'Strange Worlds' in German migration literature, and intercultural learning in the context of German Studies in South Africa.

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned Petra Langa, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is a product of my own work and has not previously in its entirety, nor in part, been submitted to any university for a degree.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationships between intercultural theory, German Studies (in South Africa) and post-war migration literature written in Germany. Migration literature as intercultural literature, and German Studies adopting an intercultural philosophy are thus associated by an intercultural aspect that also links both to a global network of intercultural relations. The study places emphasis on relationships rather than areas of research. This means that areas of research are looked at in terms of how they relate to other areas of research and other contexts. The underlying idea is that intercultural understanding can be taught at an academic level as an avenue towards building intercultural competence. At the same time, theories of an intercultural understanding should be informed by experiences that helped build intercultural competence.

Intercultural understanding is based on the idea that assumptions of binary opposition are replaced by the notion that strange worlds can merge and form new ones, eventually replacing the old ones. The world is continually changing, and those who want to progress beyond what is known and familiar need to adapt to new circumstances, especially to those emanating from globalisation. This concept applies to German Studies, and led to the introduction of 'Intercultural German Studies', a new branch within the subject that is critically discussed in chapter one. Chapter two looks at intercultural understanding in terms of hermeneutic theory, and with regard to the African-European context, the South African-German context, and the global context. Chapters three to six discuss migration literature in the light of teaching intercultural understanding (through German Studies), and with reference to intercultural theory in different contexts as presented in chapter two. Chapter three presents an overview of migration literature written in Germany since the 1980s. Chapters four to six discuss individual authors: guest worker poetry (chapter four), the works of Necla Kelek (chapter five), and Feridun Zaimoglu (chapter six).

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INTRODUCTION

 'Strange worlds' is the overall theme of this study. Perspectives that can be discovered in cultural diversity, global migration, literary expression and intercultural theory is what "strange worlds" means in the context of this research. I focus on the links between intercultural theory, German Studies (in South Africa) and migration literature written in Germany since the 1980's. My overall approach to researching these links is to investigate and reflect upon the complex systems in which many parts interact, forming clusters and developing a dynamism that promotes the emergence of innovative thinking. For example, the discovery of relationships between seemingly unrelated parts is a major objective of this work. This phenomenological or 'complexity' approach can be an extremely useful tool in finding qualitative solutions rather than the more linear and rational systems that are usually discipline driven and perhaps at times more accurate in the traditional scientific sense of a positivist approach. Positivist and phenomenological research strategies tend to present diametrically different views. They can be combined but the nature of this particular research lends itself to the latter.

The intercultural aspect in German Studies gained importance generally as a reaction to the compression of time and space in today's world and the increasing convergence of cultural and experiential timelines, which is commonly referred to as 'globalisation'. These developments are powerfully expressed in the literature of worldwide migration. In Germany, these experiences began with the post-war influx of migrant workers. This led to increased demand for German as a necessary second language and the emergence of integration politics, as immigration continued and immigrants settled in Germany to become an integral part of the population. South Africa has a history of cultural diversity, the most poignant being that of living under the apartheid regime. As a consequence of globalization, much of what is happening in one part of the world can be related to what is happening in another. An awareness of this broadens horizons and enables us to see our own world in relation to others, a process that often makes us more tolerant.

At the same time, intercultural relations have proven difficult to establish for many reasons. "Outsiders always pose a threat to the status quo. Even if they are not

physically dangerous, they are threatening simply because they are different. Their apartness is dangerous. It questions our tendency to see our society as the natural society and ourselves as the measure of normality." (Littlewood & Lipsedge 1997: 27-28) Looking at strange worlds and interacting with them does not seem easy or even natural. For many, it is uncomfortable. Remaining within our comfort zones does, however, limit our ability to analyse and judge our own situation, let alone that of others: "since we know our own local practices so thoroughly and unreflectively, the situated and local nature of meaning is largely invisible to us. It is easy for us to miss the specificity and localness of our own practices and think we have general, abstract, even universal meanings." (Gee 2005: 76) In a world of cultural flux, the comfortable position is usually one of retaining one's own cultural identity. It is, however, vital to "appreciate that you are creating and negotiating your own cultural identity in the process of communicating with others". (Holliday, Hyde, Kullman 2004: 20)

The literature of migration makes strange worlds accessible to the reader and at the same time provides an outside perspective on the world we thought we knew as our own. What we see as our reality is a different reality for others. Blioumi (2002) suggests that analyzing migration literature requires new literary approaches to this worldwide literary movement. One of the main aspects of this new approach is the idea of a cultural – spatial syncretism instead of co-existing homogeneous cultures. (Blioumi 2002: 162) More generally, "emigration is a crucial concept for the understanding of recent developments in criticism and literature. For only when the contribution of non-indigenous ethnicities is taken into account such other key phenomena as globalization and multiculturalism or – in some parts of the world – colonialism and post-colonialism appear in full". (Loriggio 1996: backcover)

In the following, I discuss these and other issues within certain contexts and theoretical frameworks and as part of interpreting literary works. Chapter 1 focuses on intercultural hermeneutics developed by German scholars working on a "new paradigm" called 'Intercultural German Studies' (IGS). A critical analysis of this new paradigm includes re-visiting the hermeneutics of Gadamer (1960), a discussion of the usefulness of a concept called 'hermeneutics of distance', looking at aspects of intercultural learning and tolerance and evaluating IGS concepts from an African

perspective. Chapter 1 will also discuss the role of the intercultural paradigm in reading and teaching literature.

The intercultural approach as explaining how we relate to others is inherently a universal issue and should therefore be considered from as many cultural perspectives as practically possible. Chapter 2 therefore seeks to broaden the theoretical framework for an intercultural approach to include not only the mainly German models associated with Intercultural German Studies but also intercultural theories from elsewhere. These include studies on objectivism-relativism, discourse theory, intercultural relations, African and colonial hermeneutics. In addition to these philosophical approaches, I introduce discussions on developments such as Africanisation and socio-cultural transition, as well as global forces such as fundamentalism and postmodernism. All of these contribute to an understanding of why the intercultural approach to migration literature is essential in its interpretation – not only to ensure a meaningful literary analysis but also to benefit from the great educational potential that such interpretations may yield.

Chapter 3 provides an introduction to the role of post-war migration literature in Germany, including its historical and socio-economic background and issues of integration as well as a discussion of literary and educational aspects. Chapters 4 to 6 trace the development of migration literature from early "guest worker" poetry to issues of integration and the psychology of a hybrid existence. Chapter 4 focuses on the 1980s when foreign contract workers arrived in Germany. Their lives and writings were characterised by an "interim" existence between cultures, languages, places, times past and present. In Germany, they were for example referred to as Turkish workers. In Turkey, they were called "Deutschländer". "Life in the interim" was therefore an integral aspect of migration literature from the very beginning. It meant that those who lived between cultures eventually had to forge new identities that fit the context of their new life in the "in-between".

Chapter 5 discusses the question of integration in the light of Turkish-Muslim life in Germany. Which aspects of this life are compatible and which are incompatible with life in Germany? Who should be authorised to take such decisions? Are culturally diverse societies entitled to an increasingly broad consensus? Or should a

constitutional state insist on non-negotiable 'core values'? These are some of the issues examined in the context of books and articles written by Necla Kelek. Possible answers to some of these questions are also presented in chapter 6 where the writings of Feridun Zaimoglu are looked at. Zaimoglu presents an interesting opposition to Kelek in that his approach could be seen as more 'pluralistic'. Whereas Kelek is emphatic on integration, Zaimoglu prefers to focus on individual choices and how they impact on an individual's chances of being integrated into wider society, as well as how they impact on someone's personal integrity. Analysing these writings in the light of intercultural categories as outlined in chapters 1 to 3 makes them powerful examples of intercultural studies based on migration literature.

1.   INTERCULTURAL GERMAN STUDIES – A CRITICAL LOOK

Among the most recent and influential theories to offer guidance to German Studies both within and outside German speaking countries are those that can be classified under the term "Intercultural German Studies" or IG for *Interkulturelle Germanistik*. Although contributions to the GIG (*Gesellschaft für interkulturelle Germanistik*, IG's academic and administrative body) in terms of publications have been varied and critical, IG theory is presented here in what at times may appear to be a homogeneous view solely for argument's sake.

According to Wierlacher, one of its main proponents, IG aims to approach the subject of German Studies from the perspective of a cultural outsider. Aspects of comparative cultural anthropology are seen to play a central role in its research and in teaching German Studies. (Wierlacher & Bogner 2003: 1) In other words, teaching intercultural German means teaching cultural studies through language and literature, which includes having an active interest in cultural exchange.

The emphasis on an inter-cultural focus developed in conjunction with the increasing demand for German as a foreign language (GFL) by foreign immigrants to Germany in the 1960's and 1970's. This eventually necessitated a serious examination of GFL as a subject, its status among related academic disciplines, and its relationship with traditional German Studies taught within Germany (*Inlandsgermanistik*), and outside Germany (*Auslandsgermanistik*). Both *Inlands* – and *Auslandsgermanistik* traditionally assume that students are (at the very least) fluent in German. The inter-cultural focus seeks to provide a common approach to *Inlands* – and *Auslandsgermanistik* as well as GFL.

The historical evolution and theoretical development of an intercultural approach to German Studies manifests itself in a vast array of contributions from a wide range of perspectives and areas of study. These include literary studies, cultural studies, hermeneutics, the psychology of learning and understanding as well as a considerable body of work criticizing aspects of the intercultural approach from various

perspectives. In the following, some of the themes that appear to be at the centre of this approach – or paradigm as it has been called - are explored and critically examined.

1.1   Intercultural hermeneutics

In Germany, intercultural hermeneutics, as an important cornerstone of the intercultural paradigm, was developed by scholars associated with the Bayreuth academic Alois Wierlacher, who instituted groundbreaking research in the field of Intercultural German Studies and edited a number of important publications.[1] Intercultural hermeneutics (*Hermeneutik der Fremde*) can be seen as an underlying concept at the heart of the theoretical framework of Intercultural German Studies. The intercultural approach to hermeneutics is based on a critical examination of the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer.

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics rests on and at the same time distances itself from that of Schleiermacher and Dilthey. Schleiermacher introduced a shift from the old assumption that understanding arises naturally, to the assumption that *mis*understanding arises naturally and should also be distinguished from *not* understanding. Hermeneutics was seen as the art of avoiding misunderstanding. (Gadamer 1966: 7) Understanding was then sought in the light of intervening historical developments that complicate understanding between author and interpreter. What a text really means must be recovered by a disciplined reconstruction of the historical situation or life-context in which it originated. All valid understanding was therefore considered to be the product of a discipline. It takes place under controlled and repeatable conditions that will ensure the same result. For Schleiermacher (and Dilthey), the interpreter's own present situation was a source of prejudice and distortion that would block valid understanding.

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[1] Among others: Wierlacher, A. ed. 1980. *Fremdsprache Deutsch.*; Wierlacher, A. et al. (since 1975) *Jahrbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache (Intercultural German Studies).* A comprehensive research bibliography can be found in Wierlacher, A. and Bogner, A. eds. 2003. *Handbuch Interkulturelle Germanistik.* 34-45.

For Gadamer, on the other hand, the interpreter's own present situation is already constitutively involved in the process of understanding. Prejudice[2] is seen as generating bias in understanding and conflicts with the scientific ideal of objectivity without prejudice. Past and present are constantly mediated through understanding. There is continuity between them, rather than a temporal gulf that needs to be overcome. (Gadamer 1966: 9-10)

Gadamer defined understanding as a "fusion of horizons". Thus for Gadamer the present situation of the one who understands loses its status as a privileged position and becomes instead a fluid and relative moment in the life of effective history, a moment that is indeed productive, but one that, like others before it, will be overcome and fused with future horizons (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein).* (Gadamer 1966: 13) Since understanding is seen as the result of a dialogue rather than an investigation, there is no rigid interpretation of a text; rather, it remains open to new understandings. (Gadamer 1962: 57)

Palmer (1969) sees Gadamer's approach as closer to the dialectic of Socrates than to modern manipulative and technological thinking. Truth is not reached methodically but dialectically. It overcomes the tendency of method to precondition the individual's way of seeing and dissolves the subject-object dichotomy. (Palmer 1969: 165)

It is Gadamer's approach to understanding as a dialectic and integrative experience that is characterized by a merging or fusion of horizons and universality that has been criticized by proponents of a new intercultural paradigm for German Studies. The claim to universality for example has been criticized as centralistic in the sense that otherness is reduced to the passage of time. Otherness, or strangeness, it is claimed, not only arises from the passage of time between the present and the past, but also from the encounter of contemporary, cultural difference. (Wierlacher & Bogner 2003: 27)

Considering the fact that this insight is at the heart of formulating an intercultural hermeneutics as the foundation for a new paradigm in German Studies, I therefore

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[2] Linge 1977 interprets the term as meaning 'prejudgment'. ('Editor's Introduction': xvii)

discuss this theory as well as some of the resulting ideas about understanding, learning and distance in some detail.

To begin with Gadamer, one could concede that his work stands in the historical critical tradition and has therefore placed more emphasis on the evolution of understanding along the passage of time rather than across cultural traditions. This is also due to the fact that when *Truth and Method* (1960) was written, the forces of globalisation did not have the same impact as they have today. A selective reading of Gadamer does however reveal that the claim to universality lifts his approach out of and beyond discussions around the vertical (passage of time) and the horizontal (culture):

> The lack of lucidity of texts handed down to us historically is really only a special case of what is to be met in all human orientation to the world as the *atopy* (the strange), that which does not "fit" into the customary order of our expectation based on experience. (Gadamer 1967: 25)

The question of how understanding is possible goes beyond the disciplines of historical interpretation:

> The hermeneutical problem only emerges clearly when there is no powerful tradition present to absorb one's own attitude into itself and when one is aware of confronting an alien tradition to which one has never belonged or no longer unquestioningly accepts. (Gadamer 1962: 46)

It appears therefore, that what Gadamer discusses here is the evolution of human understanding in the life context of all humanity, which includes the historical evolution of more than one cultural tradition and language. The emphasis by IG on a cultural axis and its apparent separation from history and tradition seems to be an arbitrarily imposed theory. In the context of intercultural relations with the African continent, such an approach has proven to be very problematic, as will be discussed further on (see pp. 22, 26-27, 30 below).

Gadamer wrote on the event of understanding that it is "universal and basic for all inter-human experience". The universality of the hermeneutical dimension is narrowed down when one area of understanding is separated from other areas of social reality. (Gadamer 1967: 30)

Supporters of an IG based on the intercultural paradigm warned that such universal approaches display a certain level of arrogance, especially if they rest on Gadamer's idea that, "Only the support of familiar and common understanding makes possible the venture into the alien, the lifting up of something out of the alien, and thus broadening and enrichment of our own experience of the world." (Gadamer 1966: 15)

The assimilation of otherness on the basis of what we know and what is familiar to us (Gadamer's *im Fremden heimisch werden*) (Gadamer 1975: 11), is seen by IG theorists as a centralistic and arrogant way of approaching and appropriating cultural strangeness (*Vereinnahmung des Fremden*). (Krusche & Wierlacher 1990: 59) It was proposed to replace the idea of assimilation or incorporation of strangeness into the familiar with the idea of distance (*Vertrautwerden in der Distanz*). (Wierlacher & Bogner 2003: 30)

1.2 "Hermeneutics of distance"

Distance is an integral part of intercultural hermeneutics and is based on the assumption that it constitutes a basic condition for human co-existence. Respecting a person's identity requires us to maintain a certain distance. Wierlacher (2003c: 224) also reminds us that a critical distance is integral to understanding.

Linked to the importance of maintaining distance is the idea that contrary to Gadamer's notion of understanding as approaching the unfamiliar on the basis of what we know, and gradually incorporating it into what is familiar to us already, we must rather approach an unfamiliar culture by trying to achieve a middle ground (*kulturelle Überschneidungssituation*) based for example on common experiences. This common ground is not a *tertium comparationis* but a position located between cultures, a position that is the intercultural location where intercultural identities are created. The

idea of common experiences, together with the notion of maintaining distance, ensures that cultural differences are neither rendered absolute nor simply levelled out[3]. The concept of a *kulturelle Überschneidungssituation* does therefore not describe a merging of cultures (or a fusion of horizons) but the third angle of a triangle, a situation that does not lead to an infringement of either cultural reality. The emphasis is on co-existence, not hybrid cultures or a merging of two cultures into one. (Wierlacher and Hudson-Wiedemann 2000: 229)

Whilst the idea of creating an intercultural identity by placing emphasis on the 'inter' may seem logical in theory, it still appears that Gadamer's idea of a fusion of horizons and hermeneutics as an assimilation of the strange into the familiar is much closer to the reality of intercultural understanding and a more workable theory explaining the growth of understanding. This point will be further explained and clarified under the heading "Understanding and learning" (see p. 17-18 below).

It is also not quite clear how Wierlacher's idea of a *kulturelle Überschneidungssituation* would look in practice. Holliday, Hyde and Kullman (2004) refer to the 'inter' as "middle cultures of dealing" and present the example of interaction between tourists and locals. Both groups behave 'out of character' as their middle culture of dealing is the tourist culture on the one hand and the trading-with-tourists-culture on the other hand:

> When people from different cultures meet a middle culture of dealing is set up within which they interact, which in turn is influenced by respective aspects of cultural baggage. What people see of each other is influenced by the middle culture of dealing, which may be very different to what they think they see which is a product of their own particular culture. (Holliday, Hyde & Kullman 2004: 26)

Such middle cultures can never form a basis for intercultural understanding. This becomes obvious when, as in the example above, personal/romantic relationships

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[3] Ideas around distance and common ground can be found in a number of articles authored and co-authored by Wierlacher. (e.g. Wierlacher 1985a, Wierlacher 2000, Wierlacher & Hudson-Wiedemann 2000, Wierlacher 2003c)

develop on the basis of this middle culture. They tend to fail because the lens of the middle culture distorts reality in the same way as previously held perceptions about the other often do not correspond to reality. The other's behaviour is misinterpreted based on experiences of middle culture dealing as well as on previously held perspectives. 'Real life' is thus replaced by middle cultures and perceptions, and after unsuccessful interaction with the other, both parties return to the old comfortable discourses. Of course, not all interactions have to end in failure; Holliday, Hyde and Kullman's example merely shows the idea of the 'third angle of a triangle' in intercultural relations to be unconstructive with regard to achieving understanding.

In summary, the IG theorists' attempt to find theoretical grounding for a new paradigm in intercultural German studies by distancing themselves from the philosophical hermeneutics of Gadamer has not been convincing. In the following, I present some of the contemporary academic criticism towards the IG theorists' notions of inter-cultural activity and distance. The concept of distance takes on a particularly problematic aspect in the African (colonial) context.

Wierlacher (2003c: 224) for example notes that Nigerian scholar Ihekweazu interpreted distance as emotional coldness. Wierlacher's view is that non-distance is the greater problem since one of its manifestations can be observed in the colonial annexation of a foreign culture. One might say that this line of argumentation is a further example of imposing a complicated theoretical approach on the reality of colonial dominance that used both distance and emotional coldness as well as war to maintain power. Moreover, the logical conclusion seems to suggest that (only) distance ensures peaceful co-existence.

A further reading on the hermeneutics of distance might even suggest that the focus is less on respecting another culture and more on protecting one's own. Albrecht and Wierlacher (2000) for example seem to suggest that intercultural competence could be regarded as a necessary tool to protect one's interests in the intercultural arena, especially in the context of German foreign policy and economic advantage as will be discussed further on (see below, p.23).

1.3 Understanding and learning

Gadamer's *im Fremden heimisch werden* stands vis à vis IG's emphasis on recognition (*Anerkennung*)[4] and a requisite distance. Recognition, as opposed to assimilation, ensures that an export of one's own cultural understanding into the new culture does not take place. Cultural appropriation of this kind is criticized as assuming universalism in humanity and as an attempt to disguise cultural arrogance and dominance. In the previous section, I have argued that the concept of *Anerkennung* favours a model of distanced co-existence, a concept that is believed to be a hindrance to social interaction and integration. It is perhaps difficult to fault the ideas of distance and recognition on a theoretical level. The reality is, however, that in learning processes, recognition precedes assimilation.

The idea of a universal humanity in the sense that every human being is capable of (intercultural) learning is supported by a psychological approach. Thomas (1996) points out that conditioning, re-enforcement and the imitation of models play a central role in intercultural learning. (Thomas 1996: 133) He reminds us that learning involves a permanent change of behaviour and cognitive structures. (Thomas 2003: 276) Referring to Piaget, he maintains that change can occur as assimilation (integration of new elements into existing structures) or as accommodation (modification of existing structures by assimilated elements). (Thomas 2003: 277-278)

Intercultural learning, then, is based not only on recognition, but also on assimilation, even accommodation and the idea of cultural synthesis, a third cultural mind, a world identity. Intercultural learning and understanding inevitably result in change and a merging of horizons. From this vantage point, fears of appropriation seem unrealistic and inflexible, as if intended to maintain the status quo.

Of course, assimilation in the context of appropriation (e.g. colonialism) is different from assimilation in the context of learning. Assimilation of knowledge is based on the recognition of something new and unfamiliar and the integration of this

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[4] See for example Fornet-Betancourt, R. 2002. 'Hermeneutik und Politik des Fremden'. 54. Also: Wierlacher, A. 2003b.'Anerkennung'. 199-202.

knowledge into an existing framework of knowledge. IG theory rejects the idea that understanding should be based on an existing framework of reference that facilitates the integration of new aspects[5] and advocates a hermeneutics of distance instead: The other can never be approximated; 'it' exists only in terms of our interpretation of it; in relation to ourselves: "Das 'Fremde'definieren wir deshalb grundsätzlich als das aufgefasste Andere, als Interpretament der Andersheit und Differenz, also als Relationsbegriff". (Wierlacher 2000: 270) If the other exists only in relation to ourselves and our perspectives of them, one may ask how the other feels as the subject of interpretation; Chipkin (2007) for example writes about Frantz Fanon that "the moment he establishes his own being-in-the-world, it collapses under the white gaze into being-for-others". (Chipkin 2007: 112)

Understanding the other and learning about the other take place at certain times and within certain contexts. Sundermeier (2003) outlines various models of encountering otherness/strangeness from a religious perspective. (Sundermeier 2003: 547-551) There is the semantic equation of strangeness with misery dating back to the Middle Ages (*Fremde/Elend*), the notion of the strange Other as an enemy or as someone living among us whom we tolerate, yet never really integrate. Finally, there is the psychological approach that, according to Sundermeier, negates all differences between people and assumes that otherness is nothing but the suppression of what exists within us: "Den Fremden als solchen gibt es nicht, sondern nur das verdrängte Eigene". (Sundermeier 2003: 551)

Mbembe (2006), a Johannesburg based professor of history and politics, in an interview offers a South African perspective on the other: he focuses on three 'figures of the other': the enemy, the neighbour and the stranger. In the 21st century, he argues, "politics has been reduced to identifying, pursuing and killing one's enemy." (Mbembe 2006: 23) He further notes that

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[5]Wierlacher, A. 2003. 'Interkulturelle Germanistik. Zu ihrer Geschichte und Theorie'.30; also Harden, T. and Witte, A. 2000. 'Introduction'. 13: "If this universal hermeneutic approach which Gadamer intended for the historical alien, is shifted to the synchronic alien, it implies that understanding the Other means assimilating and integrating the Other into one's own categories and values. Consequently, this process of understanding the Other is inherently connected with domination and exploitation."

[…] topical South African questions arise regarding the other two figures. How do we deal with the neighbour who might once have been the enemy? And how do we treat the stranger in a world of gated communities? Many people […] want to live only with those who look like them. A truly "Afropolitan" society would see people sure of their identities, unafraid to embrace the world.[6] (Mbembe 2006: 23)

The processes of learning and understanding are agents of change. Intercultural learning cannot take place inside a cultural continuum from whence the learner looks across and acknowledges the other without taking the risk of enduring painful self-questioning and the possibility of personal change. Globalisation and migration involve movements across boundaries of physical space, which inevitably means crossing boundaries of (personal) history. Confining geography and history to separate entities must remain theory.

1.4   Understanding and tolerance

An eclectic and interdisciplinary element is one of the strong points of IG theory. Apart from the hermeneutic perspective, it has engaged with cultural and literary theory, didactics and perspectives on intercultural aspects from a wide range of disciplines including economics, theology, psychology, linguistics, etc. In 1996, Wierlacher edited *Kulturthema Toleranz*, a collection of articles on interdisciplinary and intercultural aspects of tolerance.

The debate around tolerance in IG theory echoes some of the aspects mentioned in the above paragraphs. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's drama *Nathan der Weise*, especially the *Ringparabel* (parable of the ring) exemplifies the idea of tolerance during the Age of Enlightenment in Europe. Lessing's religious tolerance is a humanistic one – religious differences are tolerated in the name of a universal humanity. Wierlacher

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[6] 'Afropolitanism' has been criticised as "largely the artefacts and activities of a professional and political elite who can travel with relative ease between one metropole and another and who belong to nowhere in particular but a simultaneity of places, spaces and times" The same critics also pointed out that "non-racialism has to begin at the point of recognizing how different and unequal we have all been made to become, before it can move towards how similar we are" (Seepe, S. and Combrinck, L. 2007. 'Whose interests are being served: Unmasking Afropolitanism'. 35-36.)

rejects this approach as has been shown and argues that, by inference, the Jew is accepted because he is human, and not as a Jew who is different. (Wierlacher 1996: 612; see also Otto 2003: 397-398) This critique of Lessing's humanism ties in with criticism of Gadamer's universal humanity. Both are regarded as proposing assimilation of the other (*Vereinnahmung des Fremden*) and a hermeneutics that focuses on recognizing human universalism (*Hermeneutik, die Erkennen als Wiedererkennen des Allgemeinmenschlichen auffasst*)[7] instead of recognizing and tolerating the cultural other as someone different.

Lessing's *Ringparabel* also speaks of "active tolerance": ("Es eifre jeder seiner unbestochnen von Vorurteilen freien Liebe nach!"). This "active element" (Otto 2003: 402) ties in with the idea that toleration should be based on an effort to understand the other. (Wierlacher 1996: 551) Active tolerance was located in the "inter", the middle ground between co-existing cultures, facilitating co-operation and thereby subscribing to neither universalism nor difference. (Esselborn 1997: 63)

The concept of distance acquires new meaning in the light of the tolerance debate, with special reference to the difference (distance) between understanding someone and accepting someone. As we have seen, distance can easily be interpreted as avoidance of a potential threat associated with cultural strangeness. In my view, the necessity of distance exists in the interim between understanding and accepting. Although understanding facilitates acceptance, the distance we maintain between understanding someone and accepting someone is determined by our need to protect our identity. This need also determines levels of tolerance towards the other.

> Acceptance can be impossible if they [the others] violate values so fundamental to our identity that we can accept explanations of behaviour as valid for others but not valid for us. While we must try, at times, to transcend our conditioning, we must beware of trying to alter our personalities. If we

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[7] Krusche talks about a 'vague common humanity' ('vage Allgemeinmenschlichkeit'), one is left with in the absence of concrete facts. (Krusche, D. 1985. 'Vermittlungsrelevante Eigenschaften literarischer Texte'.121.)
Brenner 1991.writes: "[...] für das Grundproblem der Polarität von Fremdheit und Vertrautheit beim interkulturellen Verstehen ist mit der Einführung von Universalthemen der Menschheit nichts gewonnen". (Brenner, P.J.1991.'Interkulturelle Hermeneutik'. 48.)

genuinely respect another culture, we must allow ourselves to be appalled by it. (Storti 1990: 66-67)

One example of great distance between understanding and accepting is probably that of engaging with descriptions of cannibalism. Münzel's (2002) article on understanding the philosophy of Brazilian Indians explains how, contrary to philosophies on alterity, where love and affection for the other lead to peace and harmony with the world, the Tupinambà ate their enemies to strengthen themselves. The paradox, described by Lévinas, that those who comply (with God's wishes) will gain their freedom was turned into the idea that man will come into his own by becoming his enemy: loving the other (Liebe Deinen Nächsten wie Dich selbst!) as opposed to becoming the other (Friß Deinen Nächsten, so wirst Du er selbst!). (Münzel 2002: 34)

In conclusion, the concept of distance is better located in the interim between understanding and accepting than at an earlier point of engaging the other, i.e. the point of recognition (*Anerkennung)*. Active tolerance, as described above, was regarded as facilitating co-operation. My argument is that Lessing's idea of active tolerance based on the idea of a universal humanity remains more useful to intercultural engagement as it is a movement towards the other based on the assumption of similarity before difference. Tolerance as co-operation, on the other hand, assumes difference and practices careful negotiation in the middle ground that does not bring about change.

Assuming similarity before difference also protects us from a kind of *laissez-faire* tolerance often disguised as liberalism. In reality, it is arrogance that says: "They are like this because they are different from us". An example is André Glucksmann's portrayal of French philosopher Pascal Bruckner who feared a tired liberalist tolerance:

> Vergesst die Bibel, vergesst den Koran und das Neue Testament, vergesst Gott. Wenn eine Autobombe oder ein Selbstmordattentäter inmitten einer Menschenmenge explodiert, ist das ein menschliches, allzu menschliches Verbrechen. Sucht nicht nach einem vermeintlich ehrenwerten Vorwand für

eure gleichgültige Toleranz. Sie ist nichts als unmenschlich, allzu unmenschlich. (Glucksmann 2008: 7)

1.5   Some critical contributions to IG theory

Some of the recurrent criticism directed at the new paradigm of Intercultural German Studies can be found in a collection of essays edited by Zimmermann, published as early as 1991.

The IG's concept of understanding has been criticized as "unclear". (Zimmermann 1991: 156) Brenner (1991: 51-52) points out that an absolute understanding does not exist: with Gadamer he argues that understanding is always guided by prejudice. Prejudice cannot be removed but the awareness of it awards prejudice another status. It is then no longer based on unreflected authority or tradition. This thought is echoed by Epp (1991: 105), who points out that without the source culture, it is impossible to decode elements of a target culture. As described above, IG theorists warn against using existing frameworks of reference to facilitate understanding. Again, these notions are criticized here as existing in a vacuum of theoretical abstraction.

Pleines (1991: 113-136) warns that a polarization of cultural characteristics attributed to either the source or the target culture re-enforces static perspectives on society and culture. He also criticizes the emphasis on difference as difficult to separate from passing judgment on aspects of difference. Welz (1991: 155-170) even connects the demand to preserve cultural independence to the principle of 'divide and rule' underlying apartheid cultural policy in South Africa. Welz thus regards the proposed recognition of and respect for the other as a disguise for preserving a Eurocentric perspective and as an attempt to create artificial demand for a luxury article (i.e. Intercultural German Studies at South African universities). The importance of connecting history and culture comes to the fore when considering that during the Apartheid State, German cultural relations were largely reduced to communications between Germany and the white minority – a legacy the subject of German Studies will be facing for quite some time still.

Another important point of criticism concerns the question of inequality, especially with regard to the German-African dialogue. According to Kreutzer (1991: 29-31), the cultural dialogue with Africa is one of unequal partners as colonialism has systematically de-valued African cultures. At the same time, European cultures flourished. He describes an intercultural hermeneutics as nothing more than an invention designed to inject new life into an old-fashioned German Studies whose intellectual contents are exhausted and its economic viability floundering.

Zimmermann (1991: 18) describes a German Studies programme based on the intercultural paradigm as a junior partner to economics. There are indeed a number of references in articles by Wierlacher and others that link intercultural competence to German economic advantage and competitiveness:

> [German Studies are] notwendig, um die Effizienz internationaler Wirtschaftsprozesse, an denen deutsche Unternehmen beteiligt sind, zu erhöhen. (Wierlacher & Bogner 2003: 180);
>
> Active tolerance means the recognition of the Other and the creation of opportunities for the future, especially in a globalizing world. (Wierlacher 1996: 563);
>
> Toleranz bietet einen Standortvorteil. (Otto 2003: 375);
>
> Interkulturalität fand Resonanz in der Diskussion der Wirtschaftskommunikation. (Wierlacher 2000: 220);
>
> Benötigt wird profundes Fremdheitswissen im Zusammenhang mit der Globalisierung der Märkte, interkulturelle Kommunikation wird zur intellektuellen Grundausstattung. (Wierlacher 2000: 291);
>
> Es besteht Aussicht, daß der Wissens-und Kompetenzbedarf im Interesse unserer interkulturellen Bildung als Basis unserer Wettbewerbsfähigkeit erkannt und erfüllt wird. (Wierlacher 2000: 302)

Globalisation has other implications, too: the possible disappearance of (cultural) otherness, strangeness, or foreignness. Welsch advocates the idea that interculturality has already been succeeded by transculturality; the diversity of cultures has been replaced by a diversity of ways of living that transcend previous cultural formations.

(Welsch 1994: 147-178) Thus, diverse ways of living can to the same extent exist within as between cultures:

> Jede realistische Betrachtung lehrt heute, daß innerhalb dessen, was man traditionell als homogene Kultur verstand, de facto kaum weniger Fremdheiten existieren als außerhalb. Es ist falsch, das Außenverhältnis zum Grundverhältnis hinsichtlich des Fremden zu machen, das Innenverhältnis hingegen als eines der Einheitlichkeit zu stilisieren. (Welsch 1994: 156)

This idea certainly applies to the formation of a South African identity where culture is less homogeneous and less bound to a combination of nation, state and land as in Germany, for example. In advocating transculturality, however, Welsch appears to simplify or perhaps idealise the complicated processes of engaging a multicultural society in intercultural exchange – transculturality as described here can, in my opinion, only be an aspect of, but not replace interculturality.

At the other end of the spectrum, Cinar (1994) warns against the hypocrisy of advocating cultural pluralism in a multicultural or immigration society when this is not linked to equal opportunities for everyone. Cultural diversification would then mean nothing but a social process of disintegration and destabilization. (Cinar 1994: 172) Thus, whereas Welsch points to the disappearance of homogeneous cultures, Cinar criticizes the politics of majority cultures that are in favour of cultural pluralism in a dishonest attempt at protecting their own cultural and material properties. Both perspectives strongly criticize Wierlacher's xenological approach, which includes "Grenzziehungen, mit denen wir auch unsere Gruppenidentität absichern" (Wierlacher 2000: 275) – the drawing of borders that will protect our own identity as a group.

Apart from philosophical criticism that focuses on a division between the historical and the cultural/geographical as well as on the hermeneutics of distance and its social implications, there has been sharp criticism from the GFL classroom questioning not only approaches intercultural theories have taken, but also the usefulness of building intercultural competence per se. (House 1996) According to House, intercultural competence is an idealistic, ideological, emotional, non-pragmatic, anti-language and

anti-grammar approach focused on social issues such as empathy, understanding, tolerance, etc. rather than on language issues. Apart from its emphasis on emotional and ideological concerns, intercultural competence has nothing to offer that has not already been addressed by communicative competence: "ein erhöhtes Sprachbewußtsein schließt notwendigerweise ein erhöhtes Kulturbewußtsein mit ein." (House 1996: online document.)

Responding to this, Hu (2000) points out that such criticism is based on 'dichotomies of fact and perception': "these dichotomies characterize an unease with intercultural approaches that come closer to the circumstances of a country and a society in an interpretative way." (Hu 2000: 85) Hu adds: "Naturalistic positions which negate the interpretative acts of world interpretation have become epistemologically obsolete." (Hu 2000: 88) Finally, Hu reminds us of the importance that intercultural awareness has with regard to understanding inequality, especially in the context of African-European relations: "Intercultural concepts not only have the potential but rather the task of bringing the consciousness of economic inequality to light. They should also sharpen the awareness of power and assertion as basic characteristics of cultural rhetoric." (Hu 2000: 84) In my opinion, these remain important concepts of intercultural understanding that communicative competence alone cannot achieve.

From a discourse point of view, Gee argues that,

> Making visible and recognizable *who* we are and *what* we are doing always involves a great deal more than "just language". It involves acting – interacting – thinking – valuing – talking – (sometimes writing – reading) in the "appropriate way" with the "appropriate props" at the "appropriate" times in the "appropriate" places. […] "Big D" Discourses [as opposed to "small d" discourses that refer to language-in-use such as conversations or stories] are always language *plus* "other stuff". (Gee 2005: 26)

Intercultural competence relies to a great extent on communicative competence, including language skills. At the same time, it goes beyond knowing a particular language. Discourse theory provides a foundation for intercultural thinking in this regard as it sees language as creating identities in the here-and-now: "we use language

to get recognized as taking on a certain identity or role, that is to build an identity here-and-now". (Gee 2005:99) Discourse, on the other hand, is a larger concept that facilitates deeper understanding.

> Your own Discourse grid is the limits of your understanding, and it is the fundamental job of education to give people bigger and better Discourse maps, ones that reflect the working of Discourses throughout society, the world, and history in relationship to each other and to the learner. (Gee 2005: 32)

Knowledge of how discourses evolved throughout the world and history is as much part of intercultural knowledge as are language skills. Despite much criticism of IG theory, its underlying intercultural theme ensures its relevance to German Studies.

1.6   African perspectives

The term *Afrikanische Germanistik* (African German Studies) was introduced in the 1980's by Sadji (Senegal) and Ihekweazu (Nigeria). Ihekweazu (1987) developed her own approach to Intercultural German Studies which was based on, and at the same time critical of, the 'Bayreuth approach'. Her criticism appears to have arisen almost naturally as a result of her strong African perspective:

> The intercultural concept is strong, viewed from the centre, by the owners of German culture. At the periphery, its stand is more precarious. But it may help to fortify the basis of German Studies where they are still groping for some justifiable raison d'être. (Ihekweazu 1987a: 67)

Ihekweazu (1987b) raises a number of objections regarding the concept of intercultural hermeneutics as well as the hermeneutics of distance. Her criticism echoes some of the objections mentioned above. Referring to Habermas, she points out that intercultural hermeneutics seeks to understand self-awareness of social groups that is the result of their traditions. This understanding provides the basis for communicative action as it opens up both the vertical line of investigating one's own tradition as well as the horizontal line of mediating between various cultures and

groups. (Ihekweazu 1987b: 143) Ihekweazu argues that the theoretical introduction of a separate horizontal line of investigation is not necessary; intercultural questioning is based on interaction across time and space:

> Die geschichtliche Interaktion zwischen der jeweiligen Gesellschaft und Deutschland formt die Grundlage und die Voraussetzung der jeweiligen Auslandsgermanistik. (Ihekweazu 1985: 287)

German Studies in Africa therefore constitutes itself on the basis of a history of interaction between Germany and the country where it is taught. Were we to separate the historical from the cultural/geographical, we would not understand why so-called Third World cultures might give priority to researching their own traditions rather than those of the Europeans and why encounters with strangeness take on a different meaning:

> Kulturen der "Dritten Welt" haben möglicherweise Prioritäten, die der Erforschung des Eigenen den Vorrang geben [...] (Ihekweazu 1987b: 143);
> [...] das Phänomen der Entfremdung und des Identitätsverlustes ist unter kolonisierten Völkern eine so grundsätzliche und existentielle Erfahrung, daß man auf mehr Verständnis rechnen kann, als man möchte. (Ihekweazu 1984: 272)

One might argue that experiencing strangeness and loss of identity is therefore, from the German perspective, a lesson to be learnt rather than taught, especially with regard to Africa.

