modernization gave Turkey not only the literature of Schiller and Goethe, the music by Beethoven and Bach and the ideas of the Enlightenment. Modernization also regaled Turkey with a nationalism that led to the dispersal and murder of hundreds of thousands of human beings.<sup>7</sup>

He specifically refers to Greeks, Armenians, and Kurds who suddenly had a non-Turkish identity with the formation of the Turkish Republic (D 178-179), and his statement on the murder of hundreds of thousands represents an indirect allusion to the killings of Armenians (D 178). In the last chapter of *Deutschsein*, subtitled “Vergessene deutsch-türkische Verwandtschaften” (Forgotten German-Turkish Kinships), Şenocak draws subtle connections between Turkish and German history. He is clearly looking at Kemalism as a form of Enlightenment and emphasizes the great cultural achievements of Turkish modernity: the liberation of women and their much more equal status today, for example, which allows women to assume leading positions at universities, in journalism, or in business in Turkey, or new freedoms in art and science (D 144, 176). At the same time, Şenocak believes that a similar dialectical and complex approach to the Enlightenment that Adorno and Horkheimer used to explain twentieth century German history and the trauma of the Holocaust could be applied to modern Turkish history, since Atatürk’s innovations went along with nationalism that threatened to exclude minorities in Turkey (D 178-179).

The Enlightenment that Şenocak invokes is thus tempered by its dialectic. Rationality cannot be cold and merely functional; it needs to acknowledge the histories and stories of each country. Understanding history is essential for a nation’s sense of identity, Şenocak reminds us already in *Das Land hinter den Buchstaben*; but we may not always learn from it, since the first war of humanity would have otherwise been the last one (Şenocak 2006: 144). Regarding German literature, Şenocak mentions in *Deutschsein*, besides Horkheimer and Adorno’s *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, particularly Jewish authors, such as Franz Kafka, the Kabbalah researcher and Jewish mystic Gershom Scholem, and the contemporary writer Barbara Honigmann, whose stories shaped his creative writings (D 180). In the Turkish context, he foregrounds the influence that Anatolian mysticism exerted on his work and on the country’s intellectual and spiritual history, counterbalancing Kemalist rationalism. In one of his closing paragraphs, Şenocak describes the Islamic tradition with which he identifies:

I am part of this tradition of a Turkish Islam that is naturally enlightened and European. This Islam is not easily achieved in Germany, because many people who came from Turkey to Germany did not internalize it

<sup>7</sup> “Die Modernisierung schenkte der Türkei nicht nur die Lektüre von Schiller und Goethe, die Musik von Beethoven und Bach und die Ideen der Aufklärung, sie bescherte ihr auch einen Nationalismus, der zur Vertreibung und Ermordung von Hunderttausenden führte.” (D 178)

and continue to follow traditions that are not filtered through the Enlightenment. The legacy of my provenance, however, also challenges those Westerners who wish to imprison their spiritual heritage in a cultural geographic map with clearly drawn borders.<sup>8</sup>

While strongly shaped by the Enlightenment, Şenocak equally argues against Enlightenment fundamentalists who believe that the Western European norms of the Enlightenment should be universal and everybody living in Europe should live according to them. He rejects the exclusionary argument that the Enlightenment is a uniquely European phenomenon. In arguing instead in favor of an enlightened Islam, he criticizes both the fundamentalist Westerners who consider Europe and Islam incompatible, as well as some Turkish fundamentalists who strictly adhere to conservative traditions that have not been filtered through the Enlightenment. Şenocak's Islam might be characterized as a tolerant and moderate form of Euro-Islam.

### Language and Poetry

While *Deutschsein* is a collection of essays and not a novel, drama, or a volume of poetry, Şenocak's approach is highly literary and poetic. Yeşilada emphasizes that Şenocak is at heart a poet and analyzes his poetry with profound insight in *Poesie der Dritten Sprache*. She observes that Şenocak is perceived primarily as an intellectual, rather than a poet or literary author (Yeşilada 2012: 163), and she has identified a 'blind spot' in the critical literature: While his essays are widely reviewed and discussed, the reception of his large body of poetry is virtually absent in both journalistic as well as academic literature ("Blinder Fleck im Feuilleton," Yeşilada 2012: 250). This is true not only in Germany, but also in the United States, where Şenocak has a large readership among academics at universities. In the following, I will not look directly at his own poetry, but rather point out the lyrical and literary dimension of Şenocak's concepts of an enlightened German identity and particularly the role that language, poetry, and music play in it.

The emphasis on language is evident throughout his book, beginning with the dedication to his father, who taught him that roots are multilingual ("dass Wurzeln mehrsprachig sind," D 5). This emphasis on multilingualism opens the path for a pluralistic, tolerant, and open-minded worldview. Language and poetry also form the subjects of several individual chapter titles: "Die Sprache öffnen" (Opening up

<sup>8</sup> "Ich stehe in dieser Tradition eines türkischen Islam, der wie selbstverständlich aufgeklärt und europäisch ist. Dieser Islam hat es aber in Deutschland nicht einfach, weil viele Menschen, die aus der Türkei nach Deutschland kamen, ihn nicht verinnerlicht haben und weiter Traditionen anhängen, die nicht durch die Aufklärung gefiltert worden sind. Das Vermächtnis meiner Herkunft fordert aber auch jene Abendländer heraus, die ihr geistiges Erbe in eine kulturgeografische Landkarte mit klar gezogenen Grenzen einsperren wollen." (D 190)

the Language), “Gebrochen Deutsch” (Broken German), “Dichter ohne Lieder” (Poets without Songs), and “Mein Erbe spricht auch Deutsch” (My Heritage also Speaks German, D 7-8).

The first chapter, “Die Sprache öffnen: Wann bietet eine Fremdsprache Geborgenheit?” (Opening the Language: When Does a Foreign Language Offer Shelter?) opens with a citation by the poet Paul Celan: “ins Offene, dorthin, wo Sprache auch zur Begegnung führen kann” (into the open, where language can also lead to an encounter, D 9). Celan’s words guide Şenocak’s discussions of his early childhood in Bavaria. For him, Germany was at first not a country, but a foreign language (“kein Land, sondern eine fremde Sprache,” D 11), a thought that echoes the title of his earlier book *Das Land hinter den Buchstaben*. This new language offered a sensual experience for the young author, for whom words have a taste: ‘Speaking is impossible without tasting the words,’ he states in numerous variations in this chapter, or: ‘Languages speak to the senses. They sound, they taste.’ (“Sprechen geht nicht, ohne Wörter zu schmecken,” “Sprachen sprechen die Sinne an. Sie klingen, sie schmecken.” D 11, 15). Growing up bilingual and learning the distinction between “Muttersprache” and “Landessprache” (mother tongue, national language, D 16) have been foundational and emotional experiences for the author. But words need to be connected to their roots, to an understanding of people and their environment, otherwise they are denigrated to materialism and money – a different form of currency (“eine andere Art von Währung,” D 18). Language is for Şenocak the bridge between thinking and feeling (“die Brücke zwischen dem Denken und dem Empfinden,” D 21). As language mediates between thinking and feeling, it can cause joy and pleasure bordering on the erotic:

Language flows, touches, and creates desire. None of this desire is perceptible in the discussions on integration and linguistic deficits in Germany. The cool atmosphere of a laboratory prevails.<sup>9</sup>

This statement directly critiques the tone and language of the integration debates in Germany, which have lost any creative potential. Şenocak believes that immigrants in Germany will learn German more joyfully if they feel that their native language is also accepted, if they don’t see an insurmountable clash between their native tongue and the nation’s official language: two languages that do not reject one another, but rather move toward each other in order to be able to translate (“zwei Sprachen, die einander nicht abweisen, sondern sich aufeinander zubewegen, um übersetzen zu können,” D 20). If, in our contemporary times of increasingly fluid identities, a nation-state tries to impose its language too forcefully, then language, the maternal tongue, becomes one of several possible places for withdrawal –

<sup>9</sup> “Sprache fließt, berührt und erzeugt Lust. Nichts ist von dieser Lust spürbar, wenn in Deutschland über Integration und Sprachdefizite gesprochen wird. Es herrscht die kühle Atmosphäre eines Labors.” (D 18)

“Rückzugsorte” (D 22). Language, a primary means of communication, can also become a place to which immigrants can retreat and isolate themselves.

The second chapter, entitled “Gebrochen Deutsch: Die Sondersprache der Deutschen” (Broken German: The Distinctive Language of Germans, D 23-25), begins with a geographic reference to a part of West Berlin, the short space between Rathenauplatz and Adenauerplatz.<sup>10</sup> Kurfürstendamm, the avenue connecting these two spaces, is no longer an elegant promenade in this area and symbolizes instead Germany's broken identity: The physical walk from Rathenauplatz, commemorating the murder of the German-Jewish foreign minister in 1922, to Adenauerplatz, commemorating the first German chancellor after World War II and the rebuilding of German democracy, also encompasses a temporal space, the time of the downfall of the Weimar Republic, of National Socialism, and the destruction of war. Şenocak describes Walther Rathenau's vision of a secular Judaism that embraced German nationalism as a form of Enlightenment, but it collapsed with the advance of fascism. In his view, this failure contributes to “Gebrochen Deutsch” – the language that even a contemporary immigrant to Germany has to learn to speak – since a broken identity is reflected in language (D 29-30). Understanding this broken German, the inner language of the land (“innere Landessprache,” D 29), primarily results in understanding its taboos, the unspoken historical scenes and memories that distinguish standard spoken German from the emotive aspects of “Gebrochen Deutsch,” the hidden national language. “Can a national feeling openly admit its fragility, its brittleness, without having to give itself up? In which language is such a confession formulated?”<sup>11</sup> Şenocak suggests that Germans should thematize the unresolved contradictions and the breaks and fissures in their national identity more openly (D 32). A Germany that would freely discuss its ‘broken’ language and identity might ultimately have a more positive self-image and become a more open-minded, tolerant, and welcoming place for immigrants. A ‘broken German’ would be more compatible with the structure of a civilization than any fantasy of a homogeneous national community, he states (“‘Gebrochen Deutsch’ könnte sich mit Zivilisationsentwürfen besser vertragen als jede Fantasie von einer homogenen Volksgemeinschaft,” D 68). A recognition and understanding of a ‘broken’ history and past could become a point of departure for an identity based on a worldly civilization, rather than a homogeneous culture.

In evoking these two Berlin locations, Rathenauplatz and Adenauerplatz, as symbolic spaces for a broken and divided identity, Şenocak could have added one further highly emblematic geographical detail: On Adenauerplatz, one finds not

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<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, *Das Land hinter den Buchstaben* also contains a chapter on Adenauerplatz, although the tenor of the argument is slightly different here, focusing on German self-criticism despite Adenauer's achievements and on German lack of patriotism that ultimately inhibits a natural relationship to Turkish immigrants (Şenocak 2006: 163-167).

<sup>11</sup> “Kann sich ein Nationalgefühl offen zu seiner Brüchigkeit bekennen, ohne sich selbst aufgeben zu müssen? In welcher Sprache wird ein solches Bekenntnis formuliert?” (D 27)

only a bronze statue of Adenauer, built in 2005, but also an earlier memorial stone commemorating Mete Ekşi, a young Berliner, the son of Turkish immigrants, who was brutally slain in his attempt to arbitrate a fight between Berlin youths of different ethnicities. The red granite memorial stone was placed there in 1996, predating Adenauer's statue by nine years. It contains the following inscription:

Mete Ekşi, born in 1972, died on November 13, 1991 from severe injuries he sustained at this place during a violent confrontation between Berlin youths of different backgrounds. Mutual respect and a commitment to nonviolence could have protected his life.<sup>12</sup>

The sudden and tragic death that Mete Ekşi suffered also led to the establishment of the "Mete-Ekşi Prize" for educational projects that promote peaceful intercultural understanding among children and youths in Berlin. While Şenocak does not mention the events surrounding Mete Ekşi in his discussion of Adenauerplatz, they could have added persuasively to his description of a "Gebrochen Deutsch": The image of Adenauer's statue and Ekşi's memorial stone existing side by side proves that Konrad Adenauer, the first West German chancellor who achieved West Germany's westernization – its integration into Western Europe and NATO – could not solve Germany's historical and present fractures and fissures that have resulted in a fragile identity and a broken language.

Another chapter, "Dichter ohne Lieder: Ein Exkurs in die deutsche Nachkriegslyrik" (Poets without Songs: An Excursion into Postwar German Poetry) explains Şenocak's influences and his formation as a poet. Poetic language of the early 1970s, when he began to write poetry, was characterized by a radical critique of language and a distrust of lyrical language, above all of the metaphorical language of poetry ("Misstrauen gegenüber der lyrischen Sprache, vor allem gegenüber der Metaphernsprache der Dichtung," D 74-75). As a reaction against the linguistic abuses of the Nazis, postwar German poetic language became consciously unemotional. Şenocak could not identify with this dry poetic language and reminds the reader of the famous clash between Paul Celan and members of *Gruppe 47* who critiqued the pathos in his reading of his poem "Todesfuge," which they considered excessive (D 81-82). Şenocak clearly sides with Paul Celan, the Jewish poet from Czernowitz, who is an important poetic role model for Şenocak, along with Ingeborg Bachmann, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Stefan George. But he emphasizes that not just German poets, but also Turkish poets, such as Nâzım Hikmet or the Anatolian Sufi Yunus Emre, influenced his German language poetry by liberating his language emotionally. For him, the Turkish language allows a di-

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<sup>12</sup> "Mete Ekşi, geb. 1972, starb am 13. November 1991 an den schweren Verletzungen, die er an diesem Ort bei einer gewalttätigen Auseinandersetzung zwischen Berliner Jugendlichen unterschiedlicher Herkunft erlitt. Gegenseitiger Respekt und der Wille zur Gewaltfreiheit hätten sein Leben schützen können." (Bannas 2014: 4)



rect, unbroken communication with emotions; in his youth, Şenocak perceived Turkish as a language that confronted emotions directly, in an unfractured way, and communicated with them (“Einer Sprache, die den Emotionen ungebrochen gegenübertrat, die mit ihnen kommunizierte,” D 79). Şenocak had left his mother country, “Mutterland Türkei,” but his mirror country, “Spiegelland Türkei,” the country that mirrored, reflected, and contrasted with conditions in Germany, remained an important influence in the development of his literary language (D 79).

Yeşilada analyzes the importance of myth and a mythological approach to language in Şenocak's poetry, and she defines the words that comprise Şenocak's concept of myth, which in German and English all start with the letter ‘m’: metaphor, mystery, and modernity – “Mythos,” “Metapher,” “Mysterium,” “Moderne” (Yeşilada 2012: 179). Myths and mysteries that explore our dark, irrational origins can also be found in fairy tales – “Märchen,” to mention another m-word in German. In *Deutschsein* Şenocak recommends that Germans and Turks look at the language of childhood and the language of fairy tales as a point of departure for understanding each other:

Cultural encounters are always fertile when they are childhood encounters. No wonder that the language of fairy tales imposes itself here. But still today, the Arabian Nights and Grimms' Fairy Tales remain a hidden treasure in the mediation of culture.<sup>13</sup>

Şenocak points to the novel *Grimms Wörter*, Günter Grass's declaration of love to the German language, and reminds the reader that fairy tales can be an important contribution in achieving integration. In the library of a Turkish relative of Şenocak's, the Arabian tales were placed next to Luther's translation of the Bible, and Goethe's *Leiden des jungen Werther* stood near the Koran (D 182-183). Besides children's literature and religious texts, German Romantic literature also plays an important role in an essay that he subtitles “Aufklärungsschrift” (Enlightenment Essay).

*Deutschsein* abounds with references to German language writers, but also to Turkish and Persian poets, such as Nâzım Hikmet, Asaf Hâlet, Behçet Necatigil, Yunus Emre, Hafez, and Rumi. In addition to Muslim writers, he cites Jewish authors: Besides Franz Kafka, Gershom Scholem, and Barbara Honigmann, Paul Celan is one of his major influences. Şenocak's understanding of an enlightened German identity is a very humanistic and poetic one, shaped less by contemporary politics than by poets and thinkers—for example, Heinrich von Kleist, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Friedrich Schiller, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Immanuel Kant, and Alexander von Humboldt. Şenocak evokes the international language of

<sup>13</sup> “Kulturbegegnungen werden immer dann fruchtbar, wenn sie Kindheitsbegegnungen sind. Kein Wunder, wenn sich die Sprache der Märchen hier aufdrängt. Doch *Tausendundeine Nacht* und Grimms Märchen sind bislang eher ein verborgener Schatz in der Kulturvermittlung.” (D 57)

world poetry, a subtle allusion to Goethe's concept of world literature ("internationale Sprache der Weltichtung," D 80). This world literature is cosmopolitan, and its influence reaches far beyond the original national borders of its creation. Şenocak also champions Humboldt's concepts of a 'Weltbürger,' a citizen of the world. He suggests that Germans should internalize Humboldt's values and calls for "ein Alexander von Humboldt für das Innere" (D 104). Such "Welterfahrung" (experience of the world) and "Weltaneignung" (appropriation of the world, D 105), which are readily available in today's globalized and interconnected world and can also lead to isolation and alienation, need to be internalized through language and literature.

