

ABSTRACT

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PERSPECTIVES IN TWO WORKS OF
GERMAN YOUTH LITERATURE

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This study examines the portrayal of multiculturalism in two works of German youth literature, Rafik Schami's *Erzähler der Nacht* (1989) and Aygen-Sibel Çelik's *Seidenhaar* (2007). The paper first provides an overview of the origin of the concept in German political and social discussions, background on literature by foreign-born authors, as well as an overview of children and youth literature, and its role in the socialization of youth. Next, it outlines the objective of this study and the background of the authors, novels and selection criteria. The paper then presents an analysis of both novels and discusses how each text constructs multicultural identities. Using the analysis, the paper concludes that youth literature plays an important role in breaking down stereotypes.

WEST MEETS EAST: MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN TWO WORKS
OF GERMAN YOUTH LITERATURE

By

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Given today's political and international situation post-11 September 2001, studying and understanding various cultures seems not only helpful but also crucial and unavoidable. Germany has for decades, centuries even, struggled with understanding its own national identity and culture. Sabine von Dirke suggests that "the concept of culture was very important for national self-definition ... The common language, history, and cultural heritage provided the basis for the projection of a national identity. In turn, the German understanding of culture and nation became more and more ethnically coded throughout the nineteenth century" (513). Germany, in the face of today's global and mobile world, is not alone in these cultural debates. Most countries are no longer comprised of only one culture. "Now more than ever, in this age of migration and globalization, it is inaccurate to speak of homogeneous nation-states" (Klopp 1). Individuals must now try to define their cultural identity in terms of heterogeneous nations, a phenomenon that essentially has been taking place for centuries as a result of colonization.

Multiculturalism is a term that has slowly emerged in political and social environments in which a culture may no longer be as easily defined, and multiculturalism is gaining more momentum as globalization, which is linked directly to migration, continues. In the case of Germany, multiculturalism is associated with a certain internal struggle due to a variety of factors. According to Brett Klopp, "next to the United States, Germany has become the second largest immigrant-receiving state" (2), a phenomenon that began to take place in the country in the 1960s due to the arrival of its many guest workers and which has fueled prejudices and hostility against foreigners residing within

Germany. Germany has been struggling for years to come to terms with integrating foreigners within its nation. In recent years, the bombings in Mölln and Solingen in the early 1990s and the reunification of East and West Germany thrust the questions of German culture into the public debate. „In der Bundesrepublik tritt das Thema [Multikulturalität] gegenwärtig angesichts der Eskalation der Fremdenfeindlichkeit und des Rechtsextremismus im vereinten Deutschland in den Vordergrund“ (Khalil, *Multikulturalität* 201). In Germany – East Germany more or less inherited the problems associated with a multicultural society after the reunification as these issues were tied to West Germany initially – some of its citizens resist the effort to define their culture in the face of a multicultural society. Added to the Germans’ internal struggle is the added struggle to fit into a multicultural European Union. „Hinzu kommt der im Rahmen der Europa-Idee belebte Diskurs über Fragen der nationalen Identität, des Heimatbegriffs und der Integration Deutschlands in ein vereintes Europa, in eine möglicherweise, ‚multikulturelle Groß-Gesellschaft‘“ (Khalil, *Multikulturalität* 201). In Germany, the question of multiculturalism is reflecting the inner turmoil of a nation searching for a shared identity and “returns to the questions of the ethnicity of culture” (von Dirke 515). German society is trying to understand how to define its culture based on the ethnicities that help to make up its collective identity.

As Germans try to understand their own and multiple other cultures arriving into the country as a result of migration and globalization, literature can be a valuable tool in gaining insight into the concept of multiculturalism. Authors are able to offer their readers glimpses of a variety of cultures, their beliefs and values, as a way to educate and, potentially, enrich one’s own culture. In particular, authors who have grown up in a

culture that is different than their readers' are able to offer a unique perspective on multiculturalism. Youth literature is especially valuable in enlightening young readers. According to Erika Fischer, youth literature, with its focus on children and young adults, is a literary medium used in the socialization of children and teenagers (19), a medium that may be used as a guide to better understand other cultures and societies. Considering the continuing trend of globalization in today's society and the educational value of literature in the socialization of children and youth, ongoing study of multiculturalism in youth literature must be undertaken. By analyzing the portrayal of multiculturalism in two works of German youth literature, the goal of this study is to reinforce the importance of presentations of other cultures by foreign-born authors to underscore the educational role of children and youth literature in the socialization of young adults.

1.1 Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze how multiculturalism is portrayed in two works of German youth literature. Continuing to build on the body of knowledge related to this concept in this particular genre is especially relevant as children and youth literature is a medium in the socialization of children and young adults in a globalizing society. Children and young adults are particularly sensitive to meeting foreign cultures in an objective way as their world view is still being developed. Youth literature is able to present them with such objective perspectives of other cultures. Three research questions (RQ) are addressed in this study:

RQ1: How is multiculturalism portrayed in youth literature?

RQ2: How are social and political issues used to construct the multicultural identities?

RQ3: How are stereotypes and prejudices against other cultures effectively broken down?

Chapter 2: Definitions of Concepts and Other Research Findings

A basic understanding of concepts and other research findings as related to this study will help serve as a guide to the reader, as well as serve as a stepping stone for additional research. As this section of the study will show, related research in the areas of multiculturalism not only identifies and guides ways in which to consider the societal and political issues related to the concept of multiculturalism in German society, but also highlights ways in which to consider the concept in the context of German children and youth literature.

2.1 Definitions

Since the focus of my study is to analyze multiculturalism in two works of German youth literature, I will present a working definition of key concepts, such as culture, multiculturalism, guest worker and stereotype. Each concept will help the reader to contextualize the meaning and to establish a common understanding.

At the root of a discussion of multiculturalism is the underlying question of culture. How does one define German culture, “a process that begins at birth and continues to form and change well into adulthood” (Pfister and Yang 25)? How does one define any culture for that matter? A common language and shared social norms are only a small part of making up a national, cultural identity. Stereotypes of German culture likely include visible items, such as cars, food, festivals, yet culture encompasses much more than this. “Cultural data is massive, complex and heterogeneous” (Pfister and Yang 6). Edward Said offers two concepts for the meaning of culture in his book *Kultur und Imperialismus*. First, according to Said, culture includes all processes of descriptions,

communications and representations that are relatively independent of social, political and economic factors and often include aesthetic characteristics (14). Myths, legends and scientific contributions in the areas of sociology, ethnography and literature are part of this definition. Said suggests that particularly the novel can play a role in shaping thought processes and prejudices. Based on Said's second definition of culture, it is a source of 'the best' of what a society has to offer (15). This attribute of culture is somewhat problematic in that it presupposes a certain high regard of one's own culture in comparison to other cultures.

Especially in today's reality of globalization, it is becoming rare in many Western countries that one would be able to define themselves as stemming from *one* culture. "Alle Kulturen sind, zum Teil aufgrund ihres Herrschaftscharakters, ineinander verstrickt; keine ist vereinzelt und rein, alle sind hybrid, heterogen, hochdifferenziert und nichtmonolithisch" (Said 30).

Taking the concept of culture further, multiculturalism is a „Konzept, das die ethnische Vielfalt und das Nebeneinander heterogener sozialer und kultureller Muster in einer Gesellschaft beschreibt. M. bezeichnet auch die politischen Bemühungen von Regierungen und ethnischen Organisationen, die Gleichberechtigung der in einer Gesellschaft vertretenen Kulturen zu gewährleisten und Kontakte zwischen ihnen zu fördern“ (Nünning 458). The concept also underscores the cultural differences in an egalitarian context, emphasizing the enrichment of society through the diversity in the cultures (Nünning 459). Multiculturalism „refers to the multiple allegiances of individuals. It is based on the recognition of differences or on what is now called identity politics and consists of promoting cultural specificities within the national community.”

(Kastoryano 8-9). For the purposes of this study, multiculturalism underscores the importance of equality of cultures, recognizing that the differences between them enrich both the individual, as well as society.

In the context of the German discussions about multiculturalism, the term guest worker is important in understanding the origins and history of these discussions. Guest worker refers to “a foreign laborer working temporarily in an industrialized usually European country” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary).

A stereotype is “a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude, or uncritical judgment” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary). This definition is important in understanding the discussion about one of the purposes of youth literature as this study will present an argument for breaking down stereotypes through literature.

2.2 Literature Review (Other Research Findings)

When undertaking research, it is important to consider existing research not only to gain a basic understanding of the concepts, challenges and dialogue as related to the topic but also to better undertake new research.

2.2.1 Origins of Immigration

After World War II, West Germany was economically devastated and suffered from the lack of available laborers. Thus, beginning in the mid-1950s, the West German government set up agreements with Italy and Spain to recruit laborers to work in West Germany in order to help rebuild its economy. In the 1960s, West Germany also set up agreements with additional governments to receive guest workers from other countries,

such as Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia. The basic idea in these work agreements was that these *Gastarbeiter*, or guest workers, would, by definition, live and work in West Germany for a limited amount of time as guests, i.e., temporarily. However, this idea of temporariness did not work as planned even after the West German government stopped the recruitment of guest workers. Many of these “guest” workers began to stay permanently in West Germany, raising their families and thus changing the political discourse about foreign laborers, for which the country was not quite prepared. The industry in Germany also helped to promote the idea of permanency, lobbying the German government to remove the rotational principle, which meant training new workers every two to three years. According to Riva Kastoryano, “in the late 1970s, in public discussion more than in everyday speech, they changed from *Gastarbeiter* to *ausländische Arbeiter* (foreign workers) or *Einwanderer* (immigrants), and not simple *Gäste* (guests)” (27). The evolution of the term helped to signify the foreigners’ presence shifting from temporary to permanent. As a result, Germany became de facto a multicultural society though it pretended for many years that it remained unaffected by discussions about multicultural societies or immigration, both topics still resulting in differences of opinion both politically and socially.

Today, in the face of globalization, it is difficult to imagine Germany without its foreign migrants. Without question, German society and culture has been impacted by the continuously evolving presence of foreign-born residents and immigrants, as can be seen in literature, art, music, as well as the large number of international restaurants, events and immigrant languages that are spoken. Some German states have made efforts to better accommodate its immigrant residents, expanding school curricula to include

additional foreign languages or religious studies. “The idea of a multicultural society is ... spreading in Germany, where, especially for opposition activists and spokesmen, it is a way to include foreigners in the political pluralism characterized by the affiliation of individuals to a corporation, thus making both public opinion and politicians in general aware that the ,foreigners are here to stay” (Kastoryano 27).