Finally, quoting Abiola Irele, Ihekweazu points out that identifying with a work of art such as literature is more important than a thorough analysis of the entire cultural frame of references that does not guarantee understanding. (Ihekweazu 1987b: 148) This point of criticism is directed at the IG theorists' hermeneutics of distance, their criticism of what they see as Gadamer's universalistic, assimilative approach to hermeneutics. Ihekweazu's emphasis on identification is reminiscent of Gadamer's idea that imagination is more important for genuine understanding than methodological sterility (Gadamer 1966: 12) and that "a work of art transcends every

subjective horizon of interpretation, both that of the artist and that of the perceiver."
(Palmer 1969: 164)

Therefore, identification stands vis à vis the idea of distance (*Vertrautwerden in der Distanz*), as no tradition develops without the integration of alien elements (Ihekweazu 1985: 285), and those who insist on the idea of understanding "from a distance" cannot claim that their understanding is truthful – only that it is based on method. Ihekweazu points to the problem of a hierarchy between understanding the self and understanding the other (*Selbstverstehen und Fremdverstehen*):

> Zeichnet sich damit nicht doch eine Hierarchie von Selbstverstehen und Fremdverstehen ab? Wer auf Identifikation verzichtet (verzichten muß), wer auf Distanz besteht, sich nicht in vollem Ernst einläßt, kann der mit gleichem Recht die Wahrheit seines Verstehens in Anspruch nehmen? (Ihekweazu 1987b: 149)

Identification, then, does not mean that we relinquish our horizon of expectation, our frameworks of understanding and replace it with norms, values, and methods of the alien culture. This would lead to alienation from and destruction of the self. (Ihekweazu 1984: 272) The challenge remains to assimilate the alien into the existing without experiencing the pain and confusion resulting from a loss of identity. Distance is only truthfully legitimate as protection from such loss – there does not appear to be a need for a complex theoretical framework called a 'hermeneutics of distance'.

In his habilitation on the role of intercultural literature in African German Studies, Ndong (1993) echoes the concern of other critics mentioned earlier, that the development of a new paradigm was a selfish act of economic and cultural self-preservation on behalf of the ailing German Studies Departments in Germany. It served to strengthen the area of literary studies in the face of growing support for studies in linguistics, and to legitimate German foreign cultural policy. Ndong's chief accusation concerning IG theory is therefore that it has not been developed on its own merits, but to serve goals and to legitimate policies for pragmatic reasons:

> Die angestrebte Modernisierung des Faches erscheint daher als opportunistisch angepaßt. Es ist nicht abwegig, diese Modernisierung im Zusammenhang mit der Beschaffung von Arbeitsplätzen an in- und ausländischen Universitäten zu sehen. Angesichts des bisher Gesagten kann festgehalten werden, daß Wierlacher bei aller wissenschaftlichen Konfektionierung und Aufmachung seines Konzeptes viel mehr legitimierend als theoretisierend verfährt. (Ndong 1993: 28)

According to Ndong, a theory of intercultural communication as presented by IG theorists not only ignores, but perpetuates the skewed power relations between countries. (Ndong 1993:20)

In Wierlacher's *Dialektik der doppelten Optik*, the other reality operates like a prism: as we look at it, our vision is broken up and distorted. A new perspective is then reflected back that helps to broaden our horizons and shape our identities. (Wierlacher 2000: 271) Ndong criticizes this approach as an encouragement to acculturate to the German way of life. According to Ndong, Wierlacher's theory of *doppelte Optik* is directed at acculturated visitors rather than critical observers: "Es zeugt also von kultureller Arroganz, wenn Wierlacher vom „identitätsbildenden Fremdheitsinteresse afrikanischer Germanistik" spricht". (Ndong 1993: 101) The result of this hypocrisy will be acculturated elites who are invited to join the society of intercultural theorists based in Germany (GIG). In this way, African perspectives and criticism are easily appropriated and levelled out. The "other reality" will be made to serve and enrich the institution. (Ndong 1993: 107)

Simo echoes some of these concerns, questioning the motives for a German interest in an African (or other) perspective on their literature. He contends that the idea of *Fremdheit als Ferment* (Otherness as Ferment) as expressed by Wierlacher is essentially a constructive one – as long as the conditions for its success have been clarified/created:

> In dem Begriff „Interkulturelle Germanistik" wird also ein deutsches Interesse an Fremdperspektive auf die deutsche Literatur bekundet. [...], aber es wird nirgendwo dargelegt, warum die Deutschen einer solchen Übung bedürfen.

Die Idee von Fremdheit als Ferment, wie Wierlacher es ausdrückt, ist also grundsätzlich nicht falsch. Aber die Voraussetzungen ihres Gelingens müssen erörtert und geschaffen werden. (Simo 1994: 13-15)

With regard to Africa, an important condition for the success of intercultural communication is the realization that German Studies in Africa began as a colonial endeavour. The introduction of otherness was accompanied by an alienation from and the destabilization of African languages and cultures:

In Afrika sind die Selbstverständlichkeiten der eigenen Kultur längst verunsichert, weil die Beschäftigung mit dem Fremden als Entfremdung vom Eigenen programmiert wurde. [...], die Beschäftigung mit der fremden Kultur wird auf der Grundlage einer destabilisierten Eigenkultur organisiert.
Dies bedeutet, daß die Beschäftigung mit der deutschen Literatur vorwiegend als eine Auseinandersetzung mit einer als problematisch erlebten Beziehung zu einer Kultur aufgefaßt wird. Die deutsche Kultur ist dabei nicht in ihrer Spezifität interessant, sondern als Beispiel einer dominanten Makrokultur, der europäischen. (Simo 1994: 22)

Whereas I would conclude that, in terms of an intercultural hermeneutics, the vertical/historical and the horizontal/cultural are not to be seen as separate, Simo appears to support the idea that both present completely different processes of understanding: whereas the former contains elements of familiarity, the latter is completely unfamiliar:

Einige Kritiker verweisen darauf, daß das Geschichtlich-Fremde, das immer noch Momente der Vertrautheit impliziert, einen ganz anderen Prozeß des Verstehens impliziert als das Kulturell-Fremde, das ganz fremd ist. (Simo 1994: 17)

Whether we take the perspective that the world has many different histories or one common history, I agree with Simo regarding the necessity of creating conditions of equality or at least understanding and acknowledging unequal conditions, a necessity without which any intercultural dialogue is rendered meaningless.

1.7   Intercultural German Studies and literature

IG's approach to literary interpretation is based on the concepts of an intercultural hermeneutics as well as on theories of Aesthetic Response to texts (Iser 1978) and Aesthetic Reception of texts. (Jauss 1982)

Whereas a theory of response (*Wirkungstheorie*) has its roots in the text and is analysed in terms of dialectic between the text and the reader, a theory of reception (*Rezeptionstheorie*) arises from a history of readers' judgments. Its task is to facilitate interaction between readers and discussion of individual interpretations. A theory of response on the other hand focuses on the act of reading which is different from social interaction, as the text cannot adapt itself to the reader. (Iser 1978)

In his critique of Ingarden and the Prague Linguistic Circle, Iser questions the idea that there can be true and false concretisations of indeterminacies in a text. He would like to leave it open to doubt whether each reader's individual concretisation can be subjected to criteria of adequacy or inadequacy and contends that a work may be concretised in different, equally valid, ways. Having established the possibility of more than one valid interpretation of a text, he asks "How is one to understand a text whose meaning can only be constituted through the realization that it transcends existing frames of reference?" (Iser 1978: 180) He also notes that the text is to confront the reader with a new view of the familiar world.

The importance of Iser's work for our purposes lies in the removal of any definitive meaning or interpretation of a text. But, whereas Jauss focuses on the ambiguity of the reader, Iser concentrates on the effect the text has on the reader.

Iser explicates at length how literary devices such as blanks and negation are used to disguise a text to make it appear unfamiliar in the eyes of the reader and to transmit an openness of the world whereby definitive, current, given world views are turned into possibilities of how the world can be experienced. A fictional text thus " enables us to

transcend that which we are otherwise so inextricably entangled in – our own lives in the midst of the world." (Iser 1978: 230)

Influenced by Gadamer, Jauss is not interested in the definition of an actual "representative" canon, but in the dialectical and dynamic process of canon formation. A text is seen as defined by the history of its understanding, as opposed to an essentialist approach where the reader would be of no consequence.

According to Jauss, the first literary experience of a previously unknown work demands foreknowledge, an initial horizon of expectations, and a specific disposition of the audience: "The question of the subjectivity of the interpretation and of the taste of different readers or levels of readers can be asked meaningfully only when one has first clarified which transsubjective horizon of understanding conditions the influence of the text." (Jauss 1982: 23)

Tying in with Iser, Jauss then explains how, given a presupposed audience within a disposition or a given horizon of expectations, a literary work can lead to a change of horizons – the distance between the horizon of expectations and the work demanding horizontal change determines artistic character: if no changes have to be made, the work is likely to be light and entertaining. An initial aesthetic distance can, on the other hand, be self-evident for later readers and be entered into the horizon of future aesthetic experience. Examples are the masterpieces of classic character with seemingly eternal, unquestionable meaning.

Theories around the act of reading and the reception of texts therefore tie in with the hermeneutics of Gadamer and have been used by IG theorists to develop an approach to the reading of literature.

Krusche (1985b: 105), for example, points out that the philosophical approach to a hermeneutics of understanding (*Verstehenshermeneutik*) introduced by Schleiermacher and elaborated by Dilthey and Gadamer took the decisive step of including the recipients of texts in the process of understanding and thus moved away from a text-immanent view of interpretation whereby meaning constitutes itself as the sum-total of literary devices. At the same time, Krusche criticizes the lack of a

geographical angle to an historical hermeneutics that focuses solely on the passage of time within a cultural continuum. The development of a hermeneutics in the context of contemporary cultural otherness is still outstanding:

> Allerdings wird bei ihm [Habermas] ebensowenig wie bei Dilthey der Versuch unternommen, die bisher allein entfaltete historische Zeithermeneutik durch eine historische Raumhermeneutik zu ergänzen. Eine Verstehenslehre der gleichzeitigen kulturellen Fremde ist noch zu entwickeln. (Krusche 1985b: 106)

Following the idea of adding (contemporary) cultural distance to that of time, Krusche (1985b: 121) points out that difficulties of reception occur when a detailed referential framework necessary for a correct analysis of the cultural semantics inherent in a text is not available and the only framework at hand is that shared by common human understanding.

Mecklenburg (1987) echoes the same sentiments in his essay on cultural and poetic alterity. Quoting Jauss in his criticism of Gadamer, he contends that a truly dialogic understanding of alterity is not achieved through the naïve notion of a merging of horizons, but by allowing one's own expectations to be corrected and extended by the experiences of the other:

> Wirklich dialogisch wird Verstehen von Alterität dagegen erst damit, daß nicht eine naive Horizontverschmelzung vorgenommen, sondern die eigene Erwartung durch die Erfahrung des anderen korrigiert und erweitert wird. (Mecklenburg 1987: 88)

According to Mecklenburg, poetic alterity as defined by formalistic-structural approaches to literary theory manifests itself in the alienation that exists between the reader and the text. It is created by the use of poetic language which allows room for interpretation and ambiguity. But whereas poetic alienation is enveloped by a cultural continuum, we are confronted with a *double alterity* if the cultural context is different from our own:

> Auch in der dichterischen Verfremdung nehmen wir den von ihr bearbeiteten kulturellen Kontext wahr. Ist dieser ein anderer als unser eigener, so sind wir mit einer *doppelten Alterität* konfrontiert. (Mecklenburg 1987: 95)

In summary, text interpretation takes into account the historical and the cultural/spatial aspect as well as the possibility of poetic alienation. These theories are not new, however, since they also guided biblical exegesis, for example, the oldest form of (Western) text interpretation. Biblical exegesis is a good example of simultaneous historical and cross-cultural literary analysis. Historical-critical approaches to New Testament texts informed by the quest for the historical Jesus include an analysis of linguistic devices (semiotics), textual devices (literary formalism), text reception beginning from early Christianity and a socio-literary analysis. The latter involved insights from cultural anthropology regarding the social character of the ancient Christian community as the background for the synoptic tradition, especially the words of Jesus. The socio-literary analysis plays an important role in providing an understanding of how those words, as reflected in the texts, transcended the norms of their Jewish environment, an important aspect of New Testament theology.[8]. The historical-critical approach therefore saw the historical meaning of Jesus in connection with his socio-cultural and linguistic environment. For most cultures of today's world, reading biblical texts requires an understanding of different times and places and how they relate to our times and the places we know. In this regard, explanation or critical interpretation of such texts relies on hermeneutics as a general quest to approach the unknown.

Dividing time and space also means that we accord different histories to different places (as opposed to the view that the world shares a common history that can be studied in different places). Ndong (1993), in his response to Mecklenburg's discourse on alterity, criticizes Mecklenburg's definition of alterity as based upon a synchronizing nexus between today's "Third World" literature and yesterday's European literature. It is a Eurocentric attitude that assumes, in its final conclusion, that "Third World" literature will repeat European literary development:

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[8] See for example Jeremias, J. 1960. *Das Problem des Historischen Jesus*; also
Duling. D.C. and Perrin, N. 1994. *The New Testament. Proclamation and Parenesis, Myth and History;*
Maartens, P.J. 1992. 'Interpretation and Meaning in a Conflict Parable', etc.

Mit der Parallelisierung europäischer Literatur und der Literaturen in der „Dritten Welt" stellt Mecklenburg einen synchronisierenden Nexus zwischen der dortigen heutigen Literatur und der gestrigen Literatur Europas her. Damit sind nicht nur Kriterien für Fortschrittlichkeit und Rückständigkeit impliziert, die europäische Entwicklungsform wird zudem maßstäblich. Mit anderen Worten: Der heutige Entwicklungsstand der Literatur in der „Dritten Welt" soll einer früheren Stufe europäischer Literatur entsprechen. Das Vorhandensein von Ähnlichkeiten bedeutet aber noch nicht, daß es in der „Dritten Welt" zur bloßen Wiederholung des europäischen Entwicklungsprozesses kommen müsse. Ein Rekurs auf diese Ähnlichkeiten als Basis eines synchronisierenden Vergleichs verkennt die spezifische Lage der Literaturen in der „Dritten Welt". (Ndong 1993: 155)

Perhaps the term 'alterity' is, to some extent, an indication of a certain self-centeredness, especially when alterity is used as meaning absolute, radical otherness. French philosopher Levinas, according to Wolfreys (2005: 15)[9] emphasizes its absolute exteriority as opposed to a binary, dialectical, reciprocal idea of the other. Alterity means the non-same, within any attempt to think the self, or identity. Derrida, according to Wolfreys (2004: 18) regards alterity as pointing to the difference that makes possible any comprehension of the same. Alterity as absolute otherness will then serve to recognize and strengthen the self. It will not assist in the difficult exercise of going beyond the self and understanding the other.

The idea of alterity in colonialism is an example of a confrontational encounter with otherness that strengthened some selves and considerably weakened others. This historical cultural encounter cannot be ignored as a point of reference when dealing with European literature in Africa as it provides an important context in which the otherness of this literature is viewed, namely the experience of alterity as associated with inequality and division – Apartheid South Africa is a powerful example.

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[9] Here, Wolfreys refers to Levinas' work *Time and the Other* (1947, trans. R.A. Cohen).

It seems useful at this point to acknowledge the IG's emphasis on reader-orientation as generally positive (without the emphasis on difference or distance). An examination of the didactic aspect in Intercultural German Studies follows.

1.8 Intercultural German Studies and the didactics of literature

The teaching of literature has been influenced by theories of Reception Aesthetics. Ihekweazu (1984) for example points to a shift in didactic approaches towards reader-orientedness and reader autonomy. "Hermeneutik und Rezeptionsästhetik sind nicht spurlos an der Didaktik vorübergegangen." (Ihekweazu 1984: 271) Although the idea of reader autonomy appears to create equal conditions for text interpretation, the combination of didactics and reception aesthetics raised some concerns.

Ndong (1993) for example raises points of criticism regarding the role of reception aesthetics in literary didactics. He warns against equating reception aesthetics with the didactics of literature. Quoting Eggert and Rutschky, he points out that whereas reception research focuses on the kind of reception a literary work is exposed to, the pedagogue attempts to guide, improve and norm the way students receive a literary work:

> Rezeptionsforschung und Literaturdidaktik befinden sich ihren Zielsetzungen nach aber zunächst in einem Widerspruch: Der Rezeptionsforscher will Rezeptionen ermitteln, der Literaturdidaktiker und –pädagoge will Rezeptionen anleiten, verbessern, normieren. Dieser Widerspruch ist keineswegs abstrakt. (Ndong 1993: 50)

Regarding the reader-learner equation, Ndong further notes that the use of the term 'reader' as it is understood in reception theory is problematic in a learning context as it is based on the idea of a professional reader, an ideal reader whose literary judgment is based on a high level of awareness and reflection:

> Die Arbeit mit einer Gruppe fremdkultureller Teilnehmer, die mit dem der Rezeptionstheorie entnommenen Leserbegriff operiert, geht eigentlich von

dem professionellen Leser aus, der in dem Fall zum idealen Leser wird und mit der eigenen Literatur bewußt und reflektierend umzugehen weiß. (Ndong 1993: 49)

Regarding the teacher, Ndong questions the extent to which s/he is in a position to understand students' habits of reception and interpretation, especially if they are culturally diverse and the teacher does not know their interpretative traditions:

> Ebenso läßt sich fragen, inwieweit der Lehrende in der Lage ist, die Rezeptions- und Interpretationsgewohnheiten der Rezipienten zu rekonstruieren. Damit dies gelingt, ist davon auszugehen, daß man es mit einer einheitlichen Gruppe zu tun hat, mit deren Tradition sich der Lehrende beschäftigt und vertraut gemacht haben sollte. Wie ließe sich der Unterricht durchführen, wenn sich die Lerngruppe aus Angehörigen unterschiedlichster Kulturen zusammensetzte? Unter diesen Bedingungen wäre der Dozent überfordert, denn ihm wäre nicht zuzumuten, daß er sich mit allen Kulturen der Welt auseinandersetzt. (Ndong 1993: 48)

He concludes that a didactics of literature based on the link between intercultural hermeneutics and reception theory is reduced to generate artificial conversations among readers in order to construct meaning. At the same time, didactic guidance intrudes upon the readers' capacity to act freely. The result is a theoretical paradox that remains unresolved in IG theory and threatens the emancipating character of a reader/learner-oriented theory of didactics by maintaining the status quo in text reception:

> Die Literaturdidaktik wird reduziert auf eine Generierung von Leser-Gesprächen, die sich nicht von allein ergeben. Die Steuerungsmaßnahmen in Form von Didaktisierung bedeuten einen Eingriff in die Handlungsfähigkeit der Lernenden. Damit bleibt die Theorie multikultureller Hermeneutik bundesdeutscher Provenienz – aufgrund ihrer Bindung an die Rezeptionstheorie – ihren institutionellen Grenzen verhaftet und erzeugt dabei ihre eigene theoretische Paradoxie. Das Emanzipatorische an der Theorie wird

abgebogen und für die Aufrechterhaltung des Status quo dienstbar gemacht. (Ndong 1993: 54)

Specific to the African situation is the fact that German Studies at tertiary institutions are very marginal, that learners form a small minority, and readers an even smaller one.

The reader/learner debate is central to the problem of implementing a didactic theory based on intercultural hermeneutics and reception theory. Bourdieu, according to Wolfreys (2004: 41) provides a methodical perspective:

> A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded. Thus the encounter with a work of art is not 'love at first sight' […] the art of empathy, which is the art lover's pleasure, [but] presupposes an act of cognition, a decoding operation, which implies the implementation of a cognitive acquirement, a cultural code.

How have IG literary theorists resolved the apparent reader/learner *aporia*, the question whether the process of understanding foreign literature requires intercultural competence and how it affects the other perspective (*den fremden Blick*), what the limits of an acceptable interpretation of meaning are and who determines them, what role, if any, common human understanding has in the reading process?

Esselborn (2003: 484) begins by emphasizing the importance of literary texts when building intercultural competence that goes beyond factual knowledge. This thought can be considered to be an important step towards lifting the idea of an intercultural competence to a level that goes beyond factual knowledge (which, essentially, is cultural information rather than knowledge). Esselborn's approach (2003) to the didactics of literature is consistent with the hermeneutics of distance and reception theory as part of IG literary theory. A reading list for students must address culturally specific conditions and expectations of the reader; the literary and didactic traditions

of the country and its history of the reception of German literature must be taken into account:

> Eine Lektüreliste muß sich an den kulturspezifischen Voraussetzungen und Erwartungen der Adressaten, an den literarischen und literaturdidaktischen Traditionen des Landes und an seiner Rezeptionsgeschichte deutschsprachiger Literatur orientieren. (Esselborn 2003: 483)

Esselborn (2003) further points out that the absence of cultural and literary knowledge requires historical and literary assistance in understanding texts. Here, it is important to realize cultural distance, to avoid an all too quick (universalistic) understanding and to emphasize distance and otherness:

> Das fehlende Kulturwissen, die fehlende Kenntnis der kulturellen und literarischen Kodes machen historische und literaturwissenschaftliche Verständnishilfen erforderlich. Entscheidend ist, den fremdkulturellen Abstand zu realisieren und zunächst ein vorschnelles (universalisierendes) Verstehen zu vermeiden und eher Distanz und Fremdheit zu betonen. (Esselborn 2003: 485)

Ihekweazu (1985) developed an approach to the didactics of literature known as *Doppelkompetenz* (double competency). Based on the concepts of comparative literature that involve comparisons of oral literatures, comparisons of culturally specific ways of presenting certain themes, structural comparisons of literary genres, comparisons of reception analyses and influences, double competency means a simultaneous development in competency regarding source and target culture. A lecturer would therefore be able to include representative texts from both German and African literature in the curriculum, in this way facilitating the acquisition of a double competency among students. Based perhaps on the concept of Schleiermacher and Gadamer that understanding is located between what is completely known and what is completely alien, Ihekweazu (1985) notes that European and German culture are only relevant to the African student if its presentation offers aspects of similarity as well as aspects of contrast. Only a development of comparative competencies ensures a truly learner-oriented concept of teaching that makes it possible to identify culturally

specific receptions and to distinguish them from imprecise reading or misguided reflection:

> Europa- und Deutschlandkunde werden für den afrikanischen Studenten erst dann relevant und einprägsam, wenn Anknüpfungspunkte oder Kontrastpunkte die Vermittlung strukturieren. Erst mit einer fortschreitenden Kompetenz zum Vergleich ist eine adressatenzugewandte Konzeption des Lehrens möglich. Erst so ist es möglich, im Unterricht kulturspezifische Rezeptionen zu erkennen und sie von ungenauem Lesen und mangelhaftem Nachdenken zu unterscheiden. (Ihekweazu 1985: 300)

Criticism of this idea tends to welcome the comparative approach as an indication of genuine learner-orientation but questions whether a German Studies lecturer should additionally be qualified to teach African literature within its referential framework, independent of whether s/he is German or African:

> Ihekweazu scheint vorauszusetzen, daß die eigenkulturelle Literatur ein von jedem afrikanischen Germanisten beherrschtes Gebiet ist. (Ndong 1993: 150)

I believe these questions are best located in the (interdisciplinary) field of Comparative Studies to which German Studies can contribute but which it cannot encompass. It is without question that double competency is a desirable aim in this context. As an individual achievement, it can be usefully employed at the level of institutional collaboration.

To summarize the discussion around the reader of foreign literature in this context, one could conclude that the spectrum of readers includes the reader as learner, as professional reader or as an 'ordinary' person, sometimes probably combining more than one type of reader in one person.

A didactics of literature usually regards the reader as learner and the educational environment is traditionally characterized by an inherent inequality in the relationship between teachers (who might be professional readers) and learners. Understanding literature in this context usually means that reading is accompanied by providing

background information of a literary, historical or cultural kind, thereby building competence and guiding the student towards certain understandings and interpretations. This manipulates the foreign perspective. The question whether it is desirable to manipulate this perspective and to what extent should provide guidance to the teacher when preparing a lesson.

However, educational environments exist within specific cultural environments. The question as to how to empower a learner to become a more informed reader has become influenced by these environments, e.g. that of European-African economic inequality. Even though "dependency on the economic level is not necessarily tied with intellectual enslavement" (Ihekweazu 1987a: 72), inequality on this broad level can easily influence and ultimately defy the idea of teaching intercultural competence or German literature to African students. The question arising in this context is whether preserving untouched foreign perspectives really means respecting the other or whether it leads to further disempowerment and prolonged inequality, especially if those perspectives are regarded as exotic but not considered serious enough to contribute to a history of reception.

At the other end of the spectrum, we find the reader who is neither a professional reader nor treated as a learner in the above sense. Perhaps s/he is a reader who has been presented with a text, unaccompanied by an introduction or any kind of explanation. The 'lowest' common denominator is common human experiences, an ever-present resource to fall back on in the absence of additional knowledge. However, this 'lowly' knowledge (*vage Allgemeinmenschlichkeit*) turns into powerful knowledge particularly when 'classical' literature is read. According to Goethe (1827), a genuine accomplishment distinguishes itself by belonging to all humanity: "dass das wahrhaft Verdienstliche sich dadurch auszeichnet, dass es der ganzen Menschheit angehört". (Goethe 1960 (1827): 396) In Herder's thought, the status of art is only achieved when it is detached from the man and from the historical environment that created it and becomes rounded off to constitute a world on its own.[10]

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[10] Herder, J.G. 1784-91. *Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Humanity.*

Toprak (2005), in his discussion of the achievements of world literature, describes texts emanating from other cultural contexts as containing that which is at the core of all humanity but presenting it in a strange, different, foreign and unfamiliar way: " fremdkulturelle Texte, die zwar immer das "allgemein Menschliche" behandeln, aber irgendwie sonderbar, anders, fremd, von einem nicht gewohnten Zusammenhang aus."(Toprak 2005: 19) The idea of a hermeneutics of common humanity, perpetuated by a fusion of horizons and the role of a work of art in this context as defined by Gadamer thus remain important forces in the process of understanding.

In summary, the theory of an 'Interkulturelle Germanistik' as described in this chapter has, despite and because of much criticism made an important contribution to the development of an intercultural approach to the hermeneutics and didactics of literature. It has raised and brought into sharper relief (if not always solved) problems related to a wider intercultural approach. Although many contributions to publications are intercultural in content and origin, what has been sketched out here as IG theory is firmly rooted in German theoretical concepts, since most contributions are in German and German perspectives are strongly represented. As the development of an intercultural approach to German Studies is a manifestation of a general strengthening of a cultural studies approach to teaching foreign languages and literatures, chapter 2 will briefly introduce intercultural theories from schools of thought other than that of the Bayreuth circle of *Interkulturelle Germanistik*.

Herder does, however, contradict ideas on humanity as a shared ethical value by emphasizing great variations between historical periods and cultures, e.g. in Herder, J.G. 1774. *This Too a Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity*.

2. INTERCULTURAL THEMES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GERMANY AND SOUTH AFRICA

Chapter one has provided a theoretical framework for teaching literature in foreign countries from a German Studies point of view. Its interdisciplinary approach included perspectives from the philosophy of hermeneutics, cultural studies, literary theory and the didactics of literature. Before moving on to a discussion of migration literature and its didactics, it is appropriate to expand further and reflect on a few of the theoretical foundations of chapter one, namely the study of hermeneutics and of culture.

2.1 Migration literature in a cultural context

In order to interpret migration literature, it is essential to take into account the contextual frame of reference from various perspectives. One perspective is the way it evolved in Germany, historically, socially, psychologically and gender specifically, taking into account economic and political circumstances, language, etc. Another perspective suggests that migration literature and its didactic value outside Germany must be discussed in the larger context of world developments. It is necessary for this discussion to extend far beyond binary approaches to what is familiar and what is alien, beyond the notion that our lives move along chronological, rational and homogeneous timelines that exclude foreign influences. Living in times of "post – isms" requires assumptions of more complexity and less certainty in day-to-day living. The literature of migration is a reflection of these changes and cannot be grasped or taught unless the broader categories of the approach to it are in tune with changing realities, one of which is that it is not only the others who live in uncertain times. Said (1997: 81-96) defined the politics of awareness as meaning that we are not only aware of our own selves and our own identity but also how we fit into the whole of humanity. According to Said, ethnic particularity hinders intellectual progress, and the interpretation of literary works therefore requires a worldliness that firmly places all literature amongst the cultural variety of world humanity.

Before moving on to more defined perspectives on migration literature as outlined above, it is appropriate to consider some of the broader categories where this literature is embedded, particularly where it is influenced by these categories and where it informs them at the same time. Any interpretation will ultimately touch upon these themes. They include a philosophical foundation for the problem of understanding the other: there can be no scientific method in the objectivist sense to attain that understanding. However, this does not mean that nothing can be understood and all is relative. According to Bernstein (1983), Gadamer's hermeneutics rejects binary subject-object approaches and advocates the advent of new knowledge through dialogue and a fusion of horizons between equal partners. Dialogue has, however, always been fraught with inequality and the domination of the more powerful partner, claims Habermas (1985). The realization that involvement with others is at the core of human existence and all future knowledge will depend on it, can be seen as a first step towards understanding the other.

The question whether knowledge of others can be of a scientific nature or whether it can only exist as part of a particular cultural context, takes on a different perspective in the hermeneutics of African philosophers. European notions of understanding need to be contextualized to accommodate the African experience of colonialism and post colonialism, especially when introducing intercultural literature from the European context. Much as 'respect' and 'tolerance' are universally accepted requirements for successful dialogue, attempts to understand the other have had divergent histories and experiences. Finally, both the European and the African experience have influenced and are influenced by global forces to varying degrees. These can no longer be ignored when dealing with literature in any context, especially migration literature.

This chapter therefore examines selected aspects of hermeneutical and cultural studies and some of the links between them. First, a philosophical perspective on intercultural hermeneutics with special reference to Bernstein's (1983) criticism of Gadamer and to Habermas' (1970) theory of discourse is considered. The focus is then on issues of relationship and dialogue, drawing on Buber's theories (1996), as well as on the African philosophy of Ubuntu. This then leads to an examination of contemporary African philosophical hermeneutics, linked to Gadamer's hermeneutics as well as the influences of the colonialist experience and the emancipatory struggle on the African

continent. The need for Africanisation and issues of transition is discussed, as is the influence of global forces such as fundamentalism and postmodernism. Finally, some of the prerequisites for intercultural dialogue and understanding are suggested. The chapter's broad, sweeping nature illustrates the multidisciplinary aspects and the possibilities of an intercultural approach before selecting more specific examples of intercultural themes in literature relevant to this study.

2.2   Hermeneutics

The American scholar Richard Bernstein (1983) looked at hermeneutics in an attempt to go beyond the objectivism-relativism debate. His criticism of Gadamer and Habermas raised important issues that go beyond the time-space debate discussed in the previous chapter. It also points towards some issues in African philosophical hermeneutics and the universalism-particularism debate to be referred to further on. (p. 51-54)

On relativism, Bernstein comments:

> Once we begin questioning whether there is a common faculty of taste […], we are easily led down the path to relativism. And this is what did happen after Kant – so much so that today it is extraordinarily difficult to retrieve any idea of taste or aesthetic judgment that is more than the expression of personal preferences, the same tendency has worked itself out with a vengeance with regard to all judgments of value, including moral judgments. (Bernstein 1983: 120)

Objectivism can be found in Kant's and Descartes' monological and positivist notion of pure rationality and transparency of method. Gadamer's approach has been criticized as relativistic. The dialogical encounter with what is at once alien and akin to us, the testing of prejudices was objectionable to the empiricist or positivist critic of the hermeneutical circle,

> For he or she demands some clear procedure, some method that can break out
> of the circle of interpretations and serve as a touchstone for determining which
> interpretations or readings are correct and which are not. (Bernstein 1983:
> 134)

Here the objectivists' unease with relativist notions mirrors the debate around the intercultural approach as based on perception and interpretation rather than facts. (Hu 2000: 85)

Without wanting to equate relativism and particularism or objectivism and universalism, I would like to use the context of this debate to point to the problematic notion of universalism as automatically associated with the appropriation of others by the Western Powers. This notion can be found both in IG theory as part of the criticism of ideas such as a common humanity or a fusion of horizons and in some hermeneutical approaches in Africa to be discussed later. "Pure" universalism may be an idealistic concept but it is at least as indispensable to the intercultural approach as is the recognition of specifics relative to a cultural environment. Both are integral parts of the principle of intercultural dialogue. Interculturalism that is either based on the complete relativity of everything or the assumption that universalism automatically means appropriation, will face impossible barriers or, alternatively, become a front for a new, subtler form of cultural dominance.

Part of this debate is also the similarity-incommensurability aspect to which Bernstein refers:

> To use the language of incommensurability, we can say that the
> incommensurability of different forms of life or different historical epochs
> always presents a challenge to us, a challenge that requires learning to ask the
> right questions and drawing on the right resources of our own linguistic
> horizon in order to understand that which is alien. (Bernstein 1983: 148)

Gadamer stresses that understanding and dialogue require mutuality, respect, and the genuine endeavour to listen to and understand what the other is saying. It is here that Bernstein voices criticism that might be considered more relevant than the discussion

of time versus space mentioned in the previous chapter, namely that Gadamer's conditions for genuine dialogue and conversation are fragile. "The danger of contemporary praxis is not technē, but domination (Herrschaft). Gadamer's philosophic hermeneutics is virtually silent on the complex issues concerning domination and power." (Bernstein 1983: 156)

Habermas (1970), although agreeing with Gadamer's conditions for genuine dialogue, emphasizes that there are structural societal barriers that systematically distort such dialogue and communication.

Habermas, according to White (1988) provides a strong argument for the necessity of a cultural dimension in communication based on his discourse theory, which contains some of the recurrent themes in intercultural communication such as issues of power, universality, the interpretation, assertion and modification of one's needs in the intercultural arena, global identities, etc. One aspect of this theory is the idea of pure communicative action that is dependent upon free critical participation without the effects of deception, power and ideology, on reciprocal openness and on the premise that anything can be called into question. (White 1988: 55-57) Fairness is at the normative core of discourse, therefore when one tries to justify a normative claim, one is obligated to show that the interests underlying it are generalizable rather than merely particular. (Habermas 1983: 41)

If there are conflicting concepts of what interests can be generalised, an ongoing critical flexibility is necessary, a willingness to reconsider needs interpretations and to modify them "when they appear to manifest weaker claims to universality than alternative ones."(White 1988: 75). It is therefore imperative to differentiate between validity claims and power claims. Assuming that most claims to serving a general interest have been motivated by the wish to exert power and rarely coincide with a valid claim to serve the general interest, it is validity claims that merit protection, especially since it appears to become increasingly difficult to determine what constitutes a claim that can be generalised. Complexity and diversity increase as we are exposed to the world and the world exposes itself to us. As a result, identities evolve within and through more complex and diverse environments:

The rapid pace of social change and the deterioration of traditions in contemporary industrialized societies are creating conditions under which the fixed points around which identity has traditionally crystallized are being thrown increasingly into question. (White 1988: 81)

An identity must therefore be increasingly tied to the experience of continually exercising one's integrative capacity in the context of changes. This requires a reflective attitude towards one's need interpretations. Thus, flexibility of needs is no mere abstract demand but related to concrete difficulties individuals face in managing contemporary social and cultural pressure. (White 1988: 81)

Finally, the idea of pure communicative action rests on the claim to universal human competencies that have been acquired and developed in the area of cognition (as researched by Piaget), moral judgment (Kohlberg), language (Chomsky), and interactive discourse ethics (Habermas). (Habermas 1983: 42-48; White 1988: 58)

The importance of Habermas in this context lies in the dynamism of his theory of communication and in the fact that increasing social and cultural pressure does not lead to a stronger representation of needs but to a flexibility of needs. Critical flexibility is based on the principle of fairness and the notion that our interests are generalizable, the basis for this being a universality of human competencies. Although this is an ideal situation, its internal logic of interculturality as keeping needs flexible and requiring one to place trust in a universal humanity is compelling. On this argument the absence of trust must lead to inflexibility and a natural tendency to emphasize difference and maintain distance.

Habermas' ideal of pure communicative action based on the recognition of the possibility of systematically distorted communication, takes cognizance of the role of power and domination in dialogue rather than assuming ideal but fragile conditions for its success. Criticism was therefore not directed at his operating under unrealistic notions in this regard, but at the rational and argumentative character of his approach to dialogue. It implies that all participants are prepared to submit to the better argument. Hagenbüchle (2002: 156) points out that while Habermas' theory of pure communicative action (*herrschaftsfreier Dialog*) could provide an attractive basis for

intercultural dialogue and understanding, problems are rarely resolved solely on the basis of arguments and without any institutional pressure[11].

Universal humanity as tainted by power and domination, and pure communicative action being almost impossible because of human imperfection, appears to leave us with the improbability of a realizable ideal. We are left with humanity itself. Returning to Descartes' axiom, "I think, therefore I am", could one have bypassed the debates around individualism, relativism, interpretation and simply concentrated on the inter-human notion as the essence of one's existence? Sacrifice perhaps the idealism and simply say "You are, therefore I am"?

The philosopher Martin Buber wrote as part of his dialogical I-Thou philosophy, "In the beginning is the relation – as the category of being, as readiness, as a form that reaches out to be filled, as a model of the soul; the a-priori of relation; the innate You". "Man becomes an I through a You". (Buber 1996: 78,80) To Buber, the concept of personhood is an inter-human notion, rooted in a dialogic existence and relationships: "Egos appear by setting themselves apart from other egos. Persons appear by entering into relations to other persons." "The person says 'I am'; the ego says, 'That is how I am'." "There are not two kinds of human beings, but there are two poles of humanity." (Buber 1996: 112-114) That is, Buber distinguishes between inter-personal relationships and the interaction of individuals with their material world.

Buber seems to point to the dichotomy between European postmodernist consumerism and African communalism when he notes that whereas human relations in so-called Western societies are increasingly those between egos and objects, African people entertain I-You relationships. As an example, Buber compares the Western "indirect and worn-out greeting formulas" with the "eternally young, physical, relational greeting" in Africa. (Buber 1996: 70) Although some of the references to Africa are outdated and sometimes even offensive, Buber's thoughts do

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[11] „Dieser könnte eine durchaus erstrebenswerte Basis interkultureller Verständigung darstellen. Er würde allerdings bei allen Teilnehmern die Bereitschaft voraussetzen, sich dem besseren Argument zu fügen. Tatsächlich gibt es bis heute jedoch nur wenige Beispiele einer Konfliktlösung, die ohne institutionellen äußeren Druck mittels eines argumentativen Dialog allein zustande gekommen sind." Hagenbüchle, R. 2002. *Von der Multi-Kulturalität zur Inter-Kulturalität.*156.

point towards debates surrounding the usefulness of contextual notions such as that of African communalism versus Western individualism. It is for instance debatable what kind of community is more conducive to cultural change and intercultural life. Are individuals the driving force behind cultural change? Are the interpersonal relationships of community life a better basis for intercultural understanding? Buber warns that

> two basically different notions are confused when people use the concept of the social: the community built of relation and the amassing of human units that have no relation to one another – the palpable manifestation of modern man's lack of relation. (Buber 1996: 155)

In the same vein Bernstein, referring to Gadamer, writes

> Just as the individual is never simply an individual, because he is always involved with others, so too the closed horizon that is supposed to enclose a culture is an abstraction. (Bernstein 1983:167)

Interculturality is thus related to the quality of 'being involved with others'. The philosophy of Ubuntu has been described as "the African art of being a true human being through other true human beings". (Broodryk 2002: 10) The Cartesian dualism of mind and matter does not exist:

> According to Ubuntu thinkers, there is no dualism in this position because both rationality and morality are acquired from community life and do not follow from so-called universal categories or fixed ideologies. (Prinsloo 1998: 43)

Ubuntu is thus firmly placed in the African context. It is, however, not restricted to it. Steven Biko writes:

> We believe that in the long run the special contribution to the world by Africa will be in this field of human relationship. The great powers of the world may have done wonders in giving the world an industrial and military look, but the

great still has to come from Africa – giving the world a more human face. (Biko 1978: 51)

The West has, in its pursuit of universal truths, been locked in debates around objectivism, relativism and individualism. Its scientific approaches have a tendency to underestimate the importance of the quality of being involved with others. Broodryk points out that the humanness of Ubuntu is not new to the world, it is the intensity with which it is lived. (Broodryk 2002: 141)

2.3   The universalism – particularism debate

The debate around what is or should be regarded as universal and what is or should be regarded as particular takes place across the human and social sciences, be it philosophy, literature, psychology or anthropology. It has gained momentum in recent years with the increasingly tighter networks that span the globe. Post-colonialism and postmodernism have made irreversible inroads into previously accepted assumptions regarding for example the value of a shared national history, the universal appeal of European philosophy, etc. The previous section highlighted the role of power claims in this context and the importance of involving oneself with others and being flexible about one's needs. Fairness and flexibility are, however, based upon a certain level of respect and trust in humanity, which the West has not displayed in its dealings with Africa.

