H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

David Horrocks, Eva Kolinsky, eds. *Turkish Culture in German Society Today.* Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996. xxviii + 207 pp. $15.00 (paper), ISBN 978-1-57181-047-2; $49.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-57181-899-7.

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Published on H-SAE (April, 1998)

Although every other narrative on immigration and Europe makes a reference to the condition of Turks in Europe, and particularly in Germany, the social scientific literature in English, dealing specifically with the subject, is rather scant. As the editors Horrocks and Kolinsky rightly claim, *Turkish Culture in German Society Today* is indeed a contribution to a limited body of literature, which is mostly marred by gross generalizations and stereotypes of otherness. In this volume, the editors take as their task to "[break] stereotypes and [present] a differentiated picture of what it means to be Turkish in German society today as a writer, as an individual and as a group" (p. vii).

The volume is, Horrocks and Kolinsky tell us, primarily a product of their conversations with Emine Sevgi Ozdamar, a prominent Turkish writer from Germany, during the course of her residency as a Visiting Writer at Keele University. Ozdamar has a celebrated public persona in Germany. She is both a prize-winning author and an acclaimed actor-director. Her life, work, and opinions prominently figure in the volume. The first part of the book is about migrant literature in Germany, with selections from and readings of Ozdamar's work. The second part consists of articles on the condition of non-German minorities, with a focus on the Turkish minority, providing a wealth of statistics on demographics and economics of migration into Germany.

In their introductory chapter, Horrocks and Kolinsky attempt to clarify the terminology of the migration debate in Germany, outline a framework for studying minority cultures and literatures, and set the tone for the chapters to come. At the core of their framework lies the duality between "exclusion" and "acceptance" (inclusion). In broad terms, they argue that the legal, cultural, and policy premises salient in German society today deny the minorities (Turks) their rightful place in Germany and facilitate their exclusion: Turks, after living in Germany over thirty years and expressing their preference for settlement, are still not granted full citizenship. Despite the presence of relatively multi-culturalist policies, "due to their customs and Islamic orientations" (p. xiii), Turks are not culturally accepted and remain segregated, at a considerable distance from the German society. Xenophobia, blood-based notions of citizenship, and the resistance to accept diversity sanction a social climate of exclusion and foster acts of violence, intimidation, and aggression against foreigners. After laying the ground for the upcoming chapters, the editors then promise to "[offer] an analysis which is well founded in academic research," in order to introduce "a differentiated account of the cultural orientations and the socio-economic position of Turks in Germany," and to present "a closer look at [their] day-to-day experience" in German society (pp. xxi-xxiv).

The introductory chapter also assumes the task of establishing the link between migrant literature and culture. In the words of the editors, "the 'migrant' originating in one culture and writing in the language of another [occupies] a special role as a mediator between the two" (p. x). Hence, migrant writers, such as Emine Sevgi Ozdamar, "make accessible" (p. xi) the experiences and culture of Turkish migrants to the German society. In this modality, the migrant writer operates as an interlocutor between cultures and the migrant literature "bridges social gaps" (p. xi). Literature, thus, becomes more than fiction and brings the *culture* and *history* of distant places and peoples to the host society.

The chapter following the introduction is a brief but succinct review of the migrant literature in Germany, its phases and primary proponents. The authors, Fischer and McGowan, introduce the reader to a thirty-year long history of entanglement in labeling, from *Gastarbeiterliteratur* to *Migrantenliteratur* and *Auslaenderliteratur*, and then onto *Literatur deutschschreibender Auslaender*. These shifts, of course, are not simple exercises in nomenclature but mark changing perspectives in the perception of migrant literature and the position of migrants in Germany. The authors also do a commendable

job of familiarizing the reader with primary signatures and titles of migrant literature. The review ends with a commentary on questions of gender as presented in the works of three Turkish female authors writing in German (Saliha Scheinhardt, Aysel Ozakin, and Emine Sevgi Ozdamar) and promptly leads the reader to a detailed appraisal of Ozdamar's work.