2.2.2 *Literature of Foreign-Born Authors*

The concept and term of multiculturalism was not, however, immediately part of the public or political discourse, but rather, it emerged gradually as immigrants settled permanently in Germany. According to Alfred Cobbs, “one of the cultural developments accompanying the influx of significant numbers of foreign migrants into the Federal Republic of Germany, beginning in the 1960s, was the production of a literature reflective of their experiences in the foreign environment and its impact upon their lives” (19). Through their literary efforts, these foreign migrant authors were able to give a voice not only to their experiences and perspectives as an immigrant, a guest worker in a foreign country and culture but were also able to offer their readers an understanding of their own German country and culture.

Initially, this type of literature of foreign residents in Germany was called *Gastarbeiterliteratur*, or guest worker literature. This term denotes a certain negative connotation, but it was developed by scholars “to bring to the attention of a larger audience of readers and critics a literature which at that time was completely ignored” (Bayer 2). According to Monika Shafi, guest worker literature reflected the authors’ experiences of alienation and exploitation as guest workers (196). Out of this genre then grew *Ausländerliteratur*, or foreigners’ literature, as not all foreign resident authors were,

in fact, guest workers. Here, “the focus shifted to a more complex intellectual and aesthetic engagement with displacement and assimilation that also went hand-in-hand with examining one’s own cultural origin and past” (Shafi 196).

More recently, scholars have coined the term *Migrantenliteratur* as a way to designate “the literature written by authors whose parents, or who themselves, have come to live in Germany at various stages since the early 1960s” (Bayer 2). Literary themes often reflect a certain struggle of belonging as a result of the immigration experience. “Not coincidentally, the introduction of the concept of multiculturalism into German politics coincided with the emergence in the late 1970s and early 1980s of a migrants’ literature produced by Germany’s foreign residents”, according to Sigrid Weigel (qtd. in Teraoka 71). Being faced with more than one culture, migrants questioned their cultural identity, trying to understand where, how and if they fit into their environment. “Migrants’ literature itself creates contacts [between the various cultures] through its characters and stories, bridges gaps, and establishes communication” (Horrocks and Kolinsky xiii). Further examples of literary themes of migrants’ literature are the relations between Germans and members of ethnic minorities, the experience of immigration, the question of identity, cultural differences and also the way of dealing with two languages (Luchtenberg 352).

Though the term of migrants’ literature is seemingly more neutral than foreigners’ or guest worker literature, it nevertheless categorizes and classifies foreign authors and their work based on their ethnic background. It differentiates between native literature and non-native literature and, as is often the case between natives and non-natives, implies a certain power differential. As a result, multicultural thinking can create barriers

(Jankowsky 263), suggesting that researchers must look beyond the authors' background as a way to classify their work. According to Jankowsky, reading and analyzing literature from a multicultural perspective includes the difficult task of articulating equality without either erasing or overly accentuating differences between groups (262). "Thinking multiculturally means acknowledging that more than one culture sets values and meanings. In general, multicultural thinking implies that acquiring knowledge about the different cultural structures that coexist within a country, as well as globally, will allow for a greater understanding of the mental map out of which people from various backgrounds participate in society" (Jankowsky 262-263). This echoes the underlying premise in the definition of multiculturalism, which suggests the co-existence of multiple cultures on an equal level within the same society. The challenge for the reader, as well as the author, is to ensure this equality between the cultures holds true.

Another term that has evolved in order to help classify the literature of non-German authors is intercultural literature. This concept implies a certain connection between cultures. Leslie Adelson notes that the distinction between migrants' and intercultural literature "allows us to keep transnational migration and its long-range cultural effects keenly in sight as historical formations, without limiting these effects to the initial influx of guest workers" (*Turkish Turn* 23). Regardless of the academic debates of which term best describes the literature of foreign authors, the arguments typically ignore an underlying issue of definition of the culture(s) in question. Adelson suggests that "the debate about what to call literature by non-Germans living in ... Germany obscures the point that what is at stake is not the appropriate category for the foreign 'addendum' but the fundamental need to reconceptualize our understanding of an

identifiably German core of contemporary literature” (383). Labeling the literature by foreign-born authors not only has the potential to create barriers but also raises the question of how to define a culture. As previously indicated, Germany has, on many occasions, historically struggled with this very question.

2.2.3 Children and Youth Literature

Regardless of which term scholars may use to describe the literature of foreign-born or non-native authors, this literature nevertheless offers a rich perspective of different cultures. Today, the products of authors with immigrant backgrounds may be found in many different genres in German literature, including works found in children and youth literature, which is the focus of this study. Children and youth literature first began to develop into its own literary genre at the end of the 18th century, though its early forms of fables and epic tales about animals can be traced back as far as the late 13th century. During the 18th century, the age of Enlightenment, reason and optimism became integral in societal thinking. Human beings could learn to be better people through proper development. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a Swiss-born philosopher and author, had a particular impact on society’s view of children through his work *Émile* (1762), which expressed his views on education. “In der Folge galt Kindheit nicht länger als Phase der Vorbereitung auf den Erwachsenenstatus, sondern erhielt einen Eigenwert” (Schikorksy 28). Children held a special place in the family, which should offer a place for the children’s development. As a result of the new thinking toward childhood and education, a literature arose that was focused specifically on children and youth as readers: “Kinder und Jugendliche wurden als eine eingegrenzte und fest umrissene Adressatengruppe entdeckt” (Stephan 178). Many of these early works focused on instilling moral and

societal values in the young readers. Moving into the 19th century, “das entwickeltere Schulsystem ... begann, die Kinder- und Jugendliteratur von der direkten Didaktik zu entlasten und ließ sie unterhaltsamer werden; gleichwohl blieb diese Literatur ein wichtiges Sozialisationsmittel“ (Stein 280-81).

Children and youth literature can be divided by age such that youth literature is generally aimed at readers between the ages of 11 and 16 and refers to „alle Texte, Bilder und Bücher, die für heranwachsende Menschen, meist in erzieherischer Absicht, verfasst wurden; sie zielen in der Regel darauf, die geistige und soziale Entwicklung ihrer Leser zu fördern“ (Brockhaus 421). At its core, it is literature that has an added purpose than mere entertainment. It is important to recognize that “literature plays a role in society. It can have an effect on its readers. As such it can influence the perspective young readers have” (van Coillie 89).

Youth literature functions as a bridge between readers of children’s literature and those of adult literature: “Jugendliteratur hat Bindefunktion: [Sie] ist Übergangsliteratur, Schwellenliteratur” (Kaminski, *Einführung* 107). As a connection between childhood and adulthood, youth literature is often considered a tool in the socialization of young adults in that it helps them become members of their society and culture. Youth literature can help to reinforce societal norms and behaviors already being instilled in children and teenagers by parents, family, friends and teachers. Socialization – the process through which adolescents learn to be members of society – helps children learn about their own culture and how to live in it, reinforcing the norms and behaviors taught at home, such as morals, attitudes and values. “Socialization starts at home. Children first learn to see the world through the eyes of their parents. Only when they go to school, does a real

confrontation with the outside world occur” (Boukaert-Ghesquiere 26). Erika Fischer argues convincingly that it is unimaginable today to consider the socialization of adolescents without youth literature; the children and youth book holds an important socializing function in this process (54).

Today, the importance of this literary genre in the social development and the socialization process of children and youth is well established, such that many schools are including selected texts in their curricula. „[S]elbst die ‚scheinbar‘ bedeutungslose Jugendliteratur ... besitzt wichtige gesellschaftliche und politische Aspekte im Hinblick auf die Meinungsbildung von Leitbildern. So besteht also ein berechtigtes pädagogisches Interesse, Jugendliteratur im Unterricht zu lesen, zu erarbeiten, um Denkprozesse und Verhaltensweisen Jugendlicher zu erkennen und so Einfluß auf Sichtweisen und Meinungsbildung zu nehmen“ (Fischer 19). Youth literature lends itself to educating young adult minds about contemporary social and political issues, and unfamiliar cultures and perspectives through a close reading and discussions in the classroom. According to Fischer, youth literature generally peaks the young readers' interest more than standard school material, thus motivating them to read (51). Youth literature may offer some of the same educational value as general text books, yet young adults are more likely to thoroughly read a work of fiction. Fictional literature is more likely to capture the young readers' imagination, drawing them into the author's narrative and keeping them entertained and connected until the end of the story. By guiding the thought and opinion processes of young readers through fictional literature, authors are able to combine the educational value of young adult books with entertainment.

Much of today's youth literature encourages certain thought-provoking processes in young adults that typically have a positive effect on their overall societal development. Friendships between young characters are often used to help the young reader in the search for their own identity. Authors may also use youth literature to present role models and to mirror social views, such as presenting the ever-intriguing gender roles or the values of masculinity and femininity in society, in order to emphasize or challenge norms. Youth literature is also important in regards to the development of general world knowledge and understanding (Fischer 51).

Authors of youth literature have a unique challenge here in playing a role in the socialization of youth, while also enticing their audience. Works of youth literature must raise curiosity in the reader in order to continue the learning and educational process. The literature must enrich the lives of children and teenagers, encouraging their imagination, helping them to develop understanding, explaining emotions, discussing their problems and offering possible solutions (Fischer 53). In particular, youth literature that incorporates personal, societal or cultural issues, such as multiculturalism, must be educational and instructional in order to encourage its readers toward self-reflection, while at the same time entertaining them. Youth literature is a way to bring issues and histories of other cultures to the readers. Problem-oriented youth literature can change attitudes, challenge political and social standards, and break down prejudices and stereotypes. All too often, children are taught to revere only their culture's traditions, usually at the expense of another culture (Said 31). By presenting balanced and objective multicultural perspectives in youth literature, authors are able to open the minds of their young readers to accept their own and other cultures in new ways.