As mentioned above, the universalism – particularism debate extends into many areas of thought. Here, one may briefly re-visit Gadamer's hermeneutics in the context of this debate with special reference to its reception in contemporary African philosophy. Criticism regarding the strict historicity of Gadamer's theory can in this way again be dispelled as misinterpretation on the part of an audience that continues to live in what Hall calls a "single, homogeneous, empty, Western time"[12]. (Hall 1997: 234)

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[12] "alleinige, homogene, leere (westliche) Zeit" Hall, S. 1997. 'Wann war „der Postkolonialismus"? Denken an der Grenze'.234.

The Nigerian philosopher Theophilus Okere, according to Massoni (2005) and Oburota (2005), is of the opinion that philosophy is relevant in intercultural dialogue considering its role as a clarifier of ideas, words and concepts, and that hermeneutics reminds philosophy of its own cultural origins. (Massoni 2005: 261; Oburota 2005: 314-315) According to Massoni, Okere regarded culture as the foundation of philosophy: "without the background, there could be no foreground". (Massoni 2005: 264) Similarly, according to Massoni, the Eritrean philosopher Serequeberhan saw *Horizon* as the lived experience and *Discourse* as its philosophical fore-grounded outcomes. (Massoni 2005: 266) Both Okere and Serequeberhan stand in the tradition of Gadamer's hermeneutics, attempting to develop a hermeneutical approach to African philosophy and culture. Massoni (2005) quotes Okere as follows:

> "According to Gadamer, the limits that our culture imposes on us are also the condition of possibility of our recognizing what does not belong to this culture as other and thus something to be understood." (Okere quoted in Massoni 2005: 265)

According to Njoku (2005), the cultural grounding of philosophy requires that the "hermeneutical method that is imported into the African space has to undergo certain psychoanalysis to fit the dual traditional and colonial experiences of the African." (Njoku 2005: 108) It appears that there is consensus among African philosophers regarding the need to translate Gadamer's hermeneutics and render it meaningful in the African context. The importance of origin means that an interpretation of Gadamer's theories begins with their contextualisation as European. The need to contextualise is a reaction to the colonial experience of being forced to accept European norms without question. Although the need to ask how something that was developed elsewhere can be relevant to Africa is understandable, especially considering the background of colonial history, the question arises whether it is possible to develop a universally relevant discourse on the basis of culturally defined horizons or, as Obi Oguejiofor puts it:

> Philosophical hermeneutics operates within the bounds of the tension created by the desire for universality and the inevitable particularity of philosophical reflection. (Oguejiofor 2005: 76)

European discourse has a long history of assuming universality beyond its horizon. This brand of universalism remained questionable, however, as it never gained acceptability through negotiation with African discourse, for example. It was an imposed universalism, since European *Dasein* or *Being* in the Heideggerian sense in relation to Africa consisted of *Being in the World*. African *Dasein* in relation to Europe consisted of *Being in Interpretation*.[13]

Whereas European philosophy aimed at formulating universal truths, African so-called 'ethnophilosophy' remained particularistic and contextual in it approach. Oguejiofor criticizes ethnophilosophy as failing to follow a proper philosophical method. Rather, it presents the collective worldviews of African peoples, their myths and folklores and folk-wisdom as philosophy. (Oguejiofor 2005: 72) The philosophy of Ubuntu might serve as an example although its central theme of an intense humanity has had not only pan-African but universal appeal.

How can an intercultural philosophy arrive at universal models of rationality? Massoni (2005) criticizes in the concept of a universal rationality (as for example expressed in Habermas' theory of communication), that it has hitherto been accompanied by a rejection of the idea that otherness could be an object of science (as is the case in Ethnology and Anthropology). He finds such distinctions arbitrary since both are "congenital insiders of Western metaphysics" anyway. (Massoni 2005: 262) Hountondji, according to Kresse (1997), recommends the use of scientific methods and written fixation in philosophy in order to escape the limitations of ethnophilosophy (Kresse 1997: 20) and was criticized for his "scientistic metaphysics" by Serequeberhan (1994) who regards "scientistic universalism" as "nothing more than colonialism in the realm and in the guise of theory." (Serequeberhan 1994: 42) Hermeneutics in the African context is caught between

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[13] The two meanings of *Dasein* as *Being-in-the-world* and *Being- in- interpretation* are taken from a section called 'Hermeneutics in Heidegger' by Oburota (2005: 312). Oburota's reference here is Heidegger's work *Being and Time*. A shortcut to these interpretations can be found in Heidegger's essay *What is Metaphysics?* in which he refers to *Da-sein* as *Being in the World*. He also refers to the thought of and knowledge of Being as the relationship between modern science and "what-is" (*das Seiende*). Of interest in this context is the fact that Heidegger regards metaphysics as simply thinking the thought of Being without being able to reflect on the truth of Being. Oburota infers that *Being in interpretation* in the Heideggerian sense means that the thought and knowledge of something is different from the ability to authenticate the truth of this knowledge.

escaping the limits of 'ethnophilosophy' by introducing method and contextualising European hermeneutics within the African colonialist experience.

Regarding universalism and relativism generally in intercultural philosophy, Massoni (2005), referring to Mall, advocates an egalitarian universalism in intercultural discourse. He regards intercultural philosophy as existing beyond mere temporality, historicity and contextuality as it is not the name of a specific philosophical tradition but represents an attitude or orientation in philosophy. (Massoni 2005: 270, 274)

One of the conclusions that can be drawn from this debate is that Europe has imposed its brand of particularism, disguised as universalism, on the outside world including Africa, and is in need of integrative processes that allow fusions of horizons and discourses as part of intercultural debates. It also needs to allow itself to become *Being in Interpretation*, a state of Being to which migration literature has already made a substantial contribution. Africa, on the other hand, needs to develop a sense of *Being in the World* and foster an atmosphere of free cultural development or, as Serequeberhan (1994), referring to French thinker Foucault put it, existing in the "practical actuality of freedom." (Serequeberhan 1994: 89)

Whether it is the freedom to live according to the values of a cultural collective or the freedom to choose whom one wants to be, it is only on this basis that meaningful dialogue is possible. Freedom of choice fosters personal confidence, which is often followed by generosity towards others and flexibility of judgment. The following two sections deal with collective freedom in discussions of Africanisation and post-colonialism and with individual freedom as a phenomenon of postmodernism and social transition.

2.4   Africanisation and Transition

Serequeberhan (1994), in quoting Cabral from Guinea Bissau, defines Africanisation as a "return to the source". (Serequeberhan 1994: 102) This source is not a dead but an authentic African past; not a "true, uncontaminated, original African archē" but an identity that takes into account the drastic effect of colonialism and the possibility of

overcoming this inheritance, chiefly by emerging from under what Serequeberhan describes as "the particularity of the particular in European humanity [which] unlike the specific particularity of the African – is coincident with the universality of the universal." (Serequeberhan 1994: 51) Following Frantz Fanon, the creation of an authentic African past can be achieved through a "fusion of horizons" between the experiences of colonialism and African tradition into a shared history of emancipatory struggle. This fusion is powerfully embodied in the coming together of the rural masses and the urban Westernized African who "brings with him the European cultural baggage that constitutes his person". (Serequeberhan 1994: 108)

> Thus, in this encounter of the urban and rural native, the standpoint of the present is put in question and what is appropriated is not the inert past but the effective historicity of the fusion of these two elemental and dynamic forces. This is what Gadamer refers to as the "effective historical consciousness", concretely grasped within the context of the African situation. (Serequeberhan 1994: 100)

Serequeberhan rejects the ethnophilosophic approaches, represented for example in Senghor's *Africanité*, as engineered by Eurocentric ideas about Africans, and presented as the African's own self-conception. At the same time, he advocates more context-oriented modes of philosophizing based on a strong sense of one's very own historicity and its arising needs:

> […] "to know what you want in your condition" is to have a concrete theoretical understanding of one's lived historical situation. For both Fanon and Cabral, then, theory, properly speaking, is always the concrete hermeneutics or interpretation of the needs and requirements of a specific historicity. It is only in this way that African philosophy, as the reflexive hermeneutics of its own historicalness, can grow and cultivate itself as a concrete contemporary philosophic discourse. (Serequeberhan 1994: 112-114)

The "practical actuality of freedom" is a prerequisite for equal participation in discourse that is characterized by the absence of claims to power, by fairness and

flexibility of needs that will warrant a valid claim to universality. Habermas' idea of universal claims is thus reflected in Fanon's notion of universality as reciprocity among free cultures: "Universality resides in this decision to recognize and accept the reciprocal relativism of different cultures, once the colonial status is irreversibly excluded." (Fanon 1988: 44)

This is the context for the expressed need to Africanise life in South Africa and recover a sense of identity. Of course, the recovery of a collective identity may not be a priority for the rising postmodernist African middle class or the poor urban and rural masses. Their concerns may be the acquisition of material wealth or the struggle for survival rather than the "return to the source". Ending poverty must appeal to them more than the comfort gained from the collective memory of an emancipatory struggle. Global forces such as capitalism and individualism as well as generational gaps have for example proven a powerful challenge to the influence of traditional leaders or struggle and cultural activists. Material improvement appears to be an overriding concern as will be discussed further on. However, the fact remains that the quest for an identity lies at the core of human existence and will not be silenced by economic needs.

The debate on European universalism and African contextualism is reflected in the Africanisation debate in South Africa. Dr Mathole Motshekga, director of the Kara Heritage Institute, for example, said in an interview, "the educational system in this country should be Africanised," since "our judgment is biased to the West and does not do justice to African culture and religion that is based on spirituality."(Motshekga quoted in Eetgerink 2006) The Africanisation debate has made some people uncomfortable. Former President Thabo Mbeki's speech "I Am an African" (Mbeki 1998: 31-36) has left some South Africans wondering whether they are included or want to be included in his concept of being an African. Mbeki considers himself a part of all the people in South Africa and this is what makes him claim to be an African. Chipkin (2007), in his analysis of this speech, emphasizes the struggle against oppression as the defining aspect of being African:

What this therefore means is that being African, or being an individual, is contingent on something very special: being able to understand the racist power at work in apartheid and colonial taxonomies. (Chipkin 2007: 102)

It is clear that this debate mirrors some aspects of the philosophical debate on universalism and particularism. If Africanisation is seen as nothing more than a reaction to colonialism/Apartheid, as Chipkin (2007) seems to suggest, it will never be more than a particularist notion that cannot approach universal appeal, especially if it is taken to perpetuate victim status. It seems to me, however, that it was in fact Mbeki's intention to create an identity that achieves the same universal status and appeal as that of a European identity. As in Europe, this can only be achieved by allowing the identity to be all-encompassing.

With regard to intercultural hermeneutics, I believe the priority in South Africa is to encourage as many perspectives on history as possible. African identities have irrevocably been shaped by encounters with colonial others, and to remember them and articulate them constitutes a first step away from defining one's identity only in terms of struggle and towards the freedom of deciding who one wants to be. To rectify the sense of being a "people without a past" identified by Motshekga (Motshekga quoted in Eetgerink 2006) cannot also solely mean to resurrect traditions from a past that is presumed to be untainted by the encounter with the colonial other. It can only be corrected by decidedly seizing ownership of historical perspectives. It is only on this basis that other perspectives can be meaningfully discussed. Another aspect of living in the "practical actuality of freedom" is therefore the idea that "the truth shall make you free". (John 8: v32)

The awareness of how, in the course of history, identities have been negotiated not only helps establish a sense of self but it also affords the flexibility and confidence to continue negotiating the self through encounters with others. Lack of such an awareness leads to stagnation in the development of personal and collective identities, as Neville Alexander (2004) explains:

social identities seem to have a primordial validity for most people, precisely because they are not aware of the historical, social and political ways in which

their identities have been constructed. This is, ultimately, the psychological explanation for the tenacity of such identities. (Alexander 2004: 6)

What is the role of Africanisation in the South African transition or how can it influence the development of a South African identity? Former President Thabo Mbeki and others have described it as an inclusive, unifying concept that plays a constructive role in building a national identity for South Africa. Whether this constitutes an acceptable idea or not depends on our idea of a national identity. 'Risorgimento', the Eurocentric theory of nationality, is a monocultural, monolingual, ethnically defined notion of national identity. This notion, defended by centre-right political parties both in Germany and South Africa stands vis à vis "a fluid concept consistent with the notion of a multicultural policy in which there is a large measure of consensus on central values and projects around which the population as a whole coheres" according to Brigitte Mabandla, then Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. (Quoted in Alexander 2002: 87) Or, as Alexander puts it: "it is not ethnicity, religion, language or territory as such, but 'shared experience', that gives rise to nations and nationalist movements." (Alexander 2002: 89) A post-ethnic multicultural society is thus held together by shared experiences, values, interests and ideas and "can find its expression in the fact of multiple identities of the individual held together by the overarching national identity, that of being South African." (Alexander 2002: 98) This may also be a constructive proposal for Germany[14], where many debates are still locked around the problem of German identity – whether it can survive solely on the thin layer of rationality represented by *Verfassungspatriotismus* (loyalty to the constitution) or whether it requires an overcoat of nationalism which continues to evoke ambivalent feelings. South Africa's new constitution is a crucial aspect of nation building and the following quote from *Spiegel* magazine might apply to both countries:

> Verfassungspatrioten haben es da schwerer. Staaten wie die Bundesrepublik – und ähnlich die USA – basieren nicht auf einer gewachsenen nationalen Identität, sie sind synthetische Gründungen als Ausdruck eines gemeinsamen

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[14] See for example German Islam scholar Reetz who advocates "gemeinsames Bewußtsein" and "gegenseitige Wertschätzung" as necessary ingredients of multicultural life. (Quoted in "Schlüsselwort Vertrauen". 2008. 24.)

Projekts. Ihre Existenzgrundlage ist aus Papier: die Verfassung. Und fraglich ist, ob das als Kitt reicht. (Darnstädt 2008: 84)

Chipkin (2007) differentiates between nation and democracy. Nation, he writes, is "that domain where people do not meet as equals, but always already as representatives of 'peoples'. Every encounter is always already closed: it can only confirm what one already knows." (Chipkin 2007: 217) The *democratic* nation, on the other hand, is "not simply a nation of multiple identities; it is a nation composed of individuals". (Chipkin 2007: 102) The democratic transition in South Africa led to the vision of a 'rainbow nation' which "inspired thinking about a form of citizenship freed of the baggage of the nation." (Chipkin 2007: 59) Moreover, in terms of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, overcoming the antagonism of 'victims' and 'perpetrators' created the vision of a 'world people', the 'rainbow people of God', 'humanity as a whole' rather than just South African people. (Chipkin 2007: 181-185)

It seems only logical for South African official policy to adopt a pluralistic, fluid and relativist attitude towards nation building, as opposed to one that is homogeneous, static and objectivist. The experience of 'objective truths' as imposed by authoritarian regimes, has proved a worse nightmare than the uncertainty and anxiety associated with transition and change. In Germany, philosophers of the Frankfurt School expressed a similar reaction to the experience of National Socialism, rejecting all signs of reductionism in favour of complexity in social theory. Authoritarianism, propagating the apparent security of a certain objective, invariably leaves its subjects with a profound distaste for the 'truths' propagated. Moreover, it inspires deep scepticism regarding the idea of universal truths per se. Since these have been imposed and not arrived at through the dialectics of dialogue, they never were either objective or universal and were therefore invariably proven untrue. The downfall of such belief systems leaves one not only seeking for new truths, it also leaves one with the classic philosophical question of "what is truth?" and how it can be answered. Seeking dialogue and understanding rather than absolute truths can help establish new, more stable truths, but it can also result in comfort zones being compromised to such an extent that relativism itself becomes the new comfort zone, where prejudice falls again on fertile ground and grows into "some lazy anticipation, some beloved presumption that he desires to rest undisturbed in" as John Locke described it. (Locke

1971 (1882): 31) Fluidity, uncertainty and anxiety are, therefore, part of a dynamic transitional society but can lead to apprehension and social regression if they are not counterbalanced by the rewards of living in such a society. South African society is in a state of flux, described well by Robinson (2004: 275)

> The South African transition, like all moments of transformation, carries the past along with it. A neat break, between then and now, is an historical impossibility. The overlapping of apartheid vestiges and post-apartheid inventions stages a dialectical encounter and produces a heterogeneous present.

It is against this background that new truths will have to be found and constantly tested to avoid impositions or indeed anything in which one can rest undisturbed. This state of unrest easily leads to apprehension; Taylor (2004) describes the South African situation thus:

> But transitions also create uncertainty, result in fears about the future and, for those who were in a chronic state of insecurity arising from structural inequality and multiple deprivations, they could lead to deeper alienation and ruptures. (Taylor 2004: 357)

In this regard, South Africa's transition reflects a microcosm of fears and possibilities mirroring transition processes in the global arena. It appears that the debates around absolute and relative truths emanating from and serving one or more cultural contexts are not the only definitive moment of our times. What has also changed is the urgency to accept that the ideal of unity will have to be replaced by a management of diversity and that includes having to deal with demons and phantoms rising up from the chasms of the in-between. ("*Dämonen und Phantome, die aus den Klüften des Dazwischen aufsteigen*" - Bronfen and Marius 1997: 24) It also includes the management of uncertainty, the experience of having lost or fought against definitive guidelines. As will be shown in the following section, managing the uncertain can result in the extreme case of withdrawal into fundamentalism or extreme individualism. Less obvious but nevertheless problematic has been the notion that multiculturalism has to achieve nothing more than peaceful co-existence. This is discussed in chapter 3.

Having examined aspects of intercultural understanding in the context of Gadamer's hermeneutics and Habermas' ideas on successful communication and interaction, the general importance of relationships with others was once more emphasised. African-European relationships were analysed in the context of an intercultural philosophy. 'Horizon' was emphasized with regard to the African context without which there could be no 'discourse' with others. Consequently, the South African situation was discussed in the context of Africanisation and social transition. However, intercultural understanding in today's world requires the global context to be considered when examining contextual and universal features of human interaction.

2.5   Global forces

Social transitions are shaped according to social needs. Whereas the South African situation appears to require an inwardly directed search for a national identity, Germany has been grappling with a more outwardly directed search for an expanded national identity that seeks to include its growing migrant minorities. Official terminology in education reflects this: whereas Germany talks about immigration and integration, South Africa prefers to use the term diversity. Germany talks about 'people with migration backgrounds', South Africa talks about 'people of European, Indian, African descent'. Social transitions do not occur in isolation from global issues, a fact that can be exemplified by two major global forces – fundamentalism and postmodernism. Like most global forces they are inherently economic and technological but have strong cultural and social characteristics.

The recent integration debate in Germany has brought up fundamentalism as a recurrent theme and challenge. In this context, fundamentalism refers to extreme positions within the religion of Islam as represented for example by *Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüs* or the Muslim Brotherhood in Germany. South Africa has its own local branch known as PAGAD (People Against Gangsterism and Drugs) operating mainly in the Cape Town area. It is appropriate at this juncture to refer to Tibi's work in this field. (Tibi 2002) Tibi's analysis of fundamentalism ties in well with previously mentioned debates around cultural contextualisation and cultural

universalism. The religion of Islam and its moderate or fundamentalist practice is also a recurrent theme in migration literature in Germany.

Tibi warns against claims to universalism that do not originate in dialogue but seek to ignore the claims of others:

> Islam resembles Western civilization, in the sense that it is universal in both its claims and its outlook – it is thus easy to understand why Islam and the West clash, more consistently than do other competing civilizations. (Tibi 2002: 15)

He criticizes the lack of commitment to objectivity and to the possibility of universal standards, and the tendency to withdraw into cultural relativism:

> As non-Western peoples proudly develop strong commitments to their particular civilizational standards, the West comes under pressure to defend its own civilization. Certainly among the fashionable postmodernists and multiculturalists in the West, there appears to be a lack of commitment to Western civilization. In denying objectivity and global standards in general, they deprive their own civilization of its basic virtues and elements. In this framework, owing to the spread of cultural relativism, it seems no longer possible, for instance, to defend human rights as universal rights. These anthropologists [referring to the anthropology of knowledge] prematurely conclude that there is no universally valid knowledge, since each body of knowledge is valid only in its own culture. Most intriguing here is the convergence between Muslim fundamentalists, who are neo-absolutists, and postmodernists, who are cultural relativists. (Tibi 2002: 46-47)

He advocates a cross-cultural consent to a secular international morality and a cross-cultural validation of democracy and human rights as unifying factors. Objectivity is achieved through consent and validation based on cross-cultural dialogue. Tibi describes from a global perspective another avenue towards a new universalism based on equal dialogue among free and self-determined cultures.

The multiculturalism debate in Germany is, however, characterized by talk *about* Muslims rather than *with* Muslims, as Kermani points out. (Kermani 2008: 15) He claims that most of the protagonists in this debate merely carry Arabic, Iranian or Turkish names, and almost all of them have renounced Islam. Kermani adds that "die gesamte Intergrationsdebatte [ist] heute eine Debatte über den Islam – als ob die Einwanderer nichts anderes wären als Muslime". (Kermani 2008: 15) He warns that "Identität ist per se etwas Vereinfachendes, etwas Einschränkendes, wie jede Art von Definition. Es ist eine Festlegung dessen, was in der Wirklichkeit vielfältiger, ambivalenter, durchlässiger ist". (Kermani 2008: 15) He regards fundamentalist withdrawal and violence as a possible consequence of allocating identities and defining others in terms of their similarity to or difference from 'us':

> Identitätsfindung funktioniert grundsätzlich über die Abgrenzung von anderen Identitäten. Es gibt das Eigene nur, wo es etwas anderes gibt. Auch das ist zunächst ein normaler Vorgang. Und doch liegt eben hier, in der Konstruktion dessen, was man selbst ist, und der Abgrenzung von dem, was andere sind, ein Gewaltpotential. (Kermani 2008: 15)

The fundamentalism debate is, of course, very complex and can only be touched upon in this context. Religious fundamentalism such as political Islam has been a greater source of concern than other rising global forces such as postmodernism, for example. The latter appears to acquire increasing universal appeal seemingly without cultural dialogue or ideological debates and consensus. Postmodernism is an accompaniment to the age of technology, information and global communication, and can be seen as a human adjustment to these developments.

Rainer Funk (2005), in his psychoanalysis of postmodern man, describes the psychological effects of postmodernism as a profound opposite to previously mentioned notions of relationship, dialogue, shared histories, collectivism. A new universal state of mind seems to be that of I-orientation (*Ich-Orientierung*):

> Die Ich-Orientierung ist eine neue Art zu leben. Sie entspringt einem Persönlichkeitstypus, den es in dieser Verbreitung und öffentlichen

Anerkennung als Modell eines zeitgemäßen Lebens bisher noch nicht gegeben hat. (Funk 2005: 11)

Identities associated with I-orientation appear to have transgressed all cultural, geographical and historical boundaries; their experience of the self has no location; it is the result of a process of self-creation out of nothingness:

Postmoderne Ich-Orientierte konstruieren ihr Selbst- und Identitätsleben vielmehr in zunehmendem Maße frei und unabhängig von angeblichen Merkmalen des Eigenen und von Eigentümlichkeiten. Ihr Selbsterleben geht sozusagen aus dem Nichts hervor, ist die pure Selbsterschaffung. (Funk 2005: 63)

The relationship with the other is characterised by openness: cultural strangeness provides access to new experiences and stimulates creativity, thus benefiting the self:

Besonders ausgeprägt ist beim aktiven Ich-Orientierten die kulturelle Offenheit („Alles ist möglich") auch und gerade für das Exotische und Fremdartige („Nichts ist unmöglich" – Werbung von Toyota). Das kulturell Fremde ist nichts Fremdes, sondern eröffnet Zugänge zu bisher verschlossenen eigenen Erfahrungen und Ich-Setzungen und hat deshalb einen stimulierende Effekt auf die eigene Kreativität. (Funk 2005: 70)

This open-mindedness does not, however, extend to forming productive relationships based on mutual interest and tolerance and allowing physical proximity. In order to benefit from the other, the I-oriented person needs to remain at a distance – distances are overcome not by moving closer but by utilizing technological equipment:

Nicht-Produktivität hingegen hat eine Distanz schaffende Wirkung. Nur wenn der Abstand klar ist – am Telefon oder wenn man fünfhundert Kilometer voneinander getrennt ist -, kann man Nähe zulassen. Im Umgang mit dem Nicht-Eigenen und Fremden meldet sich ein ängstliches oder aggressives Gefühl, auf das mit Überlegenheit, Distanzierung oder Ausgrenzung reagiert wird. (Funk 2005: 222)

I-orientation is thus equated with non-productive, one-dimensional illusions about life, as opposed to productive, realistic and ambivalent/differentiated notions of life that are necessary to adjust to changes and to build meaningful relationships. Authentic experiences are replaced by learning how to operate ready-made programmes like those developed by the computer software industry. Relationships are replaced by computer-facilitated virtual contacts. The self transfers its own strengths and competencies onto an authoritarian technological power resulting in a lack of self or alienation from the self. Funk, who worked closely with Erich Fromm, used the latter's phrase of "Leiden an der Kultur und an sich selbst" to describe the consequences of such an alienated life. (Funk 2005: 175).

I-orientation is therefore a form of dislocation accompanied by a sense of loss that is compensated by the marketing strategies of globalised capitalism, aiming at creating identities through brands that link them to certain realities. One avenue towards creation of the self is no longer cultural socialization, but the decision what to buy.

> Das Einkaufen dient der eigenen Neuschöpfung. Shoppen gehen ist wie Neu –
> geboren – Werden; es wird in den „Kathedralen des 21. Jahrhunderts" (H.W.
> Opaschowski, 2000) vollzogen und hat quasireligiösen Charakter. (Funk 2005:
> 69)

For I-oriented people, then, the cathedral of the 21st century is the shopping mall. According to Soudien (2004), "Money is essential to young South African adults as the facilitator of the good life, and as the key to demonstrating status." (Soudien 2004: 58) Democratic and constitutional freedom in South Africa has not only led to a search for an authentic African past and the expressed need to Africanise the present; it has also given rise to exaggerated materialism. The *Observer*, under the headline "Young, rich, black … and driving an African boom", reports: "They drive sleek cars, dress to kill and spend like there's no tomorrow. Twelve years after the demise of apartheid, the children of South Africa's revolution have found a way to celebrate freedom: shopping." (Carroll 2006, online document.) In the same article, a 40-year-old businesswoman from Johannesburg is quoted as saying: "The mall is where we pay our tithes and make our offerings. It's a religious experience. When we go inside

we say don't disturb me, I'm meditating, just give me a credit card." (Ibid.) We might come across such statements anywhere in the world as materialism is a universal phenomenon, but the question remains as to whether it is not something that divides rather than unifies us.

Soudien (2004) suggests that global forces have led to greater individualism in South Africa, a development that co-exists perhaps uneasily with the recognition of the importance of tradition:

> In the struggle for building a normal life, young people are increasingly confronting the globalised world as individuals. While, interestingly, there is retention amongst young black men and women of the importance of tradition (SANYS 2000), there is, simultaneously, a distrust of the value of the old – a cynicism of the value of the 'ancients'. This cynicism implies an ambiguity about their identities and the extent to which clan and group affiliations impinge on their freedom as individuals and their aspirations to succeed in the modern world. (Soudien 2004: 58)

South Africans are thus caught in a complex search for an individual and a national identity, for a perspective on their past that can meaningfully shape the present, and for a way to establish themselves in the global community and deal with global forces. Neither the regressive trend towards absolutist ideals or any form of fundamentalism nor the fierce individualism associated with a postmodernist lifestyle seems appropriate to the task. We are left with the attempt at dialogue and understanding, resulting in agreements that carry universal approval. Hagenbüchle (2002) puts it thus: "Angesichts des nach der Postmoderne wohl unhaltbar gewordenen Modells von Multikulturalität haben wir gar keine andere Wahl, als uns auf Interkulturalität einzulassen." (Hagenbüchle 2002: 147)

The intercultural approach regards the stranger as a positive phenomenon. Strangeness is associated with dynamism and progress. Neither the post-modern nor the fundamentalist or the multicultural approach to strangeness offer this perspective as strangers remain in their own worlds. Whereas people from post-modern worlds (often intellectuals or employees of multinationals) may benefit from post-modern

notions such as fragmentation, diversification, shrinkage of physical space and compression of time, less affluent people such as labour migrants depend on their ability to seriously engage with the other.

2.6   Relating to cultural otherness

What are the characteristics of an intercultural dialogue that strives to establish universal values and at the same time recognizes and respects particularity? Or, as Waldenfels (1995) puts it, "how can we make the alien accessible without diminishing or abolishing its alienness?" (Waldenfels 1995: 39) Bammer (1995) warns against the common practice of using the alien other "to entertain, revitalize, or in some other way assist a perhaps ailing, but still hegemonic, culture." (Bammer 1995: 55) The selfishness of a postmodern event-and-fun society that builds African theme parks (with a rollercoaster rushing through an African village) to entertain and stimulate bored children serves as an example. Köstlin (2000) describes cultural self-enrichment based on the "tamed exotic" as follows:

> Tatsächlich hat sich 'Multikultur' vor allem als Euphemismus für eine Art 'Bereicherungsthese' eingebürgert, die das Angebot der fremden Kultur als Erweiterung der eigenen kulturellen Möglichkeiten begreift – wobei es, wohlgemerkt, um eine bereits gezähmte Exotik geht, mit der viele – aber bei weitem nicht alle – umzugehen gelernt haben. Fremde Kultur tut in dieser Perspektive nicht weh, ja, sie putzt ungemein. Sie erlaubt, von 'meinem' Türken oder Italiener zu reden, sie zielt auf das bunte, folkloristische Zusammenleben in Festen und Kulinarik, nobilitiert auch den Türken an der Ecke, der frisches Gemüse anbietet, das man anfassen und auf seine Frische prüfen darf. (Köstlin 2000: 367)

South Africa provides plenty of examples from its own context where such middle cultures of dealing are established. Self-enrichment and the "tamed exotic" tend to characterise the traditional relationship between white employers and African domestic workers, for example. Appreciating the other from a distance that is given to distort impressions often leads to disappointment when real encounters in non-

artificial situations occur. Simo (1993) describes how the ideology of solidarity in the former GDR created a 'middle culture of dealing' that led to post-reunification xenophobia. The same artificial solidarity based on the ideology of Soviet Russia led to the high level of xenophobia in present day Russia. Simo describes the situation in the former GDR as follows:

> [...] weil der Fremde nicht das sein kann was man von ihm erwartet, schlägt das Solidaritätsgefühl in Haß um oder bestenfalls in Gleichgültigkeit. So überrascht es nicht, wenn in der DDR der Fremdenhaß so grassiert, nachdem die Solidarität mit der revolutionären Dritten Welt jahrzehntelang als Staatideologie propagiert wurde. (Simo 1993: 27)

Artificial solidarity created by state propaganda is one way of polarizing people and creating distance – fundamentalist ideologies that adhere to non-negotiable frameworks of rules are another. And – strangely enough – a non-ideological postmodernist way of life that constantly re-invents itself with the help of modern technology is another. Here, the other is used as material for propaganda or self-enrichment, experienced via monitor or as a staged event. Real encounters do not play a central role.

Postmodernist lifestyles are attractive in that they present a freedom from any ideological framework – be it that of socialist solidarity, colonialist or nationalistic racial theories, religious fundamentalism, etc. Hagenbüchle (2002) notes: "War es ein Hauptanliegen der abendländischen Philosophie, Vielheit auf Einheit zurückzuführen, so vertritt der Postmodernismus die unaufhebbare Pluralität von allem." (Hagenbüchle 2002: 128)

Another enticing characteristic of this lifestyle is its apparent lack of boundaries, be they cultural, historical or geographical. The postmodernist person can undergo a complete metamorphosis and re-invent himself/herself, crossing boundaries:

> 'Deterritorialisierung' verdeutlicht die Tatsache, dass für das postmoderne Subjekt die Qualität der Metamorphose als Möglichkeit ständiger kreativer

Verwandlung und Grenzüberschreitung konstitutiv geworden ist. (Hagenbüchle 2002: 83)

The virtual artificiality of encounters with others (contacts rather than relationships), the exploitative tendencies of a selfish I-orientation when dealing with others remain, however, significant drawbacks when considering the postmodernist subject as a participant in intercultural encounters.

Hagenbüchle (2002) suggests an intercultural identity that is constructed on the dialectics of dialogue and remains open to negotiation: "[Es] scheint eine offene und immer wieder neu auszuhandelnde dialogisch-dialektisch konstuierte Identität gerade für die in unserer Zeit massiv zunehmende Grenzgängersituation zwischen den Kulturen als besonders vielversprechend [zu sein]." (Hagenbüchle 2002: 42) Such an identity requires a productive, ambivalent approach to reality, seeking real encounters without sacrificing its own substance. In the course of a lifetime, such an identity will increase in complexity as tradition and modernity, ethnicity and universality are combined in a way specific to each individual. (Hamburger 1998: 136)

Intercultural competence has a strong emotional component that should be developed. (Hagenbüchle 2002: 14) Instead of asking,"Who are we?"- a question that has been answered in various ways – the Cartesian way emphasizing rationality, "I think, therefore I am", the African way emphasizing relationships "I am because you are", and the I-oriented postmodernist way emphasizing individualism "I am because I am me"[15] - we should rather be asking "How do we relate to one another?" Hagenbüchle suggests that the answer to this question will also answer the question of who we are. He further suggests a certain emotional intelligence in dialogue based on empathy and withholding premature judgment as more important than superior knowledge or the better argument:

Voraussetzung bleibt allerdings, dass die Teilnehmer bereit sind, sich selber zurückzunehmen, zunächst einmal auf den Anderen zu hören und statt auf

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[15] Descartes, R. 1996 (1637). *Discourse on the Method.* (Cogito ergo sum). 275;
Broodryk, J. 2002 *Ubuntu. Life lessons from Africa.* (Ubuntu ungamuntu ngabanye abantu - people are people through other people). 13;
Funk, R. 2005. *Ich und Wir.* (Ich bin ich, weil ich ich bin). 160.

besseres Wissen und das 'bessere Argument' zu setzen, eine Kultur der 'Urteilsenthaltung' zu pflegen. (Hagenbüchle 2002: 189)

Hunfeld (2004) talks about "Askese des Zuhörens" and "die Stille des sich Zurücknehmens". (Hunfeld 2004: 297) His "hermeneutics of silence"(*Hermeneutik der Stille*) requires the reader to be silent, since reading means that we allow others to speak. Europe, I believe, will have to work through much backlog in the area of listening and withholding premature judgment or any judgment at all. At the Technical University (TU) in Berlin, intercultural competence is described as the realization that accepting others without judging them is extremely difficult: "Die Studenten sollen lernen, dass die bewertungsfreie Akzeptanz von anderen Kulturen sehr schwierig ist."[16]

A second prerequisite for successful intercultural dialogue is what Hagenbüchle describes as 'dual understanding' – allowing not only our perspective on others but the other perspective on us, a concept that has been realized in migration literature:

> Es ist zweifellos erforderlich, über den eigenen Tellerrand hinauszublicken. Was ebenso notwendig wäre, ist der Blick von ausserhalb des Tellerrands in den eigenen Teller hinein. Mit anderen Worten, 'bifokales Verstehen' ist die unabdingbare Voraussetzung für ein fruchtbares interkulturelles Gespräch. (Hagenbüchle 2002: 186)

Thirdly, he emphasizes the importance of constructing dialogue not so much around fixed cultural themes and values, but around the different historical conditions that led to different ideas about life, following the idea that information and knowledge about the other is different from understanding the other. Understanding relies on a combination of history and culture (see chapter one). The idea of a horizontal intercultural dialogue taking place between cultural entities is an artificial construction invented to maintain cultural boundaries as Köstlin (2000) points out: "Die Benennung des Fremden und der fremden Kultur lässt sich als Erfindung und

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[16] Warnecke, T. 2003. 'Vorsicht Fettnäpfchen! Was bedeutet es eigentlich, „Interkulturelle Kompetenz zu studieren?"'.11.

Konstruktion beschreiben. Sie gehört zu einer Kulturtechnik des Abgrenzens in der Moderne." (Köstlin 2000: 380)

In his criticism of IG theory, Chiellino (2000b) reminds one that a monocultural dialogue about interculturality is a futile exercise: " ein monokulturelles Gespräch über Interkulturalität ist eine wissenschaftliche Fehlleistung". (Chiellino 2000b: 389) According to Chiellino (2000b), teaching intercultural literature requires lecturers whose intercultural knowledge is based on experience. ("Wissenschaftler, die in der Interkulturalität zu Hause sind und über erlebtes Wissen verfügen.") (Chiellino 2000b: 396) The difference between knowledge and understanding is central to the intercultural approach and its treatment of time and space.

Finally, returning to Gadamer's notion of the 'inter' as the true location of hermeneutics, we need to recognize that an intercultural society always produces hybrid identities built on a combination of different experiences in different places and at different times in their lives and the lives of the surrounding communities. (Durzak 2004: 30) It is these identities that create a new, hybrid form of literature. Interculturality and hybridity are important trademarks of migration literature. Notions of *Fremdes* and *Eigenes* present a monocultural perspective and are inadequate to describe an intercultural literature.

Migration literature has made a contribution to intercultural dialogue by providing an outside perspective of what is presumed to be familiar, as well as insight into another culture. The other culture is often introduced as the underlying perspective, the lens that is used to let us see what seems familiar in a new light. In addition, its descriptiveness often allows the reader to draw his or her own conclusions, while its literariness facilitates a deep level of understanding – an important qualification to other genres or media that simply transmit information about other cultures or how others see us. One might say that intercultural hermeneutics has found its literary form in migration literature. The following chapters deal with themes and didactics of migration literature within its own context of production and reception (including its definition as intercultural literature, its evolution and social situation, e.g. the current integration debate in Germany). They further deal with the wider context of this literature as Germany's contribution to a world literature of authors who write in a

foreign language or in their mother tongue but outside their or their parents' culture of origin. (Chiellino 2000a: 62)

3.   MIGRATION LITERATURE – SOCIAL, LITERARY AND EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS

Chapter two has expanded on a complex referential framework of global developments and philosophical/sociological models that explain and facilitate intercultural understanding. Literature, especially intercultural literature, needs to be viewed in a larger context than that of a single nation, culture or language. Global change and its accompanying shifts in academic discourse thus provide the larger background to emergent literatures such as migration literature in Germany.

Chapter 3 examines migration literature in the somewhat more confined contexts of its social, literary and educational significance within and outside of Germany. The section 'historical and socio-economic background' presents a summary of migration waves in Germany in the last 50 years, as well as official immigration policy that attempted to regulate immigration and respond to the fact that Germany was becoming an immigration country. 'Issues of integration' deals with Germany's integration politics (which also affected the integration of writers). It clearly demonstrates that the integration debate was largely based on principles that have led to some regressive tendencies both among the foreign and the German population. These are, *inter alia*, withdrawal into fundamentalism and the Germans' continued (and often unsuccessful) struggle for a liberalism/nationalism that is devoid of notions of judgment or domination. Another aspect of integration policy in Germany was its ambivalent attitude towards *Integrationsförderung* (measures taken to facilitate integration) on the one hand and *Integrationsforderung* (government's demand on foreigners to integrate) on the other hand.

Literary aspects focus on the positioning of the literature; this includes the opinions of authors as well as literary criticism. Other positioning factors are its affinity with other minority literatures emerging globally, as well as theories of postmodernism and post-colonialism. They include hybridism because hybrid identities often produce hybrid texts and the role of time and space in migration literature. The latter once again refers to chapter one, providing an example of migration literature as a good

argument refuting the theory of separating time and space. The interface of time and space as one of its defining characteristics is indeed clearly demonstrated.