The section on Ozdamar is central to the mission of the volume. In her work and persona, it is aimed to capture an elaborate, multicolored snapshot of Turkish culture and migration experience. In his reading of Ozdamar's novel *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei* (*Life is a Caravanserai*), David Horrocks discovers "a search for a lost identity" and "a lost past." For him, Ozdamar recites her quest through the narratives of family journeys (migrations) in Anatolia, fragments of Turkish and Ottoman history, and her longing for forgotten words and sounds of Turkish and Koranic Arabic. In this reading, identity is located in the home-country (to be specific, in Ozdamar's hometown in eastern Turkey) and in the remnants of a mother-tongue (recollected idioms in "a foreign tongue, such as the German she writes in" p. 27). And the fragments of history and migrations break down the contiguities of identity. The shift from Arabic to Roman script in republican Turkey, for instance, "[cuts] her off from the only language her grandfather is capable of reading" (p. 25) and, thus, from the past, whereas the fragments of vernacular Turkish scattered throughout the German text signify her separation from present-day Turkey. Horrocks complements his rendition on lost identity with "images of Turkish society and history" (pp. 27-32) and "images of women" between tradition and modernity (pp. 33-37), explicated from the pages of *Life is a Caravanserai*.

Considering the centrality of her work to the editors' project, the biography of Ozdamar given in the book is quite sketchy. We learn that Ozdamar, born in Turkey, goes to Germany in 1965, and works in a factory. During those two years, she is politicized and gets to know the works of Brecht and Berliner Ensemble. Going back to Turkey in 1967, she studies theater and takes roles in various productions. After the military coup of 1971, she gets briefly arrested, returns to East Berlin to work at the *Volksbuehne*, and then via a detour in France, settles in West Germany. By and large, this is what amounts to her biography in the book–a rudimentary chronology and nothing substantive about her experience and politics. From this account, her life appears to begin in Germany at the age of nineteen, since the first formative years of her life are missing even as a chronology. We are left with readings of her novel to fill in the gaps.

An extensive interview, conducted by Horrocks and Kolinsky, follows the biographical account and reveals considerable information about her ideas and choices as an author and a public figure. Her voice exposes her convictions and prejudices, and her insights and inconsistencies. She offers provocative replies to predictable questions. She presents herself as a teller of tales, writing in German, "the language of [her] day-to-day experiences" and "the language of some five million *Gastarbeiter*," Greeks, Yugoslavs, Turks, and Bulgarians (p. 47). She does not seem to be much concerned about being in two places and experiencing "leaps in time in [her] life" and calls Jean-Luc Godard to her defense: "Once, when reading [Godard], I came across a sentence that I really like. In order to be creative, he said, you needed to leave your native country, indeed to betray it, and then you could be in two places simultaneously" (p. 53).

The section on Ozdamar closes with a playful article she wrote for the influential German weekly, *Die Zeit*, upon being asked to comment on the relations between Germans and non-Germans (reprinted here along with the German original and a commentary by Horrocks and Krause). The article tells the story of the production of her play, *Karagoz in Alamania*, with a "multicultural" cast. The play, based on a real story, is about a worker (who writes, in a letter passed on to Ozdamar, "[a] worker has no home. Wherever there is work is home for him") and his wife (who "could not stand the life either in Turkey and Germany," always moving from one to the other) (p. 56). Ozdamar humorously recounts "the normal difficulties of rehearsal"–jealousies, petty arguments, and obsessions of stars, all surfacing as *cultural conflicts*. It is a warm commentary on ordinary misunderstandings and sincere but misguided attempts to reconcile "cultural" differences. This brief piece is fun to read and aptly complicates the story of workers and writers, and foreigners and natives.