2.2.4 Multiculturalism in German Youth Literature

To consider the concept of multiculturalism in the context of German children and youth literature, it emerged here also in connection with the guest workers. The term multiculturalism began to appear in connection with children and youth literature in the 1970s under the concept of *Ausländerproblematik*, or foreigner problems, which was made possible due to the demand for the portrayal of socially relevant issues (Schultze-Kraft 361). During this time children and youth literature underwent a shift in which subjects and issues that had until then been considered only appropriate for adults were tailored to younger readers. „The secularization process and emancipation movements, especially feminism, support the growing frankness regarding taboo topics” (Bouckaert-Ghesquiere 13). Societal views changed as a result of these movements, recognizing the importance of expanding the realm of typical children and youth book topics, including the topic of foreign cultures. Even some of today’s adult books may be appropriate in portraying certain issues and subjects to a young reader, though authors typically address socially relevant issues for young readers through children- and youth-specific literature.

Early works dealing with multicultural topics often presented prejudiced or Eurocentric views. *Pippi in Taka-Tuka-Land* (1951), a novel about Pippi Langstrumpf by popular children’s author Astrid Lindgren, for example, includes stereotypical descriptions of the natives of Taka-Tuka island. Even in more recent literature some scholars (i.e., Vloeberghs) suggest that the way in which multiculturalism is portrayed in youth literature may evoke racism towards non-Western culture. For example, *Oya. Fremde Heimat Türkei* (1988) by Karin König, Hanne Straube and Kamil Taylan, is a story of a sixteen-year-old Turkish girl who was born in Germany and must return to

Turkey with her family. The novel offers little information about Oya's life in Germany, focusing mostly on her life after she returns to Turkey. Oya must change her Western style of clothes, wear a headscarf and, ultimately, accept the husband her parents have chosen for her. The story is clearly told through a Western perspective, where all positive norms in Turkey are Western values, thus reinforcing, rather than breaking down, stereotypes and prejudices. Through the one-sided narrative approach, the story reinforces cultural prejudices and dichotomies. Though perhaps not intentional by the authors, the lack of a balanced portrayal of both cultures results in one culture being favored over the other. The reader is encouraged to feel outrage about and compassion for Oya's difficulties in adjusting to life in Turkey, rather than being led through the story to learn about Turkish customs and traditions.

The different ways of portraying multicultural issues and problems in youth literature is, in part, connected to the authors' background themselves. Gina Weinkauff (qtd. in Schultze-Kraft 376) in her study of children and youth literature, entitled *Multikulturalität als Thema der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur*, found that multiculturalism is presented differently by native German authors and migrant authors. She determined that the literature of native German authors tends to be aimed at older readers, discussing the multiculturalism primarily as identity crises, whereas immigrant authors tended to focus on younger readers, focusing less on problems of discrimination. In the context of this study, Weinkauff's finding is of significance as it underscores the fact that foreign-born authors are able to provide a different perspective of multiculturalism in youth literature. Drawing on her finding, it can be argued that in the example of *Oya. Fremde Heimat Türkei*, the prejudiced and stereotypical portrayal of Turkish culture to the

Western reader is directly related to the authors' backgrounds, which is a mix of two German authors and one Turkish author. The authors are unable to present a balanced and non-biased view of Turkish culture because the story's narrators do not represent a voice from an insider's perspective of the Turkish culture and focus heavily on the concept of multiculturalism as an identity crisis.

Meeting and understanding other societies, cultures and values is generally part of the socialization and educational development of children and teenagers in Western cultures. Because today's societies are culturally complex and neither linguistically nor ethnically homogeneous, this calls for new conditions of societal understanding (Büker and Kammler 7). Claus Leggewie suggests that foreignness can introduce new qualities into homogeneous cultures (97). Youth literature can be an important tool in preparing children and young adults for the future, for this potential foreignness, teaching them about foreign cultures, open-mindedness and fighting against racism and stereotypes. It can portray concrete examples of foreign cultures and problems, while also being able to offer solutions. In a pluralistic, global world, the ability to understand different cultural thinking and the willingness to respectful interaction with new cultures will be essential for a successful and peaceful co-existence (Büker and Kammler 19). Youth literature is a much needed venue for this cultural interaction.

Today's German children and youth literature generally delivers a unanimous call for tolerance and respect of various aspects of a multicultural society and the representation of foreign cultures (Vloeberghs 144). Katrien Vloeberghs argues that books with a Western setting often address the theme of tolerance, whereas novels set against a non-Western background deal with the topic of difference. Many works of

youth literature disguise multiculturalism in the form of fables or fairy tales for their Western readers, in which the author may paint an animal a different color from the other animals to show or encourage peaceful co-existence or to address issues of racism and xenophobia. Other literary works address the theme of multiculturalism by portraying the everyday life of children and young adults in a different culture. Through these multicultural pictures, readers may gain an understanding of a life that is different from their own, learning about how people live, how they dress, what they eat in other cultures. Because literature is able to convey knowledge of foreign cultures, books can be used to help break down, rather than enforce, stereotypes in a multicultural society (Schultze-Kraft 360). Exactly how these are broken down is determined by the authors.

Chapter 3: Selection of German Youth Literature

For the analysis of the portrayal of multiculturalism in German youth literature, two young adult books were chosen: Rafik Schami's *Erzähler der Nacht* (1989) and Aygen-Sibel Çelik's *Seidenhaar* (2007).

3.1 Selection Criteria

Rafik Schami's *Erzähler der Nacht* and Aygen-Sibel Çelik's *Seidenhaar* were chosen for this study of multiculturalism in youth literature as they are able to offer a relatively wide spectrum of the concept in German youth literature. Schami's story, published in 1989, stands at the relative beginning of foreign-born authors addressing the topic of multiculturalism in German youth literature, whereas Çelik offers a contemporary perspective of a similar Muslim culture. At the time that *Erzähler der Nacht* was published, the genre was led by German-born authors, such as Angelika Mechtel with *Flucht ins Paradies* (1990) and Lutz van Dick with *Feuer über Kurdistan* (1991), who focused on multiculturalism through the eyes of children who found a home in Germany as a result of political persecution. Both Schami's and Çelik's stories focus less on immigration and discrimination, presenting instead a timeless call for understanding and respect. Though the texts encompass nearly a twenty-year difference in their dates of publication, this does not directly impact the study as the goal is not a comparison of one novel to the other but rather a look at multiculturalism in two works of authors with immigrant backgrounds. Moreover, upon researching the topic of multiculturalism in German youth literature, it became clear that the genre is lacking in authors who meet the study's criteria of being foreign born, working in German and

addressing multiculturalism. Schami's and Çelik's texts complement each other in their presentations of Muslim cultures and their emphasis of the importance of mutual respect and understanding of other cultures.

As both authors immigrated to Germany at different ages, some scholars may link them to the discussions centered on migrants' or intercultural literature; however, the aim of this paper shifts the focus of the authors' background as a way to classify them to a framework that provides the social, historical and political context in the selected young adult books. The goal is not to reduce the author's text to his or her biography or to view the text as simply an eye witness report of a foreign culture or of multiple cultures meeting. Rather, this study looks at the authors' biographies as a way to understand the cultural meaning of the novels, both of which were written in German for the German literary marketplace.

The two texts for this study of multiculturalism in the context of youth literature were chosen specifically because their authors are intimately familiar with more than one culture from first-hand observation. Schami and Çelik are able to offer their readers a particularly unique perspective on multiculturalism, being able to draw from their own experiences and background. Unlike authors who write *about* a situation, event or experience, they are able to describe from *within* this context. „Sie wollen von innen her beschreiben, was zuvor fast ausschließlich von außen betrachtet wurde: das Leben zwischen zwei Kulturen, das Leben in einer multikulturellen Gesellschaft aus der Sicht eines Vertreters der Minderheitenkultur“ (Schultze-Kraft 375). This ability to describe from within is a key distinction in writing about multicultural topics and dealing with cultural stereotyping. Building on Weinkauff's study, as previously mentioned, foreign-

born authors focus less on the problems of discrimination, offering instead an insider's perspective on the concept of multiculturalism.

Authors who were born in another country are able to mediate between their culture of origin and the culture in which they are writing (Horrocks and Kolinsky x). Neither text addresses the author's own potential search for identity or their immigration experience. Rather, their personal views, thoughts and ideas are used to present their readers with an inside look into the possibility of multiple cultures co-existing. In this way, the authors' cultural background influences perspectives of characters in their novels. Çelik, for one, presents not only non-German cultural aspects but also points to German and German-Turkish culture and issues, making her text doubly interesting and relevant to the Western reader. Schami is able to connect his world view of multiculturalism to his Syrian roots, drawing the reader to a world that is culturally in many ways a contrast to their own yet is also similar and familiar in other ways. While it would be impossible to draw a comprehensive picture of Syrian and Turkish social and cultural life in this study, the idea is to explore the clues the authors offer in order to better understand the multicultural presentations and implications found in both young adult novels.

3.2 Description of Authors and Novels

Rafik Schami is one of today's most well-known German speaking authors. Schami, whose name is actually an Arabic pseudonym meaning "the one coming from Damascus," is a particularly appropriate individual to offer a multicultural work in youth literature. Born in Damascus, Syria, in 1946, Schami immigrated to Germany in 1971. Though he emigrated to Germany as the result of his graduate work in chemistry,

political reasons also played a role in his emigration. Having founded the newspaper *Al-Muntaleq*, he had been confronted with censorship by the Syrian government. During his graduate studies in Germany, Schami worked in factories, restaurants and on construction sites, experiencing first hand the life of a guest worker. This experience, combined with his migrant experience, undoubtedly furthered and shaped Schami's desire to write and publish. Many of his literary themes reflect his concern for guest workers, migrants, political corruption and oppression. *Erzähler der Nacht* (1989), a story about the coach driver Salim, helped lead to Schami's success. To date, much of Schami's work has been translated into many languages.

Salim, a former coach driver, is reportedly one of the best story tellers of Damascus. One night, a fairy visits him and tells him that he only has a few words left to speak before he loses his voice. Unless he receives seven unique gifts within three months, he will lose his voice forever. Salim turns to the group of men in their 70s, with whom he has been meeting nightly to tell them stories, for help. Ali, the locksmith, suggests that seven dinner invitations from the group will save his voice so he invites Salim and the others to his home for dinner, which is then followed by the others' extending equal invitations. However, Salim remains voiceless. Junis, a former coffee house owner, suggests that Salim must taste seven wines in order to regain his voice. The other men make other helpful suggestions, which do not recover Salim's voice: Musa, the barber, has Salim smell seven fine perfumes; Faris, the former minister, ensures that Salim finally receives the pension that he has been struggling to obtain from the Syrian government; Tuma, who is called "Emigrant" because he immigrated to the United States

yet has been back in Damascus for ten years, takes Salim on a forty-day trip because he thinks Salim has been missing the life of the coach driver.