Educational aspects also take up some of the criticism directed at Intercultural German Studies (discussed in chapter one) in the light of intercultural learning and migration literature. Special reference is made to theories of peripheral literature versus mainstream literature, as well as to concepts of distance. Principles of intercultural learning and the role of migration literature in this context bring the chapter to its conclusion.

As a general overview of migration literature in Germany, this chapter indicates its relative position to other intercultural literatures in the world, and to contemporary 'German' literature and its criticism. The chapters that follow bring into sharp focus selected texts in their social, literary and educational contexts.

3.1   Historical and socio-economic background

Migration history in the second half of the 20th century in Germany and its political, legal, economic and social aspects has been well researched.[17] Recording the facts has proved a good deal easier than turning this phase in German history into a meaningful and successful experience for both the immigrants and the hosts to provide a sound platform for future developments. Before discussing issues of integration politics, it is appropriate at this juncture to summarize the various stages that characterized the period between 1955 and the present[18].

A prominent characteristic of each migration wave was the change in terminology accorded to those who entered the country; the first to do so were called *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers), later immigration waves included *Migranten* (migrant workers), *Aussiedler* (resettled persons (usually with German roots), *Asylbewerber* (asylum seekers) and, more recently, foreign immigrants that are referred to as *ausländische*

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[17] Bade (1996), Cinar (1994), D'Amato (2000), Göktürk, Gramling, Kaes (eds.) (2007), Kelek (2002), Mavromati (2003), Sesselmeier (2000), Simo (1993), Soetard (1998), Yano (2000).
[18] Facts and figures are mainly based on Yano, H. 2000. 'Migrationsgeschichte'. 1-17, and D'Amato, G. 2000.'Die politisch-rechtlichen Bedingungen'. 18-35.

Mitbürger (foreign co-citizens) or *Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund* (people with a migration background). The terminology at least does indicate a shift from describing people in labour related terms, i.e. their functionality in society, to describing people as having a justifiable reason for migrating, and finally as citizens with a special background (and possibly a special contribution to make to society). Notwithstanding terminological developments, political reality has, for a long time, favoured a social theory based on the hermeneutics of distance.

The so-called guest workers are a good example of people defying a theoretical concept accorded to them: many of them stayed. Between 1955 and 1973, foreign workers were actively recruited to boost the German economy. Recruitment countries were Italy, Greece, Spain, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia and the former Yugoslavia. The period between 1973 and 1979 saw a consolidation of policies governing the employment of foreign workers. This also meant a consolidation in perspective: foreigners were labourers whose entry into the country was strictly regulated and whose return was encouraged after the allocated time had passed. This perspective was reflected in the policies of *Zuwanderungsbegrenzung* (immigration quotas), *Rückkehrförderung* (support for returnees) and *soziale Integration auf Zeit* (time limits on social integration).

1979-1981 was a phase of developing concepts of 'integration'. These concepts were based on attempts to realistically diagnose reasons for migration and its consequences. This foray into understanding the motivations and needs of the immigrants was, however, less interested in improving social relations and more in circumventing the problem of integration altogether. Between 1981 and 1990, policies were aimed at encouraging people to return to their country of origin, through payment of lump sums (*Rückkehrprämie*) and refunding employees' contributions to the pension fund prematurely. A new regulatory immigration law was introduced in 1990 (*Ausländergesetz von 1990*). The *1990/1993 Ausländergesetz* was essentially a law to restrict immigration. Temporary residence permits were granted to family members and on humanitarian grounds. Study permits were granted, but work permits were accorded selectively and under exceptional circumstances. A work permit also does not guarantee residence status. As a result, the legal status of foreigners is

considerably inferior to that of a German citizen. Fischer and McGowan (1996) summarize the effects of the *Ausländergesetz* as follows:

> On the one hand the state, through its immigration laws, prevents foreign residents from integrating fully into German society, and on the other hand it demands their total assimilation to the 'legal, social and economic order of the Federal Republic, its cultural and political values' as specifically required of them by the Ausländergesetz (Foreigner law) of 1991. (Fischer and McGowan 1996: 1)

Discussions around the right to vote included proposals for the attainment of citizenship based on the principle of *ius soli* (territorial principle) allowing double citizenship, thus replacing the principle of *ius sanguinis* (ancestral principle). On a social level, becoming a citizen was closely linked to assisting in maintaining the status quo: "Die Teilnahme an und das Engagement in ausländischen politischen Verbindungen wurde als Zeichen mangelnder Adaption gewertet." (D'Amato 2000: 29). Adaptation to the German cultural nation rather than contributing to cultural development was the focus of policymakers regarding the granting of citizenship. The decision to grant double citizenship to children born in Germany until they are 23 years old took effect in 2000 and signalled a move towards facilitating integration. Likewise, the November 2006 discussions around granting residence status (*Bleiberecht*) to foreigners who lived (and worked) in Germany for six to eight years and were hitherto merely tolerated, indicated a realization of the urgent need to integrate at least those who had lived in Germany for a long time. At the same time, migration politics remain focused on devising immigration laws dealing with conditions of entry, temporary residence and citizenship. In the interest of social prosperity, there would have to be an inward focus as well – the strength of social relations cannot be guaranteed solely by guarding the borders. Germany has finally and officially accepted that it is an immigration country and needs to develop relevant policies, mainly integration oriented policies.

3.2   Issues of integration

Five decades of sharing a country with people who have a migration background should have been characterized by increasing levels of integration. However, living next to each other does not necessarily translate into living with each other, learning from one another or understanding one another. Although the Germans became used to strangers in their midst, the early 1990's were characterized by increasing social segregation. Sesselmeier (2000) summarizes what has become commonly accepted knowledge in this regard:

> Es ist anzunehmen, daß der abnehmende Identifikationsgrad Mitte der 90-er Jahre sowohl eine Reaktion auf erlebte Ausgrenzung der ausländischen Bevölkerung in Deutschland darstellt, als auch Ausdruck eines gewachsenen ethnischen Selbstbewußtseins der ausländischen Migranten und ihrer Kinder ist. (Sesselmeier 2000: 47)

Thus, lack of identification with Germany is seen as a consequence of either having been marginalized or having developed a strong sense of one's own, differing cultural identity, or both. Developing cultural self-confidence does, however, not necessarily mean that such people cannot identify with Germany. Cultivating a sense of self can be seen as a result of successful integration, as a sign of having arrived and being confident enough to pursue an individual path, writes Köstlin (2000), quoting Bausinger. (Köstlin 2000: 367) If, on the other hand, a cultural identity is cultivated as a result of having been marginalized or excluded, this identity is created as an expression of defiance and a sense that integration is a one-sided affair that requires a person to relinquish his/her identity. Defiance may also be based on the fear of exploitation, i.e. the sense of being reduced to one's functionality as a labourer for example, and being denied the acceptance as a human being. Withdrawal tendencies are of great concern to integration initiatives. Whereas the first generation of 'guest workers' may have carved an identity for themselves as import labourers between two worlds, successive generations required more support from the host society as their reference points outside this society were diminishing.

In his article 'Doppelsprachige Analphabeten: Junge Migranten ohne Schulabschluss und Berufsausbildung', Mavromati (2003) explains:

> Jetzt rächt es sich, dass Deutschland zur Deckung eines kurzfristigen Bedarfs an Arbeitskräften Millionen von „Gastarbeitern" ins Land holte und sich nicht um deren Weiterbildung kümmerte. Und dass auch die Migranten selbst sich nicht darum kümmerten. [...] Die „Gäste" fragten sich nicht ohne Grund, warum sie sich in eine Gesellschaft einordnen sollten, wo sie doch ohnehin bald in ihre Heimat zurückkehren würden. Aber sie blieben. Die Kinder der Migranten bezahlen heute die Zeche. Sie werden eingeschult, ohne richtig Deutsch sprechen zu können. Und da die meisten von ihnen in Stadtteilen wie Neukölln, Kreuzberg oder in Wedding wohnen, kommen sie in Grundschulklassen, in denen deutsche Schüler kaum anzutreffen sind. So bleiben sie noch immer unter sich. (Mavromati 2003: 45)

As a result, only one in ten second or third generation immigrant graduates from school with *Abitur* (A-level) (compared to one in four Germans). *Hauptschule* (responsible for basic education in the German three tiered system) remains the only option for most of these students, and 20 per cent do not even graduate here. Two out of five students under 30 with migration backgrounds remain without vocational training. Professional qualifications are, however, one of the main prerequisites for successful integration. (Mavromati 2003: 45)

Lack of education and training, lack of job opportunities and lack of a sense of belonging manifest themselves in low-income housing projects and the accompanying problems of unemployment and crime. Associated with this set of problems are also fundamentalist tendencies. Köstlin (2000: 373) explains that it is the loss of ideals at the core of one's cultural identity that leads to the formation of fundamentalist groups, such as the right-winged German *NPD (Nationale Partei Deutschland)* or political Islamists. Reducing one's worldview to what is perceived as cultural essentials usually signifies a lost sense of security and confidence. Group identity of some kind is then chosen as a way to regain a sense of belonging. While the German right-wing appears to be struggling not only with unemployment, lack of qualifications and a perceived lack of social acceptance, but also with a generally increasing social

complexity, many foreign immigrants have the additional problem of being officially (in the legal sense) sidelined.

It may partly be due to the Germans' lack of a sense of a national self that makes it so difficult for them to become a self assured partner in dialogue: "It is characteristic of the Germans that the question "what is German?" never dies out among them," wrote Friedrich Nietzsche in 1886. (Nietzsche 2003: 174) Whilst doubting oneself may be an integral part of defining oneself, the Germans owe it to those they invited in times of economic need to treat them as human beings.

> Doch bis heute sind sich die Bundesbürger nicht sicher, was sie von ihren ausländischen Mitbürgern verlangen dürfen. Sie tun sich schwer damit, Anforderungen zu formulieren oder auch nur Erwartungen zu äußern. Sie wollen sich nicht den Vorwurf einhandeln, intolerant zu sein. [...] Und was ist eigentlich deutsch? Wenn die Deutschen es denn selber wüssten. Auch das zeigt ja der Streit über die Einbürgerung: So unsicher die Bundesbürger im Umgang mit den Fremden in ihrer Mitte sind, so unklar ist ihr Selbstbild. (Fleischhauer and Hujer 2006: 22-23)

German-Turkish writer Feridun Zaimoglu (2007) echoes these sentiments as he comments on the uncritical attitude of German tourists when confronted with foreign cultural phenomena: "Ach ihr, meine lieben Landsleute, ihr Deutschen, wenn ihr nur lernen könntet, etwas mehr Selbstvertrauen aufzubringen: Ihr seid einfach viel zu nett." (Zaimoglu 2007: 134) Encouraging people to be critical without being judgmental and accepting without being indifferent reflects the discussion on the requirements of successful dialogue in the previous chapter. Living in the "practical actuality of freedom" means that previously oppressed voices (including those inhibited by collective German guilt regarding the past) regain a sense of free cultural self-realization and are thus put in a position to enter into dialogue as equal and self-confident partners. German liberalism seems so far to have missed this opportunity to engage. Its position in dialogue has offered little more than a rejection of inappropriate patriotism and a concept of tolerance that encouraged multicultural co-existence. Some may warn that any kind of national pride in Germany is a dangerous

notion; at the same time, the 2006 soccer world cup has been hailed as a way of combining cultural confidence and intercultural engagement.

Managing diversity without displaying any form of domination is a challenge. It means, among other things, creating equal opportunities while leaving cultural identities intact, as well as recognizing otherness in a positive sense and expecting to benefit from its input. People need a chance at integration, not as nondescript entities but in recognition of their intercultural competence, as Mavromati (2003) put it: "Ernsthaftere Überlegungen richteten sich auch darauf, endlich die interkulturelle Komptenz junger Migranten anzuerkennen." (Mavromati 2003: 46)[19]

Moving from a social to the individual level, Dayıoglu (2004) describes integrity as wholeness resulting from the integration of the various parts of an individual's identity: "Integrität beschreibt den Zustand der Ganzheit, der in Folge der Integration von Teilen eintritt." (Dayıoglu 2004: 105) She further suggests that it is not important to determine who you are, but to be able to integrate parts of your identity in such a way that whilst interacting with different groups, you always remain and act as one and the same person: „Es geht also nicht darum, festzulegen, wer man ist, sondern Teilidentitäten so zu integrieren, daß man sich in Interaktion mit verschiedendsten Guppen noch als dieselbe Person begreift." (Dayıoglu 2004: 109) Migration can lead to a fragmentation of one's identity and it is thus up to the individual to work out a coherent and self-determined autonomy. This interpretation of individual integrity forms the basis for understanding the often fragmentary and hybrid character of protagonists in migration literature.

In my view, the need to build a (hybrid) identity from fragments and to retain one's autonomy at the same time is a difficult task. Hybrid identities are new identities that are often without concrete role models. At the same time, such identities will participate in shaping the future of society. The complex task of shaping one's identity by integrating various life experiences (through time and space) into a coherent whole as well as integrating into wider society, can easily result in an identity crisis. The state is required to foster 'new' individuals, not demand that

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[19] One such initiative can be followed on www.vielfalt-als-chance.de

aspects of anyone's identity be relinquished. At the same time, integration into wider society is crucial. One of the most poignant examples of what happens when we give up on the demand to integrate in order to 'allow the stranger to remain a stranger' is that of honour killings and forced marriages. Such incidences cannot simply remain a 'Turkish issue' within a constitutional state. Chapter 5 discusses some of these problems as part of women's issues in migration literature.

3.3   Literary aspects of migration literature and its reception

Chapter 2 outlined some of the broad categories that define the changing realities of our time. Bronfen and Marius (1997) describe a complex, hybrid, post-modern world that is characterized by a multitude of self-descriptions. It is increasingly difficult to subsume the variety of social discourses under any category that maintains a certain level of homogeneity.

> [D]as postkoloniale wie auch das postmoderne Subjekt erfährt sich als Knotenpunkt einer Vielzahl von Diskursen in einer hybriden, polykontexturalen Welt. […] *Hyperkomplex* schließlich ist die moderne Weltgesellschaft, weil sie nicht nur eine (komplexe) Vielzahl alternativer Selbstbeschreibungen anfertigt und benutzt, die auf keine Einheit zurückzuführen sind, sondern weil sie diese Beobachtung bereits zu einem Element ihrer Selbstbeschreibung gemacht hat, etwa unter dem Titel 'Postmoderne'. (Bronfen and Marius 1997: 22-23)

Literary approaches are also increasingly complex, especially with regard to migration literature. This literature cannot be readily assigned to neat and contained literary niches and defies systematic patterning. An attempt is made to provide an account of some of the literature's general characteristics and at the same time take cognisance of the fact that this literature intrinsically defies traditional categorization, especially with regard to aspects of time and space.

3.3.1   Positioning

Postcolonial theory touches on many aspects that help position literature of immigrants and minorities in so-called host societies. These include issues of language, ethnicity, hybridity, place, history, education, cultural exclusion, feminism, multiculturalism, globalisation. Postcolonial theory replaces exclusively comparative, historical and national approaches, and its "earlier orientation towards philosophy was replaced by an increasing interdisciplinary closeness to anthropology and history as well as a shift towards sociology and an overlap with cultural studies." (Sarkowsky 2004: 156-157)

Reflecting some of the theoretical approaches presented in chapters one and two, Sarkowsky (2004: 160-171) maps the development of postcolonial theory as follows: its anti-Enlightenment stand means a rejection of Descartes' and Kant's simultaneous universalising and exclusive rationalism and humanism. Due to the construction of race and cultural difference in the past and its overt racist assumptions, the construction of the other was regarded as an act of cultural and psychological appropriation. Sarkowsky (2004) also mentions recent criticism of academic institutions teaching postcolonial theory that are returning to deeply conservative politics of cultural difference. She also points out that recently, warnings are growing louder against a celebration of the margin and particularity on the one hand, and an uncritical disposal of human universality on the other: "This difference between cultural particularity within human universality and cultural particularity that denies common human ground has been lost somewhat in institutionalised postcolonial theory." (Sarkowsky 2004: 171)[20] The questioning of basic philosophical assumptions regarding the universal and the particular ties in well with criticism voiced in the previous chapters and renders postcolonial study a useful approach to migration literature. Bhabha (1992) points to the link between postcolonial discourse and minority discourse as an awareness of power imbalances and a challenge of national cultures from the inside. Minority perspectives are questioning and undermining the discourse of a national hegemony. (Bhabha 1992: 437)

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[20] Here, Sarkowsky mainly refers to Tabish Khair 1999 'Why Postcolonialism Hates Revolution'.

Amodeo (2002) points out that the evolution of Anglophone literature from Commonwealth literature to postcolonial or emergent literatures mirrors the unsuccessful attempts at liberating migration literature in Germany from the constraints of existing either outside the "true German literature" („außerhalb, jenseits oder neben der ‚wahren deutschen Literatur'"), or as a marginal, inferior, exotic part of it („als etwas Marginales, Minderes oder Exotisches in die ‚große und bedeutende deutsche Literatur' eingeschlossen.") (Amodeo 2002: 89) She criticizes the attempt at locating the literature at the periphery or outside national literatures as it prevents literary criticism from developing further, and leaves the emergent literature as defined by complete isolation and dislocation:

> Es geht [in der Literaturwissenschaft] immer noch um Verortungen, die in Anlehnung an die nationalen Kategorien entstanden sind. Sie verpaßt die Möglichkeit, sich selbst zu transformieren und weiterzuentwickeln. Weiterentwickeln kann sie sich nicht, indem sie neben den Nationalliteraturen eine transnationale *world fiction* –Sparte aufmacht, in der alle Exilierten, Ausgewanderten und Deterritorialisierten in Analogie zum Differenzen verwischenden und zu optimistischen *global village* in der vollständigen Ortlosigkeit verortet werden. (Amodeo 2002: 90)

Amodeo's (2002) concerns give rise to the question of what a transnational, intercultural literature is supposed to achieve: is it expected to broaden horizons within the national literatures whence it emerged, or to form its own literary genre? This very probably depends to a large extent on the willingness of a national literature to incorporate the authors, the experiences and their literary expression into its society, mentality and serious literary criticism, all of which requires the forging of new categories of thinking. At the same time, it seems highly questionable that the creation of a "transnational world fiction genre" should be seen as an amorphous assortment of dislocated writers, a reflection of our nondescript and chaotic times. In the case of migration literature, the challenge is to describe something that emerged from locations within more than one national category and thus created its own location in the interstice (or the 'in-between' as it was termed by Bhabha (1994,

1996)[21] and others). Already in 1990, Bhabha noted the increasing separation of nation and narration. (Bhabha 1990)

The positioning of literature is not merely an abstract concept, but the result of writers' experiences in the in-between. These experiences are summarized well in an excerpt from Pico Iyer's *The Empire Writes Back*:

> Die Romane, die aus der Tradition der multiplen Heimat hervorgehen, haben es unweigerlich mit der Identität zu tun, und ihr zentrales Thema ist die prekäre Situation derer, die zwischen Mutterländern und Muttersprachen zerrissen sind, die Lage der not quites, wie die indische Schriftstellerin Bharati Mukherjee sie nennt - der nicht ganz Dazugehörigen, nicht ganz Definierbaren. Sie blicken nicht hierhin oder dorthin, sondern gleichzeitig in beide Richtungen und werden schließlich zu Bewohnern eines Nirgendwo oder Irgendwo in der Welt des Geistes. Ihre Situation ist universell, Grenzen überschreitend. (Iyer 1998: 84)

Or, as Öztürk (2004) writes, "die Autoren [wurden] lange Zeit nach ihren Geburtsorten, Lebensorten, Reiseorten, Besuchsorten, Schreiborten kategorisiert und [werden] jetzt nach ihrem Ortswechsel/Displacement, nach ihrer Ortlosigkeit, nach ihren Sehnsuchtsorten oder Wunschorten kategorisiert." (Öztürk 2004: 154) These locations can be real or imagined. Öztürk (2004) calls them locations constructed on a cognitive map that symbolizes a collective of cultural memory. (Öztürk 2004: 155) Displacement is a characteristic of Germany's brand of intercultural literature and its authors.

Positioning has, of course, been a central concern of literary criticism. The fact that authors placed themselves and their literature in the in-between has, among other factors, prompted early literary criticism of Germany's migration literature to place it outside mainstream literary production. *Gastarbeiterliteratur* provides a good example of how this literature was received in contrast to the spirit in which it was

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[21] E.g. Bhabha in his discussion of Nadine Gordimer's 1990 novel *My Son's Story*. In: Bhabha, H.K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. 20. Also:
Bhabha 1996. 'Culture's In-Between'. 53-60.

written: the early writing of 'guest workers' as collected in anthologies such as *Südwind – gastarbeiterdeutsch* and *Südwind – Literatur* was called *Betroffenheitsliteratur* (literature of victims) and described as "therapeutic writing by victims of social processes." (Fischer and McGowan 1996: 4) Said (1997) pointed out that victim-hood does not necessarily lead to an increased sense of humanity (Said 1997: 88)[22]. Fischer and McGowan (1996), referring to Özakin in her critique of Günther Wallraff's book *Ganz Unten* describe pity as a means of stabilizing cultural dominance, even as the most refined form of contempt. (Fischer and McGowan 1996: 14) Still, German literary circles initially labelled Turkish-German literature the literature of victims. And despite the fact that the second and third generation were "critical in new ways of the prejudice they encounter in Germany, but also of the self-pity, subservience, backwardness or greed of their parents' generation." (Fischer and Mc Gowan 1996: 6), it seemed a utopian task to transform literature of victims of social contempt into one that drives an intercultural literary movement, surpasses borders and helps transform German literature and its criticism. It is significant, however, that although *Betroffenheitsliteratur* has been described as such by literary criticism, this label does not necessarily reflect how the authors saw themselves and their writing. It cannot have been a "literature written *by* victims" as much of this literature was an attempt to inform, criticize and subvert. One should rather say that it represents a rejection of victim status. Chapter 4 elaborates further on the significance of *Betroffenheitsliteratur* for the development of intercultural writing in Germany as well as its educational value.

3.3.2 Hybridism

The increasing significance of intercultural migration literature is due to the fact that it reflects a changing reality in Germany, Europe and globally, thus finding itself at one of the forefronts of processing the world around us. An important characteristic of life in a global context is the greatly accelerated fusion of horizons and the

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[22] According to Said 1997, much as it is important to record the history of oppression, it is vital to re-integrate this history into a universal intellectual process that includes those who have suffered. Said further notes that since marginality and homelessness are not recommendations in themselves, it is not important who wrote something, but rather how it was written and read. (Said 1997: 94,95)

development of many forms of hybrid existence. Durzak (2004) writes that the hybridism of one's own cultural identity creates new hybrid ways of expression that can be described as intercultural. (Durzak 2004: 34) He characterizes intercultural texts as a fusion of aesthetic form and narrative tradition of the writer's country of origin with those of the German-speaking world:

> Interkulturelle Texte sind dann vorhanden, wenn der Autor Momente der ästhetischen Form und der Tradition des Erzählens und Schreibens, die auf sein Ursprungsland zurückweisen, in seine deutschsprachigen Texte zu integrieren vermag und sich ästhetische Überkreuzungen und Darstellungsweisen ergeben, die in der deutschen Binnenliteratur so nicht vorhanden sind. (Durzak 2004: 34)

As an example, he mentions the novels of Özdamar who transports Turkish idioms directly into German and thus adds oriental colour to her texts. (Durzak 2004: 34) Another example is the Syrian author Rafik Schami whose narratives evoke the idea of someone slowly and lovingly knitting a colourful oriental carpet, for example in his 2004 novel *Die dunkle Seite der Liebe*. Schami (1995) has also been able to create parallels, for example in his book *Die Reise zwischen Nacht und Morgen* where he portrays the perspective of the German alongside that of his Arab friend. Whereas the German tells the story of travelling in a linear way moving in logical consequence towards a conclusion, the friend's narrative resembles the painting of a series of colourful pictures. These are just a few examples of how language and narratives from oral traditions have merged with writing in German and from within a European narrative tradition. Language hybridism has also taken shape in Zaimoglu's (1995) creative reworking of interview material in order to avoid "the false folkloristic impression of a flowery language of Orientals".[23]

Hybridism in writing goes beyond the European dichotomy of self and other. Postcolonial theory has replaced it with the idea of a fusion or merging of cultures as Esselborn (2004) explains: "Der europäischen Dichotomisierung von Fremd-Eigen, Selbst-Anderer, West-Ost hat die postkoloniale Theorie das Konzept der „Hybridität",

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[23] Zaimoglu, F. 1995. *Kanak Sprak.*14. Also:
Adelson, L. 2005. *The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature.* 97.

der Vermischung und Überlagerung der Kulturen entgegengestellt." (Esselborn 2004: 17) Hybridism is a case of successfully assimilating and integrating largely compatible parts into a coherent whole. Hybrid writing would be impossible if authors assumed concepts of difference and cultural relativism. There are, however, voices that warn against the in-between, against "meeting on bridges". Quoting Adelson's manifesto *Against Between*, McGowan (2004) notes that the relegation of Turkish-German writing to an in-between of "the" German and "the" Turkish culture has been viewed as problematic. (Mc Gowan 2004: 32) Chiellino, according to McGowan (2004), saw 'bridges without banks' (*Brücken ohne Ufer*), a vision that was liberating and frightening at the same time. (McGowan 2004: 36) Mc Gowan also mentions Zehra Çırak's poem "Sich warm laufen" as describing the ambivalent experience of a liberating removal of boundaries and freezing isolation („die Ambivalenz der kulturellen Schwellenerfahrung zwischen befreiender Entgrenzung und fröstelnder Isolation.") (McGowan 2004: 37) Oscillating between feelings of liberation and anxiety as a result of transgressing borders is a recurrent theme in intercultural literature. I therefore regard Adelson's manifesto with caution; she argues that the concept of "between two worlds" is to the "detriment of our analytical enterprise […] partly because it suggests, contrary to all apparent evidence, that worlds remain stable while unstable migrants are uncertainly suspended between them." (Adelson 2005: 4) She continues to say that this concept

> […] does more to assuage anxieties about worlds, nations, and cultures in flux than it does to grasp the cultural innovations that migration engenders. […] One of the worlds is customarily presumed to be European and the other not, while the space between is cast as a site of discriminatory exclusions or the home of happy hybridity. (Adelson 2005: 5)

To Adelson, the concept of the "in-between" is not sufficiently credited with positive notions such as innovation or personal growth; she regards hybridity as "too invested in the paradigm of identity." (Adelson 2005: 170) Hybrid writing does, however, emanate from individual authors whose identities were forged between worlds, an experience described here rather frivolously (and contradictory to her earlier statement rejecting the "in-between" as a negative connotation) as "happy hybridity". The concept of a life between worlds appears to be a question of perspective: it could

stand for instability, insecurity and discrimination as well as for opportunity, individuality and innovation. However way it may be viewed, it remains a reality.

3.3.3   Time and space, themes and language

Previous chapters highlighted hermeneutical aspects of time and space in philosophy and literature. Strong argument has been presented that a fusion of horizons has always included aspects of time as well as aspects of space. When discussing migration literature today, it is insufficient to say that the analysis of national literatures along chronological lines requires an added horizontal axis of space. One may well take the view that contemporary migration literature represents a new form of writing and requires a new way of understanding it. The emergence of this literature has, one might claim, changed the understanding of time and space in literature. Chiellino (2000a) for example explains that it is crucial to the creation and reception of migration literature that the tendency of the host society to emphasize space be recognised and that of the newly arrived to prioritise time. Being aware of this discrepancy helps the reader understand these works in their cultural complexity:

> Aus dem Blickwinkel der Arbeitsmigranten, Exilierten und Repatriierten gestalten sich die Wege und die Ziele als ein vielschichtiges Spannungsfeld zwischen Vergangenheit und Zukunft. Da Vergangenheit und Zukunft unterschiedlichen Kulturräumen zugeordnet werden, geraten Raum und Zeit aus dem Gleichgewicht und erhalten unterschiedliche Stellenwerte. Während die Aufnahmegesellschaft die Priorität des Ortes hervorhebt, negiert sie die mitgebrachte Vergangenheit der Ankommenden. Dem gegenüber setzen die Ankommenden die Kontinuität ihrer Vorgeschichte, d.h. die Priorität der Zeit. Diese Kerndiskrepanz erweist sich als besonders ausschlaggebend bei der Gestaltung der Werke sowie bei deren Rezeption innerhalb der Gastgesellschaft. Das Erkennen dieser gestaltgebenden Kerndiskrepanz bildet die entscheidende Voraussetzung für die Auslegung der Werke und trägt dazu bei, die kulturübergreifende Komplexität dieser Literatur zu erfassen. (Chiellino 2000a: 52)

Here, Chiellino provides a reminder that migration literature in Germany was mostly reviewed by mainstream German literary criticism. This marks another break in the cultural continuum, this time between writers and their initial critics. However, the more important interruption of the time and space continuum took place in the lives of the writers themselves. Chiellino (2002) points out that the starting point of the intercultural novel is the authors' attempt to mould together the different times of their lives spent in different cultural/geographical surroundings into one coherent whole:

> Ausgangsposition des heutigen interkulturellen Romans ist also der Wunsch oder der Drang nach Zusammenfügung von Erfahrungen aus Lebensabschnitten, die sich in unterschiedlichen Kulturen zugetragen haben. (Chiellino 2002: 41)
>
> Interkulturelle Lebensläufe werden bewußt gegen jede monokulturelle Priorität von Raum und Zeit eingesetzt. (Chiellino 2000a: 61)

Loss of space and its cultural attachments is inseparable from temporal interruption. The underlying theme of different periods of time spent in different places means that borders have been crossed. This often leads to traumatic experiences such as culture shock and fear of the unknown/isolation from what was familiar. Chiellino's (2000a) list of intercultural themes includes the personal history that led to emigration, exile or repatriation, the trip to the unknown, encountering an alien culture, society and language, forging an identity between insiders and outsiders, adjusting to the working environment and every day life, political developments in the country of origin, gender specific self-awareness in a new ethical value system with different priorities. (Chiellino 2000a: 58) The following chapters will take up some of these themes in more detail as I discuss works by individual authors.

Apart from its focus on intercultural themes, it is the insistence on a creative use of the new language that accords migration literature its aesthetic autonomy. (Chiellino 2000a: 61) As mentioned above, language has contributed significantly to the hybridism of the literature. According to Chiellino (2002), one of the characteristics of the intercultural novel is the active use of one language and the latent presence of at least one other language. (Chiellino 2002: 43) As opposed to the historical novel with

its unity of space, time and language, the intercultural narrative tends to dissolve ties between geographical locations and their historical/cultural associations in order to cut through associations of location with language:

> Eine weitere Abgrenzung des interkulturellen Romans vom historischen Roman besteht in der narrativen Tendenz, jede Örtlichkeit des erzählten Raums in historisch-kulturelle Zugehörigkeit aufzulösen, um die starre Übereinstimmung zwischen Jus Locis und Sprache des Landes aufzuheben. (Chiellino 2002: 51)

It will be observed in the following chapters, that language has not only been used creatively to add for example Mediterranean or Oriental flavour that accentuates the form-content relationship. The language of both the earlier poets and that of the youngest contemporary authors have made a significant contribution to the development of "mainstream" German. Writing in a foreign language appears to unleash a certain creativity that mother tongue writers would have to employ more consciously if they were to imitate it. "Die schnellen, vorgefertigten Worte sind die gefährlichen." writes Zafer Şenocak. (1986: 65) He adds that the decision to write in a foreign language is also an expression of the wish to communicate, to break out of isolation. (Şenocak 1986: 67) The wish to communicate (*Mitteilungscharakter der Werke*) has been criticised as "aesthetically suspicious" by the classical avantgarde. (Pugliese 2006: 36)

In her analysis of Biondi's prose, Pugliese identifies the alien as an aesthetic category, characterizing migration literature as a new genre, "als Begründung der literarischen Präsenz der ausländischen Minderheiten in Deutschland." (Pugliese 2006: 10) Pugliese (2006) argues that contrary to the classical avantgarde (quoting Adorno) with its rejection of a form-content relationship and the suspension of communicative aims, this new genre not only commits itself to an aesthetic unity of form and content but also to the concept of a 'conflict literature' characterized by social and political engagement. In my opinion, it is generally rather dishonest for a writer to claim the 'suspension of communicative aims' in his or her writing once it has been published.

Intercultural literature is able to take the reader beyond the constraints of the self by introducing new horizons in form and content. I believe, with many others, that this literature is not only an important part of German literature but also valuable literature in its own right, and that it has great educational value within Germany as well as elsewhere.

3.4   Educational aspects

Migration literature in educational contexts has been discussed as controversially as in social and literary contexts. Intercultural German Studies have largely relegated it to the periphery of literary discourse. The underlying theory of distance hermeneutics has proved itself to be of little use to an intercultural approach. Some of the goals in intercultural learning can be derived from theories and processes described in chapter two, others include the assumption of cultural similarity and social equality, the availability of an outside perspective and the importance of personal change.

3.4.1   Intercultural German Studies

Chapter one provided a critique of what has been achieved by scholars associated with Intercultural German Studies (*Interkulturelle Germanistik*). Some IG scholars have contributed to research on migration literature but relative to the importance that this literature should play in Intercultural German Studies, this contribution was unexpectedly small. Perhaps this is due to the fact that its hermeneutics of distance made it easy to treat migration literature as a peripheral phenomenon. Literary interpretaions focus on the "German classics". (see for example Krusche 1985a, 1985b, Krusche und Wierlacher 1990, Wierlacher und Albrecht 1998) It is pertinent to highlight briefly some of the criticism levelled against IG again in the context of educational aspects of migration literature, as it lends contours to what is meant by intercultural understanding assisted by literature.

Chiellino (2000b) criticizes IG's approach as being no different from that of other scholars of literature who continue to disregard literature of immigrants, exiles and

repatriates as part of teaching and research: "Allein von Seiten der Interkulturellen Germanistik (Wierlacher 1985) wurde kein Interesse geäußert, obwohl sie doch mit Hilfe der deutschen Spache interkulturelle Kontexte erzeugt." (Chiellino 2000b: 387) There are various reasons for the lack of interest in migration literature displayed by literary criticism. Laudenberg (2004) notes for example, that literary criticism as well as publishing houses show a pronounced lack of interest in poetry written by foreigners and that, as a result, not many foreign authors are represented in poetic anthologies of the 1990's. She explains that previous trends in poetic writing such as Critical Poetry, New Subjectivity and Concrete Poetry have been reviewed extensively, and literary criticism therefore has little interest in pursuing similar trends in the writings of immigrant poets. She further notes that German Studies or *Germanistik* in Germany displays a general lack of interest in autobiographic literature and workers' literature:

> Kritische Gedichte war man seit Enzensberger, Fried u.v.a. gewohnt; auch die Darstellung des Alltäglichen und eine starke, fast autobiographische Ich-Bezogenheit hatten mit der sog. Neuen Subjektivität ebenso schon ihre Blütezeit gehabt wie die Sprachspiele der Konkreten Poesie. Zudem zeigt die (Inlands)- Germanistik weder für Arbeiterliteratur noch für autobiographische Literatur ein großes Interesse. (Laudenberg 2004: 145)

Chiellino (2000b) also notes that the literary reception benefited mainly the host society, as it was regarded as improving understanding of the self or as providing diversion from a monocultural environment through exotic fairy tales. (Chiellino 2000b: 390) Whether this was a result of post-modern selfishness (see chapter two) or scientific arrogance makes no difference; the fact remains that this literature was not taken seriously. Ören (1986) pointed out that both progressive and conservative forces in literary criticism created cultural ghettoes for foreign authors, either by negating the possibility of development through symbiosis, or by protecting exoticism from being assimilated into the German culture:

> Während die Konservativen uns in unser kulturelles Getto einsprerren, indem sie die mitgebrachte Kultur so konservieren, wie sie ist, und eine Entwicklung und Symbiose negieren, versuchen die Progressiven – und das klingt absurd –

uns wiederum in dasselbe Getto zu treiben, weil sie sich, begeistert von der Originalität und Exotik unserer Kultur, so sehr für sie einsetzen, daß sie sogar befürchten, sie könnte in der deutschen Kultur untergehen. Dies ist ein großes Hindernis bei unserem Versuch, den Einfluß, den die Umwelt auf uns ausübt, umzuwandeln in einen Einfluß, den wir auf sie ausüben. (Ören 1986: 92)

We recall that IG scholars controversially employed the concept of distance hermeneutics in an attempt to avoid the assumption of a common humanity and a brand of universalism that was interpreted as assimilation and appropriation of the other: "In der Betonung der Differenz zu dem anderen, Fremden, der Störfaktoren des fremdkulturellen Textes verhindert sie, das Fremde aus der eigenen Perspektive zu vereinnahmen, es vorschnell zu assimilieren." (von Nayhauss 2004: 74) As indicated earlier in the context of postcolonial criticism, fear of appropriation is based on deeply conservative politics of cultural difference and should not be confused with the attempt to understand literature. Keeping strangeness at bay ties in with an ethnically reduced perspective and a determination to relegate a discussion of intercultural literature to the sidelines of literary discourse. Rösch (1992) criticized the IG approach as introducing strange cultures with a focus on avoiding disturbances: "Denn die „Interkulturelle Germanistik" bleibt fixiert auf ihren traditionellen Forschungsgegenstand und bemüht sich um seine störungsfreie Vermittlung in fremde Kulturräume." (Rösch 1992: 69) A case in point is the 1998 anthology *Fremdgänge* compiled by Wierlacher and Albrecht. It contains texts on xenology by German authors and scholars. The xenogamic approach presented here is characterized by writing about strangers; in the context of this study, this approach does not represent intercultural literature.

Distance hermeneutics is focused on avoiding disturbances. It is a conservative approach often disguised as liberalism. Apart from protecting the self from the threat of the unknown, it does not want to confront possibly disturbing truths about what is really alien or familiar to an individual. Referring to Sigmund Freud, Bronfen (1997) describes the alien as inherent in the familiar:

Man erinnere sich daran, daß Freud den Begriff des Unheimlichen benutzt, um auf jene Differenz zu kommen, die dem Heimeligen schon immer innewohnt.

Er nennt jenen Augenblick unheimlich, wo das Fremde und das Eigene in dem Sinne kollabieren, daß das Fremde sich als Wiederkehr des immer schon Dagewesenen entpuppt. (Bronfen 1997: 276)

The psychological approach of a common humanity thus includes the idea that the alien is contained in every individual. When it reveals itself as part of our own selves, it may be a terrifying experience. It may also be a pleasant one, as we discover hitherto unknown abilities we share with people we thought were strangers, e.g. a new understanding of situations from another perspective. Experiencing strange worlds in this way may allow us to encounter previously unknown horizons outside, as well as within ourselves.

Pugliese (2006) reminds us that all human relationships are characterised by distance and closeness, including those between the stranger and society. She notes that both concepts are not to be regarded as opposing forces in a relationship but as aspects of movement towards (social) transformation. (Pugliese 2006: 36) Intercultural engagement therefore also means that decisions regarding distance and closeness must be made.