The foundation of identity and integration for Şenocak remains language; and the ability of a society to integrate its minorities is closely linked to its facility in coming to terms with its own national identity and history. However self-critical it needs to be, a love of self is essential for loving and understanding the other. For Şenocak, the failure of integration is above all a failure of communication and of language:

The question of integration is existentially linked with the question of the meaning of being German, with the crisis of the German national identity, with a question that hasn't been asked for a very long time, because it was too painful, because it caused nightmares, because the language failed.<sup>14</sup>

Creating a language, and, as Şenocak analyzed in his earlier chapter on "Gebrochen Deutsch," coming to terms with and understanding a broken German language, is essential for a sense of identity, which, in turn, will allow for greater generosity and tolerance to minorities.

## Music

Besides language and literature, music plays a large role in *Deutschsein*. Musical metaphors abound in Şenocak's book. "Die atonale Welt" (The atonal world, D 36) is the title of an entire chapter, and the image of atonality as a metaphor for a heterogeneous, mixed society weaves itself through the book. He observes that many contemporaries perceive mixed societies as helplessly and with as much irritation as they would regard an atonal composition. ("Viele Zeitgenossen stehen vor gemischten Gesellschaften so ratlos und irritiert wie vor einer atonalen Komposition," D 36). Atonal works, "atonale Werke," are not palatable for a broader audience (D 36); modern day-to-day existence is characterized by too much atonality in

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<sup>14</sup> "Die Frage der Integration ist also auf Gedeih und Verderb mit der Frage nach dem Deutschsein verknüpft, mit der Krise des deutschen Nationalgefühls, mit einer Frage, die sehr lange nicht mehr gestellt worden ist, weil sie zu sehr schmerzte, weil sie zu viele Alpträume hervorrief, weil die Sprache versagte." (D 55)

everyday life (“zu viel Atonalität im Alltag,” D 41). The average citizen longs for music, but not of the atonal kind – “Musik, bitte weniger atonal” (D 54). We live in atonal times, and our contemporary democracy challenges us to achieve living together in atonal times (“ein Zusammenleben in atonalen Zeiten,” D 71). People feel confronted with “Dissonanz und Atonalität” in contemporary complex societies (D 59). Dissonance and atonality may be perceived similarly, but have a different meaning in music. While dissonance primarily refers to a tension, clash, and lack of harmony among musical notes, atonality, the structure of twentieth century and contemporary music that lacks a key or a tonal center, is indeed a beautiful metaphor for multiculturalism in society. In contrast, tonality, the classical system of European music that centers around a key and a hierarchy of musical relations, could symbolize *Leitkultur*.

A related musical metaphor is polyphony. Şenocak asserts that immigration has produced a polyphonic sound in Germany. He criticizes the rhythm of assimilating or equalizing (“Rhythmus des Angleichens”) in post-unification Germany, which did not lead to the desired harmony (“ersehten Harmonie”) and he recommends an acceptance of a polyphonic sound (“Akzeptieren eines polyphonen Klangs”) that immigrants brought to Germany (D 58).

Şenocak also notes an absence of nuances and overtones (“Zwischentöne”) in the polarized atmosphere of the integration debate (D 49). Such intermediate tones, however, should be defining features of an immigration society. “Zwischentöne” as a metaphor for a hybrid society already appeared in his earlier book *Das Land hinter den Buchstaben* (Şenocak 2006: 66). Just as “Zwischentöne” form part of a more complex, subtle piece of music, he now proposes a more nuanced, sensitive, differentiated language (“sensiblen, differenzierten Sprache”) to replace the gladiator’s language (“Gladiatorensprache”) of some recent talk show debates (D 44). Music and literature are innately intertwined:

Each word is not only composed of letters. It also always has a melody. Maybe the holy scriptures are recognizable by a special music. The Koran definitely is. Still today, the linguistic music of this text is profoundly moving, the rhythm unmistakable.<sup>15</sup>

For Şenocak, poetry and religious texts are intensely musical. In discussing the Koran, Şenocak emphasizes less its laws than its unique music – its aesthetic, poetic, and musical beauty. When he entitles his chapter on twentieth century German postwar poetry as “Dichter ohne Lieder” (poets without songs), he critiques these poets’ deliberately prosaic approach to language (D 75). Poetry without song is Şenocak’s metaphor for a poetry without emotion, without sensuality, without a

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<sup>15</sup> “Jedes Wort ist nicht nur aus Buchstaben gemacht. Es hat immer auch eine Melodie. Vielleicht sind die heiligen Schriften durch eine besondere Musik erkennbar. Der Koran ist es auf jeden Fall. Noch heute ist die Sprachmusik dieses Textes ergreifend, der Rhythmus unverkennbar.” (D 174)

lyrical language. His own poetry, on the contrary, began as a “Hörerlebnis,” the acoustic experience and sensual pleasure of listening to new languages and transforming sounds to words (D 80). Şenocak’s poetry was shaped in his early years by recitations of the Koran which he describes as a song (“Gesang”) and by the mystical songs (“mystischen Gesängen”) of the medieval Anatolian Sufi Yunus Emre (D 79-80).

In Şenocak’s view, it isn’t an accident that music became the original German language (“nicht zufällig wurde die Musik zur deutschen Ursprache,” D 70). This is a reference to German Romanticism, which saw poetry as the closest kin to the original art form of music. German cultural identity was created out of the spirit of music – “aus dem Geiste der Musik,” as Şenocak states with a subtle reference to Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (D 71). Nietzsche was intensely preoccupied with Richard Wagner throughout his life; he initially admired Wagner fervently in his early work *Geburt der Tragödie* and then turned against him as a fierce critic in his later writings *Der Fall Wagner* and *Nietzsche contra Wagner*. In evoking Nietzsche, and especially by only alluding to Nietzsche’s early supportive work on Wagner, Şenocak reminds the reader of the importance of Richard Wagner’s music for German national identity. Wagner is largely responsible for the fact that Germany became the country of transfigured Romanticism and Dionysian music (“das Land der verklärten Romantik und einer rauschhaften Musik,” D 60). The orgiastic sensuality of Wagner’s music and its emphasis on mythology certainly shaped German Romanticism. One might debate, however, whether Wagner’s music still is a refuge of the cultural self-image of Germans, as Şenocak states (“ein Refugium des kulturellen Selbstverständnisses der Deutschen,” D 72). Wagnerian music definitely forms an important part of the German tradition. But Wagner himself is also a controversial figure because of his antisemitic writings, for example; and younger contemporary Germans may choose other musical role models as well.

At the same time, Şenocak himself seems profoundly shaped by a Romantic world view, which he claims was more influential in Germany than elsewhere (D 170). When he defines the origins of German culture as “dunkel und musisch,” he admits that the thought of describing any culture as dark and musical at its core is highly attractive for him (D 70). The frequent reoccurrence of words like roots or home (“Wurzeln” or “Heimat,” i.e. D 56, 70) could also be traced back to Romanticism, as could his emphasis on myth and fairy tales, on emotionality and an internalized soul. Şenocak rejects a social contract based purely on the cold ink of rational reason (“mit der kalten Tinte der rationalen Vernunft,” D 171). In the last paragraph of his book, he indirectly refers to the German folk song “Die Gedanken sind frei” (The Thoughts Are Free) which originated in the Middle Ages, but was also included in Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano’s Romantic poetry collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (D 190). As Şenocak explained to Alan Posener in his interview with *Die Welt*, his focus of studies at the University of Munich was German Idealism, a philosophical movement in the late eighteenth and early nine-

teenth century that began as a reaction to Kant and was associated with Romanticism and the revolutionary politics of the Enlightenment. While Romanticism is traditionally perceived as a reaction against the Enlightenment, Şenocak's "Aufklärungsschrift" *Deutschsein* is not orthodox in its Enlightenment discourse and incorporates some Romantic elements.

Turkish sources of literary inspiration for Şenocak's writings include Ottoman divan poetry and Sufi mysticism. In *Deutschsein*, he primarily refers to Anatolian mysticism, which he also describes as musical:

Anatolian mysticism, this special form of a musically and socially inspired faith, which has its roots in both Koranic doctrines as well as shamanistic nature contemplations, formed the foundation for a modern, cosmopolitan, and receptive Islam.<sup>16</sup>

He sees no contradiction between Anatolian mysticism and a modern, open, and tolerant Islam – an Anatolian atonality, one could call it, applying Şenocak's musical metaphor. Rumi's or Emre's mysticisms could be invoked as a countermovement to a rigid fundamentalist Islam, which might explain their modern appeal, as Yeşilada points out (Yeşilada 2012: 81). In *Deutschsein*, Şenocak combines the universal values of the Enlightenment with Anatolian and Islamic mysticism; and through this association he also creates a dialog between "Deutschsein und Türkischsein" (Uysal Ünalán 2013: 84-85)

Mysticism can be a component of the Romantic movement, and Şenocak seems to be influenced by both. When he describes the atmospheric sounds of being German ("die atmosphärischen Klänge des Deutschseins," D 71), this statement could be an evocation of Wagner's music that he just discussed; and he also refers to the mystical search of the outsider to become part of a new environment. When he invokes the poetic concept of a kinship of souls ("Seelenverwandtschaft," D 48), he formally refers to Stefan George's idea of a spiritual inner unity in *Gebeimes Deutschland*. But he may indirectly also imply an imagined kinship of souls between Germans and Turks, possibly the kindred spirits of German Romanticism and Turkish or Islamic mysticism.

Şenocak searches for a rationality that is not spiritually dried up ("eine spirituell nicht vertrocknete Rationalität," D 177). His vision of a German identity is highly aestheticized, poetic, and musical. In his language and his world view, mysticism and modernity are compatible. Şenocak's concept of the Enlightenment is a well-tempered one, to continue a musical metaphor, one that understands its dialectic and leaves room for spirituality and emotionality. In *Deutschsein*, Şenocak infuses

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<sup>16</sup> "Die anatolische Mystik, diese spezielle Form einer musisch und sozial inspirierten Gläubigkeit, die ihre Wurzeln sowohl in koranischen Glaubenssätzen als auch in schamanistischen Naturbetrachtungen findet, bildete das Fundament eines modernen, weltoffenen, aufnahmebereiten Islam." (D 177)

his poetic and musical call for a new Enlightenment with mysticism and certain features of Romanticism.

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# Transkulturelles Lernen mit mehrsprachigen Bilderbüchern

*Serap Atagül/Christian Müller*

## Einleitung

In den letzten Jahren ist eine steigende Anzahl an Veröffentlichungen mehrsprachiger Bilderbücher zu verzeichnen, die bisher noch nicht auf Aspekte transkulturellen Lernens untersucht wurden. Sie laden Rezipienten dazu ein, im Identifizieren von Transkulturalität Unterschiede und Schnittmengen deutscher und türkischer Kultur zu entdecken, ihre Kompetenzen in *Visual Literacy* zu erweitern und sich an sprachliche Varietäten von Deutsch und Türkisch anzunähern.

In diesem Beitrag, der sich an der Textsorte ‚Review Essay‘ orientiert, wird forschungsmethodisch in deskriptiver Herangehensweise eine Auswahl an deutsch-türkischen Bilderbüchern beleuchtet. Auf Grundlage dieses Vorgehens lassen sich mögliche Arbeitsfelder für ein transkulturelles Lernen gewinnen: Als Untersuchungsschwerpunkte werden u. a. das Kennenlernen und die Akzeptanz unterschiedlicher Kulturen und Sprachen, lebensweltliche Gemeinsamkeiten und Zusammenhänge sowie ein bewusster, kritischer Umgang mit Klischees und Vorurteilen angestrebt. Über das transkulturelle Lernen hinaus halten die Bilderbücher auch sprach- und literaturdidaktische Implikationen bereit, auf die aus Platzgründen nur vereinzelt eingegangen werden kann; das Gleiche gilt für die didaktisch-methodischen Erwägungen zur Mehrsprachigkeit.

Als Untersuchungsgegenstände dienen die Bilderbücher *Arkadaş Olalım Mı / Sollen wir Freunde werden* (2002) von Neşet Erol und Mustafa Delioğlu, *Fatma und / ile Martha* (2005) von Zeynep Bassa, *Sinan und Felix. Mein Freund Arkadaşım* (2014) von Aygen Sibel Çelik und Barbara Korthues und *Leyla und Linda feiern Ramadan. Leyla ve Linda Ramazanı kutluyorlar* (2011) von Arzu Gürz Abay und Sibel Demirtaş, deren erstmalige wissenschaftliche Betrachtung und die aus dieser gewonnenen transkulturellen Lernpotentiale einen Beitrag zur frühzeitigen Akzeptanz und Wertschätzung der deutschen, türkischen und weiterer Kulturen leisten könnten.

### Transkulturelles Lernen

Im Jahr 1993 konstatiert Bredella, es sei „eine Abstraktion, die fremde Kultur im Gegensatz zur eigenen bestimmen zu wollen. Es gibt schon immer Überschneidungen, wie es Unterschiede gibt“ (Bredella 1993: 34). Kulturelles Lernen ‚zwischen‘ verschiedenen Kulturen wird bis heute zumeist unter interkulturellem Lernen subsumiert; Welsch fragt mit dem Begriff ‚Transkulturalität‘ (vgl. Welsch 1994, 1995) nicht nach dem ‚Zwischen‘, nicht nach dem Nebeneinander und der Addition von Kulturen im bikulturellen Sinne, sondern konturiert mit seiner Konzeption die Überschreitung und Verbindung von verschiedenen Kulturen sowie einer hierdurch möglichen Identitätsentfaltung (vgl. Welsch 1994, 1995). An Welsch anknüpfend formuliert Wintersteiner das Postulat einer transkulturellen literarischen Bildung. Er bezeichnet hierbei „kulturelle Mischung, Multikulturalität und Mehrsprachigkeit nicht [als] den Ausnahmezustand, sondern [als] den Normalzustand“. In diesem Beitrag wird Wintersteiner im Besonderen entsprochen, da er Transkulturalität als „einen positiven Wert darstellt, der [...] Monokulturalität und Monolinguisimus ablösen“ (Wintersteiner 2006: 15) wird oder – je nach subjektiver Betrachtungsweise – bereits abgelöst hat. Die Ermöglichung transkulturellen Lernens setzt eine entsprechende Einstellung, Überzeugung und wenigstens eine Haltung voraus, die im besten Falle von Authentizität geprägt sein sollte, sodass Transkulturalität außerhalb und innerhalb der Schule gemeinsam ‚gelebt‘ werden kann. Transkulturelles Lernen geht unseres Erachtens darüber hinaus, „Schülerinnen und Schüler für das Konzept der Transkulturalität zu sensibilisieren“ (Walden 2010: 30). Für Kinder und Jugendliche stellt sich allzu oft die Frage nach einer Entscheidung für eine einzige Kultur oder Sprache nicht mehr, oder sie haben sie sich nie gestellt, da sie die Koexistenz von Kulturen und Sprachen nicht als solche wahrnehmen, sondern in einem selbstverständlichen Akt der Transkulturalität *a priori* verbunden haben. Kinder und Jugendliche dürfen sich unterschiedlichen Kulturen zugehörig fühlen, können und dürfen verschiedene Sprachen sprechen. Ihr transkulturelles Handeln nehmen sie weder als Konzept noch in der Alltagswirklichkeit als etwas Besonderes wahr, da eine transkulturelle Praxis für sie selbstverständlich ist. Das bedeutet nicht, dass transkulturelles Handeln per se existiert und transkulturelles Lernen obsolet wird – im Gegenteil: Es ist und bleibt eine Suche nach (auch sprachlichen) Unterschieden und Gemeinsamkeiten transkultureller Art (vgl.

Rösch 2001: 111) mit dem Ziel der Akzeptanz aller Kulturen. Der Einsatz mehrsprachiger Bilderbücher als transkulturelle Lerngegenstände kann diese Suche begünstigen.

Kindern und Jugendlichen kann transkulturelles Erkennen und Handeln nicht immer intuitiv gelingen. Sie müssen in ihrer Identitätsbildung – ein weiteres Ziel des transkulturellen Lernens – unterstützt und angeleitet werden. Transkulturalität kann einen Transfer von Aspekten einer Kultur in eine andere anstreben, „etwa bei Übersetzungen, die den Verstehens- und Kommunikationsprozess in der Sprache, in die übersetzt wird, mit reflektieren und bewusst gestalten“ (Rösch 2007: 53). Die Übersetzungen in den mehrsprachigen Bilderbüchern begünstigen einen solchen Transfer, da die Texte auf Deutsch und Türkisch gelesen und beleuchtet werden können. Obwohl sie nicht alle auf ihre Lernpotentiale bezüglich Mehrsprachigkeit analysiert werden können, sollen mehrsprachige Bilderbücher in diesem Beitrag als „kulturvermittelnde Texte [gelten], die einem anderskulturellen Lesepublikum eine ihnen fremde Kultur nahe zu bringen versuchen“ (Rösch 2007: 53), denen bestimmte transkulturelle Implikationen inhärent sind, die für den Deutschunterricht bisher noch nicht perspektiviert wurden. Halten Elemente des DaF- und DaZ-Unterrichts im Lehramtsstudium immer mehr Einzug, finden sich noch selten Unterrichtsmodelle, die beispielsweise die deutsche und türkische Sprache, die verschiedenen und gemeinsamen kulturellen Aspekte für den Deutschunterricht lernförderlich aufbereiten.<sup>1</sup>

Transkulturelles Lernen bedeutet nicht zwangsläufig, eine Übernahme anderer Kulturen anzustreben (vgl. Rösch 2007: 53). Es soll jedoch auch keine Abgrenzung von anderen Kulturen stattfinden. So kann zunächst eine „bikulturelle Doppexistenz“ (Rösch 2007: 53) ausgebildet werden, die unterschiedliche kulturelle Aspekte in sich trägt und sich auf dem Wege eines transkulturellen Lernprozesses zu einer transkulturellen Identität weiterentwickelt. Auch bei der Erreichung dieses Ziels können Bilderbücher von Anfang an unterstützend wirken.