The following sections on minorities essentially follow the exclusion-inclusion framework set out at the opening of the volume. Individual chapters, at times sketchy in their treatment of their subject matter or dismissive of any sign which may vaguely be construed as a "positive" development, nevertheless, present rich statistical information on the current state of migration in(to) Germany. The chapters specifically cover migrant minorities (Kursat-Ahlers), Turkish everyday culture (Tan and Waldhoff), and the role of Islam in the cultural orientations of Turks (Karakasoglu). The volume concludes with Kolinsky's summary of the major themes in the book and a formulation of the "German-Turkish identity" as a "ferment of a culture of diversity" and "a forerunner

of a multi-cultural future" for Germany (p. 190).

Despite this final take on a diversity-based definition of Turkishness, and despite the introductory intentions of its editors, *Turkish Culture in German Society Today* stops short of delivering its promise: a differentiated discourse on culture, migration, and Turks in Germany. It remains to be a collection inhabited only by "Turks" (="Muslims") and "Germans," and narrates inventories of exclusions and inclusions, but always *en bloc* (Turks and Turkish culture are excluded by Germans; Germans are to include or accept Turkish culture).

The book's impasse lies with its well-intended but uncritical choice of analytical framework–a model of inclusion-exclusion, which projects an equation between ethnicity/nation and culture (Germany is the land of Germans and German culture, into which Turks bring Turkish culture). This taken-for-granted model informs all the narratives in the book and betrays well-meaning intentions and interventions. Meaningful differences get collapsed into ethnic categories, manifest affinities fade away, and ambiguities disappear. "Turks" in Germany are also Kurds, Alevites, Sunnites, Marxists, Islamists, Greens, and women. They align and differentiate, as is the case with any immigrant community and after thirty years of praxis in life and work, along the lines of income, education, gender, age, and political and moral orientation. We hardly get a taste of how variables other than ethnicity play out in the lives of migrants from Turkey. (The same, of course, is also true for the undifferentiated "German," taken for granted and forgotten in the authors' narratives.) Bringing in these variables might lead to surprising, or not so surprising, stories of exclusion and inclusion but in any case would reveal more about migrancy than standard narratives of exclusion.

Another dimension missing from the analysis concerns the institutional aspect of immigration. According to the residency statistics provided in the book (pp. 118-20), for instance, in Germany, about half the migrants from Turkey have permanent residency. As permanent residents, they have access to the same rights and resources, as their counterparts who are German citizens, with the exception of the right to vote. They are incorporated into the legal and social institutions of Germany, without necessarily assuming formal citizenship. By simply focusing on ethnicity/nation as an analytical framework, the authors overlook the significance of such institutional incorporation, which produce complex patterns of exclusions but also inclusions, within and beyond the nation-state.

In the absence of a variegated analysis of migration experience of Turks in Germany, Emine Sevgi Ozdamar's novel emerges as the only proper conduit to access "Turkish culture." The particular reading of the novel provided in the book, coupled with an undifferentiated discourse of exclusion, confines the migration narrative of Turks in Germany to lost identities, lost pasts, and uncertain futures. The novel loses its author, and its own singularity as one (fictional) rendition of migration from a village in Eastern Anatolia to Germany, and becomes the master text to decipher all things Turkish, including culture, migrancy, and identity. Also lost, or removed to the background, are the unorthodox voices, divergent interpretations, and captivating experiences: an author, who seeks to be "in two places simultaneously," a worker, who follows the dictum, "a worker has no home," and a wife, who is "unable to stand to be in either Turkey or Germany." If we are to break the reductionist hegemony of prevalent migration narratives and produce "differentiated discourses," we should abandon analytic frames that limit our narratives within the bounds of ethnicity-culture equations and explain the peculiar voices of the author, the worker, and the wife.

My critique aside, *Turkish Culture in German Society Today* offers, and should be commended for, an informative review of migrant literature in Germany, substantive statistics on the condition of migration to Germany, and a suggestive exchange with a migrant author in person–a rarity in the literature.

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Citation: Levent Soysal. Review of Horrocks, David; Kolinsky, Eva, eds., *Turkish Culture in German Society Today*. H-SAE, H-Net Reviews. April, 1998.
URL: http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=1950

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