With only eight days left remaining before Salim is set to lose his voice forever, Mehdi, the former geography teacher, suggests that the unique gift that will save Salim is a story from each of the seven friends. After some fighting over this suggestion, the men agree that each one will take one night to tell a story. Some of the stories they tell are autobiographical, others fictional, still others a combination of fiction and their personal life experiences. The men share stories within stories as they take their turn to talk. As it turns out, despite having met for years to listen to Salim's stories, the men, in fact, do not really know much about each other at all. Ali, the locksmith, is the last person to tell a story to Salim but finds he cannot tell a story, bringing his wife, Fatmeh, to tell a story in his place. After the men argue over a woman's presence in their group of gentlemen, they finally relent and agree to let Fatmeh tell the last story. After she finishes, Salim is miraculously cured and finds his voice again.

The second author in this study, Aygen-Sibel Çelik, was born in Istanbul in 1969 and has been living in or around Frankfurt am Main since age two. Çelik moved back to Istanbul, when she was a teenager, for six years when her parents decided to move back to Turkey. Having grown up in Germany, this was a difficult adjustment for her and, at age twenty-one, she married her childhood sweetheart, thus enabling her to move back to the Frankfurt area. Here, she completed her studies in children and youth literature research. As a children's and youth literature scholar, Çelik has published many articles on the portrayal of the Other in children and youth literature. *Seidenhaar*, published in

2007, is her second young adult book, and some of the information is, in part, based on some personal experiences and observations.

Seidenhaar is, in many ways, a story about young girls in search of their own identities. The title of the novel refers to the father's nickname for fifteen-year-old Sinem because of her silky hair. Sinem, with the exception of a few chapters, tells the story through her young eyes. Having grown up in Germany, Sinem is Turkish but does not wear the Islamic headscarf, seeing it as a sign of Fundamentalist Islam. Canan, who is the main character of a few chapters and who dreams of becoming a teacher, is also Turkish and also grew up in Germany but wears the headscarf. One day during their Social Studies lesson, the class discusses the recent headscarf ban in their state. Sinem and Canan get into a heated discussion about the teachers' and public officials' right to wear the headscarf. Sinem feels bad after the discussion and even worse when she learns the following day that Canan has disappeared. Family, friends and the police search for the missing Canan, while Sinem worries that she may have caused Canan to run away so she decides to look for Canan as well. As a result, Sinem ends up taking a Qur'an class, which leads her to question her basic religious beliefs, even experimenting with wearing the headscarf, much to the amazement of her family, friends and classmates. Canan turns out to be hiding at the Qur'an teacher's house because she feels misunderstood by everyone, including her parents, and, with the teacher's help, finds the courage to go back home. The teacher also helps Sinem and Canan reconcile with each other though the reader is left guessing about the development of their renewed friendship at the end of the novel.

Chapter 4: Findings

The three research questions that guided this study are explored individually throughout this section by doing a close reading of each novel. These questions included (1) How is multiculturalism portrayed in youth literature? (2) How are social and political issues used to construct the multicultural identities? and (3) How are stereotypes and prejudices against other cultures effectively broken down? An analysis of the themes in the two young adult books presents an overview of how multicultural perspectives are incorporated into youth literature.

4.1 Portraying Multiple Cultures

Schami and Çelik each draw from their own personal background to help present different cultures to their young Western readers. Schami, for one, makes excellent use of Arabian images from his native Syria and opens a world of wonder to the German reader by setting Salim and his group of friends in the author's home country of Syria in the late 1950s. Salim's story is set within a frame story of a male narrator, who claims that he knew of this story because he was allowed to take part in some of these nightly gatherings of story telling as the men's errand boy. Schami acknowledges that his story telling was influenced early on in life by the oral traditions of story telling in Syria, as well as the tales of the *Arabian Nights*. "Schami's *Erzähler der Nacht (Damascus Nights)* stands out for its very ambitious attempt to break new grounds on the wings of old narrative traditions; it resorts to the techniques that have shaped the orient's monumental giant of tales the *Arabian Nights*" (Amin 214). The German reader is pulled into the magical world of Salim's Damascus by the many stories that come together to weave one beautiful story in *Erzähler der Nacht*, vaguely reminiscent of an oriental rug

of many different colors and patterns. Schami's success relies in large part on the Arabian tradition of the *hakawati*; Schami is a storyteller, who has picked up this tradition and carries it forward (Kaminski, *Migration* 384).

Many Arab cultures come from an oral tradition. In Syria, the *hakawati*, or the storyteller, poet, actor, brings old and new tales to life, reading or recounting them in coffee houses. Unlike story tellers in some other cultures, the *hakawati* does not travel to tell stories but performs regularly at the same coffee house in front of his audience, gathered there to listen to the stories and to smoke their water pipes. "Nacht für Nacht stieg der Hakawati auf einen hohen Sitz und unterhielt die Gäste mit spannenden Liebes- und Abenteuergeschichten. Die Hakawatis mußten oft gegen den Lärm ankämpfen, denn die Zuhörer redeten und kommentierten die Geschichten mit Zwischenrufen, stritten und verlangten manchmal sogar, daß der Hakawati einen Abschnitt, der ihnen gefiel, wiederholte" (Schami 107). Story telling in this way is an art form, a tradition typically learned by the younger generation from their older relatives.

Using the threat of Salim remaining voiceless forever as a parallel, Schami tries to emphasize the importance of the language, of talking. In oral traditions, language is directly connected to lifeblood – it flows through society, thus uniting individuals (von Braun and Stephan 21). The art of story telling in Syria, much like Salim's voice, is in danger of being wiped out by modern technology as the repeated mention of the radio in *Erzähler der Nacht* aims to point out: "Sie sitzen stumm da und hören diesem gottverdammten Radio zu ... seit die neue Regierung das tragbare Transistorradio für lächerliche zehn Liras auf den Markt geworfen hat, redet keiner mehr im Café" (Schami 111). By introducing the craft of the *hakawati* in his story, Schami is not only opening

the eyes of the German reader to this important part of Arab culture but also writing to preserve it. He brings this waning oral tradition back by letting his characters come to life in the imagination of his readers. “In contrast with the German Märchen’s characteristic conciseness, Schami’s stories evolve via a series of slow moving digressions that acquire dialogical shape” (Amin 211-212). Salim and his friends are not passive listeners in these stories. Much like the actual *hakawati* and their audience; they interject comments; they interrupt each other’s, even their own, stories to toss in stories of their own; they argue with each other as they are recounting their tales; they praise each other’s choice of words. Each one of these instances is carefully crafted by Schami to bring the characters to life and entice the Western reader with the art of story telling.

Schami not only uses the novel’s characters to introduce the German reader to the story telling tradition in the Orient but also uses them to evoke images of a diverse way of life in the Orient. Each of the eight men represents a unique part of Arab culture, demonstrating how religious and political beliefs vary, presenting various means of earning their livelihood, offering perspectives from the poor and rich classes. No one man shares the same background and experiences of the other men, underscoring the richness of the Syrian culture. Schami, who grew up in a Christian minority in Syria, aims to emphasize that even within one culture, there are many sub-cultures and differences. Each individual helps to comprise the collective national culture, again reiterating, as the stories themselves, the image of a beautiful, oriental rug.

Much like Schami, Aygen-Sibel Çelik draws from her background and experiences to tell the story. Çelik presents her readers with a complex picture of Turkish life in Germany in order to dispel the notion of a homogeneous immigrant life. In

particular, fifteen-year-olds, Sinem and Canan, help to open the Western reader's eyes to Turkish diversity in customs and beliefs. "Immigrants from Turkey living in Germany form a heterogeneous population with different migration biographies. Presently, they comprise four generations, the first of which migrated from various regions in Turkey" (Ehrkamp 12). Quite naturally, each Turkish-German individual is unique in his or her own way though most "observers from the outside tend to assume that Turk is like Turk, viewing the minority as a whole without internal differentiation and without its own history of social change" (Horrocks and Kolinsky xxi). Turkish migrant life is particularly relevant in Germany because Turks are the dominant immigrant group in Germany and which, as a result of their non-Germanic language and the Islamic religion, appear the most foreign to Germans, in particular Turkish women as a result of their head covering (Grenz 220). Turkish women „erscheinen dem westlichen und mittelschichtorientierten Blick – gerade auch dem weiblichen – in ganz besonderem Maße als fremd“ (Grenz 220).

Through Sinem's eyes the reader discovers not only aspects of Turkish culture but also different perspectives of Turkish culture in a foreign Western country. Sinem has grown up in Germany, yet her typical search for her own identity as a young adult takes on the added dimension of her Turkish-German Self in a multicultural setting. A part of her will feel completely familiar to a Western reader: She chats on the phone about math homework with her best friend, Meli; she has a younger brother, who likes to pester her; and, perhaps most noticeably to a non-Turkish reader, she doesn't wear a headscarf. At the same time, however, she introduces the reader to a different culture because her experiences, feelings and emotions are set against a background of Turkish migrant life in

Germany. Sinem grows up speaking two languages; her parents cook Turkish specialties at home that are noted and described in a glossary for the Western reader – “Es gab drei Vorspeisen zum Dippen und zum Hauptgericht handgemachte *Manti*. Komisch, die Fastenzeit began doch erst in vier Tagen” (Çelik 124); and her mother practices Islam, a religion that is not yet part of the norm in Germany. Yet, despite her similarities to Western readers and despite not wearing a headscarf, Sinem stands out in her home country – she *looks* foreign. Meanwhile, her old childhood friend, Canan, who does wear the headscarf, also feels conflicted in her multicultural identity. “Immer schon musste sie kämpfen. Gegen die anderen, gegen die Verbote der Eltern. Und immer geht es ums Kopftuch, um die Tradition oder um die Schule, nie gehts um sie“ (Çelik 22). A practicing Muslim, she generally feels misunderstood by her parents and friends, particularly in regards to why she wants to wear the traditional Muslim head covering worn by many women. “Als sie keinen Praktikumsplatz bekommen hat, da wollten ihre Eltern sie sogar zwingen das Kopftuch abzunehmen, statt sich für sie einzusetzen” (Çelik 62).