Die möglichen Einblicke genuin bikultureller Art im Nebeneinander von zwei Kulturen und auch die isoliert betrachtbaren interkulturellen Dimensionen zwischen der deutschen und türkischen Kultur, die die vorliegenden mehrsprachigen Bilderbücher bieten, werden unter die transkulturellen Lernpotentiale subsumiert, sodass „das ‚verbindende Gemeinsame‘, das kulturübergreifende Rezeptionen ermöglicht, nicht in der Zugehörigkeit zu einer bestimmten allgegenwärtigen Kultur zu suchen [ist], sondern in den gemeinsamen Elementen, die durch die Kulturen hindurch gehen“ (Iljassova-Morger 2009: 52).

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<sup>1</sup> Für drei unseres Erachtens sehr gelungene lernförderliche Unterrichtsmodelle, die hier nicht im Einzelnen beleuchtet, jedoch genannt werden sollen, siehe Decker / Oomen-Welke (2008), Dirim (2009) und Vach (2009).

## Mehrsprachige Bilderbücher im Spiegel transkulturellen Lernens

Im Folgenden werden vier mehrsprachige Bilderbücher<sup>2</sup> bezüglich ihrer transkulturellen Lernpotentiale für eine heterogene Grundschulklasse vorgestellt. Dies bedeutet, dass alle Schüler als Mitglieder der hiesigen Gesellschaft in die Überlegungen einbezogen sind, unabhängig von ihrem kulturellen oder sprachlichen Hintergrund. Dementsprechend verweist Rösch zum Umgang mit Bilderbüchern im Literaturunterricht explizit darauf, dass kein Schüler stigmatisiert werden solle, alle die gleichen Aufgaben bekommen sollten, dass jeder frei in seiner Interpretation ist sowie fähig, Deutungen der Mitschüler zu erkennen (vgl. Rösch 1997: 194). Nur in einer auf einer transkulturellen Haltung gründenden Unterrichtsplanung und -durchführung können Lehrpersonen aus sprachdidaktischer Sicht einer „monolingualen Fokussierung des Deutschunterrichts“ (Engin / Olsen 2009: 8) entgegenwirken und – aus literaturdidaktischer Perspektive – „transkulturelle Erfahrungsmomente“ (Engin / Olsen 2009: 12) an literarischen Gegenständen, wie den ausgewählten mehrsprachigen Bilderbüchern, bereitstellen. Die Teilkapitel zu den transkulturellen Implikationen enthalten teilweise sprach- und literaturdidaktische Überlegungen, die für den Deutschunterricht von Interesse sein könnten. An die jeweiligen Inhaltsangaben anschließend werden u. a. die Visualisierung, die Figuren- und Handlungsgestaltung, die Mehrsprachigkeit (dargestellt am Beispiel *Sinan und Felix*) und das Erkennen der Unterschiede und Gemeinsamkeiten der deutschen und türkischen Kultur thematisiert. Daraus lassen sich dann transkulturelle Lernprozesse entwickeln. Mehrsprachige Bilderbücher werden als literarische Texte präsentiert, denen als Lerngegenstand eine passende Eignung zugeordnet wird, da sie unterschiedliche Sprachen vereinen und anhand der Texte sowie deren Visualisierungen verschiedene Kulturen schon für Rezipienten im Grundschulalter erfahrbar werden.

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<sup>2</sup> Die Bilderbücher wurden ausgewählt nach den Kriterien der Mehrsprachigkeit – bestehend aus Texten in deutscher und deren Übersetzungen in türkischer Sprache – und Transkulturalität. Die Anzahl von vier Bilderbüchern ist dem einzuhaltenden Höchstumfang dieses Beitrags geschuldet; die Einbindung weiterer mehrsprachiger Bilderbücher wäre folglich möglich gewesen. An dieser Stelle sei auch auf andere zu untersuchende Bilderbuchformate hingewiesen, die sprachliches – über das Deutsche und Türkische hinaus –, literarisches und transkulturelles Lernen fördern könnten: Das digitale Bilderbuch *Glück* der Autorin Elisabeth Simon mit Illustrationen von Lena Ellermann (online verfügbar unter: <http://www.amira-pisakids.de/#book=12&p=1> [letztes Zugriffsdatum: 25.10.2016]) auf dem Portal des kostenfreien Leseförderprogramms ‚Amira‘ kann auf verschiedenen Sprachen – darunter auch auf Türkisch – rezipiert werden. Die Lektüre und das zur Verfügung stehende interaktive Quiz können transkulturelle Anschlussmöglichkeiten für den Deutschunterricht bereithalten.

*Arkadaş Olalım Mı? Sollen wir Freunde werden?*  
*Neşet Erol / Mustafa Delioğlu (2002)*

Neşet Erol erzählt eine Geschichte, die – begleitet von stetem Zweifel und Vorurteilen – in eine Freundschaft mündet. Markus besucht eine neue Schule und wird seinen Klassenkameraden vorgestellt. Yusuf, der alleine sitzt, bietet Markus einen freien Platz neben sich an, den er gerne annimmt. In der Pause stellt sich Yusuf Markus mit dem Namen „Josef“ vor. Markus betrachtet Yusuf verblüfft und merkt bezüglich Yusufs Teint an, er sei doch so braun gebrannt, „fast schwarz“. Daraufhin macht Yusuf Markus auf dessen helle Haut und blonden Haare aufmerksam: Sie lachen und beschließen Freunde zu werden. Am nächsten Schultag hört Markus, wie sein Freund Josef von Holger, einem anderen Klassenkameraden, mit „Yusuf“ angesprochen wird. Markus spricht Holger darauf an, der laut auflacht, als er hört, dass Markus Yusuf „Josef“ nennt. Markus wird daraufhin aufgeklärt, dass „Josef“ der deutsche und „Yusuf“ der türkische Vorname sei. Dies erkenne man an seinem äußeren Erscheinungsbild – schwarze Augen und schwarze Haare. Verärgert packt Markus seine Schultasche und setzt sich zu Rainer. Als Yusuf ihn hierzu befragt, entgegnet ihm Markus, dass er mit Türken nicht beisammensitzen möchte und beendet seine Freundschaft mit ihm. Yusuf ist traurig darüber, aber ihm ist ein solches Verhalten seiner Mitschüler bekannt. Die Ansichten von Markus' Vater sind geprägt von Vorurteilen und Klischees und scheinen Markus zu beeinflussen: Türken nähmen den Deutschen die Arbeitsplätze weg, türkische Frauen verhüllten ihre Gesichter sowie Türken und Deutsche sollten jeweils lieber unter sich Freundschaften schließen. Yusuf hingegen träumt von einer glücklichen Freundschaft. Im weiteren Verlauf der Geschichte wird Markus von einem Hund gebissen und Yusuf eilt zur Hilfe herbei. Beide müssen ins Krankenhaus eingeliefert werden. Dort bedanken sich Markus' Eltern bei Yusuf und nähern sich Yusufs Eltern an. Der Autor stellt des Weiteren dar, dass sich die Schüler der Klasse näher kennenlernen, Freundschaften schließen und sich gegenseitig helfen. Letztlich werden sie die „freundlichsten, fleißigsten und erfolgreichsten Kinder an der Schule“ (Erol / Delioğlu 2002: 37).

*Transkulturelle Implikationen*

Der Illustrator zeigt auf einer Doppelseite<sup>3</sup> (Erol / Delioğlu 2002: 18-19) eine Schulklasse, in der sich Kinder unterhalten, die möglicherweise einen unterschiedlichen kulturellen und sprachlichen Hintergrund haben. Im Hinblick auf transkulturelles Lernen ist die Doppelseite geeignet, den Rezipienten zu verdeutlichen, „dass die Gesellschaften aus disparaten Kulturen, aus verschiedenen sozialen Schichten, Geschlechtern und ethnischen Gruppen bestehen und kulturelle Hybridität zum wichtigsten Kennzeichen wird“ (Engin / Olsen 2009: 4). Dies kann im Deutschunterricht durch einen Austausch der Eindrücke über Verhaltensweisen

<sup>3</sup> Die Bildrechte waren bedauerlicherweise nicht zu erhalten.

der Figuren Yusuf und Markus geschehen. Die unterschiedlichen Bedürfnisse und Wünsche von Yusuf können aus der Innensicht nachempfunden und somit als Erzählanlass genutzt werden, in dessen Rahmen die Menschen als Individuum und Persönlichkeit anerkannt werden: Jeder darf so sein, wie er ist.

Die beiden Hauptfiguren Yusuf und Markus stehen auf der Doppelseite visuell nicht im Vordergrund, wie das zu vermuten wäre, sondern sind in der Klassengemeinschaft integriert abgebildet. Auf dem Bild scheint eine entspannte, freundschaftliche Atmosphäre zwischen den Kindern zu herrschen, die durch den Text unterstützt wird. Die Bild-Text-Beziehung suggeriert – wird sie in transkultureller Haltung gelesen –, dass jedem Individuum Bedeutung zukommt, unabhängig von Herkunft, Sprache oder kulturellen Unterschieden. Dies unterstreichen auch die offenen Fragen, die den Leser aus der Lektüre entlassen und als eine den Text schließende Moral gedeutet werden könnten:

Freundschaften zu schließen kann manchmal schwierig sein und braucht oftmals Zeit. Ist es aber nicht viel wichtiger, dass Menschen einander kennen lernen, ihre gegenseitigen Vorurteile abschaffen und den Willen haben, Freunde zu werden? Haben solche Bemühungen nicht Erfolg und Glück? (Erol / Delioğlu 2002: 39)

Die letzten Worte Erols können auf Grund der außergewöhnlichen Sprachverwendung „Haben solche Bemühungen nicht Erfolg und Glück?“ (Erol / Delioğlu 2002: 39) zu Irritationen führen. Möglicherweise wurde hier vom Türkischen ins Deutsche übersetzt, da beispielsweise „her zaman“ (Erol / Delioğlu 2002: 38) gebraucht wird und das nötige Wort „immer“ [eigene Übersetzung; S.A. / C.M.] im deutschen Text keine Erwähnung findet. Dieser Satz könnte, bezugnehmend zur vorherigen Seite, folgendermaßen verstanden werden: Die Bemühungen, einander kennenzulernen, Vorurteile abzubauen und Freundschaften zu schließen, können zum Erfolg in der Schule beitragen, da sich die Schüler gegenseitig unterstützen (vgl. Erol / Delioğlu 2002: 36-39) – Erols Text weist hier verschiedene Wege aus, die zu transkulturellem Lernen führen.

Die von Erol im Text angesprochenen Vorurteile sind in diesem Bilderbuch vor allem durch stereotypisierte Darstellungen gekennzeichnet: Yusuf, der Mitschülern vornehmlich durch seine schwarzen Haare, dunkle Augenfarbe und Haut auffällt sowie Markus, der „hellblonde Haare, hellblaue Augen und eine weiße Hautfarbe [hat], so als hätte er nie einen Sonnenstrahl abbekommen“ (Erol / Delioğlu 2002: 3). Die Wahrnehmung Yusufs seitens Markus ist beeinflusst durch die Vorurteile des Vaters, der darauf hinweist, dass man mit „Türken [...] keine Freundschaften schließen [könne]. Die Deutschen sollen mit den Deutschen und die Türken mit den Türken Freunde werden“ (Erol / Delioğlu 2002: 19). Auffallend ist auch der Versuch Yusufs, durch eine seinen türkischen Namen verschleiernde Änderung in den deutschen Namen „Josef“, eine Freundschaft mit Markus

aufzubauen. Markus' empörte Reaktion auf die Klarstellung, dass „Josef“ eigentlich „Yusuf“ heißt, lässt sich aus seinen Bemerkungen ablesen:

Ich dachte, er wäre ein deutscher Junge. Ich hätte es eigentlich an seinen schwarzen Haaren, den schwarzen Augen und der bräunlichen Haut erkennen müssen. [...] Er will sich wie ein deutscher Junge aufführen, nur um mein Freund zu werden. Ich lasse mich nicht verarschen. (Erol / Delioğlu 2002: 13)

Yusufs Nutzung eines deutschen Namens suggeriert, er wolle sich der deutschen Gesellschaft und seinem schulischen Umfeld zugehörig fühlen. Yusuf fühlt sich zudem in der Schule nicht willkommen, aber „so etwas passierte ihm nicht zum ersten Mal. Seine deutschen Mitschüler wollten nichts mit ihm zu tun haben, aber sie sagten auch nichts Schlimmes“ (Erol / Delioğlu 2002: 15). Ein auf bikulturelle Identitätsbildung gründendes transkulturelles Lernen könnte hier an die Überwindung der kulturellen Grenzen anknüpfen, die Yusuf anzustreben versucht. Jedoch ist „die Entwicklung einer bikulturellen Identität [...] abhängig von einem Sich-Zurechtfinden in beiden Kulturkreisen und der Interaktion in beiden gesellschaftlichen Systemen“ (Kalkavan 2013: 257). Ein solches Sich-Zurechtfinden stellt für Yusuf und – bei der Übertragung in die Realität – auch für Kinder eine immens große Herausforderung dar, für deren Bewältigung sie im Deutschunterricht mit entsprechenden transkulturellen Lernaufgaben bedacht werden können. Aus literaturdidaktischer Perspektive böten sich hier Aufgaben zur Perspektivenübernahme Yusufs an. Auf diese Weise kann die Verleugnung der eigenen Identität beim Leser Irritationen hervorrufen, die einen Anstoß zu transkulturellem Lernen in der Analyse der Identitätsbildung der literarischen Figur geben. Weiter führt die Perspektivenübernahme dieser Figur zu einer Reflexion der eigenen Identitätsbewusstheit. Letztlich, diese Entwicklung ist mit Schülern diskutierbar, werden Yusuf und Markus Freunde, trotz des Verleugnungsversuchs des Namens, trotz aller Unterschiede und in der transkulturellen Überwindung der Vorurteile.

*Fatma und / ile Martha.*  
*Zeynep Bassa (2005)*

Zeynep Bassa erzählt in diesem comichaften Bilderbuch<sup>4</sup> von zwei Mädchen, Fatma und Martha, die sich in der Schule kennenlernen und sich trotz ihrer kulturell unterschiedlich geprägten Lebensweisen befreunden. Eines Tages, als Fatma auf dem Weg nach Hause ist, wird sie auf einige Jungen aufmerksam, die eine Hauswand mit rassistischen Bemerkungen wie „TÜRKEN RAUS“<sup>5</sup> (Bassa 2005: 5) und

<sup>4</sup> Die Bildrechte waren leider nicht zu erhalten.

<sup>5</sup> Diese und die folgenden kapitalisierten Wörter sind aus dem Originaltext zitiert.