3.4.2   Intercultural learning and migration literature

The previous section highlighted the fact that in the context of this study literary criticism and intercultural understanding are closely related. This also applies to the educational context. Rösch (1992) suggests an approach to intercultural education based on the idea of a common humanity rather than on xenological and ethnic perspectives on others. (Rösch 1992: 81) Referring to Borelli, she notes that intercultural education must aim at emphasizing cultural similarities instead of cultural contrasts. The focus should be on developing a culture of human rights instead of stressing immigrant culture as separate from "mainstream" culture. (Rösch 1992: 81)

Rösch (1995) further notes that intercultural learning should create an awareness of power imbalances and mechanisms of oppression within society: "Interkulturelles

Lernen ist Lernen gegen verinnerlichte Unterdrückungsmechanismen auf Seiten der dominanten und der dominierten Gruppen." (Rösch 1995: 114) Awareness of mechanisms of oppression challenges members of the dominant culture to critically review their privileged position within the cultural hierarchy. According to Rösch (1992), migration literature renders the utopian ideal of equality and unity in diversity comprehendible: "Migrationsliteratur macht die Utopie eines gleichberechtigten Miteinander von Verschiedenem faßbar." (Rösch 1992: 85) Migration literature therefore presents essential material for intercultural learning as it reveals power relations and at the same time offers an understanding of possibilities of unity and equality. Rösch (1992) warns that conservative views in intercultural education mirror those of literary theory:

> Die Orientierung an Kulturgemeinsamkeiten wird in der Interkulturellen Pädagogik meist scharf kritisiert. Zwei Kritikpunkte werden meist genannt: Die unreflektierte Vereinnahmung und Assimilation nicht-abendländischer, nicht-christlicher und nicht-industrialisierter Kulturen und die unkritische Orientierung an und Durchsetzung von Eurozentrismus. (Rösch 1992: 81)

Fear of appropriation and the insistence on contrasts limits understanding, since such understanding cannot progress beyond the point of recognizing and tolerating difference. Brunner (2004) presents an example of how an approach based on cultural contrast was implemented in educational practice. She criticized the discourse on migration in German schoolbooks as emphasizing life "between two chairs" (*Leben zwischen den Stühlen*). Such discourse emphasizes difference and the final analysis suggests that life between cultures is as uncomfortable as being caught between two chairs; comfort can only be found on one chair – homogeneity.

> Das Fremde erscheint als das "Kulturfremde", d.h. es wird auf markante Weise thematisiert und nationale Differenzen werden überbetont. Ausländerkinder erscheinen als „besondere" (von Natur aus problembeladene) Gruppe. Die in den Schulbuchbeispielen dominante Aussage lautet also: „Bequem sitzt man eben nur auf einem Stuhl", d.h. nationale Homogenität gilt als Normalitätsvorstellung. (Brunner 2004: 73)

Such negative presentation of the 'in-between' should, however, not lead to an attitude characterized as 'against between'. Life in the 'in-between' should be understood and accepted as a social reality for many people, and it should be made clear that such a reality is not only characterized by difficulty, but also by advantages.

In the same way as migration literature resists functionalism as evidence of social developments and their shortcomings, it would be unfair to reduce it to its usefulness in intercultural education. As intercultural literature it does, however, possess certain advantages in this respect over literature from a culturally homogeneous background. Migration literature offers a minority perspective on social events in Germany. A stranger's perspective is less influenced by social obligations or expectations on the part of the host society; his or her perspective is likely to be characterized by more freedom and objectivity. (Pugliese 2006: 35) Rösch (2000) notes that these texts present a specific view of society: that of a visitor from another world. (Rösch 2000: 385) Such a perspective invites the reader to view the target society (Germany) from an outside perspective that may or may not coincide with his/her own view.

Chapter 2 provided a selection of insights from the philosophical/cultural arena that can be translated into a catalogue of goals in intercultural education. It is illustrated in the following chapters that migration literature conveys many of these insights. Some of these are:

- Worldliness as a principle, since worldliness in literary interpretation places all literature amongst the cultural variety of world humanity (see p. 43 above).
- Analysing one's needs and being flexible about them as a prerogative to adjust to changing circumstances as another principle (p. 47 above).
- Knowing that universal claims gain validity only after dialogue, but that universalism such as cross-cultural consent on principles of morality, democracy and human rights has a role to play in the same way that protecting indigenous cultures has a role to play (p. 48, 54 above).
- Learning that as human beings we exist per se as well as in the eyes of others (p. 69).

- Developing a sense of humanity, of who we are, through the quality of our relationships (p. 69).

- Assuming similarity before difference as a starting point in intercultural engagement (p. 19, 41).

- Being aware of power imbalances and how they affect intercultural relations (p. 47).

- Reflecting on global forces that affect our lives such as fundamentalism, individualism or postmodernist dislocation and materialism (p. 61-65).

- Discussing the historical developments that led to the ideas we have about life. This includes the experience of historical fluidity and the resulting heterogeneity of the present. In South Africa, there are for example parallel experiences of African, European and Indian tradition, apartheid legacies and post-apartheid transition. Migration literature teaches about negotiating the self between cultures and about the formation of hybrid identities (p. 58-60).

4. GUEST WORKERS AS POETS: INTERCULTURAL THEMES IN EARLY POETRY

This chapter introduces the fourth cluster of themes (chapters 4-6) that are interrelated and at the same time interact with those of the other clusters:
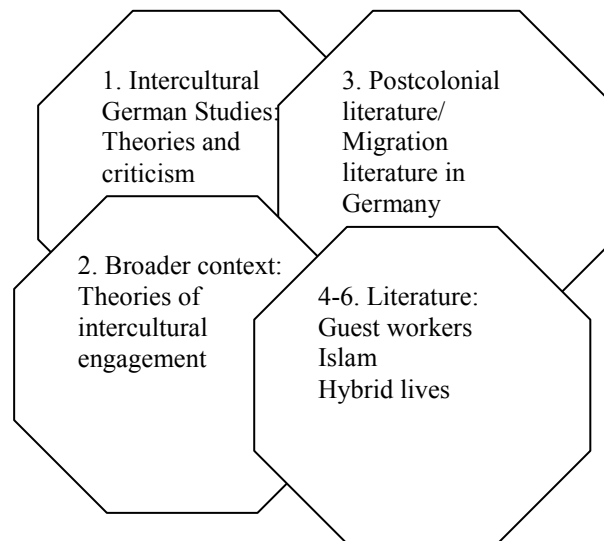
The literature of migration in Germany illustrates some of the themes raised in previous chapters, such as tolerance, identity and egalitarian issues. At the same time, these texts comprise worlds of their own. Bouncing them off against some of the intercultural themes and theories discussed earlier can however assist in placing them not only in the context of migration to Germany, but also in that of postcolonial minority literatures (thematic cluster 3), social and intercultural developments in Europe and Africa (cluster 2) and German Studies (in South Africa) (cluster 1).

The early poetry of foreign workers in Germany might be seen as the literary heritage of later generations of migration writers, as a heritage that shaped them. At the same time, third generation writers like Feridun Zaimoglu tend to distance themselves from the 'guest worker mindset' that shaped these poems.

Foreign workers' poetry provides good learning material for readers and students of German with elementary language proficiency. Often, *Gastarbeiterlyrik* (poetry by guest workers) reveals the author's level of second language acquisition

(*Zweitspracherwerbssituation*). This allows learners to reflect on their own language acquisition process and also encourages creative writing, an often-neglected didactic tool in German Studies. Creative writing inspired by poetry requires a higher level of personal involvement than its study and interpretation.

Guest worker poetry also reveals an awareness of power imbalances and mechanisms of oppression within society. It exemplifies a literary utopia in that it foreshadows the possibility of equality and unity in diversity. Rösch (2000) emphasizes the importance of a minority perspective that is anti-euro centric in language and plot:

> Denn antirassistische, antieurozentrische und antilinguizistische Erzähltechniken gehen über eine bloße Dominanzkritik hinaus und konstituieren Alternativen, indem Minderheitenangehörige zu Protagonisten werden, die zentralen Textaussagen z.T. in einer diskriminierten Sprachvarietät zum Ausdruck gebracht oder an außereuropäische Orte, Figuren, Stoffe und Plots gebunden werden. Statt einer Multi-Kulti-Idylle, die in vielen Texten einheimischer Autoren zum Teil sehr plakativ zum Ausdruck kommt, werden kulturelle und sprachliche Diversität gestaltet, zum Teil auch im Spannungsverhältnis zwischen Universalismus und Kulturalismus ausgelotet und zu einer interkulturellen Utopie entfaltet. (Rösch 2000: 382)

This outside perspective is anticipated to appeal to South African students as a way of approaching issues of power and cultural diversity in their own society, as well as in the light of themselves as potential immigrants, migrant workers or simply foreigners.

 Examples of poetry mainly from the 1980's by foreign authors (mostly Italian and Turkish) in the light of intercultural themes such as guest worker identity and social status, life in the 'in-between' and the role of language and creativity are now reviewed and discussed, drawing didactic conclusions and making recommendations.

4.1 Guest worker identity

In 1981, Franco Biondi and Rafik Schami published an article titled 'Literatur der Betroffenheit' in which they compared the 'cultural catastrophe' that migrant labourers from rural backgrounds faced in Germany, with that faced by victims of colonialism:

> Die Gastarbeiter kommen meist aus südlichen Ländern, sie kommen aus ländlichen Gebieten und sind von der dortigen kulturellen Entwicklung geprägt. Sie kommen hierher und erleben einen Bruch, denn sie werden in eine festgefügte, auf einem anderen Stand der kulturellen Entwicklung sich befindende Kultur hineingeworfen. Dieser Bruch in der kulturellen Entwicklung ähnelt sehr der kulturellen Katastrophe, die die Kolonialvölker erlitten. (Biondi and Schami 1981: 124)

Culture shock compounds the Marxian concept of alienation derived from mass production work techniques. Karl Marx (1959 (1844) gives a detailed account of the alienation of the labourer from his work, from himself, from other people, from the products of his work as a result of the production process in industrialized capitalist countries. And although Marxist thinking tends to regard the working class as an international phenomenon, the migrant labourer experiences additional alienation from his cultural roots. The migrant labour system in South Africa not only recruited its mineworkers from the rural areas, but also from neighbouring countries (by 1993, 48 percent of mine labourers were not South African citizens.) (Rabe 2006: 72) Social and psychological alienation of the working class is a theme for the discussion of universal experiences versus contextual and historical particularities. This also applies to migrant workers in Germany and South Africa.

Fruttuoso Piccolo, an Italian migrant worker, whose work remained largely unknown, published a poem (Quoted in Rösch 1995: 84)[24] depicting the life of migrant workers

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[24] In: Piccolo, F. 1985. *Arlecchino "Gastarbeiter" Gedichte und Collagen.* Hannover: Postcriptum

in the 1960s in Germany as they eked out an existence, staying in company-owned barracks:

Kopf, Arm, Hand

Augen auf
Beine nach unten
Beleuchtung im Zimmer

Das Bett
ein Wandschrank
und Gedanken.

Ich bin in Deutschland.

Piccolo's visual portrayal of the most basic elements of life is reflected in the sparseness of the language. The poem depicts the scarcity of a life in which migrant workers are reduced to their usefulness as human tools in the great machinery of German industrial production, and its inhumanity and anonymity. As described in the first two sections of the previous chapter, the German authorities had simply not considered the great impact of "importing" a human being, someone with a personal history, culture, language, mentality, etc. Being forced to reduce one's humanity to the ability to work efficiently has left many migrant workers with a deep sense of exploitation. In Marxist thought, working class consciousness was regarded as a product of the common experience of exploitation and of struggle against that exploitation. South Africa has a strong culture of working class organization; yet, single-sex hostels are still in existence in the gold mining industry. Many mineworkers regard the hostels as cheap accommodation, enabling them to save money. (Alexander 2006: 52, 72) Often, hostel dwellers were labelled 'rurals' who are lacking in urban sophistication by the 'urbanites', the youth in the surrounding townships. Shifting to English meant for the migrant worker that "the measure of freedom was no longer the degree to which one could think and act as a self-confident worker: it was the degree to which one was modern, urban and urbane." (Chipkin 2007: 129, 147) Learning German may have had a similar significance for guest

workers in Germany, although, for them, language proficiency also played a significant role in managing every day life.[25]

In their 1981 article 'Literatur der Betroffenheit', Biondi and Schami deliberately employed the term *Gastarbeiter*, not only to underline the irony of the word but also to carve out an identity and help create a sense of solidarity between those whose humanity was described only in terms of their labour. In his poem titled 'Veränderung', Chiellino (1984: 13) echoes this sense of reduction; in addition to the working environment, the bureaucracy reduces the foreigner to the validity of his documents.

> ein Gastarbeiter
>
> besteht aus vier Teilen
>
> dem Ausländergesetz
>
> der Aufenthaltserlaubnis
>
> der Arbeitserlaubnis
>
> und
>
> einem Ausländer

'Guest workers' were invited to work and expected to return home when their contracts ended; this might be seen as advantageous insofar as they were supplied with the necessary documents to enable them to work in Germany. However, while valid documents improved their legal status, they did little to improve social relations with the hosts. And many migrant workers in Germany today lead an undocumented existence, which deepens the problems of exploitation and alienation. In South Africa, immigration officials and employers often subject illegal migrant workers from neighbouring countries to abuse.[26] The working class environment appears to be at once the closest and furthest away from an intercultural utopia marked by assumptions of similarity and equality. Its grass root level interactions could ensure

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[25]The pressure to learn German in order to manage every day necessities has diminished over the years with the growth of Turkish neighbourhoods in the cities and the increasing number of Turkish owned businesses. Proficiency in German is, however, still an absolute necessity for academic and professional qualifications and generally access to job opportunities. The same is true for the role of English in South Africa.

[26] Migrants abused by SA authorities. 2007. [online]. *Mail & Guardian online.* 1 March 2007.

solidarity and intercultural exchange, especially during times of resistance (strikes, etc.); on the other hand, their legal and economic status in society does little to encourage integration, not to mention the problem of xenophobia in the respective host societies (which is as likely to increase in times of hardship as is solidarity among workers). In May 2008, more than 60 people were killed in anti-immigrant violence in South Africa. One could argue that this violence was essentially a battle for resources among the poor. Violent attacks were, however, directed at immigrants from neighbouring countries, mainly at Zimbabweans and Mozambicans. Xenophobia played a significant role in this humanitarian crisis, as did the lack of a human rights approach to migration policy in South Africa, and the lack of recognition of the positive contribution migrants have made to South Africa's economic development.[27]

4.2   Literature of victims?

When tracing themes in *Gastarbeiterlyrik*, it becomes clear that social integration has been of at least equal importance to migrant workers as legal status and economic security. Ensuring their survival as socially and psychologically intact human beings appears to have been the hardest struggle of all. Aras Ören's 1983 poem 'Made in Germany' (Quoted in Rösch 1995: 18) illustrates the difficulty of developing relationships in an environment of economic exploitation and social inequality:

> Ich liebe Dich
>
> Ich liebe Dich
>
> Ich liebe Dich
>
> Ich liebe Dich
>
> Du liebst mich nicht
>
> Ich brauche Dich
>
> Ich brauche Dich
>
> Ich brauche Dich
>
> Ich brauche Dich

---

[27] The May 2008 xenophobic attacks were widely reported in the national and international media. See for example 'Experts slam SA over migration policy'. 2008. [online]. *Mail and Guardian online.* 28.8.2008. And:
'A crisis on our hands'. 2008. [online]. *Mail and Guardian online.* 22.5.2008.

Du brauchst mich auch

The lack of a specific context in the language allows us to read this poem outside its social context. Social as well as personal relationships are often characterized by economic need rather than love. Just as often, they are also characterized by inequality. The guest worker situation in Germany exemplifies both.

There seems to exist a temptation to interpret migration literature, including its poetry, in terms of 'foreigner issues', a practice Rösch warns against.[28]. Such interpretations tend to present an over-simplified perspective that sees the literature in terms of their authors as victims who write aesthetically inferior texts of social resistance. In this respect, Ören's poem illustrates discussions in previous chapters - on the one hand, the wish to blend into the national literature (with universal themes) is understandable. On the other hand, migration literature is defined by characteristics that are positively unique and link it to an international phenomenon of migration literatures. Intercultural literature is defined by the continuous oscillation between the universal and the particular. Writers, even those who are intrepid travellers, but whose experiences are nevertheless based on a largely time-space continuum are unable to achieve this. Empathy and perceptiveness are not the same as actual experiences.

It was observed in chapter 2 that invalid power claims and inequality are at once unique and universal. The following quote by Biondi (1984) exemplifies this: "It's obvious, German: biggest fish. Italian, big fish. Turk, little fish. You [Pakistani], even smaller fish. African: all the worst jobs. Where there's rich and poor, always like that." (Quoted in Schaffernicht 1984: 56) Racial hierarchies are unique and contextual as well as universal as a concept; the hierarchy of victims in recent South African history is a case in point. The racial hierarchy during apartheid South Africa could be summarised as a system consisting of four tiers. The top tier was occupied by Whites, the second by Indians, the third by Coloureds, and the fourth by Africans. The basic understanding that racial hierarchies are contextual as well as universal as a concept prevents us from assuming that racial inequality, whether in South Africa or in Germany, can simply convert into mere class inequality as a result of constitutional

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[28] "Keine moralische Akzentuierung von Ausländerthemen" (Rösch 1995: 8)

pressure and socio-economic development measures by government. The idea of replacing racial hierarchies with class hierarchies could even be interpreted as an effort to mask the existence of racial hierarchies.

The following poem by Yagmur Adsiz (1985: 20) combines themes such as xenophobia, the challenge of the technological leap (also accentuating the break in the time continuum) and life in the in-between, or a sense of dislocation (to be discussed in the following section):

Die 'Deutschlandherren' (1979, excerpt)

Dort ist unser Name die 'Deutschlandherren'.
Und hier die 'anatolischen Kanaken'.
Wir ließen uns vom Holzpflug ans Fließband sperren.
Die Fremde ist ein Kreuz – manchmal mit Haken.

Biondi's (1989) poem 'Nasse Pinsel' (Quoted in Hasty & Merkes-Frei 2001: 61) suggests the possibility of intercultural solidarity among German and migrant workers mentioned in the previous section. It also points towards first steps at social recognition and a sense of arrival, optimism, and growing confidence, even happiness. Workers are sitting around on a hot afternoon after a long and exhausting day of work, drinking beer. They are wetting their sticky tongues (figuratively described as "Pinsel"):

Anschließend schwamm auch mein pinsel im bier
-    als ich ihn betätigte
warf ich harte dicke brocken deutsch
herum:
noch nie war ich so athletisch
im deutschen brockenwerfen
wie an jenem heißen Nachmittag.

The poem signifies the emergence of the person from under the image of the foreign worker, formerly buried in the factory, in the barracks, hiding behind documents. It

also allows the reader to reflect on his/her own language acquisition experience, especially that of having reached the threshold to actual communication with mother tongue speakers. The massive slab of wall that a language can erect between people is slowly dissolved into pieces small enough to at least be "thrown around".

Guest worker poetry illustrates the relationship between language learning and identity. Holliday, Hyde and Kullman (2004) provide some interesting insights into this relationship, starting with Schumann's[29] idea of 'ego permeability', which can be described as the ability to give up, albeit partially and temporarily, one's separateness of identity with regard to the surrounding society, and consequently be a more effective language learner. (Holliday, *et al.* 2004: 80) Holliday, *et al.* (2004) then refer to Pavlenko and Lantolf's discussion of Eva Hoffman's 1989 book *Lost in Translation*. Hoffman vividly describes her experiences of second language acquisition as a continuous oscillation between loss and gain and the accompanying frustration and exhilaration:

> Often, the inability of the 'new' language intimately to name the world (both inner and outer) is accompanied by a deterioration of that same ability in the native language.
>
> Linguistic dispossession is a sufficient motive for violence, for it is close to the dispossession of one's self. […] And if one is perpetually without words, if one exists in the entropy of inarticulateness, that condition itself is bound to be an enraging frustration.
>
> Eventually, a new voice and with it a new self gradually emerges. At first the voice is often captured in writing according to Pavlenko and Lantolf. (Holliday, *et al.* 2004: 82-83)

A sense of arrival always appears to be accompanied by a sense of loss regarding the culture and language of origin. Increasing independence and confidence, as steps toward the host society are often also a step away from the country of origin. As a result, migrants have to learn to lead a life between cultures.

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[29] Schumann, J. H. 1976. 'Second language acquisition: The pidginization hypothesis' *Language Learning* 26: 391-408.

4.3   Life in the interim

For most migrant workers, dislocation in terms of time and space has been a traumatic experience, far from the postmodernist excitement with exoticism experienced perhaps by relatively wealthy travellers or managers. Whilst the latter may have the luxury to choose and pick what enriches them without undergoing painful identity crises, this luxury does not usually extent to those whose existence depends on the ability to adjust to a new life and at the same time preserve one's sense of self. Carving out a hybrid identity containing aspects of more than one culture is a social challenge that, in hermeneutical terms, has been described as a fusion of horizons. In chapters 1 and 2, I have shown that this is a broad concept applying not only to time but also to space and all its accompanying cultural aspects. A hybrid lifestyle of any degree can be described both as a great achievement or opportunity, and a lonely and cold place in life. Both these aspects are well illustrated in the following two poems as life between two chairs (José Oliver[30] 1987: 52) and life on bridges (Zehra Çırak 1991: 93):

Stühle (José Oliver 1987)   Sich warmlaufen (Zehra Çırak 1991)

Stühle bauen   Weil man weiß, daß auch Brücken ein Ende haben
Stühle besetzen   braucht man sich beim Übergang nicht zu beeilen
Stühle bekämpfen   doch auf Brücken ist es am kältesten.
Stühle umwerfen

zwischen den Stühlen
Land erobern
stuhllos leben

zwischen den Stühlen
lebt die Möglichkeit

---

[30] South African researcher H. van Reyneveld completed a PhD thesis on José Olivier in 2006 at the University of the Western Cape which unfortunately was not available to me.

in Bewegung
zu bleiben

The poem 'Brudermord' by Levent Aktoprak (1985) (Quoted in Rösch 1995: 107) expresses pain associated with the growing presence of the alien inside oneself. The message is that in order to avoid a painful sense of fragmentation of the self, the alien needs to grow into the tissue of the existing and create a sense of wholeness.

> Brudermord
>
> Wie
> kann man besiegen
> das Fremde
> das Deutsche
> das aufwächst im Inneren
> wie ein Bruder
> ohne das Wort
> Brudermord zu gebrauchen

Another, more feminine reading might point towards the birth of the second generation. The children of migrant workers faced a different form of life in the 'in-between' with a different set of challenges: life between the 'old world' of their parents and the new one they grew up in. The ensuing generational conflict and problems of integration are discussed in the next chapter.

Rösch (1995) firmly places Aktoprak's poem in the socio-cultural context of integration versus acculturation, ethnocentrism and the insistence on preserving the culture of origin:

> Es überwindet kulturelle Grenzen [...], indem der Autor darauf hinweist, daß die Integration des „Fremden" in das „Eigene" eine Alternative zum herrschenden Akkulturaltionsverständnis an die Aufnahmegesellschaft einerseits darstellt und andererseits die Philosophie des Bewahrens der Herkunfts'kultur' kritisiert. Die Metapher des „Brudermords" deutet den

Kampf gegen eine fremde Kultur, im wissenschaftlichen Diskurs auch Ethno- oder Kulturzentrismus genannt, als Kapitalverbrechen. Dagegen bezieht der Autor eindeutig Stellung; (Rösch 1995: 108)

Aktoprak's poem illustrates a developmental and integrative approach towards language learning, allowing the alien language to eventually become an integral part of the self. Even though this is a painful process, it would be more painful not to allow the alien to enter the self, since this would render him an eternal outsider. This attitude towards language learning as integration also finds expression in multilingual poems. Rösch (1995) points out:

Die Sprachen, die auf ein Individuum, beziehungsweise auf eine soziale Gruppe einwirken, sind nicht additiv zu denken, [...] sondern integriert in einen individuellen und sozialen Entwicklungsprozeß: Die erste und alle nachfolgenden Sprachen stehen – aus der Perspektive ihrer SprecherInnen – in Beziehung zueinander. (Rösch 1995: 32)

The following poem by Chiellino (1992) (Quoted in Rösch 1995: 36) exemplifies not only language hybridism but also, it seems to me, a foray into a postmodernist advertising of the alien, away from guest worker identity and the struggle for equality and social recognition.

come together
nel mondo deli colori di Benetton
and learn to live as friends
im Lande der Nichtraucher wo die Fremde
wie Farben von Benetton geraucht wird.

Chiellino's poem can be seen as proposing that life allows the simultaneous existence of different worlds, cultures and languages not only in one person, but as a social concept driven by people with intercultural experience. Chiellino's criticism of the Germans as 'Nichtraucher' or, figuratively, as people who do not know how to relate to strangers and therefore 'smoke them' or treat them as colourful exoticism is very poignant. It may lead us to re-think the South African idea of a 'rainbow nation'

although the rainbow appears to be a more natural concept than the commercialized/postmodern colours of Benetton. In all probability Chiellino generally rejects the idea of a 'colourful' society as being too emphaticly based on how different instead of how similar people are. Solomon and Back (1996) comment on Olivier Toscana's controversial advertising campaign on behalf of Benetton:

> "One of the striking features of the Benetton campaign is the degree to which their message of transcultural unity is characterised by absolute images of racial and cultural difference. […] The concept of race is left unchallenged. […] Corporate multiculturalism trades on images of human diversity in order to produce an aesthetic that satisfies and appeals to a global market. […] What is common to these campaigns is that they all, in various ways, give support to the concept of common humanity and harmony while reinforcing cultural and racial archetypes". (Quoted in Holliday et al. 2004: 101-103)

Solomon and Back talk about a "veneration of difference" which in this context "need not be in any contradiction with white supremacy". (Quoted in Holliday et al. 2004: 103) One can agree with them as far as the Benetton advertisements are concerned. Because of their market-driven emphasis on difference and the exotic other, they appear to be the evil cousin of the rainbow people. The presentation of archetypes and essentialist/reductionist perspectives on culture are a dangerous aspect of multiculturalism which Holliday, et al. (2004: 120-132) prove to be an ever-present feature of the mass media as well.

Chiellino's earlier poem 'Es Liebe' (1984) (Quoted in Rösch 1995: 16) deals with the theme of an individual relationship in a multicultural post-modern context:

> Sie hatten sich in einer Kneipe
> kennengelernt
> er sprach ein singendes Deutsch
> sie war freier als er hoffte
> beide fanden es toll
>
> später nannten sie es Liebe

taten viel zusammen

als es zu Ende war
ahnten sie nicht, daß
ihre Liebe
ein wenig Exotik gegen
ein bißchen Integration
gewesen war.

Chiellino's 1988 comment on his poem seems to suggest a relatively neutral postmodern interpretation, a transferability to other contexts: "Die Erotik – Exotik Wechsel – Beziehung lebt von dieser Ferne – Nähe, die eben die Abnutzung des Eros aber auch ein tieferes Kennenlernen der Fremden vermeidet." (Quoted in Rösch 1995: 20) Love is replaced by the thrill of a little exoticism and political engagement, i.e. the notion that this relationship is a contribution to social integration. In individual as in social relations, the fascination with the other arises from the inherent differences but, as Chiellino points out, it does not lead to an understanding of the other. Perceiving the other as an exotic stranger is an understanding based on distance since difference is put before similarity. Eroticism thrives on exoticism, difference and distance. If distance is replaced by closeness, love and understanding, eroticism disappears. We also observe a shift in the interpretation of 'multicultural love' – whereas Ören's poem 'Made in Germany' refers to love as a disguise for economic need, Chiellino's poem uncovers it as exoticism.

If society is to evolve without marginalizing some of its people, it needs to acknowledge that many of its people lead a life in the interim. This stands in sharp contrast to the reality Chiellino criticizes in his 1984 poem 'Sklavensprache' (Quoted in Rösch 1995: 30):

mit mir willst
du reden
und
ich
soll

deine Sprache

sprechen

Chiellino's criticism of the social expectation to acculturate echoes Aktoprak's (1985) criticism of ethnocentrism. It could be that Chiellino's 'slave language' not only refers to language per se but to acculturation as well. The poem is a clear refusal to define integration as requiring foreigners to learn German and acculturate. While the importance of acquiring German remains mostly undisputed, it is presumptuous to assume that integration can succeed as a one-sided affair and that the more powerful host society dictates (rather than negotiates) its norms and parameters. This kind of arrogance continues to anger many foreigners. Chiellino considers this definition of integration to be nothing more than a master-slave relationship. The South African experience has shown the extent to which the exertion of power through language policy can destroy intercultural relations. The imposition of Afrikaans on schoolchildren by the Apartheid regime was a clear example of exerting power through language. One could say that the result was the same: the language forcefully imposed on schoolchildren was regarded by many as a form of slave language. Despite the differences in both examples, e.g. the definition of host society, the fact remains that the more powerful side finds itself in a position to make one-sided demands in terms of language learning and acculturation. To what extent, in Habermas' terms, these demands are based on power or on validity may vary in the eyes of those involved, but ultimately any one-sided demand must essentially be a power claim.[31]

Self-assertion on the part of the writers plays a role in poetic language as a balancing act to writing in German. Intercultural themes are expressed in a language that reflects

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[31] The demand to integrate was recently challenged in a speech by Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan in front of a large crowd of mostly Turkish-born citizens/immigrants at the Cologne stadium (10.2.2008). Erdogan warned of the dangers of (forced) assimilation and suggested the introduction of Turkish schools and universities in Germany. The proposal to exert more influence on the German education system together with a growing demand for the construction of more mosques has resulted in a shifting of attitudes from what some call the German 'Betroffenheitskult' (a form of liberal tolerance that is usually accorded to victims) towards more self-assertion and law enforcement. Any rejection of victim status is bound to meet with resistance and there is a chance that the possible validity of the Turkish demands may not be considered a basis for negotiation. I consider the new wave of assertiveness as unconstructive for an intercultural society as liberal attitudes and 'multi-kulti' relativism. Both are interconnected since comfortable distance liberalism can only survive as long as its power base remains unchallenged. A challenge such as Erdogan's speech can easily transform liberal attitudes into defensive ones.

experiences of a hybrid life. Multilingualism and hybridism are powerful bases for creativity, and poetic language reveals the underlying linguistic and experiential diversity. The following section discusses some aspects of the form-content relationship in intercultural poetry, and the importance of language as an expression of a hybrid identity.

4.4   Creativity and language

Pugliese (2006) emphasizes that authenticity of (intercultural) content must be reflected in aesthetic expression, if the author's voice is not intended to simply imitate cultural and language patterns of the host society:

> Die Anerkennung des Fremden ist durchs bloße Sprechen der Sprache der Ankunftsgesellschaft nicht gewährleistet. In dieser Sprache müssen auch die Erfahrungen des Fremden Einlaß finden können. Denn sonst antwortet im Dialog gar nicht der Fremde, bringt nicht er seine Geschichte ein, [...] sondern seine Stimme wird bloß zum Echo der geltenden kulturellen Muster und er tritt selbst an den Rand des Verstummens. (Pugliese 2006: 57)

For Pugliese (2006), German as a foreign language becomes a 'language of dialogue' reflecting the author's wish to be acknowledged in his/her own right - neither as the eternal stranger nor as the imitation German. This language of dialogue ("dialogische Sprache")

> [ist] nicht allein als eine ästhetische [Kategorie], sondern auch als Modell gelungener Kommunikation zu fassen, als Modell einer möglichen Anerkennung des Fremden, die weder den Fremden als Fremden konserviert noch ihn zur Integration zwingt. (Pugliese 2006: 61)

In this way, language helps create an identity: "Sprache als Identität stiftender Ort zwischen Herkunft und Ankunft." (Pugliese 2006: 99) Apart from multilingual poems, authors' identities are reflected in language in the way thoughts and pictures

are verbalized in German. This is also a characteristic of second-generation writers such as Zehra Çırak (2001) who said in an interview:

> Auch in der Sprache, wenn ich am Schreiben bin, natürlich immer nur auf Deutsch, kann es sein, daß aus dem Unterbewußtsein ein Bild entsteht und daß ich dieses Bild in ein Wort bringe, das noch aus dem Türkischen kommt. (Quoted in Hasty & Merkes-Frei 2001: 76)

Çırak's (2000) poem 'Zeitangabe' (Çırak 2000: 30, excerpt) depicts the arrival of spring; the narrative style reflecting Turkish poetic tradition:

> Frühling springt mir in die Haare
> in die Zähne
> sie wachsen
> springt mir in die Nase und den Mund
> springt mir in die Arme
> sie wachsen

The process of translating pictures and ideas that have been associated with another language, another (biographical) time and space into German, and thereby availing the underlying horizons of all three aspects to a new audience is one of the achievements of second generation authors. Their poetry offers a fusion of horizons that writers of the first generation, especially in their early attempts, could not achieve. Their writing reflects lives characterized by a much clearer separation between past and present, country of origin and Germany, mother tongue and German.

Çırak's poetry is mirrored in the prose of Emine Sevgi Özdamar whose writing has been described as reflecting a Turkish-German language symbiosis. (Kocadorn 2004: 134) Writing in this way might be called 'fusion writing' and allows writers a high level of independence and self-determination with regard to defining their personal position in time and space.[32] This level of individual independence is taken one step

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[32] Öztürk, K. 2004, quoting Göktürk: "Bestimmung der eigenen Position in Raum und Zeit".158.

further by Feridun Zaimoglu whose writing essentially overcomes not only the clear separations of early guest worker poetry but also the 'fusion' or 'symbiotic' style that draws on the earlier separations[33]. His style is completely new, despite containing the 'genetic material' of other Turkish-German writing. A new approach to language, new themes and, perhaps most importantly, a new mindset make him a third generation writer. In the preface to *Kanak Sprak* (1995), he explains that his creative re-working of interview material was necessary to avoid the false folkloristic impression of a 'flowery language of Orientals'. (Zaimoglu 1995: 14) Zaimoglu's way of transcribing various voices from interviews results in "the text as consistently bespeaking a creative product made in Germany by Zaimoglu." (Adelson 2005: 97) In chapter six, Zaimoglu is presented as using powerful language to challenge the cultural icon of the Turkish guest worker "whose powers of speech fail him in Germany." (Adelson 2005: 97) Here, it is used to demonstrate that language development can also be characterized by deliberate, even provocative deviation from the norm. Zaimoglu's literature is therefore as much indebted to the earlier poetry of guest workers as it is a decisive step towards increased self-assertion expressed not only thematically but also in language.

The idea of language development as reflecting deliberate deviations in order to innovate or provoke is revolutionary, especially among those whose mother tongue is not German. It is a daring challenge to the status quo. In terms of a didactic approach to language development, it is necessary to re-visit for the moment Rösch's (1995) comments on the subject:

> Menschen nicht-deutscher Muttersprache [haben] auch das Recht, die deutsche Sprache (trotz eventueller Normabweichungen) zu benutzen und an ihrer Weiterentwicklung mitzuwirken. (Rösch 1995: 110)

Turkish-German, Italian-German and other multilingual poets are in a powerful position to take on the status quo. The didactic value of their writing can be seen in terms of their thematic contribution, as well as in their contribution to language development and language acquisition/learning. Creative writing can also be

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[33] This should not suggest that Zaimoglu's language is aesthetically superior to 'fusion style' language.

discussed as a way of approaching the problem of teaching migration literature with all its possible deviations from standard German in the context of foreign language learning. Creative writing as part of teaching GFL encourages language use and helps counteract the problem of silences and speechlessness often associated with the GFL classroom and its emphasis on correctness in writing and speaking in a foreign language. The idea that *Gastarbeiterlyrik* is special rather than linguistically inferior allows foreign language learners the freedom and confidence to experiment and make their own creative contributions. It also allows teachers to introduce creative writing at a very early stage. The following section discusses reader orientation in interpretation and creative writing in the context of guest worker poetry.

4.5   Some didactic conclusions/suggestions

Acknowledging the value of the use of creative language, a dialogic principle and social criticism as aesthetic expressions of the alien in intercultural literature opens up didactic possibilities. Recognizing that writers who successfully work with these aesthetic principles are in the process of creating a new genre, it comes close to encouraging readers and students of this literature to delve into their own creative resources, and in this way gain 'subjective access' to this literature as Schewe (2002) suggests:

> Die künstlerisch-kreative Seite der Beschäftigung mit Literatur scheint mir recht unterentwickelt. Es ist wohl diskutierenswert, inwieweit ein auslandsgermanistisches Studium in die auf Abstraktionsfähigkeit angelegte Literaturkritik einüben soll und bis zu welchem Grade es Mut machen sollte zu „subjektiven Zugängen" zur Literatur, zur Entfaltung der eigenen (Sprach-) Kreativität. (Schewe 2002: 43)

The catalogue of educational goals at the end of chapter 3 illustrates an important aspect of intercultural learning; it may be regarded as personalized or individualized learning. Schewe (2002: 45) calls it *Sozialisation durch Literatur* as opposed to *Sozialisation zu Literatur.* Reading literature should induce a process of socialization that impacts on the personal development of students. It should not simply focus on

content and be based on a subject-object perspective or, in the context of intercultural learning, on a xenological perspective. Creative writing opens up a more subjective access to literature than reading and interpreting, and removes binary oppositions of subject and object or 'us' and 'them'. Such learning requires a high level of personal involvement and can assist processes of socialization through literature.

Creative writing as a didactic tool takes the interpretive principles of reception aesthetics a step further. In chapter one, reception aesthetics was identified as one of the underlying theories of an intercultural approach to German Studies. Rösch (1995) regards reception aesthetics as an important principle in intercultural literary interpretation:

> ein wichtiges Prinzip interkultureller Literaturarbeit [ist] das der polyvalenten Interpretation, die nicht auf eine gültige Interpretation des Textes hinarbeitet, sondern den Text – in der Tradition der Rezeptionsästhetik – als Kommunikationsangebot versteht, das sich erst durch die Lektüre realisiert und den Lesenden das Recht auf Mitgestaltung zubilligt. (Rösch 1995: 20)

Rösch (1995) provides a number of examples marking various stages of progress from a reception-based, polyvalent interpretation to creative work. Using guest worker poetry as a basis, she suggests didactic tools such as replacing words, filling in blanks, rewriting passages, finding/replacing a title as well as some relatively free creative work inspired by poetry or an intercultural theme.

A more theme oriented approach to creative writing and intercultural learning might be inspired by Aysel Özakın's 1985 poem 'Kultur'[34]. Students could try to define for themselves what the meaning of culture is (in a universal, in the South African context, or in a combination of both as presented by Özakın). An easier alternative might be a creative engagement with their identity as South Africans; defining what it means to be South African may yield some interesting results. Essay style or prose writing might be options as well as 'Rhythm and Poetry' style. 'Rap' is becoming increasingly popular among the Turkish-German youth in Germany. Zaimoglu (see

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[34] See Appendix

chapter six) has interviewed many male and female Rappers for his books *Kanak Sprak* (1995) and *Koppstoff* (1998).

Another theme oriented approach returns to the poetry and its context in Germany. Rösch (1995: 119) suggests that students are asked some initial contextual questions such as whether a poem belongs to first or second-generation writing, names of authors, countries of origin or time of writing. At the same time, she suggests a context-free presentation of migration poetry in order to avoid a distorted perspective. She emphasizes the importance of self-reflection as part of reading and interpreting intercultural literature: "Um den Prozeß der kulturellen Selbstreflexion zu unterstützen und eine xenologische Betrachtung migrationsliterarischer Texte zu verhindern, empfehle ich eine 'migrationsfreie' Darbietung von Migrationslyrik."(Rösch 1995: 117) Placing text before context ties in with the intercultural principle of assuming similarity before difference. It also corresponds to concepts of identification with a work of art based on common human ground. Discussing the text within its context as the first half of her approach suggests, appears to contradict the context free approach. In my view, this is the essential contradiction of the intercultural approach, in literature and hermeneutics as well as in philosophy or sociology. Recognising this essential contradiction is a useful approach to the didactics of foreign literature in general. Regarding the didactics of intercultural literature as outlined in chapter three, it reflects what exists in the literature itself: perpetual oscillation between the universal and the particular, the familiar and the different, what is close and what is distant.

The intercultural approach as defined above facilitates the teaching of migration literature in Germany to South African students, for example. Whether to allow creative writing to develop its own momentum or to refer to the German/South African context, intercultural learning can be defined as continually working out what is universal and what is particular. Seen as dialectic halves, judgment as to what is 'merely particular' versus the 'great universal' seems arbitrary. As the one is understood through the other, intercultural learning helps understanding the essence of greatness in literature.