With the help of the two young Turkish-German protagonists, Çelik not only writes about the identity search of a Turkish immigrant but also teaches her readers about the Muslim religion and Turkish culture. One way Çelik emphasizes the educational value of her novel is through the glossary at the back of the book, in which she explains certain Turkish traditions, customs and foods and experiences. While reading, young adults are able to refer to the glossary to learn, for instance, about the meaning and role of a *hodscha* or the religious practice of Ramadan. The glossary is a subtly effective and not uncommon technique in a young adult book to encourage the young reader to learn

more about these foreign expressions and customs. Kashmira Shet, for example, also employs this same glossary style in her novel *Schwarzer Vogel, Süße Mango* (2007), in which a young Indian woman, who is on the cusp of becoming an adult, is in search of her Self. The glossary technique allows the reader to move seamlessly through the story, using it as a reference guide to gain a better understanding of foreign customs, traditions and religious practices. Similarly, Hans Peter Richter employs this successful technique to present detailed information about historical events, Jewish customs and traditions and laws that were implemented against Jewish people in his young adult book *Damals war es Friedrich* (1961), a story of a friendship between a German and a Jewish boy during the time from 1925 until 1942. By compiling helpful culturally or historically specific information at the back of the book, the authors add to the educational value of the novel without impeding on the narrative and entertaining aspects of the novel.

Çelik also uses the protagonists to offer different perspectives on religion. Despite “Islam [being] the second largest and the fastest growing religion in Germany” (Esa), certain misconceptions about it exist in Western perceptions. “To be properly understood in the West, Islam should be seen as having multiple shades of meaning, varied interpretations that naturally result in diverse practices” (Shaaban 11). The author herself noted in an interview: “Ich wollte zeigen, dass im Islam viele verschiedene Auffassungen von Religion bestehen. Doch Mädchen und Frauen mit Kopftüchern werden oft sehr einseitig gesehen” (Finkernagel). Sinem – “Die dachten bestimmt, dass ich ein leichtes Mädchen, ein Flittchen war, nur weil ich kein Kopftuch trug ... Wer trug schon freiwillig ein Kopftuch?” (Çelik 30) – and Canan present two opposing views on the Islamic religion – “Von wegen, sie sei nicht selbstständig. Von wegen, vom

Elternhaus in die Ehe. Wie bescheuert! Nur weil sie ein Kopftuch trägt” (Çelik 22) – which, in and of itself, is not uncommon in Turkish society but is something that may not be common knowledge to many Western readers. “The immigrant population from Turkey differs in terms of level of education and political beliefs, and they belong to different ethnic groups and communities of faith. Similarly, their religious practices and beliefs are highly heterogeneous and often intersect with political persuasions, which have at times led to conflict between subgroups of the Turkish population” (Ehrkamp 12). Çelik, like Schami, also reiterates the fact that within one culture, different perspectives, educational and political beliefs, such as in the case of Sinem and Canan, exist to comprise many sub-cultures. These perspectives can and do enrich the native and foreign cultures.

4.2 Constructing Multicultural Social and Political Issues

The second research question, “How are social and political issues used to construct the multicultural identities?” examines how the authors use and build on social and political issues in their cultures in order to help portray the concept of multiculturalism in the foreign or native cultures. An analysis of the young adult books suggests that the authors’ background and experiences have an impact on how the multicultural identities are constructed in youth literature.

Moving throughout *Erzähler der Nacht* is Rafik Schami’s thinly veiled political and social critique of the injustices in his home country, offering his Western audience a historical view of events in Syria through a close reading. As Susan Schürer points out: “Beneath the jocular surface of Schami’s stories looms always a pointed political message ... Schami achieves this political cunning in light, fanciful stories through the

use of metaphors, symbols, and imagery, a technique that he attributes directly to the circumstances of storytellers in his religious-ethnic community” (168). Junis’s personal account, for instance, highlights the poor educational system: “Die Schule war grausam. Ein alter Scheich unterrichtete mehr mit Fußritten und Schlagstock als mit dem Koran“ (Schami 120). Regarding another social injustice, Schami indicates several times that Syrians were suffering from a cholera epidemic, yet the government quietly ignored, even denied, this issue, and its citizens had to learn about it instead from a BBC broadcast: „Cholera? Also doch! Er hatte die Nachricht an diesem Tag zum ersten Mal vom BBC-Sender gehört, aber der staatliche Rundfunk dementierte. Es gäbe keine Cholera, und wer das sage, sei ein ausländischer Agent“ (Schami 47). The author uses the characters repeatedly to allude to Syrian social issues without openly doing so.

Many of the stories within Salim’s story also reflect an underlying theme of Schami’s political critique, suggesting a government that does not listen to its people. Musa, for instance, recounts a story of a king, who spends all of his life wanting to hear all the lies in the world, effectively ignoring the reality of life in his kingdom. While he is listening to the stories, his country falls into ruins. “Es verging kein Jahr, bis aus Damaskus eine elende Stadt wurde. Die Leute hungerten, doch König Sadek kümmerte das wenig“ (Schami 176). The king soon knows all the lies of the world until a poor man tells him “lies” about his own kingdom, pointing out the unjust conditions and cruelty of the king. Here, Schami uses the story to point out that a king, or government, should not be occupied solely with events in other parts of the world. A good government will first focus on its own country in order to attend to the political and social problems facing its people.

Faris also shares a story of a king, who marries six women, one after the other, with the hope for a young son. When each of these wives fails to give birth to a son, he banishes them from his kingdom. At last, his seventh wife, tells him that she has born him a son. The king is so overjoyed that he wants to tear down an entire neighborhood district to build a palace for the prince in its place. A witch curses him for this deed, wishing that for the rest of his life, he would no longer be able to listen. His deafness, however, seemed to not bother the king very much, as he took joy in his young son and learned to read the lips of his minister, which he began to do less and less, instead ruling as it pleased him. Year after year, his kingdom suffered, yet he refused to pay attention. “Seine Untertanen verfluchten ihn, wenn er auf der Terrasse erschien. Er hielt ihre geballten Fäuste für friedlich winkende Hände und erwiderte zufrieden den Gruß“ (Schami 229). For the forty years of his reign, he refused to listen, until one day he was killed on the palace’s terrace. The story goes that, even though he was dead, the curse was lifted and his ears were now finally able to listen. Thus, as the king lay dead, he finally heard that his subjects and servants rejoiced over his death. Most shockingly, he also learned that the son, who had given him so much joy and pleasure during his life, was in actuality a daughter, who had been deceiving him all this time. This story emphasizes the importance of governing a country with the advice of others so as not to evolve into a dictatorship. By ignoring valuable input, rulers are bound to miss important issues that directly impact them or their people.

Salim, while he is unable to speak, also remembers a story of a king, who didn’t want to listen, recounting the story in his mind. The story had been sleeping quietly in Salim’s heart for more than fifty years – “Er hatte sie nie erzählt, und so schlummerte sie

nur all die Jahre in seinem Herzen” (Schami 238). The story of the king is yet another story within a story. The king is told a story by his court jester of a demon, who is cursed to have two mouths and only one small ear, the size of a pea. With the two mouths, the demon is able to talk so much that, eventually, everyone tunes him out completely, and he no longer has anyone who would listen to him. Only after a thousand and one (an image linked to *Arabian Nights*, which is used throughout the novel by Schami) years was the demon offered the opportunity to obtain two ears and one mouth, in place of two mouths and a small ear. He gladly accepted this chance with the obligation to now repeat everything he ever heard. Ironically, the name of the demon was Echo. The moral here is that a government should listen harder than it speaks in order to make decisions that are beneficial to its country. By repeating everything that it hears, the government is able to better understand the country’s issues and make better informed decisions.

Schami’s meaning of the stories of the kings who refused to listen, at first glance, seems to be ambiguous. However, they are directly connected to his critique of Syria’s political history. Syria’s politics during the 19th century were riddled with unrest, which is also indicated in Faris’s personal experiences. Following World War I, the French ruled Syria for many years, until it gained its independence in 1946. Syria seemed to be on its way to be a democratic nation, yet it struggled with social and economic problems and political turmoil. “During the following fifteen years [of gaining independence], leaders rose and fell at an alarming rate” (Cooke 5). The leadership of Syria changed so frequently during this time that Schami ridicules this issue: “Durch die vielen Putsche der fünfziger Jahre verwechselten die Bewohner des alten Viertels die Namen von Ministern und Politikern nicht selten mit denen von Schauspielern und anderen Berühmtheiten”

(Schami 6). As Faris indicates in his story, once the door was opened for one coup, it remained open for one coup to follow another: “Die Tür zum Putsch blieb in Syrien lange offen” (Schami 220).

Schami uses the stories of the kings to voice his critique of the Syrian government in not listening to the country’s needs, failing its people in implementing a stable democratic system. The government failed to resolve the country’s internal political, social and economic issues. Syria’s people had been powerful and united as one voice to drive out the French, yet “once this common aim was achieved, things began to fall apart” (Moubayed xii). Syria, instead, developed into a dictatorship with an active secret service:

Man erzählte, daß der neue Geheimdienst die größte Verbesserung war, die die Union mit Ägypten unter Präsident Nasser gebracht hatte. Er hieß nicht mehr schlicht Geheimdienst, sondern »der nationale Sicherheitsdienst«. Seine Maschen wurden noch enger geknüpft, so eng, daß nun Väter und Mütter vor den eigenen Kindern nicht mehr sicher waren und Nachbarn sich gegenseitig mißtrauten (Schami 47).

The secret service, which remains active even today in the Syrian culture and government, may not seem as entirely foreign to the young German readers of a democratic government as the former East Germany also had an active security service that monitored its citizens’ activities. To Schami, who had to leave Syria, in part, due to political persecution as a result of his critical stance toward the Syrian regime, politics are a particularly sensitive topic. „He opposes all forms of political dictatorship and religious fundamentalism the world over, but particularly in his home country of Syria and

throughout the Middle East where resistance is met with arrest, torture and death” (Schürer 169). Schami uses the young adult novel to voice some of his personal views, while connecting the stories to present a glimpse into Syrian culture.