„DEUTSCHLAND DEN DEUTSCHEN“ (Bassa 2005: 5) bemalen. Unreflektiert singt Fatma das Gelesene vor sich hin, bis sie entsetzt bemerkt, dass sie dies selbst betrifft, da sie sich der türkischen Kultur zugehörig zu fühlen scheint. Daraufhin überlegt sie sich, wie es wäre, Deutschland verlassen zu müssen, um in der Türkei zu leben. Sie denkt zunächst über die positiven Seiten des Lebens in der Türkei nach, bemerkt jedoch, dass sie in der Türkei ihr deutsches Lebensumfeld und vor allem auch ihre Familie vermissen würde. Sie erinnert sich an einen Hinweis, was zu tun sei, um in Deutschland bleiben zu können: Integration. Sie beschließt, eine „ECHTE DEUTSCHE“ (Bassa 2005: 13) zu finden, um Antworten auf ihre Fragen zu diesem Thema zu bekommen. Auf ihrer Suche begegnet sie auf dem Schulweg einem polnischen und einem asiatischen Mädchen, die auf Grund von Fatmas distanzlos vorgetragenen Fragen flüchten. Fatmas Lehrerin spricht sie auf ihre traurige und nachdenkliche Stimmung an. Fatma öffnet sich ihr gegenüber: „ICH MÖCHTE INTÄKRATZION [sic!] MACHEN. ABER WEISS NICHT, WIE DAS GEHT“ (Bassa 2005: 16). Ihre Lehrerin klärt sie auf, dass Integration ein gemeinsames Zusammenleben und Akzeptanz voraussetzt und macht sie auf Martha, eine neue Mitschülerin, aufmerksam. Es beginnt eine herzliche Freundschaft zwischen Fatma und Martha, die auch von Vorurteilen in Alltagssituationen und Einstellungsunterschieden von Familienmitgliedern begleitet wird, wie im folgenden Abschnitt deutlich wird.<sup>6</sup>

### *Transkulturelle Implikationen*

Fatmas Lehrerin veranlasst das Kennenlernen zwischen Fatma und Martha. Dabei unterhalten sie sich über ihre Wohnorte: „WIR WOHNEN IN DER BAHNHOFSTRASSE ZWISCHEN DEM DÖNERLADEN UND ALDI [sic!] UND DU?“ sagt Fatma, worauf Martha antwortet, dass sie „IN DER KASTANIENALLEE AM WALD“ (Bassa 2005: 17) wohne. Die erste Unterhaltung zeigt die räumliche Separation und damit zusammenhängend eine Ungleichheit der Lebensverhältnisse auf. Fatma wird bereits auf den ersten Seiten des Buches mit einer Aldi-Tüte abgebildet (Bassa 2005: 9), was nicht nur das Schüren von Vorurteilen, sondern auch Unbehagen bei Lesern auslösen könnte. Diese und andere klischeebeladenen Darstellungen in Bild und Text fordern Rezipienten dazu heraus, die Bild-Text-Kombinationen mit Hilfe einer transkulturellen Haltung zu überwinden. Im weiteren Verlauf fragt Fatma Martha, ob sie heute zu ihr kommen dürfe; sie erhält eine Absage mit folgender Begründung:

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<sup>6</sup> Kritisch zu betrachten sind einige im Folgenden genannten Elemente des Bilderbuchs: Die Buchseiten sind zum Teil mit Schrift überfüllt und wirken unübersichtlich, was die Lesefreude einschränken könnte. Grotesk auf Grund ihrer Bedeutungslosigkeit wirkt vor allem eine Kreatur, der Fatma auf dem Schulweg begegnet und sagt: „BRING MICH ZU DEINEM ANFÜHRER!“ (Bassa 2005: 14). Was sich die Autorin hierbei dachte, bleibt im Verborgenen. Für eine weitere große Irritation kann das in Fatmas Unterricht von ihrer Lehrerin eingesetzte Bilderbuch sorgen. Das Cover ist identisch mit dem in diesem Beitrag vorgestellten Bilderbuch. Auf unlogische Weise wird hier das intradiegetische (vgl. hierzu Genette 1989) Bilderbuch im Bilderbuch behandelt.



HEUTE HABE ICH BALLET [sic], MORGEN FLÖTE, ÜBERMORGEN MUSS ICH MIT MAMA EINKAUFEN GEHEN UND NEUE KLAMOTTEN KAUFEN. FREITAGS ÜBE ICH MATHE. NUR SAMSTAG-NACHMITTAG [sic] HABE ICH NICHTS VOR. (Bassa 2005: 17)

Auch hier könnte eine Klischeehaftigkeit in der Zuschreibung eines pedantisch geplanten Tagesablaufs der deutschen Familie zu erkennen sein, die keine spontane Verabredung zulässt. Der bedrückte und verärgerte Gesichtsausdruck Marthas könnte dem Betrachter ihre Unzufriedenheit über diese Planung verraten. Das Gespräch und die Bildsequenz auf Seite 17 werden mit der Bestätigung der Verabredung für den kommenden Samstag beendet. Die Bilder regen dazu an, Klischees und Vorurteile bewusst kritisch wahrzunehmen und als Sprechanlass im Deutschunterricht in sprachdidaktischer Hinsicht lernförderlich aufzubereiten. Die Schüler treten bei der Betrachtung der Identitäten der literarischen Figuren Fatma und Martha in einen kommunikativen Austausch. Dies kann „als Impuls für das Erarbeiten kulturspezifischer Eindrücke“ (Spiegel 2009: 173) dienen und soll von den Schülern selbst bewertet und diskutiert werden, da es wichtig ist, sich „von bestehenden Klischeevorstellungen [...] zu lösen“ (Tekinay 2001: 89).

Die Erzählung wird „AM SAMSTAG...“ (Bassa 2005: 18) fortgesetzt und Martha stellt ihre „NEUE TÜRKISCHE FREUNDIN FATMA“ (Bassa 2005: 18) ihrer Mutter vor, die ihr vorwurfsvoll antwortet: „MARTHA, DU HAST MIR ABER GAR NICHT GESAGT [sic] DASS DEINE NEUE FREUNDIN TÜRKIN IST. NA JA, WAS SOLL'S ... HALLO!“ und fährt fort, dass Fatma „ABER SCHÖNES HAAR [habe], SO FEST UND RABENSCHWARZ“ (Bassa 2005: 19). Auch hier wird wiederholt mit stereotypisierten Bildern gespielt und auf die dunkle Haarfarbe Fatmas fokussiert, wohingegen Martha und ihre Mutter in blonder Haarfarbe dargestellt werden. Auffällig ist auch, dass die nationale Identität Fatmas – und später auch Marthas – explizit betont wird. Im Hinblick auf transkulturelles Lernen ist die Unterteilung in ‚Eigenes‘ und ‚Fremdes‘ bezüglich nationaler Identitäten, wie es hier geschieht, kontraproduktiv, „da diese Zuschreibungen in Einwanderungsgesellschaften als überholt angesehen werden müssen und nicht den Bedürfnissen der Schüler entgegenkommen“ (Engin / Olsen 2009: 14).

Schülern kann in der Diskussion solcher Bilder und Texte deutlich gemacht werden, dass es schon immer nationales Identitätsdenken gab und wohl immer geben wird, eine transkulturelle Haltung jedoch dazu beitragen kann, dass sich solche Denkstrukturen nicht negativ auf die Gesellschaft auswirken.

Die negativen Einstellungen gegenüber nationalen Identitäten prägen auch den weiteren Handlungsverlauf. Die abwertende Aussage von Marthas Mutter gegenüber Türken „LEIDER STEHT HYGIENE BEI DEN TÜRKEN NICHT IMMER AN ERSTER STELLE“ (Bassa 2005: 19), wird durch kindliche Naivität sowie Wohlwollen überdeckt und wird von Martha nicht hinterfragt. Auf das Beja-

hen der Frage von Marthas Tante Christa, ob Fatma und ihre Mutter Deutsch sprechen können, führt sie fort: „ABER DEINE OMA BESTIMMT NICHT! GIB IHR DIESE ADRESSE... ...DA KANN SIE ENDLICH MAL DEUTSCH LERNEN!“ (Bassa 2005: 21). Das Nichtbeherrschen der deutschen Sprache wird zur persönlichen Demütigung genutzt und findet sich auch im Gespräch zwischen Fatma, Martha und Fatmas Opa sowie später auch mit der Tante wieder (Bassa 2005: 23, 25). Auf dem Weg zum „TÜRKISCHEN LADEN“ begegnen die Mädchen Fatmas Opa, der stereotyp mit langem Bart, unterschiedlich gemusterter Kleidung, einer Gebetshaube und Gebetskette am Handgelenk abgebildet ist. Mit erhobenem Zeigefinger belehrt er die Mädchen, dass sie „SCHÖN SPIELEN“ und auf Schweinefleisch, Schnaps und Bier, was Deutsche wohl „VIEL“ konsumieren, verzichten sollen (Bassa 2005: 23). Auf die Frage, was Fatmas Opa damit meine, erklärt ihr Fatma: „NA, JA, WIR DÜRFEN KEIN SCHWEINEFLEISCH ESSEN UND KEIN BIER UND SO'N ZEUG TRINKEN“ und begründet ihre Aussage mit dem Koran, „EIN BUCH, IN DEM ALLES STEHT [sic] WAS DU TUN DARFST UND WAS NICHT“ (Bassa 2005: 24). Es wird anschließend eine Analogie zur Bibel hergestellt, denn „ES IST AUCH EIN BUCH, IN DEM STEHT [sic] WAS DU DARFST UND WAS NICHT“ (Bassa 2005: 24). Diese Textstellen eröffnen Anknüpfungspunkte zum transkulturellen Lernen in den teils verletzenden, klischeehaften Aussagen sowie – hier erstmals angesprochenen – möglichen religiösen Gemeinsamkeiten.

„IM TÜRKISCHEN LADEN“ stellt Fatma ihrer Tante Hatice ihre „DEUTSCHE FREUNDIN MARTHA“ vor (Bassa 2005: 25). Verärgert erklärt sie Fatma, sie solle aufpassen, denn „DEUTSCHE MÄDCHEN [...] SPIELEN MIT JUNGS [...]“ und türkische Mädchen dürfen nicht mit Jungen spielen, da das „NICHT RICHTIG“ (Bassa 2005: 25) sei. Die Mädchen verwerfen auf Grund der belehrenden Bemerkungen bikultureller Art ihren ursprünglichen Plan, gemeinsam ein „BISSCHEN BAKLAVA UND EIN BISSCHEN LOKUM [...]“ zu essen mit den Worten „MEIN HUNGER IST VERGANGEN!“ und „MEINER AUCH!“ (Bassa 2005: 26). Den ständigen Separationsversuchen begegnen Fatma und Martha, indem sie Hand in Hand den Laden verlassen – ein deutliches Zeichen transkultureller Haltung. Fatma will sich ihrer Freundschaft noch einmal gewiss werden und fragt: „SIND WIR DENN NOCH FREUNDE?“ (Bassa 2005: 27). „NA KLAR!“, antwortet Martha und sie schwören, dass sie „FÜR IMMER FREUNDE“ bleiben wollen (Bassa 2005: 27). Das Bilderbuch endet mit einer ähnlichen Bildsequenz wie zu Anfang: Auf der letzten Seite des Buches ist die zu Beginn gezeigte Wand noch einmal abgebildet, mit der von Fatma ergänzten Aufschrift, die Nationalitäten und Kulturen überschreitend und verbindend wirkt: „TÜRKEN NIX [sic] RAUS. FATMA UND MARTA [sic] SINT [sic] GUTE FREUNDE“ (Bassa 2005: 30).

Für transkulturelles Lernen besonders in den Blick zu nehmen sind die ausschließlich ablehnenden Haltungen der Erwachsenen gegenüber der jeweiligen Kultur. Diesen steht die transkulturelle Haltung der Kinder entgegen, die das Posi-

tive und Gemeinsame beider Kulturen mit ihrer eng gelebten Freundschaft herausstellen. Im Literaturunterricht kann die Auseinandersetzung mit den transkulturellen Haltungen der Figuren Fatma und Martha die negativen bikulturellen Haltungen der Erwachsenen obsolet werden lassen. Auf diese Weise können Schüler Identifikationsmöglichkeiten angeboten bekommen und lernen, unterschiedliche Kulturen zu akzeptieren.

*Leyla und Linda feiern Ramadan. Leyla ve Linda Ramazanı kutluyorlar.*  
Arzu Gürz Abay / Sibel Demirtaş (2011)

Das Bilderbuch erzählt die Geschichte einer Freundschaft zwischen Leyla und Linda, die in Köln leben und sich im Urlaub während der Fastenzeit in einer türkischen Hafenstadt namens Ayvalık treffen. In den Sommerferien besucht Leyla ihre Großeltern in der Türkei und Linda reist mit ihrer Mutter auf eine griechische Insel, die sich unweit von Ayvalık befindet. Für Leyla ist dieser Urlaub besonders aufregend, weil sie sich dort in der Zeit des Ramadans befindet und dessen Traditionen kennenlernt. Sie freut sich zudem auf die Ankunft ihrer Freundin Linda. Auch Linda lernt muslimische Bräuche und türkische Speisen kennen und darf das „Zuckerfest“ (Gürz Abay / Demirtaş 2011: 28), das auch als Ramadan-Fest zu bezeichnen ist, miterleben.

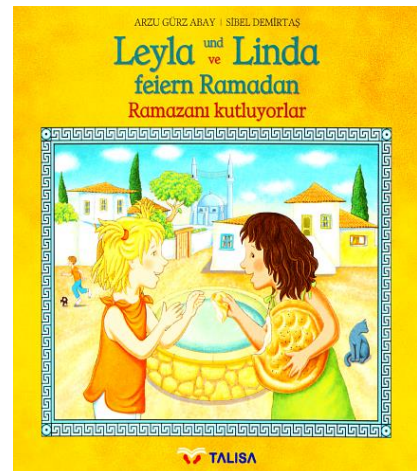


Abb. 1: Buchcover: Gürz Abay, Arzu: *Leyla und Linda feiern Ramadan. Leyla ve Linda Ramazanı kutluyorlar.*

### Transkulturelle Implikationen



Etwas verschlafen, aber sehr aufgeregt, schaut Leyla dem Trommler aus dem Fenster zu. Sie genießt es, die lustigen Gedichte und die Trommel in der Nacht zu hören. Nachdem alle wach geworden sind, trifft sich die ganze Familie dann in Pjamas in der Küche zum Essen. Leylas Opa Halim amüsiert alle am Tisch mit seinen Geschichten aus der Jugend. Es wird gegessen, getrunken und gelacht, bis vor dem Morgengrauen die Fastenzeit beginnt.

Uykulu gözlerle ama heyecanlı pencereden davulcuju seyrededi Leyla. Geceyarısı neşeli manileri ve bu gümbürtülü sesi dinlemek çok hoşuna gidiyordu. Herkes uyanınca da, mutfakta bütün aile pijamalarıyla yemekte buluşuyordu. Leyla'nın dedesi Halim bey, yemek masasında anlattığı gençlik hikâyeleri ile herkesi eğlendirirdi. Yenilir, içilir, neşeli sohbetler edilirdi. Gün ağarmadan da oruç başlardı.

Abb. 2: Gürz Abay, *Arzu: Leyla und Linda feiern Ramadan. Leyla ve Linda Ramazanı kuthuyorlar*, S. 12-13.

Die vorliegende Doppelseite des Bilderbuchs (s. Abb. 2) zeigt eine Szenerie in der Küche der türkischen Familie in Ayvalık: Auf der linken Abbildungshälfte sind Leylas Opa Halim, ihre Oma und ihre Eltern zu sehen, die gemeinsam den Tisch decken. Die rechte Seite der Abbildung gibt den Blick durch das offene Fenster auf die Straße frei. Leyla schaut „dem Trommler aus dem Fenster zu“ (Gürz Abay / Demirtaş 2011: 12). Als Gegenstände türkischer Kultur sind die Teekanne und die Teegläser mit Untertassen, die auf dem Tisch stehen, zu erkennen. Der Krug mit den dazugehörigen Bechern und die Obstschale auf der Kommode neben dem Fenster sind oftmals Bestandteile eines traditionellen Haushalts in der Türkei. Der Trommler hingegen, der einen roten Fes – eine Kopfbedeckung aus rotem Filz, die vor allem zu Zeiten des Osmanischen Reichs getragen wurde –, eine rote Weste und spitze Schuhe trägt, bedarf einer Erklärung:

Es ist eine alte Tradition, während der Ramadanzeit [...] [vor der Morgendämmerung; S.A. / C.M.] von einem Trommler geweckt zu werden. In den alten Zeiten gab es schließlich keinen Wecker. Mit dem lauten Tamtam der Schlegel und zwischen den fröhlichen Melodien singt der Trommler Reime, die er von seinen Vorfahren gelernt hat [...]. (Gürz Abay / Demirtaş 2011: 10)

Der Leser lernt – wie Linda im Bilderbuch – auch im Weiteren über die kulturellen Traditionen, auch im transkulturellen Sinn, wenn Leyla diese auf das Leben in Deutschland transferiert:

Jede Nacht während des Ramadans geht ein Trommler in den Straßen umher, um uns aufzuwecken. Er singt dazu witzige Reime und spielt ganz laut auf seiner Trommel. Stell dir vor, da spielt in Deutschland jemand Trommel auf der Straße; mitten in der Nacht! (Gürz Abay / Demirtaş 2011: 26)

Die Unvoreingenommenheit, die Neugier und die Kulturoffenheit Lindas schaffen transkulturelle Lernmöglichkeiten, die von Schülern adaptierbar sind und sich u. a. in Abbildung 3 widerspiegeln:



Abb. 3: Gürz Abay, Arzu: Leyla und Linda feiern Ramadan. Leyla ve Linda Ramazanı kutluyorlar, S. 20-21.

Halim erklärt Linda den Gebetsruf (im Türkischen ‚Ezan‘ genannt): Es ist der Gebetsrufer, oder Muezzin genannt. Er ruft uns täglich fünf Mal vom Minarett aus zum Gebet. Nun wissen wir, dass es Zeit ist, unseren Gebetsteppich auszurollen und zu beten. (Gürz Abay / Demirtaş 2011: 20)

Der Text wird in einer Gedankenblase illustriert, in der der Gebetsrufer eine Gebetshaube als religiöses Symbol trägt. Die bildlichen Elemente sind hier meist analog zum Text dargestellt, was dem Leser das Verstehen erleichtern kann.