5. MULTICULTURALISM AND INTEGRATION: NECLA KELEK'S BITTER TRUTHS

As outlined in the previous chapter, many guest workers began to settle in Germany, improved their legal and economic status, and overcame language barriers. Foremost on many minds was also the reunification with their families. The arrival of women (or sometimes husbands) and children was a further step towards settling permanently (or at least until retirement) in Germany. The literature of immigrant women in Germany added new horizons to the strange worlds of foreign minority life. Fischer and McGowan (1996) summarize the literary reflections of these experiences (in the context of Turkish women) as follows:

> The increasing immigration of women after the Ausländerstopp in 1973, as well as long periods of political unrest in Turkey, supported the emergence of an autonomous differentiated literature by Turkish women in the Federal Republic. The gender conflicts that aggravate the search for a bi-cultural female identity give this writing its distinctive perspective. The patriarchal structures that shape the authors' socialization in Turkish culture can also be found, in modified form, in the society of the host country and compound the discrimination, which the writers experience as foreigners. (Fischer and McGowan 1996: 12)

While it may be true that gender conflicts aggravate the search for a bi-cultural female identity, this quote exemplifies a tendency to generalize; terms such as "patriarchal structures", "authors' socialization in Turkish culture" are often associated with the gender specific distinctiveness of women's writing. Liberation from oppressive patriarchal structures and emancipation from tradition and religious practices remain important themes in women's writing. At the same time, younger authors wish the complexity of their work to be recognized as beyond easy categorization as feminist literature. Secondly, "Turkish culture" is obviously by no means equal to patriarchy or traditionalist Islam.

Necla Kelek approaches the subject of the emancipation struggle from the perspective of Turkish minority life in Germany in conjunction with the role of (fundamentalist and political) Islam, the challenge of multiculturalism and the failure of integration. Her literary achievement is that of an awareness campaign and the contribution of a clear point of view in favour of foreigners adjusting to life in Germany. Taking a stand through writing in this way brought her accusations of simplification, false generalization and aggressiveness detrimental to her aim of promoting dialogue. She has nevertheless contributed to an important intercultural debate, and her books provide a thematic introduction to that debate.

It is particularly appropriate to discuss Kelek's work here in the context of the multiculturalism debate between rigorous pluralists and relativists and so-called "Enlightenment fundamentalists" who could be seen as Eurocentric universalists. Participants in this debate are also women who wear headscarves and those men and women who consider themselves "European Muslims". South African Muslim identity provides an interesting contrast to the battle for identity raging in Europe. One may take the view that the combination of women and Islam, foreign minority life and the host society's integration politics pinpoint the problem of multiculturalism as a policy in itself rather than a starting point for intercultural dialogue.

5.1   The demand to integration

Kelek's (2005) book[35] *Die fremde Braut* is partly autobiographic. The story of her family, who belongs to the Circassian minority, begins with her great-grandfather who acquired considerable wealth selling female slaves to the Sultan's harem. Her grandmother was kidnapped out of a kitchen cupboard where she was hiding, and whisked away on horseback by her grandfather. Her mother was "purchased" by her father for two oxen. Her parents eventually left the rural village of Pinarbashe near Kayseri for Istanbul and led a secularised Western life. After their arrival in Germany in 1968 when Kelek was eleven, her parents returned to practicing a more literal Islam according to the rural traditions of their roots. Whilst her older siblings complied with

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[35] I am referring to *Die fremde Braut* in this way as it defies genre categorisation. This is discussed further on (see p. 121 below).

the family law as set down by her father, Kelek began to clash with him, questioning his convictions, for example the fact that she was not allowed to participate in physical education at school as that was incompatible with the father's idea of protecting the family honour. Her father's alienation from the larger German society and from his own family, as well as his generally intolerant attitude deeply depressed her. Eventually, Kelek began studying and working in various jobs. Her family criticized her independent lifestyle. In 2001, she submitted her doctoral thesis on young Turkish women and Islam, which was published in 2002 under the title *Islam im Alltag*.

The title *Die fremde Braut* refers to brides who are "imported" from (mostly rural) areas in Turkey to enter into arranged marriages and subsequently live in Germany. A clear weakness of this book is the haphazard mixture of autobiographic material, interviews with other women and references to her academic work. For the purposes of this study, it is appropriate to focus on the final chapter of her book 'Bittere Wahrheiten oder Woran die Integration scheitert'. (Kelek 2005: 267) The text contains some of her central messages, which she aims to substantiate elsewhere through interviews and academic references. She begins by acknowledging that thousands of Turkish immigrants have mentally arrived in Germany – they have accepted German society as their own and have become part of German culture and democracy. At the same time, she points out that 2.5 million people with a Turkish migration background live in Germany and the majority of them have continued to live 'on the outside', meaning that their lives take place mostly within the Turkish community and its way of life, its language, religion, etc. Her analysis of the situation is as follows:

> Die Deutschen gingen davon aus, dass die Eingewanderten die Werte und Konventionen der hiesigen Gesellschaft übernehmen würden: Spätestens in der dritten und vierten Generation von Migranten würden sich die kulturellen Differenzen sicher verflüchtigen. Die Türken ihrerseits machten – bis auf wenige Ausnahmen – keine Anstrengungen, ihre zweite Heimat zu akzeptieren. Sie blieben Türken und wurden wieder Moslems – das Fremdsein in der Fremde bewirkte bei ihnen eher die Flucht in die Regression; wie bei einem Kind das sich von seiner Mutter vernachlässigt fühlt. Sie geben den

Deutschen die Schuld, sie nicht integriert zu haben, und die Deutschen reagieren darauf mit dem, was inzwischen zu einem festen Bestandteil ihrer Identität geworden zu sein scheint: mit Schuldbewusstsein. (Kelek 2005: 260)

Kelek (2005) concedes that one of the causes for the failure of integration is „die nach wie vor vorhandene strukturelle Benachteiligung von „Ausländern" und eine durchaus verbreitete, sei es unterschwellige, sei es manifeste, fremdenfeindliche Haltung". (Kelek 2005: 261) The main cause, however, is „eine vefehlte Integrationspolitik, die von der Lebenslüge getragen wurde, Deutschland sei kein Einwanderungsland." (Kelek 2005: 261) Misguided tolerance on the part of the Germans, Kelek argues, allowed them to sacrifice basic and universally binding human rights to a cultural relativism:

Denn auch die linken und liberalen „Multikultis" haben mit ihrer eher folkloristischen Sichtweise auf die Ausländer der Integration einen Bärendienst erwiesen. Unter dem Signum der Toleranz haben sie die jeweiligen „Eigenheiten" der türkisch-muslimischen Gesellschaft in Deutschland verteidigt und damit nicht selten die Selbstausgrenzung der Migranten befördert. Eine Toleranz, die selbst noch die Intoleranz und alltägliche Gewaltverhältnisse als Bestandteil eines „anderen kulturellen Kontextes" hinzunehmen, ja, zu respektieren bereit ist, entlarvt sich letzten Endes als wertlos und gibt damit jeden Anspruch preis, die Gesellschaft nach allgemein gültigen Rechten und Verpflichtungen zu gestalten. Menschenrechte, Grundrechte sind nicht teilbar, nicht kulturell relativierbar. Sie sind die Fundamente einer aufgeklärten Gesellschaft und müssen unter allen gesellschaftlichen Umständen verteidigt werden. Wer dazu nicht bereit ist, redet der Gegenaufklärung das Wort. Solange die deutsche Gesellschaft sich diesen – ihren eigenen Identitätskern nicht wirklich bewusst macht und ihn nicht offensiv zu verteidigen bereit ist, wird die Integration nicht gelingen können. Die in der Verfassung verbürgte Freiheit des Individuums gekoppelt an soziale Verpflichtung ist das Angebot, das die deutsche Demokratie anderen machen kann. Es ist ein großartiges Angebot, gerade für Menschen

aus anderen Kulturen, die solche Rechte des Einzelnen nicht kennen. (Kelek 2005: 261)[36]

Kelek (2005) further argues that despite the obvious advantages of life in a secular democratic society, the majority of Turks living in Germany are not inclined towards integration:

> Ich habe allerdings Zweifel, ob die Mehrheit der in Deutschland lebenden Türken die Integration wirklich will – ihr vorherrschendes Verhalten spricht eher eine gegenteilige Sprache. Die meisten lesen keine deutsche Zeitung, schon gar keine deutschen Bücher. Die meisten sehen ausschließlich türkisches Fernsehen, kaufen in türkischen Läden und haben keinen privaten Kontakt zu Deutschen. Ihr Lebensrahmen bleibt die Türkei, es sind die anderen türkischen Familien, die Koranschule, der Fußballverein, die Teestube und die Umma, die Gemeinschaft aller Muslime und der türkische Nationalismus. Man bleibt unter sich und den türkisch-muslimischen Geboten verhaftet. (Kelek 2005: 262)

These lengthy quotes from Kelek's work are necessary to illustrate the strength of her argument. At the same time, they display a fundamental weakness of analysis. Some of the criticism levelled against her work is presented in the next section. At this point, it is useful to discuss briefly the principal issue of writing on behalf of collectives, and the necessary generalizations that accompany it. The initial discomfort with Kelek arises from a sense of imbalance – much credit is given to the German host society (and hardly any serious criticism), and a lot of blame to the Turkish-Muslim community. Kelek's (2006) reply to the charge of generalizing (and therefore simplifying) is as follows:

> Wer ein Problem so zu erklären versucht, dass seine grundlegenden Ursachen sichtbar werden, setzt sich immer dieser Gefahr aus. Ein Bericht über Obdachlosigkeit beschreibt die Lage derjenigen ohne ein Dach über dem

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[36] Kelek's human rights approach is shared by others. Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk recently complained that the Western media portrays differing views as those of political Islam versus the secular society, when the actual differences arise between those who respect a human rights ethics, and those who do not. (3 Sat. 2007. *Kulturzeit* 3.5.2007.)

> Kopf; niemand würde erwarten, darin von denjenigen zu lesen, die ein Dach über dem Kopf haben. (Kelek 2006a: 155)

Here, she disregards the importance of power relations by simply casting the Turkish minority in the role of victims (those without shelter) and ignoring the position of those who are 'sheltered' (by or as part of the host society). The latter are seen as powerful and not in need of analysis. This notion is contrary to the aims of writers such as Chiellino who challenged those who thought they had no need to 'adjust' and demanded that they regard their position of advantage as a basis for active dialogue rather than indifference. Kelek, on the other hand, seems to encourage acculturation on the part of those whose cultural practices are 'unacceptable', or who are simply outnumbered as a minority and have little political or economic power. Her attitudinal stance substitutes for a more carefully balanced analysis, which would normally provide more reliable conclusions.

At the same time as taking a stand which requires her to argue on behalf of the Turkish collective, she rejects the idea of collective identities as they facilitate withdrawal from society and encourage formation of a parallel society:

> Verräterisch sind Formeln wie „wir Türken" oder „wir Muslime", sie erheben immer noch das „Türkentum" und das „Muslim-Sein" zur kollektiven Identität. Jeder in dieser Gesellschaft hat das Recht, Türke, Deutscher, Muslim, Christ oder etwas anderes zu sein. Als Individuum kann er frei wählen, seine Integration als Türke oder Türkin, als Muslim oder Muslimin muss daran keineswegs scheitern – wohl aber, wenn er sich zurückzieht auf die kollektive Identität. Ein Einzelner kann integriert werden, ein Kollektiv nicht. (Kelek: 2006b)

Kelek argues that a collective that does not allow individual members to reject some of its cohesive elements (a process that can ultimately lead to its dissolution) must not be tolerated. Her strong stance for integration (in the sense of acculturation) aims to eradicate those elements of group cohesion that she considers to be incompatible with basic human rights. This kind of 'surgery' may, however, be unsuccessful as long as

the collective in its unaltered form continues to provide a kind of emotional and spiritual security that cannot be found elsewhere.

The following summarises some of the elements of Turkish-Muslim identity that Kelek rejects as unacceptable. These will be based on her most recent publication titled *Die verlorenen Söhne*. (2006a) Similar to *Die fremde Braut*, this book is a combination of autobiographic detail, academic references and interviews with Turkish men serving time in prison for various crimes. The interesting aspect about this book is that Kelek focuses on the male perspective and the cultural norms that guide the behaviour of fathers and sons, husbands and brothers towards women, the Muslim community and the host society. The paragraph titled 'Töten für Allah' lists as some of the "unacceptable behaviour" the wearing of symbolic clothes such as the headscarf, arranged or forced marriages, circumcision and sacrificial slaughter of animals:

> Es sind die schlichten Bräuche, die symbolhafte Kleidung wie das Kopftuch, das bewusste Verheiraten der Söhne oder Töchter mit Partnern aus der „reinen" Heimat und die blutigen Traditionen wie Beschneidung und Opferfest, die zu Demonstrationen der „kollektiven Selbstvergewisserung" geworden sind und eine Absage an die Ziele der aufgeklärten Gesellschaft signalisieren. Die schlichten Antworten, die sie auf die kompliziert gewordene Wirklichkeit zu geben scheinen, sind für viele von den Frösten der Moderne abgeschreckte Menschen attraktiv – eine Zukunftshilfe, eine Perspektive bieten sie nicht, und mit einer aufgeklärten demokratischen Gesellschaft sind sie nicht vereinbar. (Kelek 2006a: 170)

The perspective of fathers and sons who see themselves as fulfilling their duties as members of the Muslim community, who believe in Allah and read the Qur'an is strongly reflected in their understanding of such concepts as law and obedience, responsibility and guilt. The story of Mehmet, one of Kelek's prison interviewees, shows what she describes as a typical combination of strict adherence to the law of the father, and a subsequent absence of a sense of guilt or responsibility for one's actions:

> [...] die Unterwerfung unter die Gebote der Familie und das Unvermögen, die eigene Schuld und damit auch die eigene Verantwortung zu erkennen [sind] zwei Seiten derselben Medaille und [könnten] eine Antwort auf die Frage sein warum so viele türkische Männer straffällig werden. (Kelek 2006a: 40)

Kelek (2006a: 202) points out that according to Sharia law, murder (as opposed to adultery) is not considered a capital crime, but one that allows the possibility of subsequent revenge killings. The idea of murder as revenge also underlies the condoning of honour killings as a man's duty towards his family. A sense of having fulfilled one's duty is accompanied by the absence of guilt: "Der neunzehnjährige Bruder, der seine Schwester Hatun Sürücü erschossen hat, sagte, dass er in der Nacht nach der Tat endlich gut geschlafen habe – er hatte seine Pflicht erfüllt." (Kelek 2006a: 150) Such obedience to the law will necessarily clash with the judiciary of a secular society:

> Die muslimischen Söhne können den Spagat zwischen den traditionellen Regeln des archaisch-religiösen Patriarchats, das von ihnen Unterwerfung und Gehorsam verlangt, und den Anforderungen einer modernen Gesellschaft, die von ihnen Selbständigkeit, Sozialkompetenz und Eigenverantwortlichkeit erwartet, nicht bewältigen. Alle Anstrengungen zur Integration müssen daran zwangsläufig scheitern. (Kelek 2006a: 156)

Here, Kelek shows depth of insight regarding the situation many Muslim men in Germany find themselves in. Those who experience this very real dilemma often do not want to accept that they should choose one way of life and abandon the other. Similarly, the story of Haluk "ist die Geschichte von einem, der in die Fremde aufbrach und doch sein Dorf nie verließ." (Kelek 2006a: 25) His story highlights the physical separation in the lives of women, children and men as further eroding the basis on which relationships are built:

> Bei den Tscherkessen, das habe ich auch schon von Haluk gehört, darf ein Kind nicht im Mittelpunkt stehen. Die Frauen versuchen, die Kinder fern von den Männern großzuziehen. Die Männer sollen ihre Kinder weder sehen noch

hören. „Ich habe meine kaum jemals angefasst", hatte mir Haluk erzählt, „im Beisein von Fremden schon gar nicht." (Kelek 2006a: 99)

In the context of this study it is of no great consequence whether these traditions have a cultural or a religious base (or both). One may ask, however, to what extent relationships between fathers and their children are context-related, and what other contexts may produce a similar attitude to this relationship. In secular societies with high divorce rates, for example, many fathers are permanently separated from their children. Universal features of this relationship (such as Haluk's wish to touch his children) are often threatened by contextual socialization.

The paragraph headed 'Getrennte Leben' describes the extent to which boys' and men's lives are relegated to take place outside the house. Female-male relationships within the family are characterized by physical and emotional distance:

> Muslimische Jungen wachsen in weiten Bereichen des Alltags getrennt von ihren Schwestern auf. Im Haus, wo die Frauen und Mädchen sind, gibt es für die Jungen oft keinen Platz. Wenn der Junge eine Schwester oder eine Schwägerin hat, kann er keine Freunde mit nach Hause bringen, denn diese würden mit den weiblichen Hausbewohnern in Kontakt kommen, und das ist nicht vorgesehen. Früh aus dem Haus auf die Straße verbannt, wissen die jungen Muslime nicht, was und wie Frauen fühlen, und sie lernen, dass es einen Mann auch nicht kümmern muss. (Kelek 2006a: 151)

Kelek discusses these aspects strictly in the context of the Turkish-Muslim community; her analysis draws attention to the particular problems she experienced as part of her socialization between cultures. Her texts can be read as documenting minority life in contrast with the surrounding society. As such, her writing offers a standpoint for the discussion of a complex issue. An intercultural approach seeks understanding by relating the particular to the universal. Kelek's contextual writing lends itself to relating certain behaviours she observes within her context to other contexts that may reveal similar behaviour. An analysis of multi-contextual behaviour may in turn reveal some universal features with regard to conditions that shape a

particular behaviour. More generally, as intercultural literature, it lends itself to a discussion of challenges associated with cultural transitions.

5.2   Criticism

Criticism of Kelek's work highlights some of the cornerstones of the intercultural debate in Germany (and Europe). From a literary perspective, I have argued (p. 121, 125 above) that Kelek's books are a rather awkward combination of narratives based partly on interviews, partly on her own life story, as well as academic references and lecture-like passages that could be part of political speeches with frequent appeals for social change. While each mode of writing has its merits, the combination of these seems repetitive. Her writing would most likely retain more of its power to engage readers if genres remain separate as interviews, academic references, political activism and narratives. Moving from one to the other has a tiring effect on the reader and does not do justice to any one of the texts. Moreover, one gets the impression that as a result of her personal life story, she adopted certain attitudes that are then substantiated by other people's experiences and some academic research. This attitude-driven approach diminishes the interpretative choices a reader may have concerning a narrative. It also reduces the more academic texts to proving a point rather than being the result of a quest that kept an open mind. In short, "The writer is more concerned to know than to judge." (Somerset Maugham 2006: 152)

Her chapter on circumcision titled 'Ich bin ein Mann' in *Die verlorenen Söhne* is a case in point. (Kelek 2006a: 109-122) It begins with the story of her nephews' circumcision ceremony, a ritual Kelek experiences as a needless infliction of pain with the singular goal of strengthening patriarchal structures. It is a powerful story despite the fact that it leaves one with a feeling of uncomfortable negativity. This is followed by a short paragraph on the history of circumcision in Islam and a longer passage on the generally negative effects of circumcision from a medical perspective. Kelek also mentions the story Nelson Mandela tells in his autobiography *The Long Walk To Freedom* about his circumcision as part of the activities in the initiation ceremony. Her focus is on the pain he felt (and was not allowed to show) rather than the pride he clearly felt at being accepted into the society of adult men. Kelek also

compares male circumcision to female mutilation ("Die Genitalverstümmelung von Mädchen ist durch den §262 Strafgesetzbuch verboten. Warum gilt die Beschneidung nur bei Mädchen als Körperverletzung?") (Kelek 2006a: 121)

The actual story at the beginning of the chapter titled 'Ich bin ein Mann' would have sufficed to convince the reader that under certain conditions, circumcision is a traumatic experience for young boys. If some readers were left with the impression that Islamic tradition celebrates child abuse, suspicion of attitude-driven writing will only increase as subsequent paragraphs aim to underline the point made in the story. Reference is only made to voices that present an outright rejection of the possibility that circumcision can be an important and meaningful ritual to some communities. While the narrative can be accepted as based on subjective experience, what follows are one-sided statements that neither help the story, nor are they academically sound because they are unbalanced. Apart from a lack of consideration for those following religious or traditional practices such as circumcision, Kelek also ignores anyone who does not support her view. The United Nations health agency UNAids and the World Health Organisation for example regard circumcision as an important tool in Aids prevention. They also emphasise that "male circumcision has no connection with female genital mutilation, a practice with many adverse physical and psychological impacts and with no demonstrated medical benefits". (Aids prevention: UN gives green light to circumcision. 2007, online document.) UN guidelines further propose that circumcision should be promoted 'with full adherence to medical ethics', but in a 'culturally appropriate manner'. For instance, traditional practitioners who carry out circumcision in a ritual to symbolise a child's transition to adulthood should be consulted to help ensure support for a circumcision campaign. (Aids prevention: UN gives green light to circumcision. 2007, online document)

In February 2006, the German newspaper *Die Zeit* published an open letter by Terkessidis and Karakasoglu entitled 'Gerechtigkeit für die Muslime! Die deutsche Integrationspolitik stützt sich auf Vorurteile. So hat sie keine Zukunft. Petition von 60 Migrationsforschern'. (Terkessidis and Karakasoglu: 2006, online document.) This was a petition signed by 60 academics engaged in migration research. The main thrust of their criticism concerns the fact that policy makers in Germany prefer to base their decisions on prejudiced, unbalanced material, rather than on sound scientific research:

Dass der ehemalige Innenminister Necla Keleks Buch bespricht, dass sie für ihre in höchstem Maße unseriöse Arbeit den Geschwister-Scholl-Preis erhält und dass sie eine gern gesehene Beraterin im Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge ist; dass große Teile der Verwaltung, Ministerien und Medien lieber auf unseriöse Pamphlete zurückgreifen, während die differenzierte wissenschaftliche Forschung kaum wahrgenommen wird – diese Entwicklung ist in der Tat besorgniserregend. (Terkessidis and Karakasoglu: 2006, online document.)

The article further notes that in her dissertation *Islam im Alltag*, Kelek finds that for young people with a Turkish migration background, Islam is a way of social identification rather than an unquestioned religious tradition. She has since distanced herself from this view; in her book *Die fremde Braut* Islam is portrayed as a backward, patriarchal and reactionary religion: "Es ist der unverbesserlich rückschrittliche Islam, der verantwortlich ist für Zwangsverheiratungen und andere Grausamkeiten. Als Gegenmittel hilft nur „Integration" in die deutsche, sprich westliche Gesellschaft". (Terkessidis and Karakasoglu: 2006, online document.)

In her written reply to the newspaper, Kelek (2006c) responds by saying that she sees her work as going beyond explaining phenomena contextually. Exposing taboos and proposing solutions are an urgent concern to her, considering the miserable lives of many import brides in Western societies, and the generally deteriorating relationships in many families with migration backgrounds:

diese Kritiker [kommen] aus der gut ausgestatteten Welt der öffentlich finanzierten Migrationsforschung. Sie hätten in den vergangenen Jahrzehnten Zeit, Mittel und Gelegenheit gehabt, die Frage von Zwangsheirat, arrangierten Ehen, Ehrenmorden und Segregation und dem Islam zu untersuchen. Sie hätten die Fragen stellen können, die ich gestellt habe. Sie haben es nicht getan, weil solche Fragen nicht in ihr ideologisches Konzept des Multikulturalismus passten. Damit haben sie aber auch das Tabu akzeptiert und das Leid anderer zugelassen. (Kelek 2006c, online document.)

She received support in this regard from Alice Schwarzer, a well-known women's rights activist in Germany. (Schwarzer 2006: 40) Schwarzer's article (as well as the migration researchers' petition) mention Kelek alongside the Somali born activist Hirsi Ali who received similar criticism for her book *Infidel*:

> If her coming-of-age-story and the saga of her nomadic family, who moved from prewar Somalia to Saudi Arabia, then Ethiopia and finally Kenya – were allowed to breathe on its own, "Infidel" would prove an eye-opening look into the plight of African Muslim women. But throughout the book, you can't help but feel manipulated, rather than moved. (Ali 2007: 32)

Hirsi Ali's activism on behalf of Muslim women, similar to Kelek's, was criticised for its assumption that Islamic and Western ideas are essentially incompatible. Their writings were criticized for actively supporting the idea of their incompatibility:

> Hirsi Ali is more a hero among xenophobes of Islam than Islamic women. That is problematic considering that she describes herself in "Infidel" as a woman who "fights for the rights of Muslim women, the enlightenment of Islam and the security of the West". "How can you change the lives of your former sisters, and work toward reform, when you've forged a career upon renouncing the religion and insulting its followers? (Ali 2007: 33)

One could come to the general conclusion that social activism (the necessity of which remains undisputed) does not mix well with literary or academic texts. Since activism presents a clear point of view, its main weakness lies in the absence of other points of view. Kelek's claim to 'go beyond the contextual' can only be interpreted as simply assuming that everyone should share a certain attitude. This kind of unauthorized universalism is incompatible with academic research and literary interpretation. At the same time, Kelek's social awareness campaign has brought the issue of migration and integration into sharp focus, an achievement that academic writing with its balanced approach and fictional writing with its interpretativ approach to reality are perhaps less able to achieve – apart from the fact that campaigning is usually not the intention behind this type of writing. In the following, I will discuss Kelek's contribution in the context of the German and European debate on Muslims living in Europe.

5.3   Headscarves, 'Enlightenment fundamentalists' and European Muslims

One may argue that in a globalised world, a particular dress code means nothing more than adding colour to the global community. At the same time, national and traditional colours gain importance as forms of identification. Whether it is despite globalised standards or because of them, women's headscarves remain a highly charged issue in Europe. Power and Hall (2006) define the scarf as "a universal sign of Islamic heritage" and point out that:

> For liberal Western societies, the debate over the hijab – a scarf that covers the head but not the face – crystallizes a key modern dilemma: how to reconcile the commitment to protecting freedom of expression with the ideal of integration and social cohesion? (Power and Hall 2006: 34)

Soëtard (1998: 43-53) discusses the issue from an educational perspective: the twofold task of education is to foster the development of individuals as well as their integration into society. For him, the question is to what extent particular interests should be respected – only if they do not clash with universal (state) interests, or perhaps at the cost of these interests? He concludes that "Die Angst vor zuviel Partikularität kann nur von denen kommen, die die Universalität als ein „An und Für sich" betrachten." (Soëtard 1998: 52) The idea of universalism as eternally valid and unchallenged leads us to think that particular interests are always a threat to what is (considered to be) universally acceptable. Thomas (1998) uses the South African example to illustrate the problem of combining claims to universalism, with claims to power. Referring to N. Alexander, she argues that if universal means eternal, those in power could simply determine the contents of a universally accepted value system:

> Schließlich – das belegen die Beiträge von Alexander für Südafrika besonders eindringlich – ist das Element von Herrschaft als analytische Kategorie im Verhältnis von Pluralität und Universalität zentral, da sonst jedes Konzept eines "Allgemeinen" unterschwellig das von der jeweils herrschenden Gruppe "Anerkannte" bedeuten könnte. (Thomas 1998: 60)

From a philosophical point of view, Habermas (2008) discusses the relationship between the preservation of cultural identity and the enforcement of shared citizenship. He rejects both the 'secularists' who "insist on the uncompromising inclusion of minorities in the existing political framework and accuse their opponents of a "multiculturalist betrayal" of the core values of the Enlightenment" and the radical multiculturalists who "cannot discern in any universalist validity claim, such as the claim for the universality of democracy and human rights, anything but the imperialist power claim of a dominant culture." (Habermas 2008, online document.) Habermas (2008) criticizes the multi-culturalists' relativistic position as "inadvertently robbing itself of the standards for a critique of the unequal treatment of social minorities." (Habermas 2008, online document.) Returning to the South African example, it seems that radical relativists who convince themselves of the incommensurability of cultures may also quite consciously reject standards for a critique of unequal treatment of social groups. Apartheid's legally enforced separation along racial lines implied unequal treatment of social groups. This brings us to the conclusion that both radical relativism and radical universalism are underpinned by problematic background assumptions (incommensurability, absolute truths, etc.), and are accompanied by the same power claims that assume the superiority of one group over another. Habermas (2008), in true philosophic fashion, concludes "the democratic state must not pre-emptively reduce the polyphonic complexity of the diverse public voices, because it cannot know whether it is not otherwise cutting society off from scarce resources for the generation of meanings and the shaping of identities." (Habermas 2008, online document.)

At the other end of the spectrum, one might argue that a democratic society has the right to defend core values that are premised on basic consensus. These would be considered untouchable and not open for debate with representatives of particular interests. This clearly is Kelek's and Schwarzer's point of view. In the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, Schwarzer (2003) for example insists that active tolerance (as encouraging dialogue rather than indifference) is not possible if the other side is characterized by intolerance:

"Seit einem Vierteljahrhundert ist der Schleier der Frauen die Flagge der islamistischen Kreuzzügler. Er ist das Symbol für Separierung. Zeit also, endlich Schluß zu machen mit der gönnerhaften Pseudotoleranz – und anzufangen mit ersthaftem Respekt. Respekt vor allem für die Millionen Muslime, die von dem Terror im eigenen Lager noch bedrohter sind als wir." (Quoted in Cziesche *et al.* 2003: 83)

The same article reports general concerns regarding the tolerance of headscarves in public office (such as schools), as this is said to underestimate aggressive intolerance on the part of Islamic fundamentalists. (Cziesche *et al.* 2003: 84) This rather polarizing view can easily lead to an imbalance in the representation of needs in favour of the state and, as Habermas (2008) points out, "the constitutional interpretation is bound up with the prejudices of the majority culture." (Habermas 2008, online document.) Such polarisation is also expressed in an essentialist/reductionist view of tolerance (e.g. we tolerate those who tolerate us). Habermas reminds us "we need tolerance only vis-à-vis worldviews that we consider wrong and vis-à-vis habits that we do not like." (Habermas 2008, online document.)

In order to engage in meaningful intercultural dialogue, an individual or a society can neither insist on retaining the status quo nor be expected to sacrifice core values in order to accommodate others. To balance both, it needs to be made clear which principles are negotiable and which are not. Kelek appears to have made a significant contribution here, mainly her emphasis on what should be non-negotiable social principles. Others have more generally noted the need for European societies to be more definitive about their identity. Earlier, reference was made to the German unease regarding a national identity. Alam (2006) points to a similar dilemma in France and Britain: "Britain's veil debate, like the ongoing controversy over headscarves in France has more to do with Europe's own identity crisis than with the presence of some "dangerous other."" (Alam 2006: 32) In Germany, as Adelson (2005) remarks, "the newly configured headscarf is no longer a sense of German superiority, the self-confident largesse of a civilized nation with rights it is eager to bestow on immigrant women, but a heightened sense of German insecurity."(Adelson 2005: 130) Perhaps the identity debate is too emotionally charged. Core values in the form of basic rights are already protected by the constitution and as such enjoy special status. At the same

time, a dynamic society has to work on an ever-broadening consensus. Engaging in this dialogue offers the possibility to accommodate others; at the same time it will help clarifying what is non-negotiable.[37]

Ultimately, the principle of non-negotiation and insistence on integration and acculturation can be assigned to all fundamentalists, whether Islamic or so-called 'Enlightenment fundamentalists' as Hirsi Ali, Kelek and others have been labelled [38]. Bruckner (2007), belonging to the French *nouveaux philosophes*, argues that modernity has inherited the ideals of Enlightenment and its claim to embody a new age of self-conscious history as well as the tradition of philosophers such as Gadamer, contesting these claims and arguing that criticism of prejudice is nothing but prejudice itself. The legacy of both these movements has led us to "understand how to reconcile the particularity of national, linguistic and cultural ties with the universality of the human race." (Bruckner 2007, online document.) From a philosophical point of view, Bruckner (2007) defines the weakness of multiculturalism as "chaining people to their roots" and taking away their individual rights by associating them with groups:

> It is one thing to recognize the convictions and rites of fellow citizens of different origins, and another to give one's blessing to hostile insular communities that throw up ramparts between themselves and the rest of society. How can we bless this difference if it excludes humanity instead of welcoming it? This is the paradox of multiculturalism: it accords the same treatment to all communities, but not to the people who form them, denying them the freedom to liberate themselves from their own traditions. Instead: recognition of the group, oppression of the individual. (Bruckner 2007, online document.)

Bruckner finds the 'worship of diversity' questionable: "Against the right to difference, it is necessary to ceaselessly reaffirm the right to resemblance. What unites

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[37] As for example in the case of the proposal by Jutta Limbach, a former German constitutional judge, to create a minority status in the German Basic Law, (which would, for example, excuse Muslim girls from gym class). Although this proposal is based on a broadening consensus, it has been criticised as socially regressive. (Limbach, J. 2005. Making multiculturalism work [online].)
[38] E.g. Buruma, I. 2006. *Murder in Amsterdam: The Death of Theo Van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance.* Also:
Garton Ash, T. 2006. 'Islam in Europe'.

us is stronger than what divides us." (Bruckner 2007, online document.) His (postmodern) approach as I understand it combines the ideals of universality and individualism in order to overcome the polarizing effect of group associations. Garton Ash (2006) on the other hand reminds us that group associations and the accompanying prejudice and discrimination are impossible to dismiss from a more realistic vantage point:

> Much of the discrimination applies equally to non-Muslims of immigrant origin. It is, so to speak, indiscriminate discrimination against people with darker skins and foreign names or accents; plain, old-fashioned racism or xenophobia, rather than the more specific prejudice that is now tagged "Islamophobia." (Garton Ash 2006, online document.)

Of course, group discrimination based on appearance pre-empts ideas about individuals and universalism. Garton Ash (2006) also points out that new groups are formed as a result of people living between groups:

> What I call the In-between People: those who feel at home neither in the European countries where they live nor in the countries from which their parents came. They inhabit "dish cities", connected to the lands of their parents' birth by satellite dishes bringing in Moroccan or Turkish television channels, by the Internet, and by mobile phones. (Garton Ash 2006, online document.)

Perhaps this is the group version of multicultural post-modern life. Garton Ash believes that social progress is not hampered by group formation; on the contrary, the formation of new groups can support social progress. One of these new groups are the Muslim Europeans in the sense of people who believe that you can be both a good Muslim and a good European. The 2006 petition referred to earlier in the chapter signed by sixty migration researchers in Germany supports this view:

> In der `zweiten Generation` muslimischer Einwanderer erfährt der Islam eine komplizierte Neuinterpretation, die sowohl mit dem familiären Umfeld als auch mit den Reaktionen der Mehrheitsgesellschaft interagiert. Diese oft sehr

subjektive Neuinterpretation lässt sich nicht einfach über den Kamm des Patriarchalen und Rückschrittlichen scheren. (Terkessidis and Karakasoglu 2006, online document.)

'Euro-Islam' has been interpreted in many different ways. Islam scholar Reetz said in an interview with German magazine *Der Spiegel*: "Einige verstehen darunter, dass religiöse Muslime sich mit ihren Aktivitäten auf Europa konzentrieren sollen, nicht auf Autoritäten außerhalb. Andere wollen darin Tendenzen zur Säkularisierung sehen." (Quoted in Schlüsselwort Vertrauen 2008: 25) Euro-Islam is often discussed in the context of a hermeneutics approach to the Qur'an. Tariq Ramadan (2008) for example notes that belief in Allah, as well as commitment to prayer, fasting and charity do not exclude belief in democracy, freedom of expression, human rights and religious freedom, and adds that, "Praktisch alles andere ist interpretations- und anpassungsfähig in Raum und Zeit." (Quoted in Bednarz and Steinvorth 2008: 40) Bardakoglu, Turkey's highest representative of Islam (2008) says: "Jede Zeit muss den Koran mit ihrem eigenen Geist, ihrer Kraft, ihrer intellektuellen Erfahrung verstehen."(Quoted in Bednarz and Steinvorth 2008: 41) This is based on the idea that "Nur wer die Umstände kennt, unter denen der Prophet Gottes Wort empfing, kann auch die Botschaft dahinter erkennen." (Bednarz and Steinvorth 2008: 43, quoting Özsoy). Ramadan (2008) adds that the question what it means to be a Muslim can no longer rely on answers from countries of origin and requires an adjustment to the European environment. (Quoted in Bednarz and Steinvorth 2008: 40) Tibi (2008), on the other hand, sees "Ramadan-Islam" as an attempt to give orthodox Islam a European face without really changing anything. (Quoted in Bednarz and Steinvorth 2008: 40) The different interpretations of what constitutes a European Islam may still be open to debate, but the theory remains that a historical-hermeneutic approach to the Qur'an should protect it from exploitation by diverse interest groups. The debate around a European Islam offers another perspective on the importance of a fusion of horizons and the difficulties arising from uncompromising attitudes, be they strictly orthodox or secular.

The intercultural approach tends to support ideas of universal ground and individual choices as well as progressive groups. It does not, as has been seen, combine well with polarising attitudes, or a form of plurality that is defined by a superficial kind of

respect for particularity and an underlying wish to maintain a comfortable distance: "What was apartheid South Africa if not the respect of singularity pushed to the point that the other no longer has the right to approach me?" asks Bruckner (2007, online document), warning not to accept diversity that is interpreted as difference and experienced as impassable distance.

As a multicultural society, South Africa faces in principle the same intercultural challenges. At the same time, Muslim identity in South Africa and in Europe respectively has some definitive characteristics that make it unique to its particular environment. Having outlined the complex debate in Europe, it is appropriate to discuss briefly some aspects of Muslim identity in South Africa in contrast to the challenges Muslims face in Germany.

5.4   Muslim identity in Germany and South Africa

Kelek, as an activist writer for social justice in Germany, has been accused of fuelling negative sentiments towards the Turkish-Muslim minority by being judgmental. Her emphasis appears to be on what is non-negotiable. While this is important, her writings leave us with an undeniable sense of negativity towards these minority communities, a sentiment German social discourse can ill afford. Referring to Emine Sevgi Özdamar´s novel *Mutterzunge*, Fischer and McGowan (1996) argue that

> […] this text, in which an emancipated Turkish intellectual voluntarily subordinates herself to an Islamic Koran teacher, has brought Özdamar repeated attacks from her German public. They are unable, it seems, to accept that a Turkish woman might choose a different path of self-discovery to the Western feminist one they, eurocentrically, assume to be universally applicable. (Fischer and McGowan 1996: 17)

Seeking a Muslim identity is all too easily associated with withdrawal from secular society. Wohlrab-Sahr (2006) analysed withdrawal in the context of conversion to Islam. She notes that

> Biographical analyses indicate a close connection between processes of biographical crisis and the conversion decision. […]
>
> Characteristic experiences are personal devaluation resulting from the violation of norms regarding sexuality and gender relations or from the dissolution of a gender-related social order. (Wohlrab-Sahr 2006: 76, 80)

Wohlrab-Sahr (2006) also found that conversion could be the result of failed attempts to move up socially and economically, and the loss of personal acknowledgment associated with that failure. It can also be seen as "symbolic emigration" into an "imagined community" which is global, thus resolving problems of belonging within one's own social and cultural context. (Wohlrab-Sahr 2006: 80, 81) She concludes: "In the German cases, covering and sometimes circumcision for men become symbols for the re-creation and revaluation of the person." (Wohlrab-Sahr 2006: 83) This supports Kelek's theory of Islamic tradition as a way of withdrawing from secular society. The same arguments, one might add, can be used to explain Kelek's own withdrawal from Islam.

Badran (2006: 195-204) points out that patriarchal discourses are questioned by growing numbers of born Muslims in the West. (Badran 2006: 195) At the same time, "most immigrant Muslims in European societies are positioned without choice through physical characteristics associated with Muslims (racial profiling) and distinctive demeanour as "outsiders" (or "outside insiders")." (Badran 2006: 195) In contrast, "In South Africa, where there are old established Muslim communities, being or becoming Muslim is not "foreignising". (Badran 2006: 199) She argues that

> In South Africa there appears to be an absence of highly negative feelings toward Islam and toward women who choose to embrace the religion. The antiapartheid struggle and the current project of constructing the new South Africa must be among the explanatory factors. Strongly held ideas about equality and justice (for so long hijacked in South Africa) in this highly pluralistic society create a different public space and a different public ethic. Moreover, South Africa is a more religious society than most societies in the West; people are more "at home" with religion and certainly display less of a phobia towards it. (Badran 2006: 203)

Badran further notes that immigrants in European countries are "thrust into a position of being expected to adjust or fit in. The challenge for them becomes how to maintain their identity and pride or self-respect – in short, their distinctiveness or difference – and remain an equal part of the larger whole." (Badran 2006: 203) In South Africa, on the other hand, "the societal and marital tensions surrounding marriage with an immigrant or second-generation citizen are typically absent. The veil as a form of head covering seems a far less charged issue in South Africa than in European societies." (Badran 2006: 204-205)

It appears that South African Muslims have achieved the fusion of nationality and religion that (presumably the majority of) German Muslims are still struggling to achieve. This allows them to focus more on religious core issues such as the role of women in Islam. According to Badran, Islam in South Africa has a history of feminism combined with anti-apartheid struggle which brought into it "a sense of equality and justice irrespective of race, ethnicity and gender". (Badran 2006: 222) South Africa therefore has a "home-grown Islamic feminist discourse and activist movement." (Badran 2006: 219) Consequently, the South African women "do not feel they have to announce their new identity in any defensive way. They come to Islam with liberatory ideas". (Badran 2006: 223) This is clearly the opposite of Muslim women withdrawing from society.