The theme of the importance of communication is also repeated among the personal accounts of each of the group of friends. Each one, at some point, indicates how he failed to listen adequately or, in Ali’s case, to talk. Whereas Faris admits: “Ich habe leider nie so richtig zugehört” (Schami 221), Ali was taught to say very little in life, resulting in his inability to tell stories, for which Salim almost has to pay the price with his permanent muteness. Schami uses Salim and his friends to underscore the importance of heeding the right balance of listening and speaking. “Worte sind empfindliche Zauberblumen, die erst im Ohr eines anderen ihren Nährboden finden” (Schami 240). Schami teaches his young readers that words are precious and by choosing the right words and listening, they are able to learn about others, other cultures, their own culture and themselves. Only through the balancing act of listening and speaking can multiple cultures learn from each other in order to co-exist in a shared society.

Aygen-Sibel Çelik also portrays certain societal and political problems in her novel. Çelik takes the opportunity to discuss a current and controversial topic in public and political discourse, namely the headscarf ban, through her protagonists’ opposing views on wearing the headscarf. The headscarf debate has not only been a lively one in Germany but is also connected with political and social turmoil in Turkey. Following World War I, Mustafa Kemal, commonly referred to as “Atatürk”, took on the Turkish government leadership and, in an effort, to modernize and Westernize his country, he implemented various policies that were meant to bring Turkey to more equal footing with

its Western neighbors. Westernizing the East seemed important to Atatürk as Islam had long ago lost its Western reach: “During its political and military heyday from the eighth century to the sixteenth, Islam dominated both East and West. Then the center of power shifted westwards” (Said, *Orientalism* 205). Among the political and social reforms, Atatürk changed the meaning of headwear, outlawing the fez for men, discouraging veiling for women and banning the headscarf in universities. Turkish intellectuals remain in discussion over the headscarf, and Turkish society reflects different interpretations of the debate. In urban centers, Turkish women generally wear it less frequently, whereas rural Turkish communities may see completely veiled women.

In Germany, society is also divided over the headscarf. As Ruth Mandel notes, “many years after the Turkish presence in the Federal Republic of Germany became a daily reality, objects which Germans associated with Turkishness, such as the headscarf worn by many Turkish women and girls, became the displaced locus of debates on the socio-economic reality of contemporary Germany and acquired a complex plethora of meanings over and above that of marking cultural or religious identity” (29). The headscarf debate in German societal and political discussions resulted in Baden-Württemberg and Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony) passing laws that prohibit teachers from wearing headscarves in schools. The headscarf “brings to focus a political, social, and gendered struggle for control over the conditions of its wearing” (Mandel 30), carrying with it multiple meanings for both wearers and society. “The headscarf itself becomes a locus for many levels of differentiation within the Turkish community and within German society, pointing as well to the more obvious conflicts between Turks and

Germans” (Mandel 29). In German society, the headscarf is often seen as a visible example of the Turkish resistance to integration.

Through *Seidenhaar*, Çelik is able to incorporate some of the political and religious persuasions related to this debate. Mandel discusses the political implications of the headscarf in detail, suggesting that: “Germans on the right see the scarf as ugly, backwards, and, most of all, un-German, but also as something almost intransigently innate to Turks and Turkish identity ... On the other hand, the discourse of the left would have the headscarf symbolize Turkish practices of sexism, backward and primitive patriarchal domination of women, and repression” (38). Sinem and some of the other characters in the novel, such as her classmate Tom and her parents, connect the headscarf with a sign of Turkish identity. By commenting on its mere presence, they reinforce the notion that it is un-German. Sinem links the Muslim veiling to Fundamentalist Islam, a movement within Islam that is generally believed to be connected with a political agenda, – “Ja, sie war bestimmt eine *Fundi* [sic]” (Çelik 8) – and sexism, thinking that women who wear the headscarf are forced to do so – “Mir konnte Canan nicht weismachen, dass sie das Ding gern trug” (Çelik 11). Sinem thus represents some of the arguments in favor of the ban.

Çelik presents other issues related to this debate in her novel through Canan for whom the ban is particularly troubling as she dreams of becoming a teacher but also wants to wear her headscarf as a religious custom. “»Und du willst unbedingt Lehrerin werden?« Canan nickt. Natürlich. Etwas anderes kann sie sich gar nicht vorstellen. Aber das Kopftuch abnehmen, das kann sie sich auch nicht vorstellen” (Çelik 62). To Canan, the headscarf is not a political, social or cultural symbol but instead a sign of her

religion. Her parents are quick to suggest that she choose her possible teaching career over her religious beliefs, which Canan finds equally troubling. “Ihre Eltern sehen das anders. Das Kopftuch ist ihnen nicht so wichtig, wie es die Schule und ihre Karriere sind” (Çelik 62). Canan’s parents thus link the headscarf to a visible sign of lack of integration into their new homeland. Çelik aims to suggest that integration and multicultural co-existence are not mutually exclusive. Canan does not want to give up her religious reasons for wearing a headscarf in order to be able to obtain a teaching position. Her religious beliefs do not take away from her German-Turkish or Turkish culture. Multiculturalism in a society should not require the loss of certain cultural or religious aspects. Rather, a multicultural society should be built on respect, tolerance and understanding for different beliefs, customs and traditions.

After the heated class discussion between Sinem and Canan in the Social Studies class, Çelik allows the reader to follow each of their emotional and thoughtful processes in coming to understand each other. Sinem, in her search for Canan, takes part in Canan’s Qur’an class, which is held at the mosque near her home. Almost as an aside, Sinem remarks about the presence of the mosque, a now common part of German cities. “Turkish immigrants’ transnational practices have changed German society and altered German cities. Turkish restaurants, teahouses, green grocers and import/export stores are now part and parcel of urban life in Germany. Religious institutions and communal places such as mosques have become integral fixtures of Germany’s urban landscape” (Ehrkamp 12). Though Sinem notes that Turkish mosques in Germany are typically not as elaborate as mosques in Turkey – “Die Fatih-Moschee war nichts weiter als eine Halle

auf einem heruntergekommenen Hof' (Çelik 41), they are nevertheless becoming a part of Germany's cities.

4.2.1 Concepts of Gender Roles

Underlying many of the social and political issues presented in both novels is the authors' portrayal of societal norms and traditional gender roles for men and women. The analysis of gender, not just female, roles has become such a vast field that it has developed into a well represented area of study. "From a feminist perspective, gender is generally understood to be a social construct, a culturally shaped group of acquired attributes and behaviors, mental and emotional characteristics, and roles distributed unequally between the female and the male" (Romann 202). Essentially, gender studies suggest that the acquired behaviors and attributes of men and women are part of the socialization process. Thus, the basic understanding of the meaning of men and women, masculinity and femininity, are culturally bound and determined, varying in values and norms. In this way, the roles, functions and characteristics of the gender are not biologically but socially and culturally constructed. This means that women and men are socialized and brought up differently in each society. Gender studies thus not only studies femininity but rather the relationship between femininity and masculinity. Every culture can be studied closely to gain an understanding of the gender roles and differences and analyzed to determine the meaning of these differences. Gender identity is particularly interesting on a multicultural playing field, as the definitions of masculinity and femininity may differ, perhaps even clash, with the reader's own understanding of gender roles. Here, once again, literature can play an important role in

providing a construct of new possibilities and different cultural values. The following text analyses can offer perspectives of gender in different cultures.

In Rafik Schami's novel, for one, masculinity is also portrayed through the use of many different characters, of which the eight main characters stand out. Each of them is described as being the head of the household and their traits range from being "zauberhaft" (Salim) to "tapfer" (Ali, the locksmith) to highly educated (Mehdi, the geography teacher) to powerful (Faris, the minister) to smart (Musa, the barber). Ali was said to have slapped a French general for laughing about the prophet Mohammed, for which he was imprisoned and tortured for many hours, almost killing him. Here, men are connected with strength, violence even. Through Mehdi and Faris, men are also the symbolic carriers of education and intelligence. Mehdi, for example, has educated so many students in geography that he has lost count: "Wie viele Schüler er mit den Ländern der Erde, ihren Flüssen und Bergen vertraut gemacht hatte, wußte er selber nicht, aber er war stolz darauf, zwei Bankdirektoren, einen General und mehrere Ärzte zu seinen ehemaligen Schülern zählen zu dürfen" (Schami 53). Mehdi is also Salim's friend, who has the story telling idea that will return his voice. Faris, in turn, is also highly educated: "Der Pascha ließ seinen jüngsten, sensiblen Sohn Faris ... an der Sorbonne in Paris Jura studieren" (Schami 217). Based on the eight main characters in Schami's novel, the young reader may thus infer that the Syrian culture links masculinity with the importance of education, strength and intelligence. "Middle Eastern gender roles have traditionally been governed by a patriarchal kinship system" (Bowen and Early 93). The main characters certainly cast the Syrian society as inherently patriarchal, yet there are several female characters worth noting who indicate a complex picture of Syrian femininity.

Even though Schami's focus appears to be on the main male characters, he skillfully weaves several female characters into the story. Many stories reinforce the image of a patriarchal society in which women are responsible for the household, rearing of children and caring for aging parents, as in Salim's daughter's case: "Im Gegensatz zum geliebten Sohn, der nur Briefe, aber keinen einzigen Dollar schickte, ließ die Tochter ihren Eltern eine kleine Rente zukommen" (Schami 19). Family plays a central role in many cultures. In Syria, "one's position within a family—whether one is married, single, divorced, or widowed, a parent or childless—also defines one's social status in the community. A man is autonomous upon reaching adulthood, usually eighteen, but he is expected to support his natal family as well as his wife and children" (Bowen and Early 14). It is noteworthy here that Salim's children stand in contrast to this norm, because the daughter is described solely as beautiful, whereas the son is *beloved*, despite not financially supporting his family. No matter that the son is not upholding traditional male duties, he is still beloved, whereas the daughter is described merely as physically beautiful in supporting her parents. Does Schami mean to imply that she is not equally beloved? It is more likely that Schami was actually subtly challenging gender tradition by allowing the daughter to be financially independent. Likewise, Schami points out that a female singer was so popular that no president, who wanted to be taken seriously, dared to hold a speech on Thursday evenings when the singer's songs were broadcast: "Millionen Araber liebten sie so sehr, daß kein Staatspräsident, wenn er sich ernst nahm, es wagte, eine Rede am Donnerstagabend zu halten; denn kein Araber hätte ihm Gehör geschenkt" (Schami 46). Here, the female's voice overpowered the voices of important men. In contrast, it is equally noteworthy that the author specifically mentions that

women were not among the listeners of the story telling in Junis's coffee house – “»Das weiß ich nicht, da ich in meinem Kaffeehaus nie Frauen unter den Zuhörern hatte ...«” (Schami 114). By taking time to note these seemingly trivial instances of male and female power differences, Schami seems to be daring a traditionally patriarchal culture and alluding to a society that may be in turmoil over its traditional roles for women.