Auf den Lichterketten, die zwischen zwei Minaretten befestigt sind, ist auf türkischer Sprache „Hoşgeldin Ramazan“ (Gürz Abay / Demirtaş 2011: 21) zu lesen, was sich mit ‚Herzlich Willkommen Ramadan‘ [eigene Übersetzung; S.A / C.M.] übersetzen lässt. Leylas Opa erklärt Linda auch, warum gebetet wird und dass beim Gebet der Körper „nach Mekka“ (Gürz Abay / Demirtaş 2011: 22) ausgerichtet ist, eine Stadt in Saudi Arabien. Es ist der Ort, wo die heilige Kaaba ist, ein Haus

Gottes. Alle Muslime auf der ganzen Welt beten in Richtung Kaaba. So sind sie mehrmals am Tag in ihrem Gebet vereint (Gürz Abay / Demirtaş 2011: 22).

Das Kennenlernen der türkischen Kultur vollzieht sich nicht ausschließlich anhand religiöser Aspekte, sondern auch im gemeinsamen Essen nach dem Gebetsruf:

Die Familie und die Gäste setzten sich gerade an den reich gedeckten Tisch, als Linda erschrocken einen Schrei ausstößt und mit einem Sprung fast vom Stuhl fällt: ein lauter Kanonenschuss! Statt eines knurrenden Magens haben jetzt alle ein lächelndes Gesicht, denn der Kanonenschuss verkündet das Ende der Fastenzeit (Gürz Abay / Demirtaş 2011: 24).

Auf dem Tisch sind türkische Speisen wie „Börek mit Spinat und Joghurt“ (Gürz Abay / Demirtaş 2011: 28), gefüllte Weinblätter, Fladenbrot, schwarzer Tee und auch in Ayvalık angebaute Oliven zu sehen, die Linda schon „oft bei Leyla in Köln gegessen [hat], daher kennt sie bereits viele Gerichte der türkischen Küche“ (Gürz Abay / Demirtaş 2011: 28). Mimik und Gestik der Figuren wirken glücklich und verdeutlichen dem Rezipienten ein selbstverständliches Miteinander der Kulturen. Transkulturelle Gemeinsamkeiten zeigen sich auch im Alltagsleben der Mädchen, denn Leyla und Linda gehen in Deutschland in den gleichen Kindergarten und besuchen auch den gleichen Tanzkurs. Sie spielen oft zusammen und die Mütter verstehen sich gut. (Gürz Abay / Demirtaş 2011: 14)

Dem Leser wird Linda somit als eine Figur präsentiert, die die türkische Kultur nicht als fremde ansieht, diese akzeptiert und in ihr Leben integriert. Auch für Leyla scheint es keinerlei ‚kulturelle Hürden‘ zu geben.

*Sinan und Felix. Mein Freund Arkadaşım*  
Aygen-Sibel Çelik / Barbara Korthues (2014)

Aygen-Sibel Çelik erzählt von verschiedenen Alltagssituationen der Freundschaft zwischen Sinan, einem Deutsch und Türkisch sprechenden Jungen, und dem Deutsch sprechenden Felix.<sup>7</sup> An einem Sommertag überlegen sich Sinan und Felix, was sie unternehmen wollen. Während dieses Gesprächs schießt Murat, eine weitere Figur, seinen Ball an Sinans Kopf. Daraufhin unterhalten sich Sinan und Murat auf Türkisch. Felix versteht kein Wort und fühlt sich ausgeschlossen. Sinan überredet Felix zu einem gemeinsamen Fußballspiel mit Murat. Hülya, die mit ihrem neuen Fahrrad und ihrem Hund in die Handlung Einzug hält, spricht ebenso Türkisch mit Sinan und Murat, was Felix erneut sauer werden lässt. Felix schießt Murats Ball versehentlich in den See und fällt beim Versuch, den Ball herauszuholen, hinein. Sinan und Hülya helfen Felix aus dem Wasser, wohingegen Murat nur auf seinen Ball fokussiert ist und den beiden nicht hilft. Völlig durchnässt stellt sich Felix vor Murat und ruft: „Banane!“, was auf Türkisch bedeutet: „Mir doch egal!“ (Çelik / Korthues 2014: o. S.). Der Begriff „Banane“ des Textes wird auf dem Buchcover bildlich illustriert: Sinan sitzt am linken Rand und Felix rechts auf einer überdimensionalen Banane. Der Untertitel des Bilderbuches „MEIN FREUND“ bzw. „ARKADAŞIM“ steht unterhalb der sitzenden Kinder, wobei der deutsche Begriff unter Sinan und der türkische unter Felix zu finden ist. Die enge Freundschaft wird mit den letzten Worten der Erzählung noch einmal verdeutlicht: „„Komml!“, sagte Sinan. ‚Wir gehen!‘ [sic!] Felix war froh, dass er und Sinan sich so gut verstanden. Sinan war eben sein bester Freund.“ (Çelik / Korthues 2014: o. S.)



Abb. 4: Buchcover:  
Çelik, Aygen-Sibel: *Sinan  
und Felix. Mein Freund  
Arkadaşım.*

<sup>7</sup> Ein weiteres Bilderbuch mit transkulturellen Lernpotentialen derselben Autorin befand sich während der Erstellung dieses Beitrags im Druck und trägt den Titel ‚Sinan, Felix und die wilden Wörter‘ (Pulheim 2016).

### Transkulturelle Implikationen

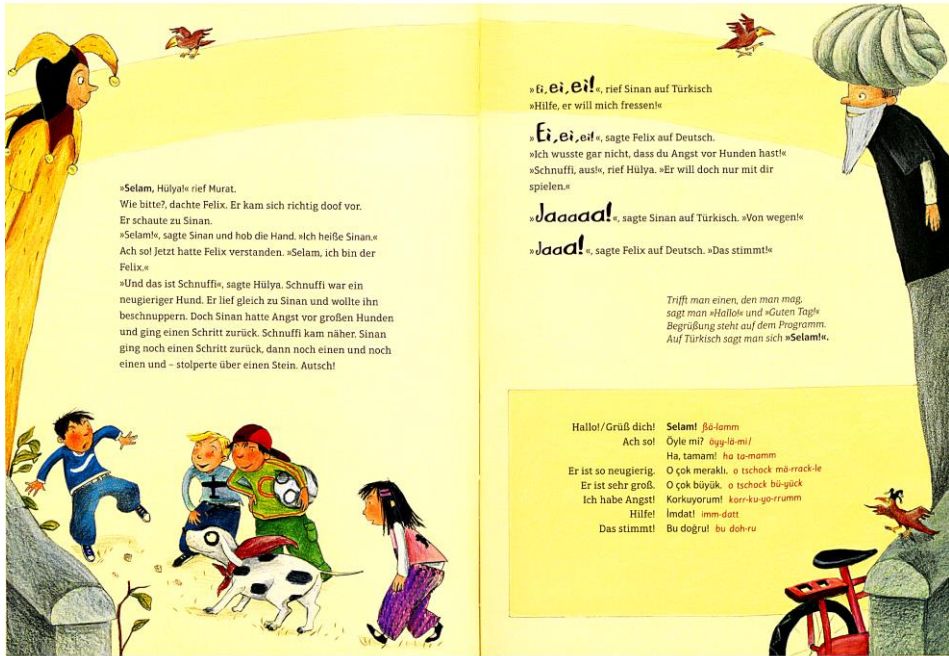


Abb. 5: elik, Aygen-Sibel: *Sinan und Felix. Mein Freund Arkadaım*, o. S.

Auf der prsentierten Doppelseite des Bilderbuches auf Abbildung 5 vollzieht sich die erste Begegnung der Jungen mit Hlyä bilingual: Murat begrt sie mit den Worten: „**Selam**, Hlyä!“ (elik / Korthues 2014: o. S.). Felix kommt „sich richtig doof vor“ (elik / Korthues 2014: o. S.), da er ihn nicht verstehen kann. Auch in anderen Situationen wird der Leser auf die Enttuschung von Felix aufmerksam: „Felix verstand kein einziges Wort. Das machte ihn wtend. Sinan war doch sein bester Freund! Worber hatte er da mit Murat gesprochen?“ (elik / Korthues 2014: o. S.). Wenn sich Murat und Sinan auf Trkisch unterhalten, fhlt sich Felix ausgeschlossen und denkt, dass Murat „bestimmt absichtlich“ so handelt (elik / Korthues 2014: o. S.). Murat versucht ihn zu beruhigen, er solle „mal cool“ (elik / Korthues 2014: o. S.) bleiben, denn „Trkisch ist gar nicht so schwer!“ (elik / Korthues 2014: o. S.). Als transkulturelle Implikation kann hier die Aufforderung zum Lernen einer fremden Sprache als Mittel zur Verstndigung aufgegriffen werden. Seinen ersten Versuch in trkischer Sprache macht Felix, nachdem auch Sinan Hlyä mit „Selam!“ begrt und hinzufgt „Ich heie Sinan.“ (elik / Korthues 2014: o. S.). „Ach so! Jetzt hatte Felix verstanden. »Selam, ich bin der Felix.«“ (elik / Korthues 2014: o. S.). elik greift hier eine alltgliche Situation im Leben der Kinder und Erwachsenen auf, da das Bilderbuch „neben der Mehrsprachigkeit der



Kinder und Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund auch die lebensweltliche Mehrsprachigkeit von einheimischen Kindern und Jugendlichen“ (Engin / Olsen 2009: 7) berücksichtigt und somit ein transkulturelles Lernen anhand des Erkennens von vergleichbaren sprachlichen Situationen wie einer Begrüßung ermöglicht: Türkisch und Deutsch werden hier in einen Begrüßungssatz selbstverständlich eingebunden. Diese gemischte Sprachenverwendung wird nicht hinterfragt oder abgelehnt. Zur näheren Untersuchung des Sprachgebrauchs lassen sich deutsche und türkische Interjektionen und deren unterschiedliche Intonation – diese wird den Rezipienten durch die visualisierte Buchstabengröße und den -umfang erleichtert – auf ihre Transkulturalität hin überprüfen:

**,Ei, ei, ei!’<sup>8</sup>**, rief Sinan auf Türkisch.  
 ‚Hilfe, er will mich fressen!‘  
**,Ei, ei, ei!’**, sagte Felix auf Deutsch.  
 ‚Ich wusste gar nicht, dass du Angst vor Hunden hast!‘  
 ‚Schnuffi, aus!‘, rief Hülya. ‚Er will doch nur mit dir spielen.‘  
**,Jaaaaa!’**, sagte Sinan auf Türkisch. ‚Von wegen!‘  
**,Jaaa!’**, sagte Felix auf Deutsch. ‚Das stimmt!‘  
 (Çelik / Korthues 2014: o. S.)

In einer Vokabelliste sind deutsche und türkische Begriffe aus dem Text gegenübergestellt und mit einer Aussprachehilfe versehen, was Rezipienten zur Übung der Sprachen und ihrer Besonderheiten, zur Überwindung sprachlicher Unterschiede und zum Erkennen von Gemeinsamkeiten motivieren könnte. Zudem unterstützen lyrische Texte das sprachliche transkulturelle Lernen auf einigen Seiten des Bilderbuchs:

Trifft man einen, den man mag,  
 sagt man ‚Hallo!‘ und ‚Guten Tag!‘  
 Begrüßung steht auf dem Programm.  
 Auf Türkisch sagt man sich **,Selam!’** (Çelik / Korthues 2014: o. S.)

Zur Vertiefung dieses Lernens könnten Schüler im Deutschunterricht dazu aufgefordert werden, sich selbst an einer kreativen Schreibaufgabe zu versuchen, indem sie lyrische Texte mit den Wörtern der Vokabelliste entwerfen zur

Hybridisierung und Mischung von Sprachen im schulischen wie im Alltagskontext. Damit wird die Grenze zwischen dem ‚Eigenen‘ und dem ‚Fremden‘ aufgehoben, das heißt, dass Abgrenzungen von ‚eigener Spra-

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<sup>8</sup> Hervorhebungen im Text.

che‘ und ‚fremde(n) Sprache(n)‘ als überholt erkannt werden müssen [...].  
(Engin / Olsen 2009: 7)

Das den Text und die Bilder ergänzende Angebot an Sprachspielen, Worträtseln und Steckbriefen über Sinan und Felix kann zusätzliches Interesse an sprachlichem transkulturellem Lernen wecken.

Rezipienten werden des Weiteren Visualisierungen dargeboten, die transkulturelles Lernen über die Sprache hinaus ermöglichen können: Am linken Seitenrand der Abb. 5 ist Till Eulenspiegel zu sehen, der lächelnd auf den am rechten Seitenrand sichtbaren Nasreddin Hoca blickt. Till Eulenspiegel und Nasreddin Hoca sind zwei Schelme aus deutschen und türkischen Volksgeschichten. Ihre transkulturellen Gemeinsamkeiten, die von Rezipienten intertextuell bzw. intermedial erarbeitet und verglichen werden können, bestehen in ihren jeweiligen scharfsinnigen Scherzen und Streichen, aber auch ihren Lebensweisheiten.

### Schlussbetrachtung

Transkulturelles Lernen gewinnt im Zusammenleben verschiedener Kulturen eine immer größere Bedeutung. Mehrsprachige Bilderbücher, die sprachliche und kulturelle Unterschiede und Gemeinsamkeiten anhand von Text und Bild aufzeigen, sind transkulturelle Lerngegenstände par excellence. Schon an den abgebildeten (Abb. 1 und 4) und nicht abgebildeten Cover sowie bei den zum Großteil bilingualen Titeln wird das Potential für transkulturelles Lernen offenbar: Alle Figuren werden durch ihre Namen, ihre Haarfarben und teilweise auch durch ihre Teints nach deutscher und türkischer Herkunft stereotyp präsentiert und auf diese Weise separiert – besonders beachtlich ist dies, da die vier Bilderbücher von verschiedenen Autoren, Illustratoren und Verlagen produziert wurden. Auffallend verbindend ist das zentrale Motiv, das allen hier vorgestellten Bilderbüchern gemein ist: das beidseitige (Er-)Leben der mit kulturellen Hürden verbundenen und letztlich engen deutsch-türkischen Freundschaften, bei denen sich transkulturelles Lernen u. a. in den kindlichen Figurenhandlungen beobachten lässt.

Die Figuren und deren Handlungen eröffnen Rezipienten bei der multiperspektivischen Suche nach Transkulturalität literar-ästhetische Erfahrungen anhand von Text und Bild. Die Übernahme der Perspektiven literarischer Figuren (vgl. Spinner 2006: 6-16; vgl. Freitag 2007: 197-226) als ein Ziel des Literaturunterrichts lässt sowohl einen kulturellen Perspektivenwechsel als auch eine Reflexion beider Kulturen zu. Ein solcher Literaturunterricht kann ein Nährboden für eine Identifizierung kultureller Unterschiede und Gemeinsamkeiten sein sowie eine Akzeptanz der möglichen Vermischung von Kulturen anbahnen. Rein bildbasiertes transkulturelles Lernen erfolgt mit mehrsprachigen Bilderbüchern über eine anzustrebende Kompetenzerweiterung in *Visual Literacy*, indem Rezipienten über das Bildlesen zu einem Perspektivenwechsel und damit zu einem Verstehen von kulturellen Aspekten angeleitet werden. Wie an den Verweisen auf die Visualisierung und Text-Bild-

Beziehungen dargelegt werden konnte, ist die Ausbildung einer Bildlesekompetenz bei der Bilderbuchrezeption ebenso von Bedeutung wie die zum Textverstehen nötigen Lesekompetenzen. Bildlesen fördert die Imaginationsbildung – hier vor allem auch zur Perspektivenübernahme – sowie auch sprachliche Kompetenzen (vgl. Dehn 2008: 227; vgl. Dehn 2011: 48). Für den Deutschunterricht ist eine integrative didaktische Perspektivierung von mündlichen Sprachkompetenzen im Literaturunterricht interessant – auch in zwei unterschiedlichen Sprachen. In einer Untersuchung mit einem Kind mit Türkisch als Erst- und Deutsch als Zweitsprache zu einer mündlichen Nacherzählung einer deutsch-türkischsprachigen Bilder-geschichte stellt Kalkavan fest, dass sich die Nacherzählungen in beiden Sprachen hinsichtlich der verbalen Wiedergabestrategien inhaltlich und bezüglich ihrer narrativen Struktur nicht signifikant unterscheiden (Kalkavan 2013: 115). Auf Grund dessen kann der Einsatz von Bildergeschichten – und in der Folge auch von mehrsprachigen Bilderbüchern – unabhängig von der Erstsprache einer Förderung mündlichen Nacherzählens dienlich sein. Zur weiteren Sprachförderung könnte die Aussprache und das Hören von Versen, Reimen und klangähnlichen Wörtern beitragen, die beispielsweise in ‚Sinan und Felix‘ zu finden sind. Als Gegenstände diverser Sprechansätze ermöglichen mehrsprachige Bilderbücher eine Wortschatzerweiterung, da sprachlich und bildlich kulturelle Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede aufgeführt werden, die Schüler zu einer Diskussion anregen. Des Weiteren könnte die Betrachtung der unterschiedlichen Typographien von Interesse für eine Sprachsensibilisierung sein.