Hers is one voice from the South African context, but, Badran claims, "Islamic feminism is a global phenomenon; it is part of global Islam and global feminism." (Badran 2006: 201) Islamic feminism, far from rejecting Islam, engages with it - with the result, one might suspect, of getting closer to understanding both Islam and feminism.

The South African example shows how dangerously entrenched attitudes in Europe have complicated intercultural dialogue. At the same time, the importance of continued engagement with all facets of this dialogue has become crucial to nothing less than ensuring world peace. In the following chapter, the work of Feridun Zaimoglu, a writer who has continuously engaged in intercultural dialogue and has shown the way forward will be discussed.

6.   FERIDUN ZAIMOGLU ON 'KANAKEN'[39] IN GERMANY

Feridun Zaimoglu's texts pose a challenge to literary analysis. His writing emanates from the forefront of social change. Literary critics appear to be in the process of deciding whether to recognize the merit of newly developed concepts of analysis as presented in previous chapters, or to simply sideline authors like Zaimoglu. Rappe (2002) comments as follows:

> In Deutschland tut man sich schwer mit dem Crossover, verweigert das Prädikat Literatur und sucht passende Ethnoschubladen. Das Leben im Uneindeutigen, im Ambivalenten, die kreative Kraft, die daraus erwachsen kann, das Arsenal von Kommunikationsangeboten findet hier leider noch wenig Gehör. So gesehen befindet sich Zaimoglu eher in der Gesellschaft postkolonialer Autoren [...] Was sie zu schreiben haben, ist nicht der Befindlichkeitssprech eines in der Fremde verlorenen Volkes, sondern eine neue deutsche, englische oder französische Literatur. (Rappe 2002, online document.)

Rather than developing the idea of the ambivalent, resulting from the exposure to constant historical and cultural flux as a source of creative capital within German literary tradition as Rappe suggests, it seems easier to find a drawer (e.g. ethnic minority writing) and leave any new writing there for the time being. Zaimoglu, however, refuses to be filed away and emphasizes that he writes from within German society, thus positioning himself to be judged as a German writer. Although Zaimoglu has consistently stood for the same ideals, he is happy to acknowledge those who see him as having undergone a metamorphosis in his readers' and critics' eyes, from the 'Malcolm X of the Turks' to a 'German poet'. The outside perspective he offers is to be regarded as a bonus characteristic, not anything that puts him outside mainstream literature. In an interview with German newspaper *Die Zeit*, he comments:

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[39] 'Kanake' is a derogatory word for 'foreigner'. Zaimoglu uses it to create a sense of identity, similarly to the use of the word 'nigger' among African Americans.

"Ich möchte mit einer Legende aufräumen: Ich will nicht provozieren. Ich wurde in Rezensionen meines neuen Buches als „Musterschüler des Inkorrekten" bezeichnet, der sich in ein Bemühen hineingesteigert hat und dabei völlig in die Irre gelaufen ist. Mir wurde unterstellt, ich wolle aus meiner Nische als „Ethno-Schreiber" ausbrechen, sei aber mit den Bildern außerhalb meiner Erfahrungswelt heillos überfordert. Das beruht auf einem Mißverständnis: Ich habe „Kanak Sprak" und die anderen Bücher nicht als ein nicht-deutscher Autor geschrieben. Das waren alles deutsche Großstadtphänomene, und ich war stolz, sie neben die Erfahrungen der „Zonen-Kinder" und der „Generation Golf" stellen zu können. Was man mir vorwerfen kann ist, daß ich ein ruppiger und teilweise pornografischer Autor bin, daß Schmutz in meinen Büchern geballt vorkommt. Aber es geht hier nicht um formale Kriterien." (Quoted in Fehrenbach 2002, online document.)

As a new German writer with a focus on social change, Zaimoglu retains an outside perspective on 'mainstream society'. Rappe (2002) describes it as "der Blick von Außen, oder am Rande tut sich was, ist zum Sprung bereit und schießt genau in die Mitte. In die Mitte der selbstgefälligen Globalisierungs-Berlin-Mitte-Gesellschaften." (Rappe 2002, online document.) The claim to both the inside and the outside perspective on society must provoke literary criticism to revisit some of its concepts and categories such as German versus minority literature, and perhaps re-define underlying concepts regarding workers' literature, struggle literature, postcolonial literature, literature from the in-between, emergent literature, and hybrid writing. Zaimoglu's writing appears to exemplify ambiguity asserting itself. The author's identity, his writing and serious criticism thereof, are all intended to defy any existing critical approaches, especially the one suggesting that his writing is irrelevant to 'mainstream' literary discourse. Ambiguity, here, is not to be seen as problematic, but asserts itself somewhat aggressively as advantageous in every respect, and establishes itself as a social and literary concept. Zaimoglu's ideas on the question of identity are a good illustration of this:

"Dieses Schwindelwort von der Identität ist der Dreh-und Angelpunkt des westlichen Bewußtseins. Bullshit! Es gibt keine Identität. Wurzeln, Verortung, alles Dreck. Identitätskrise, lächerlich. Was es gibt, sind wir. Die Kanaksta.

[Kanake + youngster or gangster] Und wir werden uns zeigen. Wir werden auffällig werden. Es geht ab ... Kanak Attack!" (Quoted in Lottmann 1997, online document.)

The 'Kanaksta Community' includes "Arabs, Tunesier, Libanesen, Westshore-Kanaken (Leute aus dem Westteil Kiels), Pakistani, Russen, Leute aus dem Balkan, sogar ein Jude [...]." (Lottmann 1997, online document.) According to Zaimoglu, "Viele Kanaksta sind Deutsche. Du bist in dem Moment Kanakskta, wo du die Gesellschaft durchschaust." (Quoted in Lottmann 1997, online document) The 'Kanaksta Community' is defined by its ability to see society as it is, which may be interpreted as having both the inside and the outside perspective. The individual Zaimoglu is nobody but himself: "Mann, ich bin Kieler! Ich bin Schleswig-Holsteiner, ich bin doch der Feri, Mann." (Quoted in Lottmann 1997, online document.)[40] On individual identity, he has this to say:

"Wie langweilig wäre es denn, sich für das eine oder andere zu entscheiden. [...] Das ist das sogenannte 'Postmoderne', das postmoderne Lebensgefühl. Man pflegt seine eigene Biographie und baut seine eigene – ich nehme das Wort mal in den Mund – Identität selbst zusammen. [...] die existentielle Frage lautet: Wer bin ich, und wie erobere ich mir den Raum, so sein zu können, wie ich bin." (Quoted in Grumbach 1999, online document.)

Zaimoglu's existential approach to identity as the right to assert one's individuality without being defined by others in any way (forcing them to accept possible ambiguity), and his claim to a double perspective (seen as rightfully adopted by some and an arrogant assumption by others), place him at a considerable distance to the earlier literature of migrant workers in Germany. This distance constitutes a third angle to his work. Regarding Zaimoglu's style of writing, Adelson (2005) asks: "Is this an updated version of "the Turkish Gastarbeiter" whose failed powers of speech led Bhabha to enshrine him as an icon of incommensurability and alienation?" and answers: "This is hardly the case, for Zaimoglu regards the incoherence of "Kanak

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[40] His 2007 book *Rom intensiv* is the literary outcome of his one-year stay in Rome. Among Italians, Zaimoglu is first and foremost a German visitor, thereby extending the European idea of a German identity.

Sprak" as powerful rather than powerless […] he rejects both the guest worker literature of the 1980s and a liberal proclivity to feel pity for Turkish victims of German circumstance." (Adelson 2005: 98) Wertheimer (2002) adds, "Mitleid, Sentimentalität und Toleranz sind nicht zuletzt auch Zeichen der Macht, ja der Diskriminierung". (Wertheimer 2002: 131) Quoting Zaimoglu from the introduction to *Kanak Sprak*, he summarizes Zaimoglu's disassociation from guest worker writing as follows:

> Aus seiner Perspektive stellt sich die Migranten-Literatur der siebziger Jahre als eine „weinerlich sich anbiedernde und öffentlich geförderte Gastarbeiterliteratur dar, jene Art von Literatur, die den Prototypen des Türken „Ali" – arm aber herzensgut – in Szene setzte: Müllmann und Opfer. (Wertheimer 2002: 131)

Wertheimer (2002) regards Zaimoglu's texts "als provokante Reaktion auf die Opferliteratur". (Wertheimer 2002: 131) As noted in chapter four, there are reservations regarding the classification of guest worker writing as the literature of victims or by victims, considering that the act of writing and publishing cannot be achieved by mere victims. One has to agree with Wertheimer when he points out that protest is essential to Zaimoglu's writing: "Der Protest von Zaimoglu wendet sich gegen diese verborgene Tendenz der "Sonderbehandlung" von Minoritäten in positiver wie negativer Absicht." (Wertheimer 2002: 132)

Kocadoru (2004) talks about 'third generation Turkish authors in Germany' whose literature "ist nicht mehr die Literatur der Migranten, sondern die Literatur von Menschen, deren Sozialisation in Deutschland realisiert worden ist." (Kocadoru 2004: 134) He describes third generation authors as follows:

> Eine Generation, die weder betroffen ist, noch sich auf Identitätssuche befindet, weil sie weiß, was sie ist. Diese Autoren sprechen ohne Hemmungen aus, daß sie Türken in Deutschland sind. Und in dieser Haltung verbirgt sich der Versuch, sich zu behaupten und ihr Existenzrecht in dieser Gesellschaft zu verteidigen. (Kocadoru 2004: 135)

Zaimoglu's vehement rejection of victim status, his claim to individual freedom and social equality, combined with the advantage of a broadened perspective, places him at the forefront of this new generation of writers in Germany. An analysis of his writings will show that neither his academic career nor big city life removed him from his 'grassroots', an achievement somewhat reminiscent of the struggle many colonially educated intellectuals subjected themselves to in order to preserve both halves of their personality as parts of an integrated self. Zaimoglu describes Turks attempting 'to be more German than the Germans' as "Assimil-Kümmel". His texts portray Turks as dealers, users, pimps, idiots, transsexuals, prostitutes, moderate Islamists, lusty Hodshas, Gotteskrieger (Allah's soldiers). According to Kocadoru, these are negative types that first and second generation writers would never have dared portray. (Kocadoru 2004: 137) Zaimoglu's vivid tales from society's underbelly centre on the international community of 'Kanaka', including some 'Germans'. Zaimoglu's writing about 'Abschaum', 'Lumpenethnier', the scum of society, has been likened to the literature of the 'black power' and 'black consciousness' movement in the United States. (Puritz 1998: 31; Wertheimer 2002: 132) Rather than the Turkish-German language symbiosis that can be found in the texts of Emine Sevgi Özdamar (and others), we find Anglicisms and the self-confidence to assert one's existence and identity. Wertheimer (2002) summarizes as follows:

> Straßenkehrer (sprichwörtlich), Dealer, Idiot, transsexuelle Hure, moderater Islamist. Eine scheinbare Negativauswahl von Typen, die eines dennoch gemeinsam haben: Selbstbewußsein, Identität. Das Ganze in Analogie zur „black power", zum „black consciousness movement" in den Vereinigten Staaten. Diese ethnische Identität ist eine Antwort auf die Tendenz zur politisch korrekten „main-stream-Kultur" in Deutschland. (Wertheimer 2002: 132)

Zaimoglu's idealist, perhaps even utopian vision of a social order is decidedly a humanitarian one. His writing is based on an understanding of the human condition, his rage is directed at the hypocritical tolerance of the intolerant. He has not been afraid to rake up the muck and confront the pretentiously clean-looking establishment with it. He is certainly no gentleman-writer; a novel like *German Amok* (2004) requires some preparedness to absorb a great amount of pornographic detail, and

Abschaum (1997) confronts the reader with the paralyzing sensation of great despair that can never be resolved. Zaimoglu produces the kind of understanding that in my opinion does not necessarily lead to agreement or acceptance, but to greater humanity. He is able to do so because his writing is based on engaging people and listeining to their stories (for example the story of Ertan Ongun that he used for *Abschaum*, and the men and women he interviewed for *Kanak Sprak* and *Koppstoff*). His own depth of understanding is reflected in interview protocols, stories based on interviews, fictional short stories and novels such as *Kanak Sprak, Koppstoff, Abschaum, 12 Gramm Glück, Leinwand.*

6.1 Against difference and assimilation

As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, the idea of cultural fusion as the creation of something entirely new can neither be based on the concept of total difference, nor on the complete absence of difference. One can interpret Zaimoglu's writing as supporting the idea of newness that emerges from the rejection of both complete difference and complete assimilation or acculturaltion. His insistence on 'being different' lies at the core of this rejection; being neither Turk nor German but both, means being neither different nor the same. The ideal community of 'Kanakstas' is something entirely new, ambiguous and as yet undefined. It is held together by a fierce individualism and the demand that its existential right be acknowledged. Similarity can only be found within that community; they are different to everyone else.

But, of course this community is not ideal and not homogeneous. The German perspective influences its members' tendencies towards either assimilation or difference, as 23-year old Rapper Ali put it:

> Der einheimische hat für'n kümmel ja zwei reservate frei: entweder bist du'n lieb alilein,'n recht und billiger bimbo eben [...] Dann gibt's noch'n zweites reservat, in dem der fremdländer den part des verwegenen desperado übernimmt, ein richtiger mannskerl eben, der wie'n blitz aus der hüfte schießt und in diesem reservat lümmeln sich die goldkettchen-bimbos und die

schneuzerkümmel und machen jagd auf blonde weibchen. (Zaimoglu 1995: 27)

In *Liebesmale, scharlachrot* (2002), Hakan talks about his strong dislike of "assimilated" Turks, about difference in the form of social distance displayed by criminals, and about those that are neither here nor there:

> Manchmal frag ich mich, Alter, was wir eigentlich in Alemanya suchen, wir sind Anatolier mit schiefem Herzen und haben es zu einigem Ruhm inner Krimibranche gebracht, dann gibt's noch Studierte wie dich, die weder Fisch noch Fleisch sind, und dann bringen die Türkenblätter Fotos mit Erfolgskümmeln, gemachte Männer wie Frauen auf'm Feld der Politik oder des Bisiness, und denen möchte ich am liebsten innen Arsch treten, so kleinscheißig wie die sind. (Zaimoglu 2002: 69)

The German perspective has heavily influenced ideas about difference and assimilation. Difference has been interpreted negatively and indiscriminately as social distance displayed by criminal desperados, orthodox Turks, Islamists, and others. Assimilation has been interpreted as 'trying to fit in' irrespective of social status or education. Zaimoglu's 'Kanak Community' on the other hand does not consider these boundaries; anyone is accepted who does not allow him/herself to be drawn towards either side:

> Man sagt dem bastard, er fühle sich unwohl, weil zwei seelen bzw. zwei kulturen in ihm wohnen. Das ist eine lüge. Man will dem bastard einreden, er müsse sich nur für eine einzige seele entscheiden, als ginge es um einen technischen handgriff, damit die räder sich verzahnen, als sei seine psyche ein lahmgelegter betrieb. (Zaimoglu 1995: 110)

This interpretation of assimilation means minimal disturbance to the so-called host society. In order to achieve this, the 'bastard' is required to rid himself of everything disturbingly strange and behave as though his personal history began with his or his parents' arrival in Germany. This concept of assimilation favours those who fit in without disturbing anyone. The 'Kanak Community' has little patience for them and

has no interest in the psychological details of such an existence. Zaimoglu takes a closer look at the 'grassroots' who, despite their backwardness, do not disturb 'the Germans':

> Sie ernähren sich von teig und fett, tunken brotrinde in ungesunde saucen, auf hochzeiten tragen die frauen schlimme gewänder, aus der Türkei kehren sie zurück mit zwiebelsäcken beladen, sie haben eine erbarmungslose schwäche für kitsch: venezianische gondeln, gipsfigurinen, gestrickte klorollenhütchen, obstschalen aus hartplastik, (Zaimoglu 1995: 101)

Their backwardness is of no interest to the German employers and authorities. They begin to take notice, however, when the Kanak Community produces young men like Yücel, 22, Islamist:

> Der anfechtungen sind viele hier in der ungläubigen land. Die jugend wird geführt in der lästerung durch baalhörige unterteufel, die gier und lust erwecken, gier nach hab und noch mehr hab, und lust auf nacktes frauenfleisch, [...] und so sollen sie uns hassen als fundamentalisten, das ist eine auszeichnung, das ist uns ganz recht. (Zaimoglu 1995: 138-139)

Zaimoglu does not judge 'Kanaken' by their distance or closeness to German society. His criteria are their ability to powerfully represent this new community by maintaining their individualism and their right to exist.

Adelson (2005) adds another facet to understanding difference in this context: difference as "the cultural difference that migration makes as a historical formation, not the bloc difference ascribed to ethnicity as an inherited category of belonging" (Adelson 2005: 169) Adding the historical aspect to the cultural and social means that we may find ourselves at that point in the hermeneutic model when horizons merge to form a new movement. Adelson (2005), however, seems to believe that "dialogue and fusion in the hermeneutic model become euphemisms for the erasure of difference" (Adelson 2005: 24) I would not agree with this view; in my opinion there is at least a difference between the before and the after, the old and the new. Adelson nevertheless develops an interesting concept of "touching tales" on the basis of her own

"hermeneutic streak." (Adelson 2005: 21, 26) This concept may be understood as describing 'lines of thought' that touch or get entangled without reaching closure or fusion of any kind:

> The touching tales bespeak historical and cultural entanglements to which the transnational labour migration of the 1950's and 1960's has given rise in Germany. […] The literature of Turkish migration [is viewed] as a historical phenomenon, and [it is the intention] to interpret literary structures partly in terms of their transfigurative historic significance. (Adelson 2005: 21, 26)

Under the heading 'Genocide and Taboo', Adelson (2005: 103) presents the example of the gigolo in Zaimoglu's *Kanak Sprak* (1995) to illustrate touching tales of Germans, Jews and Turks. Ercan, 24, works as a gigolo and tells the story of a female customer who calls him "mein schlimmer judenschniddel" whereupon Ercan has the following thoughts:

> Was doch sone christenlady alles zusammenstammelt, wo alle welt doch wissen tut, daß der olle alemanne oberster barbar war beim judenschnitzeln und gas denen ihre lungen treiben. [...] Also rächt sich's verscharrte fleisch und klumpt als geist und viele geister in den lebenden also sagt mir die theorie, daß so ne lady sich was geholt hat, ohne daß sie's natürlich weiß, was geschnappt vonner leiche tief unten im schlamm schlimm gemeuchelt. (Zaimoglu 1995: 71)

Ercan's story is that of a woman using the services of a (circumcised) Muslim man to live out her fantasy of having sex with a Jew. He is not sure whether she accuses him of being an enemy of the Jews or tries to fraternise with him against the Jews. Neither makes any sense to him in the light of the extermination of Jews by Nazi Germany. Although he tells himself that he is simply providing a service for money, he is deeply disturbed by the fact that his customer 'has caught something from the murdered corpses deep down in the mud'. She has gone mad with ideas of domination or guilt or both. Ercan as the Turkish Muslim 'outsider' has the inside story on one German madness which he interprets as the murdered Jews' revenge on the Germans: the

spirits of the murdered corpses harass the living and some of them are driven to madness.

The convergence of time and space (as argued in chapter 3) is further illustrated in Zaimoglu's *Leyla* (2006), *Koppstoff* (1998), *Liebesmale, scharlachrot* (2002) and *German Amok* (2004). Whereas the novels *Leyla* and *Liebesmale, scharlachrot* describe a considerable historical and spatial stretch from the time before arrival in Germany in 1965, to the return of Turkish pensioners to Turkey in the 1990's respectively, *Koppstoff* was written during a time of increasing right wing violence against foreigners in the early 1990's in Germany. In his introduction to *Koppstoff*, Zaimoglu comments on neo-nazis and the negative attitude of politicians and ordinary Germans towards foreigners:

> Stiefelnazis sind nur ein Teil der politischen Wirklichkeit. Die eigentlichen Aufwiegler sind einige prominente Vertreter der politischen Klasse. Die Stichworte kommen längst aus der Mitte der Gesellschaft. [...] Bezüglich der politischen Verhältnisse in diesem Land hat sich eine Düsternis und eine Wut breitgemacht, die aus vielen Protokollen spricht und die ich selbst vor ein paar Jahren nicht für möglich gehalten hätte. (Zaimoglu 1998: 10)[41]

The 1990's rise in racial hatred was widely associated with the aftermath of re-unification; in *Koppstoff*, Aynur, 34[42], talks about increased nationalism accompanied by arrogance: "Der Aleman hat jetzt Verantwortung, und ganz andere Saiten zieht er auf, jetzt ist er sowas von Nation, daß Kaffernläuse und Kanakenbrut Schuhe putzen und Absätze küssen müssen." (Zaimoglu 1998: 33)

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[41] A recent example of how the 1990's arson attacks on houses of Turkish citizens by German Neonazis (in Solingen and Mölln) still reverberate among the Turkish population is the investigation of the February 4, 2008 fire that burned down a house in Ludwigshafen inhabited by Turkish families. Several people were killed in the fire. Police investigators were flown in from Turkey to ensure that a possible racist attack was not disguised as an 'accident'.
The January 2008 provincial election campaign of Hesse's CDU premier Roland Koch serves as a recent example of criticism levelled against mainstream politicians who use inflammatory statements at the expense of young people with migration backgrounds. Koch used the more general topic of violence amongst the youth to target foreigners and the 'problem of immigration, security and integration' in general. He was widely criticized for polarizing the wider population for political gain.
[42] Following *Kanak Sprak* which was based on interews with men, *Koppstoff* is the female version; Aynur is one of the women interviewed in the latter.

In *German Amok*, examples of 'touching tales' or 'merging horizons' can be found as the story of Turkish migration gets entangled with that of German reunification. The two histories have become an interconnected, shared history. Much of the novel centres around the Berlin scene of performance artists and their often grotesque interpretations of life; one of the central figures is Japanese born performance artist OPPTIKK. She is referred to as "Kunstfotze" in a matter-of-fact way, a term she herself regards as accurately describing her. She speaks a mixture of English and German – "Unter Künstlern erfreut sich Deutsch als Verkehrssprache keiner großen Beliebtheit" (Zaimoglu 2004b: 116) – and on hiring the first person narrator as stage decorator, she says: „Er macht euch komplett! Ihr wißt: Kortex und Kodex, that's the point. That's the reason why he is mit uns at this place. Er wird Seelenreinigen mit uns allen. You know: There is no ‚I' in teamwork." (Zaimoglu 2004b: 116) Whilst in Berlin, grotesque and usually meaningless happenings, exhibitions, installations and after-parties have an enthusiastic following from within the artsy community of bored attention-seekers. But disaster strikes when a 'theatre group' is hired to perform in the provincial town of Treptin in Saxony, on former GDR territory. The superficial, head-in-the-clouds Berlin theatre group is so far removed from the realities of rural East Germany that they do not seem to foresee the clashes between East and West, big city and small town, multicultural artists and village youth with neo-nazi leanings. The superficiality and aloofness of the West German artists is in such stark contrast to the surrounding East German landscape that ethnicity no longer plays a role. Notwithstanding the various 'battles' between performers and local youths which eventually force the local authorities to take notice ("Der Bürgervorsteher ist in Begleitung des Truppführers des Löschkorps erschienen, um sich ein Bild von der Kunstarbeit zu machen.") (Zaimoglu 2004b: 131), the group continues with 'rehearsals'. Mauritius Pink, one of the directors, explains the underlying concept of the upcoming performance to the first person narrator who then voices his reservations:

> -Wir greifen auf die darstellerischen Urtechniken der Verkörperung des Schamanismus zurück. Es wird ein Mix unterschiedlicher Stilelemente: Buto, Expressionsmime der deutschen Zwanziger, Performance Art, afrikanische Transformationsbilder, und immer wieder Buto.

-Mensch Pink, überleg' doch mal: Wir sind hier im dunklen Osten. Die kennen nur Zonenplaste und Kombinatskunst. Und dann kommst du und erzählst ihnen was von Transformation. Die halten dich doch sofort für einen Agenten der Gauckbehörde, der sie abwickeln will. (Zaimoglu 2004b: 131)

In *German Amok*, Zaimoglu deals with a clash of cultures that no longer takes the form of German versus Kanak but that of a sophisticated Western freedom (despite its madness) versus the Eastern disorientation after a long period of authoritarianism. It is a clash of social developmental stages, of histories lived apart and places not previously shared. Zaimoglu thus creates an allegory to the theme of cultural difference and its core 'problem' of separate places and histories, thereby extending the concept of difference beyond ethnic boundaries. The premiere of the 'play' turns out to be another meaningless chaos, watched by an equally bemused and confused audience:

Der Mummenschanz beginnt, die Ostdeutschen, vom jahrzehntelangen bolschewistischen Drill geprägt, drängen sich zu einer Halbmondformation zusammen. Einige erwecken den Anschein, als harrten sie eines barschen Appells, um an einer Bonzenloge vorbeizudefilieren. Kein Wimpel- oder Wurstverkäufer weit und breit. Also starrt das hergelockte Ostpack auf die kostümierte Westmeute. Das Löschkorps der Freiwilligen Feuerwehr besteht fast ausschließlich aus den Jugendlichen, die uns lynchen wollten. [...] Sie haben ihren Frieden mit uns gemacht, vielleicht denken sie auch nur, daß sie nach unserem Abzug die Russenkaserne als Neuarischen Stützpunkt in Anspruch nehmen werden. [...] Das Dorfvolk darf teilnehmen und belustigt sein, die Aufführung dient ja zu dessen Belustigung. (Zaimoglu 2004b: 250)

Zaimoglu's style is that of observer, sometimes voyeur. At the same time, the first person narrator is an active participant in everything that goes on. The author's habit of being in the role of outside observer (without passing judgment) combined with his narrating protagonist's inside scoop on things lends this novel its power of insight.[43]

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[43] In October 2007, in the town of Halberstadt in Sachsen-Anhalt, four Neonazis were accused in a court of law of attacking and seriously injuring members of a theatre group from the Northern Harz

6.2   Abschaum – psychology and tendencies of a hybrid existence

'Abschaum' are the scum of society. As criminals, junkies, as mentally disturbed, unemployed, uneducated and poor people, they are characterized by social distance and many have a 'migration background'. The dichotomist German perspective categorizes them as those who do not fit in as opposed to those who do. Zaimoglu blames this perspective for being the initiator, not the analysis of or even the solution to the situation:

> Solange wie dieses land uns den wirklichen eintritt verwehrt, werden wir die anomalien und perversionen dieses landes wie ein schwamm aufsaugen und den dreck ausspucken. Die beschmutzten kennen keine ästhetik. (Zaimoglu 1995: 113)

Adelson (2005) writes that "Zaimoglu presents his cast of characters as an underworld of affect, a substratum of reality reflecting a deeper truth about German society in the 1990's. [They] present themselves as having the inside scoop on dirty business in Germany." (Adelson 2005: 99,103) Not only does the inside perspective afford his characters an understanding of society, their criticism of it allows the reader a new understanding of who they are and how they think. Their idea of honourable behaviour for example is in sharp contrast to the German view of what is honourable: "Zaimoglu's Kanaken emphatically assert their decency and integrity in contradistinction to what they perceive as German indecency and self-deception." (Adelson 2005: 101) The accusation of self-deception refers mainly to perceived unwillingness on the part of the Germans to make an effort to understand the lives and motivations of those they call 'Abschaum':

> Aber, bruder, der alemanne ist ja gern dozent und mag ne weisheit nach ner anderen in die welt scheißen, nur wenn's darum geht, mal die eigene personalhaltung aufzuknacken und's madengewimmel rauszulassen, ist er nicht mit von der partie. (Zaimoglu 1995: 83)

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region in June of the same year. Local police in Halberstadt initially took no action against the offenders despite overwhelming evidence.
See 'Halberstädter Neonazi-Prozess: Zeuge belastet Hauptangeklagten.' *Zeit online.* 11.10.2007.

One may add that their idea of integrity not only contradicts that of the Germans but also stands in sharp contrast to the perceived hypocrisy, backwardness and subservience of their parent generation:

> Mein vater kam aus irgendeinem kaff da unten, er kam, um ein kleines vermögen hier anzuschuften, [...] Ich empfand nichts als ekel, widerwillen gegen einen mann, der sich die seele aus dem leib schuftet für den billigen traum eines kleinbürgers. (Zaimoglu 1995: 111)

The rejection of both worlds forces them to create their own, and they do so with varying degrees of success. In *Kanak Sprak*, Memet, 29, poet, summarizes the youth's impatience, their despair at being reduced to rubbish in the streets of the big cities, and their feeling of never having been offered a fair deal in the first place:

> Die jungs streunen durch die stadt, [...] [sie] sind klumpen aus adrenalin. Sie wollen es ohne vertröstung auf bessere zeiten wissen. [...] Sie sind menschenmüll, eine verschwendung in den straßen der metropolen, sie haben das spiel verloren, weil die karten gezinkt sind, die man ihnen in die hand drückt. (Zaimoglu 1995: 109)

In this situation, they have nothing left but the pride of being different, often referred to as 'black pride' and a sense of group cohesion and mutual understanding. These survival skills are employed (more or less aggressively) by the educated and the uneducated, the successful and the unsuccessful. Zaimoglu's use of the term 'Abschaum' could therefore be interpreted as turning a derogatory term into one associated with pride, in the same way as the words 'nigger', 'kaffer', 'kanak', and many more have been used to describe proud members of the 'Abschaum' community. Zaimoglu's provocation here derives from the fact that the community of those labeled in terms of what after all began as a discriminatory and racist way of reference is so large and multifaceted, that it should be taken seriously rather than ignored as simply a community of losers. 29-year-old Akay has this to say on the issue of black pride:

Wir sind hier allesamt nigger, wir haben unser ghetto, wir schleppen's überall hin, wir dampfen fremdländisch, unser schweiß ist nigger, unser leben ist nigger, die goldketten sind nigger, unsere zinken und unsere fressen und unser eigener stil ist so verdammt nigger, daß wir wie blöde an unserer haut kratzen, und dabei kapieren wir, daß zum nigger nicht die olle pechhaut gehört, aber zum nigger gehört ne ganze menge anderssein und anders leben. (Zaimoglu 1995: 25)

At the same time as 'Abschaum' refers to the wider community of those who had to forge new identities for themselves and survive, the use of this term is also meant to draw attention to those who struggle unsuccessfully within that community. Zaimoglu's 1997 book *Abschaum* is the true story of Ertan Ongun, who did not succeed in negotiating his way in what he perceived to be a hostile environment. Ongun's story demands that more needs to be done to fill the void between integration and deportation/detention: „jedes einzelne Wort schleudert den um Sympathie bemühten Eingliederungsverfechter kalten Hohn entgegen." (Zaimoglu 1997: backpage) The book can be seen as a contribution to an understanding of failure and, ultimately, a contribution to developing new ways of reducing crime, unemployment and drug addiction, based on that understanding. Among the most pronounced aspects of this understanding are Ongun's sense of honour, his sense of inequality and his sense of emotional isolation.

Ongun's sense of honour makes him reject 'Assimilkümmel', as they betray everything the 'Abschaum' community stands for. They are seen as having given up on the battle, the need to fight and defend oneself at all cost in order to save face. Ongun usually fights with the despair of one who has nothing to lose, preferring to lose his life to losing his integrity. The police are aware of this concept of honour and take him seriously when he pleads with them not to force him to kill them. He has no respect for those who avoid confrontation: "Er isn Deutscher, er ruft die Polizei, er kann sowas nicht selber regeln." (Zaimoglu 1997: 127) Blowing the whistle on one's business partners, not paying one's debts and raising one's voice to someone's father are also serious cases of dishonourable behaviour. At the same time, going to prison is acceptable, unless one has been falsely accused or been caught committing a crime that is 'unworthy' of one's criminal career: Ongun relates the story of having been

arrested for stealing cigarettes, an embarrassment for someone otherwise known as a 'serious criminal'. Even the arresting officer says: "Mensch, Ertan, so tief gesunken!" (Zaimoglu 1997: 90)

The story of the arrest of a drug dealer's father who runs a legal fast-food restaurant and has asthma is an example of Ongun's sense of inequality and a condemnation of dishonourable behaviour displayed by the Germans:

> Wenn sie nen Deutschen verhaften und der sagt: Ich brauchn Arzt, ich bin am Arsch, ich hab irgendne Scheiße, dann sofort: Was haben Sie denn? Dann tritts Gesetz in Kraft, aber in dem Fall, beim Türken, das sind Arschlöcher, das sind Lügner, primitives Pack und fertig aus, Der Typ verreckt fast aufm Boden, und er kriegt noch eins auf die Rübe drauf, sie nehmen ihn einfach mit, und während des Verhörs kracht er zusammen und stirbt. (Zaimoglu 1997: 56)

Ongun describes Germany as "kein Rechtsstaat [...] keine Gesetze [...] Es gibt nur die Macht und die Mächtigeren und die Ohnmacht und die Ohnmächtigen, das ist alles." (Zaimoglu 1997: 163)

Ongun has no friends and no relationships; he relies on 'kollegas', business associates and prostitutes for emotional support. His parents have returned to Turkey:

> Meine Eltern leben inner Türkei, ich mein, ich hab nie von denen Gefühle gezeigt bekommen, oder doch, die haben Gefühle gezeigt, aber nur Aggression und Schläge. Bin ich deshalb so kalt? Haben mich die Drogen kalt gemacht? Hat mich das Leben kalt gemacht? (Zaimoglu 1997: 181)

His parents' helplessness regarding Ertan's criminal career and drug addiction is tragic: "Aus dir wird nix mehr. […] egal, ob du gehst und wann du wiederkommst, scheißegal." says his father. (Zaimoglu 1997: 114) The addiction to tablets, cocaine and heroin is completely beyond their understanding: "Ich habs nicht mehr ausgehalten, meine Eltern wissen nicht, was Sache is, die sind zwar böse, daß ich Tabletten nehm, aber die kapieren das einfach nicht, die kennen das nicht und reden nicht mit mir." (Zaimoglu 1997: 60) Talking about problems and weaknesses within

the protected environment of the family is important to Ongun. On visiting a friend in a psychiatric institution in Heiligenhafen, he advises the friend's wife to talk to him more, to listen to him and to try and break the emotional isolation that led to nervous breakdown, paranoia, depression:

> Weißt du, bevor wir zu ihm hingefahren sind, hab ich mich mit seiner Frau getroffen und hab gesagt: Du redest zu wenig mit ihm, du hörst ihm nicht zu, und die ganzen Gedanken, die in seinem Kopf herumschwirren, interessieren dich nicht, du denkst, er isn Idiot, is er aber nicht, er isn sehr intelligenter Typ, es fehlt euch an Wörtern, das is der Grund, wieso er ausflippt. Als wir da waren, hat sich das absolut bestätigt, er sagt: Ich hab niemanden zum Reden, ich freß alles in mich hinein. (Zaimoglu 1997: 29)

Ongun vehemently refuses to function in society; he associates this with being on the outside ('draußen'); his alternatives are drugs, prison, or the life of a criminal: "Ich will flüchten, entweder in meine Traumwelt oder einen Knast." (Zaimoglu 1997: 181)

> [...] ich komm hier draußen einfach nicht klar. Entweder ich kann die Spielregeln nicht beachten, oder ich will auch gar nicht mitspielen. […] ich scheiß auf die Gesellschaft. Da im Dreck, da war ich wenigstens wer, da war ich Abschaum, weißt du, und jetzt geh ich so unter. (Zaimoglu 1997: 180)

Ongun's preference for drugs, prison and crime over what he considers to be a futile and dishonourable attempt at achieving social acceptance, links him to a worldwide community of 'Abschaum': Ongun tells the story of the annual fight during the *Kieler Woche* (an annual sailing competition that involves festivities at the harbour and in the city centre) between the local Turks and black American soldiers in a notorious Kiel nightclub:

> Wir haben angefangen, auf die Leute einzuschlagen, weil wir wissen, die Nigger sind auch wie wir, die tun meist ein auf scheißegal, jeder Hund bellt auf seinem Müllhaufen, die Bergstraße is aber unser Müllhaufen und nicht die Bronx, wo die Nigger herkamen. (Zaimoglu 1997: 64)

Since, in Ongun's world, fighting is honourable, the attack on the Americans is in recognition of their equally futile attempts at being socially accepted. Similar to the black American soldier, Ongun and his gang defend a pseudo-territory: "So hat man sich also fremdes Territorium angeeignet und verteidigt, alles nur so Pseudoterritorium, is ja gar nicht deins, es gehört ja den Deutschen." (Zaimoglu 1997: 64) The sense of displacement and non-acceptance leads him to engage in an endless battle against the system, a battle he regards as the only way to define himself.

In his 2003 crime novel *Leinwand*, Zaimoglu introduces senior police officer Seyfeddin as a protagonist who emerged from the struggle of negotiating different worlds in his life with his personal integrity intact, and at the same time fully integrated into society. He is, perhaps, Zaimoglu's ideal character; he is a "new" citizen who does not allow himself to be drawn into either world: on the one hand, there is his cynical attitude towards police bureaucracy and his relationship with officer Poelzig, his training instructor, which he describes as "ein freundschaftliches Verhältnis während der gemeinsamen Einsätze, das jedoch nicht über das Berufliche hinaus ging". (Zaimoglu 2003: 9) On the other hand, there is the conversation with drug dealer Remzi who accuses him of betrayal, whereupon Seyfeddin makes it very clear that he has no patience with those who regard criminal behaviour as a celebration of their withdrawal from society:

> Remzi schnaubt. „Mieser Hund. Kriechst hier den Deutschen in den Arsch und machst den Job der rassistischen Bullen. Wir sind Türken, Mann. Du verkaufst deine eigenen Brüder"
> Seyfeddin sieht wütend aus. „Komm mir nicht auf die Tour, du kleiner Scheißer. Bist du mal in der Türkei gewesen? Weißt du, was sie mit Typen wie dir da machen?" (Zaimoglu 2003: 13)

Seyfeddin imitates much of the behaviour associated with disillusioned police officers, including racist and patronizing behaviour towards criminal suspects. Upon arresting a group of drug dealers, he roughs up one of them, a Nigerian man:

> Na gut. Sie verstehen mich nicht. Das tut mir wirklich Leid. Ich übersetze es Ihnen mal in Negersprak. Du spucken aus Beweismaterial, dann wir dich

bringen zu Abschiebehaft. Wir haben Straße gereinigt von menschliches Unrat, du gehen zurück in Busch von Afrika. (Zaimoglu 2003: 12)

As the Nigerian turns out to be a diplomat whose embassy officially complains to the German police force via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Seyfeddin reminds us that everything is not what it seems. He is demoted to work as an undercover agent in the Kiel railway station. He uses this new task to teach his young female intern, Claudia, a lesson: dressed as a prostitute, he handcuffs her to a pillar in the vicinity of tables belonging to a fast food restaurant inside the station, hoping that she will overhear some incriminating conversations. Noticing Claudia's unhappiness with this task, he says:

> Keine Panik. Die Leute mögen das Elend nicht. Sie werden daher durch Sie hindurchsehen, als wären Sie Luft. Sie werden einfach ausgeblendet. Genießen Sie es. Wer hat nicht schon einmal davon geträumt, unsichtbar zu sein. (Zaimoglu 2003: 63)

Being ignored to the point of being invisible somehow belongs to Seyfeddin's catalogue of experiences, in the same way as his police work provides him with insight into other people's misery and personal problems:

> Die polizeiliche Ermittlungsarbeit ermöglicht immer wieder tiefe Einblicke in die Interna gesellschaftlicher Gruppierungen und in persönliche Eigenarten, die uns sonst rein persönlich nicht interessierten. So gesehen erweitern wir unseren Horizont. Andere würden uns darum beneiden. (Zaimoglu 2003: 79)

Seyfeddin is a police officer whose ironic, often cynical view of society and the police force shows that somewhere in his background lies a deeper understanding of society's criminal underbelly; at the same time, his police training allows him insight into the machinations and bureaucracy of the police force. Both parts of society benefit from his insights. In his conversations with Claudia, a psychologist, for example, he points out that re-integrating a criminal into society presumes that that person has been socialized to view integration as a positive achievement in the first place:

[Resozialisierung] beinhaltet die stillschweigende Voraussetzung, dass der Proband schon einmal sozialisiert war. Ein allgemeiner Fehler bei der Betrachtung von Straffälligen. Wie wollen Sie jemanden resozialisieren, der nie sozialisiert war? (Zaimoglu 2003: 123)

Claudia's initial dislike of Seyfeddin turns into surprised admiration for him. Her concern as to his unusual methods of investigation, his exploitation of police bureaucracy (during the recovery operation of a body from a lake near Kiel, Seyfeddin organizes a barbecue, he also finds flimsy excuses for taking trips to the beach, he frequently leaves the office and enjoys several expensive business lunches in scenic locations) leave doubts as to his integrity, work ethic and morals. She eventually begins to admire his creative and insightful way of dealing with criminals, solving cases and keeping fellow officers entertained and motivated. Just when she has thoroughly turned around on her judgment of Seyfeddin and suggests that he finds a way of justifying another expensive 'business lunch', Seyfeddin reminds her that there are procedures to follow:

Claudia seufzt. „Ich sehe schon. Mit Ihnen ist nichts anzufangen. Sie sind einfach nicht spontan genug."