Several other female characters play key roles Salim's life. Salim's wife, for instance, is described as “feurig und mutig” (Schami 19). She is even said to have rescued him from armed soldiers one evening. Here, Schami seems to once again be challenging traditional views of femininity. Three women hold a particular importance in the novel. For one, as Salim was facing fierce competition in the coach driving business, an old woman gave him the idea to entice his customers with story telling on their long journeys: “Eines Tages brachte ihn eine alte Dame aus Beirut auf die rettende Idee... Salim nannte diese Frau seine ‘Glücksfee’” (Schami 8). The second woman to wield power over Salim is the fairy who visits him one evening to tell him that he will lose his voice forever if he does not receive seven unique gifts. As he learns, it is also this fairy that has ensured his success as story teller year after year, supporting him and weaving together his stories. Is Schami suggesting that it is not really Salim at all who is the infamous story teller but a fairy? The third, and perhaps the most important woman, is Ali's wife, who tells the final story that restores Salim's voice, his lifeblood. Were it not for the story told by a woman, the male characters would ultimately not have been able to save Salim. Despite the strong and intelligent images of masculinity the reader encounters by way of the main characters, these female characters seem to suggest that strength and intelligence are also connected with femininity.

Unlike the main male characters who dominate the story telling, however, the female characters' importance is based on helping Salim, the main character, achieve success throughout his life. The old woman gives him the idea to his success as a coach driver, the fairy ensures that his stories are well told, and Fatmeh restores his voice so that he can once again tell stories. Symbolically, the female body appears to be merely a means to an end in giving life and success to the men. Ali's wife, Fatmeh, is actually not readily accepted by the men during the last evening of the story telling. In fact, her very presence causes the old men to argue with each other, and the powerful and educated minister goes so far as to say: "»Sage deinem Weib«, rief der Minister und setzte sich zurecht, »sie soll sich in acht nehmen, wenn sie redet!«" (Schami 248). Even though Ali seems to defend his wife, he also questions her ability to tell stories, talking to her as if she were a stranger: "»Kannst du das denn gut genug? Erzähl erst mal mir, damit ich höre, ob deine Geschichte meiner Freunde würdig ist.«" (Schami 251). Male characters further question female intelligence in one of the stories about the kings who did not listen: "Am schlimmsten aber litt seine Frau darunter, denn er hatte die Gewohnheit, nicht nur auf sie nicht zu hören, sondern alles, was sie erzählte, für dumm zu erklären" (Schami, 239). Gender studies are helpful here in further analysis of the connection between gender and intelligence.

Scholars in gender studies suggest that intelligence, or knowledge, is directly connected with masculinity (von Braun and Stephan 77). As the reader learns through Schami's stories, *hakawati*, for instance, were only males. "Der weibliche Wille zum Wissen galt als sündig und gefährlich. Nur mit Mühe konnten sich daher Frauen Wissen aneignen" (von Braun and Stephan 77). Women were not allowed or were not thought to

be intelligent enough to perform stories or even to listen to the stories. Female *hakawati*, or artists, even simply female knowledge and intelligence, could threaten the traditional gender divisions. “Nur Fatmeh wußte mehr, aber sie hütete ihr Wissen als ihr innigstes Geheimnis” (Schami 249). Women were not allowed to obtain knowledge for centuries and, though this has changed in most societies, women often still struggle against traditional roles and views.

Though Schami appears, in part, to be reinforcing traditional Syrian gender roles and values, he actually aims to break old norms and standards through the strength and intelligence of the old woman, the fairy and Fatmeh:

In Schami’s tales acts of villainy are performed exclusively by males, be they human beings or personified animals, while females and children are always among the victims who are exploited and oppressed. On the other hand, in many tales the courageous heroes who engender resistance and ensure salvation are female characters or children. Thus the narratives stress the necessity of women’s emancipation, and call for a rejuvenation of ideals to change a world dominated by oppressive male-oriented ideologies (Khalil, *Fairy Tales* 121).

Despite Syrian culture being inherently patriarchal and valuing women mostly for supporting their husbands and families, Schami aims to counter this cultural and societal norm. Fatmeh’s role, in particular, allows Schami to scold “Arab men for their underestimation and fear of women’s talents” (Amin 229). Syrian culture, even today, struggles with changing traditional beliefs: “Legislative and institutional changes over the past thirty years have opened up large areas of opportunity for Syrian women, who are gradually entering the professions and government offices. Yet social attitudes have

changed more slowly, leading to significant divergence between the ideal and the actual status of Syrian women” (Shaaban 101). Schami challenges Syrian society to continue to redefine its understanding of masculinity and femininity by depicting female characters that are in stark contrast to traditional definitions of gender. Female characters appear as strong, intelligent and independent, while still carrying on some traditional roles and traits. As traditional and societal views of gender roles help to comprise a cultural perspective, Schami herein helps to show another level of Syrian culture to his young reader but also highlights his personal views that challenge these traditional roles. Schami’s personal challenge to tradition is more closely connected to today’s Western gender roles.

In the beginning and closing sections of *Erzähler der Nacht*, Schami mentions that Salim has the ability to help swallows that are unable to fly. “Hätte es den Kutscher Salim nicht gegeben, wären sie verhungert. Wir Kinder brachten die Schwalben zu ihm, und wirklich nur zu ihm, und Kutscher Salim ließ alles liegen, nahm den zitternden Vogel in seine große Hand ... Keiner konnte es ihm nachmachen. Er gab dem Himmel seinen besten Akroaten zurück” (Schami 17). By looking at Salim’s ability through the eyes of a gender studies scholar, these seemingly obscure passages take on much more complex dimensions. In gender studies, scholars suggest that women traditionally represent nature, whereas men are typically the *Kulturträger*, the carriers of culture (von Braun and Stephan 20). In the male’s confrontation with the female, he becomes the hero, and nature submits to him. The sections about the swallows can be read in such a way that, as part of nature, they represent the female form. Salim seems to encourage the swallows to fly again, much like Schami, through the personal challenge to traditional Syrian gender

roles he presents in his novel, encourages women to continue working to change social attitudes.

Aygen-Sibel Çelik, in turn, attempts to provide a rather complex picture of Turkish masculinity and femininity. Masculinity is presented by a mix of characters, such as the *hodscha* of the mosque, who appears as an aging, educated man yet is suggested to be somewhat backward and unprogressive: “Die Lehrerin sagte, dass es traurig sei, solch rückständige Gedanken in einem Islam-Lehrbuch zu finden und ihr Vater – er war wohl der Hodscha der Moschee – es auch noch gut finden würde” (Çelik 61). Other male characters are Sinem’s father and the Qur’an school teacher’s husband; however, they are not described in detail, which may be interpreted as the author’s attempt to highlight the importance of the female role. Femininity is presented with the help of many of the female characters. The book title in and of itself is a reference to the main character’s beautiful hair, linking femininity with beauty. In contrast, during Canan’s disappearance, her mother emphasizes that her daughter will continue with her schooling to become a teacher. At the same time, this scene offers a conflicting view of women. While the men are arguing and the young boys are looking for Canan in the neighboring area – “Inzwischen spekulierten und diskutierten die Männer wieder. »Was hat sie zuletzt angehabt?« Canans Beschreibung wurde in sämtliche Handyleitungen gebrüllt ... Andere beauftragten die Jungen, die Gegend abzusuchen” (Çelik 26) – the women are merely described as sitting around and crying, even wailing – “Als sei das der Startschuss, fingen die älteren Frauen an zu klagen und das Wimmern und Heulen vom Anfang setzte sich fort“ (Çelik 26).

Though Turkish definitions of femininity and masculinity are somewhat obscured, the young reader is able to gain a slightly better insight into the gender roles in Turkish culture through Sinem's experiences and the narrator's description of Canan's feelings. Aside from the *hodscha*, it is unclear where the other male characters work though it is clear that the women are found in traditional roles, such as mother, wife and traditional teacher. According to Muslim tradition:

Men are expected to provide for their families; women, to bear and raise children; children, to honor and respect their parents and grow up to fulfill their adult roles. Sons are to become educated, marry, and assume steady employment; daughters are to become mothers and increasingly to work outside the home as well.

Actions, whether honorable or shameful, do not reflect upon the individual alone, but on the entire family (Bowen and Early 93).

Many of the gender divisions presented in the novel seem to stem from Islamic customs, such as the fact that women should not touch the holy book when menstruating, that they must cover their head when entering a mosque – “Um in die Moschee hineingehen zu können, hatte ich mir meinen Wollschal um den Kopf gebunden” (Çelik 103) – or be separated for prayer and Qur'an studies by gender. During the Friday prayer, Sinem notices that in the women's prayer room they are listening to a recording from the men's prayer room: “Das war eine Live-Schaltung in den viel größeren und viel schöneren Gebetsraum der Männer” (Çelik 102).

However, as Çelik tries to explain through the young Qur'an teacher, many prejudices and misinterpretations exist against and within the Muslim religion. In fact, many of the traditional gender roles are not predetermined by Islam. “The majority of

social restrictions on Middle Eastern women originate in social patterns such as patriarchy and honor, which had little direct link to Islam. A case in point is veiling, which literally means covering their face, although it is often used as a gloss for conservative dress or for seclusion. Islamic law does not mandate veiling, but only requests that women dress modestly” (Bowen and Early 95). The Qur’an teacher echoes that Islam encourages women *and* men should dress modestly – “Die Männer haben genauso die Pflicht, sich zu beherrschen. Auch sie sollen sich nicht freizügig kleiden“ (Çelik 82) – and that Islam does not actually *require* women to wear the headscarf: “»Es gibt Gelehrte, die sagen zum Beispiel, dass im Koran nicht der Kopf, sondern der Busen gemeint ist, den die Frauen bedecken sollen. Dass man also gar kein Kopftuch tragen muss!«” (Çelik 83). Çelik tries to challenge traditional definitions of femininity by exposing some of the social issues women face in a Muslim society, such as traditional stereotyping related to the Qur’an, which helps to explain her emphasis on women in the novel in general. It is certainly no coincidence that the main characters are female and that male characters appear mostly on the periphery.