Neben den didaktischen Überlegungen zu literarischem und sprachlichem Lernen wurde in diesem Beitrag die grundsätzliche Bedeutung transkulturellen Lernens dargestellt. Jeder Mensch – auch schon im Kindesalter – darf selbst entscheiden, ob ihm etwas eigen und fremd ist, ob er von außen, z. B. anhand der Bilderbuchfiguren, an ihn herangetragene Trennungsmöglichkeiten von Kulturen und Sprachen wahrnimmt und überwindet. Diese Freiheit der Einnahme und Ausübung einer transkulturellen Haltung ist gerade in aktuellen Zeiten der durch Migrationsbewegungen zunehmenden Heterogenität unserer Gesellschaften von großer Bedeutung, die im Deutschunterricht von Anfang an thematisiert werden sollte. Ein didaktisch begründeter Einsatz mehrsprachiger Bilderbücher kann hierzu einen Beitrag leisten.

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# Interview mit Selim Özdoğan

## Erfüllen und Verweigern von Erwartungshaltungen

*Daniel Schreiner*

Der Kölner Schriftsteller Selim Özdoğan machte bereits 1995 mit seinem Erstlingswerk *Es ist so einsam im Sattel, seit das Pferd tot ist* in Deutschland auf sich aufmerksam. Der Roman gilt bis heute als ein Kultbuch, das sich weiterhin stetig verkauft.<sup>1</sup> Mit den nachfolgenden Romanen *Nirgendwo & Hormone*, *Mehr*, *Ein gutes Leben ist die beste Rache* und dem Buch zu Fatih Akins Film *Im Juli* gelang es ihm, sich als vielseitiger Schriftsteller der deutschen Literaturszene zu positionieren. Selim Özdoğan hat zudem für einige Jahre eine Kolumne in der Wochenzeitschrift *Die Zeit* verfasst, in der er sich zu politischen und kulturellen Themen in der BRD äußerte. Auf der Internetpräsenz *tumblr* erreicht Özdoğan jenseits seiner Romane mit seinen Audioblogs ein größeres Publikum.<sup>2</sup> Obwohl seine späteren Romane *Die Tochter des Schmieds* und *Heimstraße 52*, die sich mit dem Schicksal einer türkischen Familie in der Türkei und in Deutschland beschäftigen, von einzelnen Rezensionen in Zeitungen und Internetforen gelobt wurden, ist über ihn im deutschen universitären Bereich im Vergleich zu Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Zafer Şenocak oder Feridun Zaimoğlu nur wenig geschrieben und geforscht worden. Im Jahr 2010 wurde Selim Özdoğan für den deutschen Science Fiction Preis für seinen Roman *Zwischen zwei Träumen* nominiert. Nach einem längeren Aufenthalt in der Türkei erschien 2016 sein neuester Roman *Wieso Heimat, ich wohne zur Miete*. Im Juli 2016 nahm Selim Özdoğan zudem das erste Mal am Ingeborg-Bachmann-

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<sup>1</sup> Der Roman verkaufte sich nach Angaben von Selim Özdoğan bislang rund 40.000 mal.

<sup>2</sup> Verfügbar unter <http://worte2014.tumblr.com> [letztes Zugriffsdatum: 26.10.2016].

Literaturwettbewerb in Klagenfurt teil. Derzeit arbeitet er an einem Roman mit dem Arbeitstitel *Wo noch Licht brennt*, welches den letzten Teil der Trilogie markiert, die er mit *Die Tochter des Schmieds* und *Heimstraße 52* begonnen hatte. Im Herbst 2016 war der Autor für ein Semester als *Writer in Residence* an der University of Michigan in Ann Arbor tätig und in den USA auf Lesereise.

Im folgenden Interview – das ich im Rahmen meiner Dissertation über Strategien kultureller und politischer Partizipation in türkisch-deutscher und mexikanisch-amerikanischer Literatur mit ihm geführt habe – gibt Selim Özdoğan Auskunft über seine vielseitige Prosa sowie seine Erfahrungen mit dem deutschen Literaturbetrieb und diskutiert politische Fragen der deutsch-türkischen Erfahrungswelt.

— *Anfang Juli 2016 warst du beim Ingeborg-Bachmann-Literaturwettbewerb „Tage der deutschsprachigen Literatur“ eingeladen. Wie bist du dorthin hingekommen und welche Erfahrungen hast du dort gemacht?*

Ich glaube, ich werde als ein Autor wahrgenommen, der an so etwas eher nicht teilnehmen würde. Was ja Verweigerung ist und somit eine Grenze. Die will ich ja in meinem Leben nicht mehr ... Alles tendiert bei mir dahin, die Grenzen aufzulösen. So gesehen schien der Wettbewerb eine gute Möglichkeit, um eine Fahrkarte durch den gesamten Literaturbetrieb zu bekommen, und ich habe mich daher dort mit einem Text beworben. Hat halt leider nicht geklappt. Ich glaube, man muss, wenn man dorthin geht, für sich selber auch eine klare Vorstellung haben, was dort geschieht. Für mich ist der Ingeborg-Bachmann-Literaturwettbewerb eine Veranstaltung der Literaturkritik, bei der man sich der Deutungshoheit von sieben Juroren ausliefert. Mit dieser Vorstellung ist es mir nicht schwer gefallen, teilzunehmen. Man akzeptiert, dass das eine Veranstaltung ist, die Literaturkritik, in kanonische Bildung investierte Zeit und Elitarismus legitimiert. Das ist der Rahmen, der vorgegeben ist. In dem bewege ich mich. Ich begeben mich also freiwillig in einen gesetzten Rahmen. Ich würde es auch noch mal machen, aber dann mit einem Text, dessen Schwäche ich nicht schon im Vorfeld sehen kann. Ich wusste, man kann meinem Text vorwerfen, dass er zu viel will bzw. nicht genau weiß, was er will. Ich habe gehofft, dass das nicht passiert, aber es ist dennoch eingetreten.

— *In einem deiner Audioblogs hörte ich den Satz „Ich möchte mit dir reden! Austausch!“ Diesen Wunsch nach Kommunikation bzw. die Beschäftigung mit dem Thema des menschlichen Austauschs bzw. des gestörten Austauschs kommt in vielen deiner Romane vor. Was bedeutet Austausch für dich und woher kommt die große Relevanz dieses Themas für deine Prosa?*

Weil Menschen soziale Wesen sind. Mehr Relevanz braucht das Thema nicht. Wir alle sind soziale Wesen. Aber wir bleiben total oft – und das ist das Interessantere für mich – an einer komischen Oberfläche hängen. Es gibt bestimmte Sachen, die wie Kontakt aussehen, aber nichts mit Kontakt zu tun haben. Ein billiges, aber zeitgenössisches Beispiel dafür ist Facebook. Du bist in Kontakt mit Leuten, aber das ist nicht das, was ich unter Kontakt verstehe. Es geht ja nicht um einen reinen



Informationsaustausch, es geht um etwas, was darunter liegt. Die Verbindung, die stattfindet, ist idealerweise eine andere. Ich fand beispielsweise Gespräche über das Wetter früher scheiße, da wir alle sehen, wie das Wetter heute ist. Und wie du das empfindest, ist doch scheiß egal ... Aber wenn das deine Möglichkeit ist, in Kontakt mit dem Gegenüber zu treten, ist das doch super. Es geht nicht um das Wetter, sondern um die Wärme, die Freundlichkeit, die Nähe, das Interesse, das man in die Worte legen kann. Es geht auch um dein Wesen. Darum geht es ja immer. Du willst dich mit Leuten verbinden oder verbunden fühlen. Ich glaube, das ist ein universelles Bedürfnis für die allermeisten. Es gibt Ausnahmen, es gibt immer Ausnahmen.

— *Gül und Fuat aus deinem Roman „Heimstraße 52“ reden nicht miteinander und leben aneinander vorbei. Wieso ist das so?*

Es gibt keinen Raum dafür, es gibt allein kulturell schon keinen Raum dafür. Das ist etwas relativ Modernes, eine Partnerschaft, die auf tatsächlicher Kommunikation aufbaut und nicht darauf, dass man irgendwann die Eigenheiten des Partners verstanden hat und sich dementsprechend verhält. Man kann ja ein beliebiges deutsches Beispiel von vor 50, 60 Jahren nehmen und hat die gleiche Form der Nichtkommunikation. Wo hätten sie es denn auch lernen sollen? Es gab keinen Raum! Die andere Frage ist jedoch, muss es den geben? Ist das, was damals passiert ist, unbedingt falsch? Nein! Das Bedürfnis nach Kommunikation hast du vielleicht woanders erfüllt bekommen. Ich finde das nicht unbedingt schlimm. Es ist nicht meine Vorstellung von einer Partnerschaft, aber das Konzept von Partnerschaft hat sich auch gewandelt. Und man glaubt ja immer, dass das, was man heute glaubt, richtig ist, und das, was man früher geglaubt hat, falsch ist.

— *Du bist in Köln-Mühlheim geboren worden. Warst du im Sommer 2014 auf der Kundgebung „Birlikte“, bei der an den Nagelbombenanschlag der NSU in der Keupstraße vor 10 Jahren erinnert wurde? Wie fandest du die Veranstaltung und wie hast du den damaligen Anschlag erlebt?*

Ich habe damals schon nicht mehr auf der Rheinseite gewohnt und ich habe das so erlebt, wie ich die meisten Sachen erlebe ... das läuft immer so ein bisschen an mir vorbei. Ich bin kein Nachrichtenkonsument. Das ist ein komplexes Thema, da kommen mehrere Fässer zusammen, die man da aufmachen kann.

Punkt 1 muss man vielleicht warnend voraus schicken. Du musst dir überlegen ... ich bin gar nicht in Mühlheim geboren, das steht nur in Wikipedia, aber ich bin da aufgewachsen. Ich bin da zur Schule gegangen. *Birlikte* war ein Riesenkulturprogramm, da sind jede Menge Menschen aufgetreten. Ich stand dann irgendwann da und dachte, warum hat mich eigentlich keiner gefragt. Warum fragen die niemanden, der von hier kommt? Irgendjemand von denen – nicht alle müssen mich kennen – aber irgendjemand hätte darauf kommen können, dass man auch ... Alles, was ich jetzt sage, muss mit Vorsicht genossen werden. Vielleicht bin ich ja nur

beleidigt. Jedenfalls habe ich angefangen zu überlegen, ob das nicht auch ein Indiz dafür ist, dass man gerne über die Leute, aber nicht mit ihnen redet.

Das heißt nicht, alle müssen türkische Freunde haben und bei denen zu Besuch gewesen sein und mit ihnen Tee getrunken haben. Nein! Aber es ist auch ein Zeichen von fehlendem Kontakt auf eine Art. Ob das jetzt auf *Birlikte* zutrifft oder nicht ist ja letztendlich zweitrangig. Die Frage ist häufig nicht „Wie können wir mit ihnen reden?“, sondern „Wie können wir für sie etwas Gutes tun“, was sie schon wieder in so eine doofe Opferrolle hineindrängt.

Punkt 2: Dieser ganze NSU-Komplex, zu dem es viel zu sagen gäbe ... vielleicht so ... ich hab trotz NSU nie Angst vor Rechts gehabt in diesem Land. Das kann damit zu tun haben, dass ich von meiner Erscheinung her nicht eindeutig als jemand identifizierbar bin, von dem man sagen könnte: „Boah, der gehört hier aber nicht hin“. Der NSU ist eine überschaubare Größe, die man einordnen kann. Wovor ich eigentlich viel mehr Angst habe, ist diese ganze Mitte, die sich halt nicht für rechts hält. Das ist für mich ein Riesenproblem. Davor habe ich Angst. Das sind die Leute, die einem Sarrazin Raum geben. Das sind ja keine Rechten, die wen einladen, sondern das sind immer Leute ... Wenn der Satz schon so anfängt: „Verstehen sie mich nicht falsch, ich hab ja selbst türkische Freunde.“ Alles, was danach kommt, ist Rassismus. Aber dieser Mensch hält sich nicht für rechts. Tut der wirklich nicht, der meint das auch nicht böse, das ist mir klar. Aber das kann ich nicht einordnen. Ich weiß nicht, wie viele es davon gibt. Ich habe absolut Angst davor. Ein weiteres Beispiel dafür ist, wie Begriffe das Bewusstsein und die Gesinnung dahinter nicht verbessern, sondern verbergen. Das hab ich ja quasi live miterlebt. Am Anfang waren wir Gastarbeiter, dann sind wir Ausländer geworden, dann sind wir Migranten geworden, dann sind wir zu Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund geworden und dann sind wir – unterwegs nach 2001 – auch noch Muslime geworden. Aber vergessen wir das. Von ‚Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund‘ bis ‚Dönermord‘ war der Weg so kurz, dass ich denke, was ist denn passiert? Es ändert sich nichts in den Köpfen dieser Menschen. ‚Dönermorde‘ war für ein paar Tage okay und dann hat man es stillschweigend unter den Tisch fallen lassen.

Aber man muss dieser Mitte den rassistischen Spiegel vorhalten. Und ich bin nicht so, dass ich sage, die sind alle böse. Nein, die wollen mir nichts Böses. Das ist mir bewusst, die haben aber auch kein Bewusstsein für eine Augenhöhe, auf der man sich begegnen könnte. Menschen sagen: „Aber wenn ich in Italien bin, bin ich auch mit Zuschreibungen von außen konfrontiert, das ist normal, das ist menschlich.“ Ja, aber der Unterschied ist, dass ich hier nicht fremd bin, ich gehöre dazu, ich bin hier nicht als Tourist.

— *Es tut mir leid, aber ich muss mit dir über „Vibrationshintergründe“<sup>3</sup> reden. Deine Prosa verweigert sich kraftvoll der Verinnahmung und Einsortierung in irgendwelche Konzepte von*

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<sup>3</sup> Selim Özdoğan hat den Begriff als Überschrift für eine Glosse über den Terminus ‚Migrationshintergrund‘ verwendet. Der Text erschien in der Wochenzeitung *Die Zeit* („Unser Vibrationshintergrund“, 13.05.2009) und in dem von Deniz Utlu herausgegeben Kulturmagazin *Freitext* (*Freitext* Nr. 18/2011). Die Kategorisierung ‚Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund‘ muss demnach als diskursiver

*„Migrationsliteratur“ und Bindestrich-Identitäten. Wie gelingt dir das? Wie lange wird es dauern, dass wir alle so frei und grenzenlos sehen können und übereinander sprechen können, ohne jemanden ‚identitär‘ einzusortieren? Serdar Somuncu hat gestern auf dem Birlikte-Festival auch sehr optimistisch [Selim lacht: Der spricht optimistisch? So kann ich mir den gar nicht vorstellen!] von einer neuen deutschen Identität der Vielen gesprochen. Wo geht es hin?*

Es hat lange gedauert bis ich verstanden habe, dass Erwartungen, die man aufgrund meines Namens hat, zu verweigern, auch Unfreiheit bedeutet. Auf einmal macht man Dinge – die man gerne machen würde – aus dieser Verweigerungshaltung nicht. Dass ich anders wahrgenommen werde, wird mir mit diesem Namen erhalten bleiben. Da führt kein Weg dran vorbei. Und so lange wir Identität als etwas begreifen, das sich klar abgrenzen lässt, werden wir auch mit diesem Identitätsbegriff nie weiter kommen. Die Kunst war es, einfach irgendwann zu sagen: Ich verweigere nicht und ich erfülle nicht. Ich bin frei davon.

Meine literarische Bildung ist ja autodidaktisch. Ich habe gelesen, was mich interessiert und habe dann lange Jahre geglaubt, ich wäre auf eine Art und Weise viel weniger gebildet als viele meiner Kollegen, bis ich festgestellt habe: „Also okay, ich kenne vieles nicht, was die gelesen haben, aber die kennen auch nicht vieles, was ich gelesen habe. Die haben den Namen noch nie gehört!“ Ich kann die *Buddenbrooks* einordnen, aber ich fand es langweilig zu lesen und habe es weggelegt. Die haben keine Ahnung, wenn ich sage, ich habe *Angst und Schrecken in Las Vegas* von Hunter S. Thompson fünfmal gelesen. Das haben die nie gehört. Ist aber auch egal. Ich bin ja letzten Endes ein sehr amerikanisch geprägter Autor und kein deutsch oder türkisch geprägter Autor. Ich verstehe Literatur auch als etwas Internationales. Und ja, Literatur ist auch immer etwas Nationales, weil wir sie A nun mal in einer Sprache schreiben müssen und weil sie B auch etwas über ein Land aussagt, dessen Sprache sie benutzt. Aber ganz am Ende ist Literatur international und wir könnten uns auch gesellschaftlich dahinentwickeln, dass Vielfalt gelebt wird und nicht nationalstaatliche Trennungen gemacht werden. Aber ich fürchte, die Literatur wird dabei hinterherhinken. Mein Lieblingsbeispiel ist Hiphop. Hiphop wird als internationale Kultur verstanden, aber wir haben heute außer ein paar Feuilletonisten niemanden, der mit dem Finger auf die Hiphoper mit Migrationshintergrund zeigt und sagt „Die haben eine andere kulturelle Herkunft.“ Man muss die Musik nicht mal gut finden, aber das sind in der Innensicht alles deutsche Hiphoper. Die bringen deutschen Hiphop nach vorne, unabhängig von ihrer Herkunft.