„Spontaneität im höheren Polizeidienst wäre eher ungewöhnlich und wird von vorgesetzten Stellen allgemein als leistungshemmend angesehen." (Zaimoglu 2003: 136)

Seyfeddin's character is Zaimoglu's attempt at creating a figure that successfully negotiates life between various worlds, shaping an integrated self as he goes along, creating a new, individualistic personality that eventually finds admiration. Seyfeddin impersonates the idea of identity as a personal project. Holliday et al. (2004) point out that a person's identity is found in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going. The individual's biography must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them into the ongoing 'story' about the self. (Holliday *et al.* 2004: 68) Zaimoglu's character has kept an open mind and at the same time preserved his self-integrity.

6.3   On Women and Islam

In April 2007, Zaimoglu commented on the choice of participants at the *Deutsche Islamkonferenz* initiated by German Minister of the Interior, Wolfgang Schäuble, in September 2006. His main criticism was that there was a lack of confident female Muslim believers at the conference. In particular, he criticized "hyped–up" Islam critics Necla Kelek and Seyran Ates for their intolerance of female Muslim believers: "Sie greifen diese jungen Frauen ständig, unermüdlich an" (Quoted in Bahners 2007: 40) Zaimoglu expressed his stance for individualism and self-assertion and his vehement opposition to Kelek's simplistic dichotomy of integration versus backwardness:

> "Wenn man in einer Demokratie lebt, muss man sich damit anfreunden, dass die Menschen großen Wert auf Individualität legen. Wenn Sie diese jungen Neo-Musliminnen fragen, antworten Ihnen 95 Prozent, dass sie sich als deutsche Musliminnen begreifen. Aber man fragt sie gar nicht. Stattdessen ist man schnell bereit, von einer Parallelgesellschaft zu sprechen und den Teufel an die Wand zu malen." (Quoted in Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2005, online document.)

Zaimoglu warns against an undifferentiated view of Muslims in Germany. His books are an attempt at providing a more differentiated understanding that breaks up the confrontational dichotomies of 'us' and 'them', of those trying to be like 'us' and those who fight against 'us'. Female Muslims in particular have to insist on creating a space for themselves without having to relinquish parts of what they consider to be their identity. At the same time, Zaimoglu is not uncritical of them; religious hypocrisy exists here as it does in his Roman stories (Zaimoglu 2007) with regard to Catholicism. In *Zwölf Gramm Glück* (2004a)*,* he writes about a born-again Muslima: "Die Bekehrung löscht einen Teil der Erinnerung […] Sie sieht im langen züchtigen Kleid sehr gut aus, allerdings scheint mir ihr Schamtuch auf Effekte angelegt zu sein." (Zaimoglu 2004a: 93) Rather than idealizing only one way of life, Zaimoglu advocates the emergence of a new phenomenon, German Islam:

"Daß Deutschland unser Mutterland ist, daß wir hier leben und auch hier glauben, das ist der deutsche Islam. Deswegen begrüße ich es, wenn fremdstämmige Deutsche der zweiten und dritten Generation in die Moscheeverbände, wenn sie in Schlüsselpositionen nachrücken. Die sind einfach vom Leben hier geprägt, verhalten sich anders." (Quoted in „Ja, es gibt einen deutschen Islam" 2006: 2)

Ideally, German Islam is a fusion achieved through the dialectics of two opposing forces resulting in the formation of something new. This fusion will eventually replace the old dichotomy. It is my opinion that unless a theory of non-adherence to old definitions and acceptance of new fusions guides policy makers, society will continue to force old identities on new people. This will perpetuate a sense of displacement that more often than not results in people like Ertan Ongun whose behaviour, in turn, continues to fuel old fears used to justify confrontational thinking of 'us' and 'them': "Ertans Botschaft ist: Wir sind die Kanaken, vor denen ihr Deutschen immer gewarnt habt. Jetzt gibt es uns, ganz eurem Bild und euren Ängsten entsprechend." (Zaimoglu 1997: 183) There is an urgent need to define 'integration' as not being one-sided.

Perhaps the idea of a German female Muslim (sometimes referred to as 'Muslima') is the most challenging fusion of antagonisms of all. Zaimoglu's advocacy of subjectivity and self-assertion is also reflected in the protocols of women he interviewed for his book *Koppstoff*. In an interview, Zaimoglu (1999) comments:

"[...] gerade die Frauen [haben] es mit machtvollen Zuschreibungen und Erwartungen unterschiedlicher Kulturen zu tun. Dagegen setzen sie ihre eigene Subjektivität, einen harten, unnachgiebigen Blick auf diese Gesellschaft, eine selbstbewußte Liebe zum Leben." (Quoted in Grumbach 1999, online document.)

A central theme in *Koppstoff* (protocols of taped interviews with women of Turkish background who have been living a long time in Germany) is the strong rejection of assimilation, of withdrawal into crime and the insistence on self-definition, combined with the accusation of German arrogance, condescension and false liberalism. The

rejection of both assimilation and withdrawal into crime and/or drugs is based on the assumption that both are interrelated: the unsuccessful struggle for social acceptance may lead to withdrawal, which further removes the possibility of achieving the original goal of gaining acceptance. The following quotes from *Koppstoff* exemplify these notions:

> N gebleichter Brother ausm Kongo und n Türkengirl mit Frisierstabblondlöckchen, die haben was gemeinsam, daß sie den Fremdpapp da man abschludern, mit nem Fremdmittel [...] zum Abreib- und Abspülpreis, daß sie man halt die eigene Rassenhemmung n bißchen innen Griff kriegt. (Zaimoglu 1998: 36)
>
> Diese Leute halten es für ein Kompliment, wenn sie mal nicht für einen Kanaken gehalten werden, denn sie schämen sich ihrer Herkunft und ihres Andersseins. (Zaimoglu 1998: 59)
>
> Sie sind die schwächsten in der Gruppe. Sie wissen sich nur durch Anpassung zu helfen, wählen das Einfachere, reißen alle Wege und Brücken ab und beschweren sich dann auch noch darüber, daß ihre Familie keinen Zugang zu ihnen findet. (Zaimoglu 1998: 60)
>
> Und dann die andere Sorte von untertänigst Alemanbefolger, die werden, wenn die Tür da zufliegt, und sie kommen da man nicht inne Alemanloge rein, die werden also zu Türkenbombern, zu so Ekelpaketen [...] Sowas is natürlich ne ausgewachsene Niete, der hat sich den Gescheit-Spruch des Aleman richtig gemerkt, und der heißt: Mach mal ne Runde Ursprung, mach mal ne Runde Kultur. (Zaimoglu 1998: 39)

The need to assimilate and not stand out as different from the rest of society is understandable. For some, hiding behind certain visual appearances seems to be an easier option than drawing attention due to a different appearance. The underlying wish is to feel as part of society, to blend in. At the same time, these choices can create distances between family members, especially if a person tries to assimilate to the host society to such an extent that their identity becomes unrecognisable to their families. Moreover, the possibility of rejection from the host society whose way of life they try hard to emulate, may lead to a breakdown in personality as both worlds now appear closed to them. The anger arising from these rejections does not help gain

the acceptance they crave. Such problematic developments thus originate in a sense of being an outsider and different from the surrounding society and wanting to somehow rectify the 'problem'.

Criticism of the Germans focuses on their liberal pretentiousness ('Liberalultramild') and their arrogance:

> gegen sein Schickimicki, sein Jet-set, gegen sosyete-bebe, gegen sein Kopfzerbrechen, wie er den Mohr vom letzten Dreck waschen kann, gegen's Pintwedelige, was er Kulturforschen nennt, gegen seinen gottverkackten Sprech mit wie interessant!, und was es nicht alles gibt! [...] Ich spucke auf ihr Schönfinden von Gosse und Rassenrede, ich spucke auf ihre Mildepralinenseele, (Zaimoglu 1998: 11, 14)

A 25-year old philosophy student contemptuously describes her professor as someone who "möchte auf Teufel komm raus seine obergescheite Idee von den Dingen 'irgendwo ansiedeln'" (Zaimoglu 1998: 108) and, when confronted with the idea of 'das Imperativ' (instead of 'der Imperativ'), erupts into predictable academic arrogance:

> ich sage das Imperativ, damit diesen öligen Clubphilosophen das Gesicht abrutscht, damit sie diesen Richtigstellerdünkel herauskehren können. [...] Du als Anatolierin, als kurzbeinige Frau, du mit deinem Abitur, nun gut, das können wir ja irgendwie nachvollziehen. Aber bei einer so ernsten Sache wie dem Imperativ mußt du aufpassen. Da hört der Spaß auf. (Zaimoglu 1998: 108-109)

The women in *Koppstoff* often talk about male confrontational thinking as being at the root of failing social transformation. They are angry at the lack of acceptance on the part of the Germans and the absence of self-confident and self-assertive personalities on the part of Turkish men. Their anger is that of self-assured women who do not permit either side to determine how they should live. Perhaps this becomes evident only when we read about Leyla's arrival in Germany in 1965:

Mir fallen die Frauen auf, die ohne männliche Begleitung in der großen Bahnhofshalle unterwegs sind, sie schreiten auf hohen Absätzen voran, als kennten sie ihr Ziel genau. Ich bewundere ihren blassen Teint, ihre zu Turmfrisuren hochgesteckten Haare, ihre Halstücher in schreiend bunten Farben. Sie gehen an den Männern achtlos vorbei, die Männer schauen ihnen nicht nach. Ich nehme mir vor, mich in der Stadt Berlin nach einem Zuckerpastetenhaus umzusehen, vielleicht lerne ich dort deutsche Damen meines Alters kennen. Ich werde den Wolf streicheln, und er wird vielleicht die Hand nicht beißen, die ihm über das Rückenfell fährt. (Zaimoglu 2006: 524)

The innocence of this initial situation of arrival offered every opportunity to arrive at an integration concept that could have been beneficial to everyone. It was, however, "die Zeit, die in ihre Herzensfibern und Gelenkkapseln Sporen der Bekümmerung setzte." (Zaimoglu 2001: 9) As discussed in chapter 3, the initial period of multicultural co-existence did not lead to concepts of an intercultural society but to many regressions, culminating in the racist violence of the 1990's. Zaimoglu's approach to themes such as assimilation and withdrawal, social 'Abschaum', women and Islam has been at the forefront of facilitating the kind of understanding that enables sustainable social change.

Another important aspect of his writing is the use of irony and satire that add a certain lightness and enjoyment to such grave subjects as Islam in Germany, for example. His descriptions of the interactions between the first person narrator and his Hodsha (religious leader) in *German Amok* illustrate this:

-Ich bin dein Hodscha, und ich sehe es als deine Pflicht an, daß du für mich nach einer gefälligen jungen Braut Ausschau hältst. [...] Dünne Fesseln soll sie haben, aus gutem Hause kommen und frei von Damenbart sein. Blond ist besser als brünett, aber daran soll es nicht scheitern.
- Hodscha, mein lieber Hodscha, erstens: ein Kuppler bekleckert sich hier nicht unbedingt mit Ehre, es gilt als unanständig, Menschen zusammenzuführen, weil, zweitens: jeder viel Wind macht wegen seines

freien Willens. Man kann die Leute nicht zu ihrem Glück zwingen. (Zaimoglu 2004b: 41)

The return to orthodox Islam has increasingly become a source of concern for the German authorities based on the assumption that it provides the basis for political or militant Islam. Typically, Ersin, Hodsha's son in *German Amok,* is a radical convert whereas his father simply and without much ado internalized a Muslim lifestyle as an integral part of his life in Germany. In this regard, the religious attitudes of the parent generation are more progressive and conducive to nation building than those of their more militant children:

-Hodscha, dein Sohn Ersin sagt: Wenn wir an die Macht kommen, schneiden wir allen Ungläubigen die Kehle durch.

-Es wird ihm ergehen wie allen glühenden Spätkonvertiten. Wenn seine Kollegen die Macht an sich reißen – was nie eintreten wird – werden sie ihn als allerersten an die Wand stellen. [...] Ein Mädchen wäre mir sowieso lieber gewesen. (Zaimoglu 2004b: 90)

Circumcision as an expression of patriarchal dominance was discussed in the previous chapter. Necla Kelek describes it as 'unacceptable behaviour' in *Die verlorenen Söhne*. In *German Amok,* Zaimoglu removes the provocation that circumcision might entail, from the environment of confrontational and judgmental thinking that we find in Kelek's writing, and places it in such a grotesque context that the message is clear: The more circumcision is discussed in a confrontational and provocative way on a national or international stage, the more the religious significance it has for many Muslims is being exposed to disrespect and ridicule. In *German Amok*, the 'Kunstfotze' suggests that circumcision be turned into an event, a simultaneous live and video performance on stage, etc.

Du lädtst ein handverlesenes Publikum in die Kunsthalle ein, natürlich ist die Presse anwesend, und sie alle dürfen die Beschneidung von, sagen wir mal, zehn Knaben live miterleben. Noch besser: die Beschneidung findet in einem separaten Raum statt, die wird über Videokameras in den Zuschauerraum übertragen. Da ist soviel Provokationsmaterial drin: du erklärst das

patriarchalische Fest par excellence zum hotten Event! [...] Deine Forderungen: Fremdheit muß operiert werden, das heißt Ethnochirurgie! Und: Fremdheit muß unterhalten, das heißt Erlebnispark bei freiem Eintritt. (Zaimoglu 2004b: 48, 49)

The world of 'mad' artists aims to put life as they see it on stage, to turn it into an event, a performance, expose it to postmodern exploitation of the exotic, etc. Zaimoglu creates a grotesque here that runs parallel to official politics, the Islam Conference and its participants, especially activists like Kelek who labeled circumcision as backward and its practices in need of exposure. It is, of course, up to the reader to decide on the merits of either way of portraying the issues that surround circumcision. Certainly, Zaimoglu's presentation, although a biting criticism of the way religious issues are discussed in Germany, is nevertheless the one that allows a person to take a bird's eye perspective and to use the grotesque as a basis for understanding the effects the circumcision debate in Germany has on both sides. Perhaps, for Kelek, such issues are too painful and serious to portray in what she may perceive as a frivolous way. At the same time, Kelek's style seems to fuel confrontational thinking.

A discussion of Zaimoglu's writing might not be considered complete without noting that his most recent novel *Liebesbrand* (2008) definitely transcends the idea of migration literature and positions itself as a new German literature as definitive cultural identities are replaced by more ambiguous ones. There are a few faint traces of his favourite intercultural themes such as issues of difference and assimilation in the form of the main protagonist's relationship with his Turkish relatives. When he attends his nephew's circumcision ceremony, he refers to it as "folklore" and to himself as belonging to the "Abtrünnige, die sich der Folklore verschließen". (Zaimoglu 2008: 116) At the same time, he criticizes the assimilating attitude of his relatives towards Germany: "Ein Wunderkind in Deutschand mußte spätestens mit zehn Jahren so gut Deutsch sprechen wie ein Germanist". He concludes, in true Zaimoglu style, that "ich mochte ihn [den Neffen] sehr, er würde, trotz aller Maßnahmen, nicht zum Heuchler werden." (Zaimoglu 2008: 121)

The other theme that Zaimoglu takes up again is that of interconnecting tales between Germans, Jews, and Turks. "Bist du ein Jude?" asks a prostitute in Hamburg's red light district around the Davidstrasse. "Nein, sagte ich, ganz normaler Deutscher." (Zaimoglu 2008: 113) Later, he meets Tyra, the woman he falls in love with, and introduces himself:

> Ich bin David, sagte ich.
> Du bist doch kein Deutscher, sagte sie.
> Doch, ich bin eben etwas später dazugekommen.
> Und hast einen deutschen Namen angenommen.
> Nein, sagte ich, nur aus einem U ein I gemacht. (Zaimoglu 2008: 94)

These are the only direct references to the main protagonist's cultural identity and they are characterized by an insistence on personal integrity and a rejection of categories and definitive identities. Otherwise, the characterization of protagonists is plot-driven and insists on individual autonomy. This novel, therefore, aesthetically underlines Zaimoglu's themes and makes him a new writer whose literary roots are in migration literature and whose stories are increasingly difficult to describe in terms of traditional cultural associations.

6.4   Conclusions

This chapter concludes by summarizing some of the central aspects of intercultural thinking transported by migration literature and its accompanying theories of interpretation. Migration literature can be read as a way of broadening horizons. Ultimately, the study of this new literature must result in a new mindset that I believe is relevant for all culturally diverse societies.

As events usually precede the principles, one must begin by focusing on some of the social aspects discussed in previous chapters before arriving at the mental prerequisites for an intercultural understanding. In the context of this study, emphasis was placed on questions of equality and individual integrity.

The question of equality is an integral part of cultural diversity. Whereas South Africa emphasizes pluralism, cultural diversity and nation building, Germany's issues revolve around (im)migration, integration and a hegemonic versus minority culture. In both countries, the question of equality is at the core of managing diversity: In Germany, Zaimoglu and others (1998) wrote in a manifesto of their political action group *Kanak Attak*:

> We support the fundamental human rights of all people yet at the same time are critical of notions of "equality" that mean the subordination of difference under one hegemonic culture. We seek to challenge this dominance of a hegemonic culture that ignores racial inequality – whether it is understood as "global postmodernism" or a dull Teutonism. (Zaimoglu, Terkessidis *et al.* 1998: 260)

In an interview with the Mail and Guardian newspaper in South Africa, Chipkin (2007) says that the official version of what a South African is, "is not just about identity questions, but [has] also [to do with] the allocation of economic resources, economic policy, a vision of post-apartheid South Africa." (Quoted in Do South Africans really exist? 2007, online document.)

Equally challenging as acknowledging and overcoming inequality, is striving for individual integrity. Chipkin (2007) says: "What I think is interesting is this idea that identity is a project of the self. The idea that one is working to produce one's own identity – it is not something given, it is not something imposed upon one." (Quoted in Do South Africans really exist? 2007, online document.) This rather postmodernist view is echoed by Zaimoglu in a more militant way as a demand to allow individualism:

> Es ist besonders in unseren Zeiten eine Binsenweisheit, dass kein Mensch mit einer strengen linearen Biographie aufwarten kann. Der Versuch, Einzelne wie Kollektive zugunsten vermeintlicher Erkenntnisgewinne zu vereinheitlichen, muss in einer Art Küchentischethnologie enden. Wer von Zusammenprall und Unverträglichkeit spricht, muss sich früher oder später mit dem Umstand

abfinden, dass die Konfliktlinien nicht zwischen den Kulturblöcken, sondern innerhalb der Kulturkreise verlaufen. (Zaimoglu 2001: 9)

Bhabha, similarly, suggests that "the threat of cultural difference is no longer a problem of 'other' people. It becomes a question of otherness of the people-as-one". (Bhabha 2006: 215) Thinking along the lines of group identities within society is detrimental to the growth of individualism and especially hard on those individuals who depend on their ability to negotiate more than one culture to achieve personal integrity. The 'demand to integration' is essentially a power claim. It does not assist those already living 'between cultures' to move on to living 'with cultures'.

Individualism and personal integrity are, I believe, the driving forces of sustainable social transformation. Due to inherent inequality in culturally diverse environments, not all individuals are exposed to the same amount of pressure regarding their ability to negotiate between cultures. Those who are under pressure need to decide which of the new aspects to assimilate and what of the old to preserve. South African thinker Es'kia Mphahlele (2004) offers an African perspective:

> In every colonized person there are two selves: the indigenous (traditional) self and the other self imposed by the colonizer. The two come closer to each other and move away from each other by turns. The wise man tries to unite the two so as to create a unified self. We call this the integrated self. He thinks deeply about the combination so that he can understand himself better, where he comes from, where he is today and what has happened to him, and where he is going. Only when you have regained self-pride and reassembled the various elements of tradition and given them dignity, hallowed them, can you decide wisely which of the new values to throw out, which to appropriate or incorporate. (Mphahlele 2004: 284)

Zaimoglu's characters struggle more or less successfully to be 'wise men' in Es'kia's sense; the internal struggle of the colonized person (in (South) Africa) is not far removed from that of his 'Kanaken' in today's Germany. Zaimoglu's 'Kanaken' are the ideal new individuals who have invented themselves from what was available to them in both (or more) worlds. The reality is, of course, that the potential to assimilate

the 'best of both worlds' remains an undefined ideal that many do not (want to) achieve. For Zaimoglu, the ideal is not perfectionism but the individual's striving for personal integrity. This means that s/he neither withdraws into grass root traditionalism nor allows her/himself to be drawn into complete assimilation of the new world with its inevitable possibility of rejection ('Assimilkümmel'). Both his books *Leyla* and *Abschaum* show that Zaimoglu neither removed himself from his roots nor ignored those who failed to adjust. His intellectual integrity saved him from the agony of Fanon's 'acculturated elites':

> In order to secure his salvation, the colonized intellectual feels the need to return to his unknown roots and lose himself, come what may, among his barbaric people. He finds himself bound to answer for everything and for everyone. This painful and harrowing wrench is, however, a necessity. Otherwise we will be faced with extremely serious psycho-affective mutilations: individuals without an anchorage, without borders, colorless, stateless, rootless, a body of angels. (Fanon 2004: 157)

Striving for personal integrity has recently been less of a philosophical question; young people are often more concerned with overcoming economic inequality. Materialism and consumerism create the illusion that a quicker way can be found to create an identity for oneself. Spending money is certainly easier than struggling to position oneself in society and maintaining one's integrity. In his film *Wut*, Aldadag (2005) shows the Turkish youth to live parallel lives at home and on the street, lives between a traditionalist world and a materialist one which are often financed by crime.[44] Nkuna (2006) writes that the South African youth in Johannesburg oscillates between the township world "which is dull" and *The Zone*[45] which "represents an exciting new world that is hip, classy and multiracial". (Nkuna 2006: 271):

> […] young people are actively trying to create a new multiracial identity. They are doing this on the basis of having fun together. Spending money is part of the game. It is a celebration of present prosperity and represents a moving on from old, politicized priorities. (Nkuna 2006: 262)

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[44] See also Fatih Akin's 1993 film *Kurz und schmerzlos.*
[45] 'The Zone' is part of the Rosebank Shopping Mall in Johannesburg.

Often, this kind of materialism is little more than escapism from the underlying problems of social and economic inequality. Consumerism as the global equalizer is the postmodernist approach to cultural diversity and inequality. Gee (2005) argues that among the youth (his example being wealthy students and working class students) the wealth factor as a unifying concept should not be underestimated:

> It has been argued that our new global capitalism is fast turning these two groups into separate "cultures" composed of people who share little or no "co-citizenship". The wealthier group is coming progressively to feel more affiliation with similar elites across the world and less responsibility for the less well-off in their own country. (Gee 2005: 138)

It remains questionable, however, to what extent celebrating prosperity (real or imagined) can be a culturally unifying factor. In my opinion, the most important prerequisite for an intercultural understanding is the realization that intercultural people do not survive very well in societies that are either homogeneous or characterized by mere multicultural co-existence. The cultural heterogeneity of their background does not allow them to choose only one world. The world they create for themselves is a new one containing only fragments of the worlds surrounding them. A binary approach to social analysis such as the one underlying multiculturalism does not allow the formation of new worlds that supersede the old ones. It only preserves the old ones.

In a 2007 interview with Fathollah-Nejad, Zaimoglu said: "This whole ethnic crap gets on my nerves. And then people look at me if I say "German"! I know that over ninety per cent are thinking, "You look like what you look like. With your name? Mate, with your face? No one but you is gonna believe that!" I couldn't care less about that. What's the one thing that matters? The way I see myself!" (Quoted in Fathollah-Nejad 2007, online document.)

As long as an underlying structure of opposition is assumed, it is of little consequence whether the attitudes of those in power are liberal or conservative. The conservative demand to one-sided integration may even be less confusing than a liberalism based

on distance tolerance and favouring the multicultural model of co-existence. In an interview following his film *Wut*, Aldadag (2005) commented on liberalism as an easy tolerance that survives at a distance and ends with the approach of 'danger'. Both the conservative and the liberal model are based on the 'us' and 'them' approach to cultural diversity. This approach perpetuates inequality as long as ethnicity is linked to social and economic opportunity. It also makes it impossible to ignore ethnic particularities as Zaimoglu demands.

The clash between those who understand new emergent cultures as crucially contributing to "transform our sense of what it means to live, to be, in other times and different spaces" (Bhabha 1994: 367), and those who aim to preserve the status quo (and have the political and economic power to do so) is central to the problem of cultural and social integration.

CONCLUSIONS

The question was asked what happens when migration literature that was written in Germany is read in South Africa. From an academic perspective, the attempt at answering this question brings together various areas of research such as German Studies, the African context, the global environment and, of course, the literature itself and the role it plays in all these contexts.

One might say that the reason why such a question could be asked in the first place is the fact that one's awareness of today's world is becoming increasingly global and complex as many of the old boundaries seem to disappear. If this is the context of the question, the response to this question should reflect a similarly global or complex approach. This is because boundaries around academic disciplines are softened and a largely positivist approach is replaced by a more relational one, meaning that relationships between entities are of at least the same importance as the entities themselves. Research strategies underlying this study have therefore been described as phenomenological or following a 'complexity approach' in that relationships between seemingly unrelated parts or clusters can be found. The discovery of such relationships could perhaps be likened to the trying out of new connections in the human brain, thus increasing its complexity, its ability to relate one thing to another and its flexibility with regard to absorbing and placing new information. In the context of this study, emphasis was placed on the ability to understand relationships between cultures rather than study culture(s) per se.

Migration literature generally reflects the writers' engagement with more than one culture. As part of an emergent minority literature or as part of German Studies, it can be read in yet another cultural context, for example in the African context. In addition, one must take into account the global context as background to understanding the relationships between all of the above contexts. "Why the emphasis on relationships?" one may ask. An obvious response is that such an approach not only reflects life in a globalised world but, more importantly, is necessitated by it.

Emphasis on relationships can be understood in the context of building intercultural competence. This means that a person is equipped with an ability to deal with living in culturally diverse environments, crossing cultural borders, facing identity crises, keeping a 'personal narrative' going in the face of confusing or potentially threatening situations, dealing with the fact that time and space seem to have become strangely entangled in one's personal life, etc. If described as such, it is obvious that building intercultural competence relies on personal experience. One may reasonably conclude that it is, however, possible to build intercultural understanding at an academic level in terms of theories, as well as social and literary developments and what one can learn from them. Intercultural understanding can therefore be taught on an academic level. The relationship between intercultural understanding based on academic studies and intercultural competence based on personal experience should prove to be mutually enriching.

This objective has been pursued throughout this study. The subject of German Studies has opened itself to the study of an intercultural understanding and has introduced a number of theories based on hermeneutics in philosophy and literary interpretation. The contribution of 'Intercultural German Studies' could therefore be summarised as providing some sound theoretical background to an intercultural understanding. At the same time, intercultural theories that were developed with a view to creating an 'intercultural branch' within German Studies have also been critically examined from various perspectives. It was this constructive criticism that brought into sharp focus the problems associated with the study of how we relate to otherness.

The evidence points towards the root problem underlying all further thinking in Intercultural German Studies as being its binary approach. This approach entails that the relationship between two entities comprises a third entity, a so-called *kulturelle Überschneidungssituation*. A merging of two entities into one was seen as something to be strenuously avoided. Based on this, a xenological perspective of 'us' and 'them' (*Eigenes und Fremdes)* was adopted by IG scholars. The importance of keeping a distance between 'us' and 'them' was highlighted (*Hermeneutik der Distanz)*. Ideas of universal humanity or common human ground were criticised as 'appropriating otherness'. Finally, understanding was described as taking place as time passes, as well as through interacting with contemporary cultural/geographical otherness

(*gleichzeitige kulturräumliche Fremde)*. Again, one could argue that this leads back to an underlying binary worldview characterised by the idea that time and space always form a continuum or an entity. Considering the fact that throughout world history, people have migrated and cultures have merged, one might argue that there never really existed something like a cultural entity that lived in a certain space over a long period of time. Even if this view is taken, one should concede that with the advent of globalisation and migration, ideas of binary cultural opposition are difficult to maintain. This should not mean that cultural differences are levelled out. One should rather say that engaging with these differences is not likely to leave one's cultural autonomy intact.

IG's binary approach might also be at the root of its perhaps subconscious avoidance of themes associated with migration literature. Here, we find evidence that intercultural engagement ideally leads to a merging of cultures. Withdrawal and insistence on cultural autonomy almost always lead to social and individual regression, as do emphases on difference and distance. Criticism from the African context has underlined the importance of reducing cultural distance and creating equal conditions for intercultural engagement. In summary, one might say that IG omitted to combine an academic approach to intercultural understanding with an attempt to listen to those engaged in building intercultural competence based on personal experience.

Intercultural understanding has, of course, not only been looked at as part of German Studies. Theories of intercultural understanding and social developments that led scholars to reflect on the effects these developments had on intercultural activity, have been discussed in chapter two. In terms of the theories, one might summarise the findings of chapter two beginning with the idea that there is no need to decide whether one wants to focus on what is particular to one culture or on what is universally human. Both aspects are two sides of the same coin, as the one is understood through the other. To use a simple example, one might say that the basic human need for the society of others makes us understand why some people live communally and others never leave the house without a cellphone.

Another finding refers to the fact that communication is generally fraught with inequality and the dominance of the stronger partner. This is exemplified both in the

context of African-European relations and of themes in migration literature. One could conclude that this is one of many reasons why migration literature is relevant to the South African context: because it raises issues of dominance and power imbalances in the context of cultural diversity. Thirdly, the importance of relationships per se has again been stressed.

In terms of social developments, Africanisation has been discussed with regard to questions of identity. Understanding how cultural identities evolved over time can help free oneself from cultural baggage such as feelings of guilt or victimisation. Acknowledging the past not only helps understand one's own culture but also that of others. Looking at 'contemporary cultural otherness' would therefore offer less than half the story. Still on the subject of identity, the question of what happens to identities in social transitions was asked. South Africa's transition to a democratic, constitutional state for example raises the question what this does to the South African identity. Does it suggest that identity is based solely on rational thinking and negotiation? Social transitions often lead to ambiguity and uncertainty regarding a national identity and individuals should be encouraged to strive for personal integrity within this new environment. This can only be achieved by keeping an open mind and by avoiding a reversion to old discourses and old comfort zones.

Moving from the African to the global context, the focus has been on social developments and discourses that impact on intercultural engagement. Distance is for example created by defining human relationships in terms of the 'amassing of human units' through electronic networks of communication, computer animated virtual realities, etc. Postmodern lives are often characterised by people interacting only indirectly with one another via high technology electronic devices. Relationships are to some considerable extent therefore relegated to fantasy and illusion. One could say that such communication is conducive to intercultural engagement, as it is extremely fast and knows no borders. It does, however, create its own barriers because it plays with reality rather than engages with it. Closely related to the virtual world of intercultural relations is the definition of identity in terms of global marketing brands. Again, one might say that sharing an affinity for the same brands is a unifying factor. This kind of consumerism is, however, fuelled by suggestive company advertising

that often links its products to fantasy worlds. Identities that are linked to commercial products are superimposed and artificial. Lastly, distance was discussed in the context of fundamentalist movements that follow a non-negotiable framework of rules and demand strict adherence to those rules by their followers. The example of fundamentalist Islam was used because of its relevance to the context of this study. It is appropriate here to point out that any movement or government that demands strict adherence to non-negotiable rules ultimately insists on an enforced homogeneity. At the same time, distance towards those who do not adhere to the rules is implied. As was noted earlier, distance between largely homogeneous blocs is not conducive to intercultural engagement.

In summary, chapter two stressed the importance of relationships that take into account the contextual as well as the universal in intercultural understanding. Relationships between people are an important aspect of developing identities. How one sees oneself in relation to others is an important part of defining oneself. This process is particularly important in social or personal transitions, when a person's identity may be called into question by a changing cultural environment. A first step to building an integrated self in the face of change may be to ask, how one's own as well as others' identities have been shaped by past experiences. An awareness of identity as a developmental process may result in the idea that one's identity could be a project of the self rather than an inescapable burden or a stroke of luck. Looking at identity as partly self-defined means that on a social level, such identities often promote dynamism and progress. In the context of this study, they have also been accredited with a high level of intercultural competence. These general observations obviously exclude those who define themselves in terms of anti-social behaviour.

Having prepared the ground in terms of the complex world of intercultural understanding and intercultural engagement, migration literature was presented as processing a complex intercultural and global reality. Writers tend to cut through associations connected to time, space, culture and language. A writer like Zaimoglu cannot be approached on the basis of an 'us' and 'them' approach since he already transcended all asscociations connected to 'us' and 'them'. Migration literature is the literary expression of a society beginning to understand that there are many

interpretations of what it means to live in a place. It could mean that one does not understand the language, or that one's cultural reference points are associated with another temporal phase in one's life and a different space. The literature often reflects experiences of speechlessness, of time spent in different environments, and the effort to assimilate all those sometimes frightening experiences into an ongoing story of the self. This narrative is important in that it helps hold together an identity that might otherwise disintegrate as a result of a fragmented existence. Disintegration could mean withdrawal into only one aspect of one's identity, such as a return to traditional ways of life, or the attempt to eradicate all aspects of one's identity that belonged to the time before arrival in the new environment. In the light of challenges such as these facing authors of migration literature, literary criticism is requested to found its analyses on a separation between nation and narration. It is also critical, one might add, to question all associations with nation and narration.

Returning to questions of the universal and the contextual, the section on educational aspects in chapter three has added another dimension. Moving from a rejection of the universal (chapter one) to acknowledging that both are integral parts of an intercultural understanding (chapter two), it is now suggested that in intercultural learning one should assume similarity before difference. Intercultural learning is presumed to begin by stepping closer to the other rather than keeping a distance.

Chapters four to six looked at themes in migration literature. The idea of being suspended between cultures, languages, past and present and different spaces could be summarised as the overall theme of chapter four. It was referred to as 'life in the interim', a situation often characterised by speechlessness and loneliness stemming from the feeling that what one knows is of little interest to the new environment. At the same time one does not know enough about the new place. Over time, the new language and an understanding of the new environment begin to seep in and grow into already existing language systems and alter previous assumptions. A hybrid identity begins to take shape as elements associated with arrival in the new environment are connected to those associated with preserving aspects of one's 'old identity'. A prolonged life between cultures over more than one generation often means that hybrid identities become entirely new identities. Speechlessness turns into language

that expresses the experiences of hybrid lives, that serves as a tool to communicate, to criticise and provoke.

Chapter five discusses the extent to which individuals might adapt to the new environment and the extent to which they might preserve aspects of their old identity. The perspective is that of the German host society in relation to the Turkish-Muslim minority. Necla Kelek's attitude, put strongly, could be characterised as emphasising the demand to integrate in order to eradicate all 'unacceptable' behaviour on the part of the Turkish minority, referring mostly to aspects of traditional Muslim life. She was portrayed as someone who writes on behalf of the demand to integration, and she is referred to as an 'enlightenment fundamentalist' or, described in a less provocative way, as a human rights activist. A discussion of what should be deemed universally acceptable behaviour versus unacceptable behaviour in the context of Muslim orthodoxy led to the conclusion that what is needed is a combination of rules that are non-negotiable and those that are negotiable. This ensures that core values are respected and at the same time there is acknowledgment that an ever-broadening society requires an ever-broadening consensus on values. With regard to the religion of Islam, new mergers were suggested, resulting for example in a European Islam, a German Islam or a South African Islam. One might assume that these contextual interpretations of Islam help remove binary oppositions between the religion and the cultural environment where it is practiced.

Chapter six highlighted the importance of non-homogeneous environments and the acceptance of ambiguity for the development of intercultural identities. Identity was regarded as a project of the self whereby individuals neither insist on staying exactly as they were nor try to remove all aspects of a previous identity and emulate other identities in the new environment. Only when an individual allows both aspects of the old and the new to grow into one identity, can one talk of personal integrity. This process is best supported in an environment of cultural heterogeneity, where no definitive choices between worlds have to be made. If either side exerts pressure on an individual to acculturate, this could affect the process of deciding who one wants to be, and hamper the achievement of one's personal integrity. Hence Zaimoglu's appeal to accept that it is possible to foster social integration without acculturation to the German way of life.

Throughout the study, different contexts were investigated and researched with a view to finding and demonstrating relationships between them. These relationships could be seen as a point of departure for conclusions that may apply to more than one context. Such conclusions can only be valid if contexts can be related to each other. Here, it must be noted that in intercultural thinking, it is less important whether one finds that contexts can be related to one another and universal conclusions can be drawn, or whether differences between contexts mean that findings that are valid elsewhere have to be adapted to fit the context. What is vital in intercultural thinking is, in my opinion, to continue looking for relationships. The contexts themselves are interesting to cultural thinkers. The assumption that what applies to one context could be made to apply to another is interesting to 'enlightenment fundamentalists'. A continuing and infinite search for what unites and what distinguishes people is an essential element of intercultural philosophy.

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APPENDIX

Kultur (Aysel Özakın, 1985)

Heutzutage

Ist die Kultur

Sehr aktuelle Frage

Durch Kultur wir erklärt

Krise, Kriege, Rassenfrage,

Identität, Kontinuität, Zugehörigkeit,

Und die arme Kultur

Beinahe verwirrt

Schaut um sich

Und fragt

Was bin ich eigentlich?

Bin ich vielleicht

Die ersten Märchen

Die euch die Oma erzählt hat?

Oder die Angst vor der Hölle?

Vor der Sünde?

Oder die Rituale?

Was bin ich eigentlich?

Sitze ich eher

In eurer Küche

Oder in euren Bücherregalen?

Braucht ihr mich vielleicht

Als einen schönen Klang

Für eure Tänze?

Was bin ich eigentlich?

Anlaß zum Genuß

Oder zur Macht?

Ein Argument für Freiheit

Oder für Knast?

Eh Leute!

Was bin ich?

Bach oder Dönerkebap?

(Quoted in Rösch 1995: 80)