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Diskriminierungsvorgang verstanden werden. Siehe dazu auch die treffende Analyse der Schriftstellerin Lena Gorelik: „Ein wenig später sprach man von Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund, um einen Namen für Menschen wie mich zu haben. Man gestand den Ausländern also mittlerweile zu, auch – oder in erster Linie – Mensch zu sein. Ein echter Fortschritt. Das befanden dann auch Wissenschaftler, Politiker, Öffentlichkeitsmacher für politisch korrekt, und der Begriff blieb, bis er wie eine ansteckende Krankheit um sich griff, sich verbreitete wie ein Virus. Jedermann erleichtert, sich endlich unproblematisch zu dieser problematischen Masse von Menschen äußern zu können, nicht für eine Sekunde in Erwägung ziehend, dass diese Menschen, für die man einen so schönen politisch korrekten Namen gefunden hatte, so heterogen sind, wie es Gruppen nur sein können.“ (Gorelik, Lena (2012): *Sie können aber gut Deutsch*, München, S. 33)

Das liegt A daran, dass die das auch als internationale Kultur begreifen und dass die alle auch amerikanischen Hiphop hören, und B daran, dass Vielfalt einfach schon gelebt wird. Das ist ja so. Das können wir nicht mehr wegdiskutieren. Das wird ja tatsächlich gelebt. In der Literatur, das sind ja gerade die Leute, die gerne in der Regel auf sowas Stumpfes wie Hiphop herabschauen und das für dumm halten und unmusikalisch und was weiß ich. Der Wille zur Differenzierung führt halt auch zu Schubladendenken. Das liegt in der Natur der Sache begründet, dass die Leute, die wir als Literaten für dumm halten, auf eine Art schon zwei Schritte weiter sind. Sehr genaue rationale Unterscheidungen führen zu Ausgrenzung und zur Betonung der Andersartigkeit.

— *Du hast in deinen Audioblogs verstärkt deine Meinung zu Maxim Billers These der „langweiligen deutschen neuen Literatur“<sup>4</sup> wiedergegeben und die Position bezogen, dass man Literatur nicht ihre Herkunft vorwerfen kann, dass Literatur Grenzen und Schranken aufhebt. Was treibt dann stattdessen jemanden wie Akif Pirinçici<sup>5</sup> um? Denkst du über sowas nach oder lässt dich das kalt und nervt es dich gar, deswegen gefragt zu werden, nur weil du auch einen türkischen Nachnamen hast?*

Das interessiert mich ja, das ist nicht schlimm. Ich kann mich nur nicht richtig darüber aufregen. Man kann das so und so sehen. Ich sehe das als Verlogenheit: Wir geben den Leuten die Möglichkeit, sich über Pirinçici's Position zu empören, indem wir darüber berichten. Das hat auch einen verstärkenden Effekt für Leute, die anderer Meinung sind. Aber ich glaube, dass diesen Leuten viel zu viel Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt wird. Das ist die Medienwelt, in der wir leben. Warum kriegt denn dieser Mann so viel Platz? Und drei Wochen bei Amazon auf Platz 1 gewesen zu sein ist überhaupt kein hinreichender Grund. Es gibt andere Bücher, die bei Amazon auch auf Platz 1 gewesen sind. Das hat aber niemanden interessiert. Woher kommt das? Wieso kriegen die so viel Raum? Warum durfte Thilo Sarrazin überall hingehen? Ich verstehe nie genau, wie diese Sachen zusammenhängen ... So ist aber Feuilletondenken in Deutschland. Natürlich habe ich auch Theorien dazu. Aber der Weg in meinem Kopf von einem Comedian wie Bülent Ceylan zu Akif Pirinçici ist nicht so weit. Die dürfen das. Die haben den richtigen Namen und die dürfen dann Sachen sagen, die eigentlich tabu sind und als rassistisch gewertet werden. Wir benutzen diese Leute, um bestimmte Positionen zu vertreten, um bestimmte Haltungen zu behaupten. Wenn Akif Pirinçici in einer Rede einen strafrechtlich nicht relevanten KZ-Vergleich bringt und sein Verlag daraufhin seine Bücher aus dem Programm nimmt, ist das marketingtechnisch eine

<sup>4</sup> Biller, Maxim (2014): „Letzte Ausfahrt Uckermark“, in: *Die Zeit*, 20.02.2014.

<sup>5</sup> Akif Pirinçici war der erste türkisch-deutsche Bestsellerautor. Sein Katzen-Krimi *Felidae* aus dem Jahr 1989 wurde sogar ins Englische übersetzt und verfilmt. Seit einigen Jahren ist Pirinçici nun als Verfasser verschwörungstheoretischer ‚Sachbücher‘ einmal mehr erfolgreich. Sein Buch *Deutschland von Sinnen. Der irre Kult um Frauen, Homosexuelle und Zuwanderer* (2014) und die Folgeveröffentlichungen sind allesamt frauenfeindlich, rassistisch und homophob.

kluge Entscheidung des Verlages, aber es steht niemand auf und fragt nach der Freiheit der Kunst. Danach fragen wir, wenn wir einen linken Platzhalter haben. So existieren diese Figuren, um öffentlich Haltung zu behaupten. 1964 bekommt Sidney Poitier den Oscar, dann kann man behaupten, Schwarze sind ja gar nicht benachteiligt. Dann müssen sie jahrelang den Clown machen wie Eddie Murphy. Dann kommt Denzel Washington Jahrzehnte später und wird eigentlich im Grunde wieder als Platzhalter missbraucht.

— *Ein Buch will vermarktet werden. Gibt es moralische Grenzen für dich, die du nicht überschreiten willst?*

Da ist aber eine sehr schwer zu beantwortende Frage. Moral ist ja in der Regel ein willkürlich gesetzter Wert. Es hat keinen Wert, dass ich eine andere Vorstellung von Literatur habe und mir denke: „Aber das Literaturverständnis dieser anderen Leute ist halt falsch.“ Ich komme nirgendwo hin damit. Ich bin nicht derjenige, der die Spielregel bestimmt. Also wenn du bei einem Spiel mitspielen willst, musst du dich auf eine Art auch an die Spielregeln halten. Dass man korrumpierbar ist, kann schon sein. Aber der Gradmesser für: „Würdest du das machen oder halt nicht“, ist nicht moralisch, sondern eine Frage nach: „Bleibt das Schreiben eine schöne Beschäftigung für mich? Hilft das Schreiben Grenzen aufzulösen?“ Wenn die Antwort ja ist, ist alles gut, wenn es um etwas anderes geht, kann ich es nicht machen.

— *Im Roman „DZ“ kritisiert Ziggys Tochter die Verlogenheit der europäischen Gesellschaft und träumt vom wilden Leben in der DZ. Was ist es, was sie kritisiert und was davon siehst du schon heute in Europa angelegt?*

Das ist ein ganz grundsätzliches Problem, glaube ich, von Gesellschaften, die zu groß werden. Irgendwann gehen halt Kontakte verloren. Und Dinge, die keine Kontakte sind, werden dir als Kontakt verkauft. Die gesamte Kulturbranche, wir können das auch Unterhaltungsindustrie nennen, ist ja letzten Endes ein Beispiel dafür, dass in dem System, in dem wir leben, eine gewisse – Verlogenheit ist nicht das Wort dafür – eine gewisse Mehrdeutigkeit enthalten ist. Nehmen wir das Buch als Kulturgut. Es ist nur ein Produkt der Unterhaltungsindustrie, das muss man vermarkten, das muss sich so und so oft verkaufen. Der Autor will davon leben. Der Verlag will davon leben. Das unterscheidet sich im Grunde nicht von einer Seife, die du verkaufst. Aber dann haben wir hier die Möglichkeit ... du kannst mit dem Text in Kontakt treten. Der löst etwas bei dir aus und das ist es, was der Autor, der am Ausgangspunkt der Kette steht, sich wünscht. Am anderen Ende der Kette ist der Leser, der sich vielleicht das selbe wünscht und dazwischen ist es einfach nur ein zu vermarktendes Produkt. Punkt! Und solange das ein zu vermarktendes Produkt ist, interessiert nicht der Kontakt, sondern der Markt interessiert. Dadurch kommt sowas zustande, was man Verlogenheit nennt. Ich will Kontakt, aber ich will die Bücher auch verkaufen. Das geht nicht genau in die Richtung deiner Frage ... Aber ich glaube, so entstehen diese Sachen. Es kommen dann

einem Dinge verlogen vor, weil Interessen erst mal behauptet werden, aber wenn man nachfragt, geht es doch um etwas Anderes. Das Interesse der Drogenpolitik ist ja nicht: „Wir wollen aufgeklärte mündige Bürger haben, die Dinge selber für sich entscheiden können“, sondern das Interesse der Drogenpolitik ist irgendetwas anderes, aber wir tun so, als würde es um die Gesundheit der Bürger gehen.

— *Der Ungrund, ein Wort, das ja auf den Philosophen Jakob Böhme zurückgeht, bezeichnet den Ursprung aller Dinge und bei dir heißt es „Am Anfang war Klang“!*

*Die Idee scheint auch in „Zwischen zwei Träumen“ durch. Die Romane „DZ“ und „Zwischen Zwei Träumen“ wirken auf mich wie Zwillingsschwestern, die zusammengehören. Ist das so und was sind das für Gesellschaften, in denen die beiden Romane spielen?*

Dass die so ein bisschen ähnlich sind, weiß ich, aber was passiert ist ... ich habe zwei Antworten dazu in meinem Kopf. Die Idee, dass du Träume aufzeichnen kannst, ist ja nicht meine. Ganz eindeutig. Da kommen die meisten Menschen von ganz alleine drauf. Bei *Zwei Träumen* ging es mir darum, was kann man daraus basteln? Dass das dann eine spirituelle Komponente bekommt, liegt in meinem Charakter begründet. Das Schöne war, auf einmal eine freie Fläche zu haben. Normalerweise, die anderen Sachen, die ich geschrieben habe, hatten immer einen festen Bezugsrahmen, den wir Realität nennen, an die sich die Handlung halten musste. In der *Heimstraße* kann nicht plötzlich einer anfangen zu fliegen. Das ist nicht schlimm. Da ist immer noch viel Platz, du musst dich halt nur an gewisse Grenzen halten. Bei *Zwischen zwei Träumen* habe ich festgestellt, „Boah ist das geil, jetzt kannst du machen, was du willst!“ Es war sehr schön zu schreiben und ich wollte das noch einmal haben. Ich würde das ein weiteres Mal so machen – dass diese beiden Romane alternative Realitäten behandeln und drogenlastig sind, ist dabei eher ein Zufall. Mein jüngster Roman *Wieso Heimat, ich wohne hier doch nur zur Miete*, geht in eine ähnliche Richtung. In ihm wird aber deutlich weniger mit veränderten Bewusstseinszuständen gearbeitet, sondern mit kulturellen Realitäten, die ja auch jeder hat. Das ist dein Wahrnehmungszustand. Bei Drogen ist das den Leuten einfacher zu erklären, aber es gibt auch Wahrnehmungszustände eines Veganers oder eines regelmäßigen Burger-Essers und ihren Blick auf Deutschland. All das sind ja auch verschiedene Perspektiven.

— *Nochmal zum Ungrund zurück ....*

Klang ... das ist so ein Klischee-Standardspruch, aber du wirst viele Autoren finden, die doch lieber Musiker geworden wären, wenn sie gekonnt hätten, doch dann fehlte das Zutrauen oder Talent. Aber Sprache ist letzten Endes immer auch Klang. Das wird in Deutschland nicht unbedingt wahrgenommen. Da wird auch gerne behauptet, die deutsche Sprache sei nicht melodisch. Das ist für mich immer ein Hinweis darauf, die eigene Unfähigkeit der Sprache anzulasten. Sprache ist für mich immer Klang und man kann das auch auf verschiedene Art und Weise erklären. Wenn du im Nebenraum Leute hast, die sich unterhalten, aber du kannst die Wörter nicht verstehen, kriegst du trotzdem eine Ahnung, was dort für eine Stim-

mung herrscht. Für mich ist Klang total wichtig. Schreiben ist immer auch: Ich muss die Sätze zu Ende schreiben, die müssen passen, die müssen stimmen. Du kannst sehr viel über Klang wettmachen, was dir an – oh ein Eigentor – sprachlicher Qualität fehlt.

— *Die Übersetzung der Tontafel in DZ war sprachlich sehr erfindungsreich ...*

Ja, aber es hat irgendwann auch keinen Spaß mehr gemacht. Ich musste eine Sprache finden, die sich deutlich von der Alltags- und Schriftsprache unterscheidet und immer noch lesbar ist.

— *Hat dir das Türkische dabei geholfen?*

Nein, da helfen ... Referenzpunkte könnte ich dir insgesamt so viele aufzählen, das ist aber egal. Die Idee, dass du eine Sprache hast, die alles über Verben ausdrückt, finde ich naheliegend. Da bin ich aber nicht alleine darauf gekommen, die habe ich von Borges. Dann habe ich ein Buch gelesen von einem ehemaligen Missionar: Dan Everett, *Das glückliche Volk*, so heißt das auf Deutsch, oder *Das glücklichste Volk*. Der versucht die Sprache des Stammes in Brasilien, bei dem er gelebt hat, die eine ganze besondere Struktur hat, zu beschreiben. In wie viele Richtungen kann Sprache denn gehen. Brauchen wir Wörter für Farben ...?

— *Welche Werte sind in diesen zukünftigen Welten der Romane „DZ“ und Zwischen zwei Träumen wichtig? Wie definieren sich die Menschen dort? Die Protagonisten reisen viel und sind an exotischen Orten, nationale Identitäten scheinen weniger eine Rolle zu spielen?*

Nationale Identitäten sind ja etwas sehr Künstliches, die zur Abgrenzung dienen. Das hat mich nie interessiert. Eine kulturelle Identität ist da etwas anderes, ist aber beide Male nicht Thema. In *Zwischen zwei Träumen* wollte ich eine Welt beschreiben, die sich von der heutigen unterscheidet, auch in den unerheblichen Details. In *DZ*, das ist ja egal, ob wir dieses Europa oder die *DZ* haben, es ist hier wie dort ein kapitalistisches System, das regiert. Wir verkaufen Träume, wir verkaufen Drogen, das sieht nach Freiheit aus. Weil etwas da drüben illegal ist, bei uns legal ist. Aber letztlich entscheidet der Marktwert und der ist wichtiger als die Freiheit.

— *Ist diese Zukunft so viel anders als unsere Gegenwart?*

Nein, ich finde nicht. Was einfach damit zu tun hat, dass wir immer noch ein kapitalistisches System haben, und das diktiert. Das ist kein Unterschied und das ist ja die Welt, in der wir leben. Es ist immer total schön mit so Worthülsen wie Demokratie und Meinungsfreiheit um sich zu schmeißen, aber man muss sich nichts vormachen. Das zählt alles nichts. Das sind nicht die vorrangigen Interessen. Auch wenn so getan wird, als würden wir weltweit Demokratie befürworten. Erst wollte man das Christentum überall in der Welt verbreiten. Und dann sagte man: „Das war ein Fehler ... machen wir jetzt nicht mehr, fanden wir im Nachhinein auch doof, aber Demokratie als Wert finden wir okay, das wollen wir einführen. Dass Portugal, Deutschland, Spanien, Italien, Griechenland nicht so eine astreine demo-

kratische Geschichte in den letzten 100 Jahren hatten, ist auch egal. Wir haben das erfunden, wir kennen uns damit aus. Und die anderen haben das gefälligst auch einzuführen.“ Dabei geht es in erster Linie um wirtschaftliche Interessen. Ich weiß ja auch keinen Weg daraus oder eine bessere Gegenwelt, aber so sind das letzten Endes nur Details, die anders sind, sowohl Europa als auch die *DZ* sind beides im Grunde repressive Systeme.

— *Hast du einen gewissen Anspruch, mit deiner Arbeit etwas verändern zu wollen?*

Nein, ich möchte nicht die Leute verändern, aber ich möchte in den Kopf von Leuten. Es gibt kein Ziel dahinter außer Kontakt. Die Bücher sind nur ein Ausdruck von meinem täglichen Leben. Und da wünsche ich mir schon ein anderes Bildungssystem, das dem einzelnen mehr Autorität und mehr Autonomie beibringt und zugesteht. Essen ist ein gutes Beispiel. Verbraucherschutzverbände klagen darüber, dass die Verpackung Falsches verspricht. Die Klage ist berechtigt. Aber wir können alle lesen und schreiben. Wir können alle dieses Ding im Supermarkt umdrehen und sehen, was denn die Zutaten sind. So viel ‚Autoritäten in Frage stellen‘ würde ich mir schon wünschen. Meine Arbeit als Autor könnte dazu führen, den Leuten einen Geschmack von Freiheit zu geben. Aber der Anspruch ist jetzt nicht: „Ich will die Leute ändern“. Ich will, dass wir in einer besseren Welt leben. Ich weiß nicht, wie eine bessere Welt hier aussehen sollte, aber ich weiß, es wird einfach sehr viel Scheiße als Lebensmittel verkauft. Dann hast du auf der anderen Seite dogmatische Veganer, ich denke dann: „Ey Alter, du bist Großstadtkind, sonst wärs du nicht so.“ Leute, die Fleisch essen, sind nicht per se schlecht. Und die, die sich vegan ernähren, sind nicht alle gut. Von diesem komischen Schwarzweißdenken einfach mal wegzukommen und von dieser Überzeugung wegzukommen, dass man selber auf jeden Fall alles richtig macht. Nur deshalb kommen wir auf so Ideen wie Demokratieexport.

— *Krishna Mustafa, der Protagonist in deinem jüngsten Roman „Wieso Heimat, ich wohne zur Miete“ bricht ebenfalls mit diesem Schwarzweißdenken und stellt mit seiner Naivität und Neugierde Erwartungshaltungen und stereotype Sichtweisen in der Türkei und der BRD generell in Frage ...*

*Wieso Heimat, ich wohne zur Miete* lebt davon, einseitige Rollenzuschreibungen sichtbar zu machen und nicht nur die eine Seite sichtbar zu machen, sondern gleichzeitig zu zeigen, dass die eigene Sicht auf die Rolle, die man spielt, auch nicht richtig sein muss. Und es somit eigentlich immer bei jedem ‚Entweder-oder‘ noch eine dritte Möglichkeit gibt. Wir haben uns aber angewöhnt zu glauben, wer nicht auf der einen Seite steht, der steht auf der anderen. Dichotomien zu denken hat Tradition, aber ich glaube, dass der Reflex zu urteilen sich mit der Beschleunigung der Medien verstärkt hat. Und dass eine Normierung stattfindet, die wenig Zwischentöne zulässt. Identitäten werden medial fabriziert. 60% der Türken in Deutschland haben Erdoğan gewählt. Das ist die medial verbreitete Wahrheit, die ein Bild vom Türken entwirft. Die statistische Wahrheit ist, dass ca. 3 Millionen türkisch-



stämmige Menschen in Deutschland wohnen, von denen 1,4 Millionen aufgrund von Alter und Pass wahlberechtigt in der Türkei sind. Von diesen 1,4 Millionen haben 34% gewählt. Von diesen 34% haben 59,7% Erdoğan gewählt. Das sind ca. 220.000 Menschen. Was ja nicht ganz 60% von 3 Millionen sind. So wird ein einseitiges Bild generiert.

Das Beispiel illustriert dies nicht zu 100 Prozent, aber es zeigt, wie die Medien grundsätzlich arbeiten und du dann nur eine Seite wahrnimmst. Niemand sagt, die Mehrheit hat nicht gewählt. Krishna Mustafa aus *Wieso Heimat* ist jemand, der das vorgefertigte Bild aus Neugierde und aus seiner eigenen Logik heraus hinterfragt. Dabei bemerkt er, wie wenig Substanz diese Bilder haben. Er kann erkennen, dass die Fragen, die an ihn herangetragen werden, oft ins Leere greifen, weil sie die Wahlmöglichkeit von vornherein beschränken und polare Lösungen suggerieren. Die Welt ist rund, es gibt nicht die eine oder die andere Seite, Grenzen sind immer nur willkürlich gesetzt.

— *Vielen Dank für das Gespräch!*

Ich danke!

### **Werkverzeichnis Selim Özdoğan**

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**Almut Küppers/Barbara Pusch/Pinar Uyan  
Semerci (Hg.) (2016): *Bildung in transnationalen  
Räumen Education in Transnational Spaces*,  
Wiesbaden (297 S.)**

*Emre Arslan*

In einer Anzeigenkampagne der ‚Deutschlandstiftung Integration‘ zwischen 2009 und 2011 strecken öffentlich bekannte Migranten aus Deutschland ihre Zungen heraus. Auf dem Plakat steht das folgende Motto: „Raus mit der Sprache. Rein ins Leben“. Nur so viel (oder besser: so wenig) Information reicht für viele Menschen in Deutschland aus, um zu verstehen, worum es in dieser Kampagne geht: Sprache ist der Schlüssel, der die Tür zur Integration in Deutschland aufschließt. Die Stiftung erstrebte anscheinend eine möglichst sichere Vermittlung der Botschaft mit folgenden Zeichen: Die Zungen unserer ‚Vorzeigemigranten‘ sind rot-schwarz-gold bemalt. Die Übersetzung dieses vor-ikonographischen Wissens in das Ikonographische<sup>1</sup> sollte sogar für ungebildete Migranten eindeutig sein. Auf den Zungen der glücklichen und stolzen Migranten ist nämlich eine deutsche Flagge sichtbar. Mit der Sprache ist somit die deutsche Sprache und nicht eine beliebige, wie etwa

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<sup>1</sup> Diese Unterscheidungen in der Bildanalyse stammen aus der kunsthistorischen Theorie von Erwin Panofsky. Aufgrund des Einflusses dokumentarischer Methoden werden sie häufiger in sozialwissenschaftlichen Analysen verwendet. Für eine gute Darstellung dieser Methode: Burkard, Michel (2013) „Fotografien und ihre Lesarten. Dokumentarische Interpretation von Bildrezeptionsprozessen“, in: Bohnsack et al. (Hg.): *Die dokumentarische Methode und ihre Forschungspraxis. Grundlagen qualitativer Sozialforschung*, S. 99-131.

die Herkunftssprache der Migranten, gemeint. Mit dieser zusätzlichen Hilfe ist der Botschaft nicht zu entgehen: Migranten sollen Deutsch lernen, dann sind sie gut integriert und erfolgreich.

Die wissenschaftliche Analyse kann natürlich nicht bei der bloßen Wiedergabe des ikonographischen Wissens bleiben, da es sich dabei vorwiegend um die Ikonologie eines Bildes handelt. Somit ist die wissenschaftliche Frage wie folgt zu stellen: Was verrät diese Anzeigenkampagne unabhängig von ihrer beabsichtigten Botschaft über unseren Zeitgeist? Der vorliegende Sammelband von Küppers, Pusch und Semerci bietet eine solide Grundlage, um die ikonologische Ebene solcher Bilder oder Diskurse zu durchdringen.<sup>2</sup> Hegemoniale Diskurse und Strukturen sowohl in Deutschland als auch in der Türkei – trotz ihrer wichtigen Unterschiede – sind sehr stark von einer monolingualen und mononationalen Ideologie geprägt. Als Folge hinterlassen diese dominanten Ideologien und Praxen eine große Lücke, weil sie die reale transnationale Wirklichkeit von Menschen nicht erkennen und anerkennen. Dieser Sammelband kann auch als ein Versuch für die Schließung dieser Lücke betrachtet werden. Mehrere Beiträge im Buch belichten unsichtbar bleibende Erlebnisse, Erfahrungen, Probleme und Potenziale der realen Menschen insbesondere im Bereich der Bildung im transnationalen Raum.

Im Beitrag von Susanne Becker über die Sprachvermischung (oder wie es in ihrem Beitrag heißt: Translanguaging) im deutsch-türkischen transnationalen Raum werden nicht nur die Abwertungsmechanismen durch eine monolinguale Ideologie geschildert, sondern auch Beispiele der unsichtbar bleibenden, aber nützlichen Funktionen vom „Translanguaging“ geliefert: „Neben dem Arbeitsmarkt kann Translanguaging in lokalen transnationalen Räumen wie türkischen Supermärkten und Friseursalons in Deutschland als Ware gehandelt werden. Hier wird Translanguaging jenseits der tatsächlichen Kommunikationsmöglichkeiten als Marker von Ethnizität zur Ware. So antizipieren Kunden mit einem „Supermarkt“ eventuell Produkte, die sie in einem „Supermarkt“ nicht bekommen würden“ (S. 48). Auch Julia Split setzt sich mit der widersprüchlichen Position der Migrantensprachen zwischen der alltäglichen Bedeutung der persönlichen Ebene und einer ideologischen Funktion auf der nationalen Ebene auseinander. Während Rück- und Abwanderer in deutschen Firmen in der Türkei ihre Deutschkenntnisse als Werte auf dem Markt einbringen können, müssen sie beispielsweise in der Kommunikation mit Kunden ihre türkischen Namen verheimlichen und einen deutschen Namen annehmen (S. 65).

Auf europäischen und nationalen Ebenen wird durchaus ein starker Mehrsprachigkeitsdiskurs gepflegt. Kutlay Yağmur legt in einer quantitativen Analyse jedoch dar, dass die Migrantensprachen in fast allen Ländern Europas im Verhältnis zu den ‚Prestigesprachen‘ sehr wenig anerkannt und unterstützt werden (S. 105). Am Beispiel des Türkischunterrichts bestätigen Christoph Schroeder und Almut Küp-

<sup>2</sup> Passenderweise wird gerade diese Anzeigenkampagne in einem der Beiträge im Buch behandelt. Julia Split verdeutlicht in ihrem Beitrag die Differenzen zwischen der o. g. Suggestion der Kampagne und der Realität der in Callcentern arbeitenden türkischen Rückkehrer in Istanbul (S. 65-66).

pers im deutschen Kontext diese Tendenz. Die Autoren berichten über den Status und die Herausforderungen der türkischen Sprache im deutschen Bildungssystem und folgern, dass das Bildungspotenzial dieser Sprache hier nicht erkannt wird. Die Beiträge von Seyitahmed Tokmak über Schulen in freier Trägerschaft und von Beatrix Albrecht über die interkulturelle Öffnung in der hannoverschen Albert-Schweitzer-Schule geben seltene Beispiele des Nutzens dieses Potenzials wieder. Almut Küppers wertet in ihrem Beitrag die Prozesse und Wirkungen des deutsch-türkischen bilingualen Unterrichtskonzepts der Albert-Schweitzer-Schule unter der Leitung von Beatrix Albrecht in Hannover aus. Besonders wertvoll macht ihre Analyse die starke Einbeziehung der Kinderperspektive, die im nationalistischen Diskurs häufig ausgeblendet wird: „Anders als bei Politikern, Bildungsplanern, Schulleitern, Eltern oder Lehrern sind die Handlungen der Kinder kaum beeinflusst von Ideologien, Weltanschauungen oder Überzeugungen. ... In ähnlicher Weise begegnen Kinder Sprachen. Sie kümmern sich nicht um deren Status in der Gesellschaft oder um deren Wert als kulturelles Kapital, sondern sind grundsätzlich neugierig darauf, die Sprachen zu lernen und zu benutzen“ (S. 183). Die überzeugende Analyse von Küppers zeigt die sinnvollen sozialen, emotionalen und intellektuellen Effekte des Konzepts auf die Kinder. Küppers berichtet gleichzeitig von einem frustrierenden Weg der Schulentwicklung, insbesondere wegen der hohen ideologischen Einwände und Hürden. Ähnliche Ergebnisse findet man auch im Beitrag von Sarah Fürstenau: Die Erfahrungen mit dem von ihr initiierten Projekt MIKS (Mehrsprachigkeit als Handlungsfeld Interkultureller Schulentwicklung. Eine Interventionsstudie in Grundschulen) belegen erneut die verhaltene und skeptische Haltung von Schulleitung, Lehrkräften und Eltern (auch mit türkischen Hintergrund) gegenüber einer Einbeziehung der Migrantensprachen in den Schulalltag.

Trotz der zunehmenden Realität der Transnationalisierung zwischen Deutschland und der Türkei bleibt die mononationale und monolinguale Ideologie auch in der Türkei sehr verbreitet. Während Sarah Rottmann die negativen Effekte dieser Ideologie auf Kinder von Rückkehrern aus Deutschland feststellt, beobachtet Müge Ayan Ceyhan solche Auswirkungen auf kurdische Kinder in türkischen Schulen. Beide Beiträge zeigen dabei, dass die vorherrschende nationalistische Ideologie in türkischen Schulen zu einer starken Unterdrückung der realen Potenziale, Emotionen und Erlebnisse der Kinder führt. Weitere zwei Beiträge im Buch setzen sich gerade mit dieser engstirnigen nationalistischen Ideologie in der Türkei auseinander. Kenan Çayır analysiert Schulbücher in der Türkei und stellt fest, dass diese ein stark sicherheitsorientiertes Weltbild propagieren und einen Argwohn gegenüber Transnationalisierung und Globalisierung fördern. Batuhan Aydagül berichtet über einen „Education Think-and-do-Tank“, der sich an türkischen Schulen mit dem Ziel der Förderung des kritischen Denkens engagiert. Sein Beitrag verdeutlicht nicht nur die Bedeutung solcher Aktivitäten für die Schule, sondern auch die starken Widerstände gegen eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit dem herrschenden Schulethos seitens der Schulleitung und der Lehrkräfte. Die engstirnige nationalis-

tische Ideologie in der Türkei trägt der immer intensiver gewordenen deutsch-türkischen Transnationalisierung der Bildung nicht Rechnung. Die Beiträge von Karl-H. Rössmeyer und Nilüfer Tapan / Sevinç Hatipoğlu behandeln die Bedeutung der deutschen Schulen in der Türkei für Interkulturalität und Transnationalisierung. Im Hochschulbereich ist diese Tendenz sogar noch prägnanter: Şeyda Ozil berichtet über die seit langem bestehenden türkisch-deutschen Beziehungen im Hochschulwesen am Beispiel der Germanistikabteilung der Istanbul Universität und stellt fest: „Insgesamt lässt sich aufgrund der vielfältigen Entwicklungen und Kooperationen zwischen der Türkei und Deutschland mittlerweile von institutionalisierten transnationalen Beziehungen sprechen“ (S. 254). İzzet Furgaç berichtet über die Türkisch-Deutsche Universität in Istanbul als eine vertiefte Institutionalisierung des transnationalen Raums zwischen beiden Ländern und Wiebke Bachmann behandelt hauptsächlich die Bemühungen des Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienstes (DAAD) in der Türkei. Der Beitrag von Süheyla Schroeder und Karin Schmidt über Bahçeşehir University Campus in Berlin offenbart die Gegenseitigkeit dieser Entwicklung.

Wie die Beiträge im Sammelband zeigen, ist eine enorme und vielschichtige deutsch-türkische Transnationalisierung nicht nur auf der Alltags-, sondern auch auf institutioneller Ebene, vor allem im Bereich von Bildungseinrichtungen festzustellen. Sie verdeutlichen jedoch auch gleichzeitig, dass dies nicht automatisch zu einem kritischen Hinterfragen der veralteten Ideologien oder Denkweisen führt. Anscheinend fehlt vielen Menschen u. a. Wissen, um ihre altbekannten und dadurch bequemen Denkmuster zu ändern, obwohl diese nicht mehr den erlebten Realitäten entsprechen. Kulturwissenschaftliche und bildungstheoretische Konzepte sind unverzichtbar, um Wissen über die realen Prozesse zu erlangen. Wie Adelheid Hu diagnostiziert, ist das Wissenschaftsfeld dieser Aufgabe bisher kaum gerecht geworden: „Insgesamt gesehen ist festzustellen, dass der Diskurs über Internationalisierung überraschend wenig unter Einbezug kulturwissenschaftlicher oder auch bildungstheoretischer Konzepte geführt wird, und dies, obwohl Migration, Globalisierung, Multikulturalismus, Interkulturalität und Identität Kernthemen der Kulturwissenschaften wie auch der Bildungswissenschaften sind. Wenn überhaupt kulturelle Aspekte ins Spiel kommen, scheinen essentialisierende und reinfizierende Konzepte von Kulturen und kulturellen Zugehörigkeiten an der Tagesordnung zu sein“ (S. 260). Der Sammelband von Küppers, Pusch und Semerci ist ein wichtiger und gelungener kultur- und bildungswissenschaftlicher Beitrag zum Diskurs der Transnationalisierung. Um die realen Geschichten und Prozesse menschlicher Verhältnisse hinter dem nationalistischen Nebel zu enthüllen, benötigen wir jedoch deutlich mehr solcher Beiträge.

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Azade Seyhan (German and Comparative Literature, Bryn Mawr College)

Levent Tezcan (Culture Studies, Tilburg University)

Im Mittelpunkt dieses Bandes steht das Werk des türkischen Autors und Übersetzers aus dem Deutschen Sabahattin Ali, der mit seinem Roman *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* (*Die Madonna im Pelzmantel*) zu posthumem Ruhm gelangte. Der Roman, der zum Großteil in Deutschland spielt, und andere seiner Werke werden unter Aspekten der Weltliteratur, (kultureller) Übersetzung und Intertextualität diskutiert. Damit reicht der Fokus weit über die bislang im Vordergrund stehende interkulturelle Liebesgeschichte in der *Madonna* hinaus.

Weitere Beiträge beschäftigen sich mit Zafer Şenocaks Essaysammlung *Deutschsein* und dem transkulturellen Lernen mit Bilderbüchern.

Ein Interview mit Selim Özdoğan rundet diese Ausgabe ab.



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