Analyzing gender roles further, traditionally, gender studies scholars suggest that an order exists that dictates the direction of the looks between men and women. “Der Mann ist Träger des Blickes, die Frau dagegen diejenige, die gesehen wird. Eine Umkehrung der Blickrichtung hat stets tödliche Folgen“(von Braun and Stephan 75). Not coincidentally is the look by the male also directly connected with sexual desire. In *Seidenhaar*, Mert, a co-worker of the Qur’an teacher’s husband, is the one to look at Canan, making her feel embarrassed and wonder if her blouse is too tight. “Er starrt sie an. Wie soll sie reagieren? Was soll sie tun? Canan geht ins Bad. Sitzt ihr Kopftuch

richtig? Ist ihre Bluse zu eng?“ (Çelik 76). Not only does he openly stare at Canan, but he also follows her and harasses her. “Was wollen Sie?« Canan weicht einen Schritt zurück. Wusste sie es doch. Dieser Scheißkerl! Er hat sie verfolgt” (Çelik 91). Mert’s looks at Canan and the ensuing harassment also carry an undercurrent of danger and forbidden desire, particularly as Canan is still a mere child in the eyes of today’s Western society. “Im semantischen Spektrum physischer Gewalt ist Vergewaltigung eine grundlegende Bedeutungsfacette: Gewalt schließt die sexuelle Vergewaltigungsgewalt konstitutiv mit ein” (von Braun and Stephan 88). When Canan tries to assert herself to stop the harassment, thus changing the direction of the traditional look, the teacher and her husband must carry the consequences when Mert brings false allegations about them to the police in order to get back at Canan. Yet, Canan and Sinem team up to help clear the names of the teacher and her husband, refusing to allow the reversal of the direction of the look to have severe consequences. Islam adds an interesting and unexpected dimension to the gender studies perspective in that it requests women to dress modestly in order to avoid being the object of the male gaze. Given cultural and religious guidelines, Mert should not have been able to look at Canan. Here, Çelik further challenges the traditional perspective of the direction of the male gaze.

Through Mert’s character, Çelik is also able to voice some of the unprogressive thinking that still exists among Turkish men: “»Zum Beispiel die Frauen. Sollten sie nicht wieder rein und ehrbar werden, an der Seite eines Mannes ihren Platz einnehmen, ihm dienen, so wie es Gott für sie bestimmt hat?«” (Çelik 76). By voicing this type of thinking, Çelik dares Turkish society to challenge it. She further attempts to rid society

of these views by positioning the progressive, modern teacher, who appears as independent and strong, in stark contrast to Mert, challenging old Muslim traditions.

Çelik makes several references to the female body, not only in the connection with Mert and Canan, in which the reader is left to infer that the female body is something to be ashamed of. When Sinem looks at her naked body in the mirror in the privacy of her bedroom, she quickly hides herself when she fears that someone may have seen her through the open window. Again, as is the case with Canan, the female body seems to be something to be ashamed of when viewed, or possibly viewed, by a male. The female body is also linked with uncleanness when a student in the Qur'an class suggests that she should not touch the Holy Book while menstruating. Each time the female body is portrayed in connection with feelings of shame and impureness, implying that femininity is traditionally valued only for the purposes of reproduction in Turkish culture. Çelik attempts to change the negative connection with the female body by opening up a dialogue for discussion through her novel.

As a result of her own background, Çelik presents complex and sometimes conflicting gender roles in Turkish society to enrich her multicultural perspective. Gender roles seem to be mostly defined by tradition and societal values, yet Çelik offers several new perspectives on tradition. For instance, Sinem's father may take on the traditional female role of cooking dinner for the family. When he tries to act as the head of the family to question Sinem about her reason for wearing the headscarf, however, he fails to elicit a response from Sinem, even making her laugh about his behavior. "Jetzt versuchte es mein Vater. Er wollte wieder einmal das Familienoberhaupt raushängen lassen. Er räusperte sich und versuchte ganz autoritär zu klingen. ... Ich presste mir den

Mund zu. Er sollte nicht hören, wie ich lachen musste” (Çelik 90). Çelik, by way of Sinem, Canan and the Qur’an teacher, thus quietly challenges traditional gender roles throughout the novel. Not only does she promote education and intelligence for women, but she also denounces traditional thinking, such as marriage for young women.

Both Rafik Schami and Aygen-Sibel Çelik portray patriarchal cultures in which the roles for men and women are defined by society, yet they also try to break through some of these traditional cages. The novels seem to suggest that the groundwork has been laid to change the cultural gender constructions, but more work needs to be done by women themselves to assert themselves in a male-dominated society. Çelik’s Qur’an teacher and Schami’s Fatmeh, in particular, seem to echo Sigrid Weigel’s theory of the *schielende Blick*. Using the mirror as a metaphor, women must free themselves from their societal and cultural reflection that has been created by men in order to create a new self-perception (Martin 183). The author is able to play the role of mediator in the reflections of the gaze, thus, standing between the old and the new.

4.3 Breaking Down Stereotypes and Prejudices

The third research question, “How are stereotypes and prejudices against other cultures effectively broken down?” attempts to gain general insight into how books for young adult may help to counter xenophobic fears in society. A close reading of the novels suggests that the various characters in the books are able to present contrasting views of stereotypes and prejudices in order to bring them to light, discuss them and, ultimately, refute them.

In addition to highlighting Syrian culture, values and beliefs, Rafik Schami tries to connect the cultures of East and West through his character Tuma, the emigrant. Tuma

seems to function as a bridge between cultures, a gate that swings easily back and forth between Eastern and Western cultures. “Tuma’s privileged position of someone who lived in the West grants him ‘authority’ among his friends to look back in thought, to undertake comparisons, approve or disapprove of customs, of traditions, local or foreign with good reason” (Amin 217). Ruba Turjman argues convincingly that Tuma “represents some of Schami’s most important views on multicultural coexistence. Through this character, Schami conveys his vision of multiculturalism and voices his views on homeland, integration, and cultural identity” (288). Schami, himself, has had to struggle with these views as an immigrant to Germany.

Tuma practically exudes multiculturalism with his occasional interjections of “well” in conversations, his American wife whose mother is from Mexico and whose father is from Lebanon, his European suit and hat “wie die der Gangsterbosse in den amerikanischen Filmen” (Schami 142), such that Faris sometimes calls him ‘Mister Humphrey Bogart’. In his small garden in Syria, he has included a plastic penguin, which seems to sit happily among his many native plants but is not well received by some of his friends. On the evening of Tuma’s story, he brings the host, Salim, a plate of cookies that his wife has baked from an old Mexican recipe. However, a gesture that is quite common in American (and German) culture is not well received here: “So etwas macht ein arabischer Gast nicht, Kekse mitbringen” (Schami 143). Tuma appears as a blend of two cultures, aspects of both complementing his personality. Equally interesting to his blended cultural personality is his positive attitude and good sense of humor that he seems to maintain about both cultures. He does not let cultural misunderstandings discourage him but rather continues to emphasize mutual respect and understanding.

During his story, Tuma begins to tell his friends about his immigration and experience in America, trying to use this opportunity to explain certain American customs, such as not bargaining when shopping in stores, maintaining cemeteries, celebrating birthdays. He also tells them about his experience of explaining certain Arab customs, such as the diverse religious beliefs in Syria, to Americans. Regardless of which country he is educating about the other culture, each time his efforts fall on deaf ears. “»Well, ihr seid unverbesserlich, aber wie dem auch sei, die Amerikaner leben anders und glaubten mir genausowenig wie ihr, wenn ich ihnen von unserem Leben erzählte. Sie hielten alles für Märchen. Sie glaubten nicht, daß wir Kamele reiten und Feigen essen, auch nicht, daß wir tagelang Hochzeit feiern und noch länger die Toten beweinen, aber nie den Geburtstag feiern.«” (Schami 160). As an immigrant, Tuma is able to note cultural differences, hoping to foster mutual understanding and respect in both cultures. Interestingly, Schami situates the meeting of Syrian culture with a Western culture in the United States rather than in Germany though his story is written for the German reader. This strategy allows the German reader to connect with the story, while not feeling implicated or judged by the discussion of possible prejudices and stereotypes.

As is the case with his American acquaintances with Syrian culture, Tuma’s Syrian friends are in equal disbelief of American culture that he begins lying in order to avoid feeling helpless and embarrassed: “Er kaute an seiner Enttäuschung, daß die anderen diese Lüge, die er aus einer kleinen Meldung der New York Times und den Namen von Präsidenten und Ministern zusammengezimmert hatte, für bare Münze nahmen und sie auch noch lobten” (Schami 168). His friends seem to be stuck in their own stereotypical notions and only if he feeds them their truths can they accept his story.

While Tuma was seemingly able to understand and even embrace certain aspects of American culture, he is disappointed in his friends' inability of accepting different cultural beliefs and traditions, but he is also not challenging them. "Schami depicts the relations between different ethnic groups as challenging, while portraying inter-ethnic relations as successful on a personal level" (Turjman 288). It is easier for Tuma to accept a diverse culture as he has personally experienced cultural differences, which helps him to foster a multicultural understanding in both cultures.

Even though Tuma is unsuccessful in convincing his friends and acquaintances in either country of the others' traditions and values, Schami, on the other hand, is quite successful in presenting contrasting views in order to open the dialogue about stereotypes and prejudices that exist in Western and non-Western cultures about traditions that may be foreign to them. Schami uses Tuma and his friends to show how easily prejudices against other cultures may surface and how difficult it sometimes is to change those views. Through Tuma's experiences, he encourages his readers to cast an objective, rather than subjective, look at cultures that are foreign to them. Schami further helps to break down stereotypes in multiple cultures though he focuses mostly on Syrian culture in his stories, a culture with which he is intimately familiar. In Tuma's story, he opens the dialogue and interaction yet ensures a co-existence of cultures by presenting both sides of the possible stereotypes. Here, Schami again reinforces his call for heeding the right balance of listening and speaking.

In addition to presenting views through contrasting characters, "writers have other means to incorporate their message apart from the characters and point of view. In many stories the plot is elaborated as a function of the moral message" (van Coillie 93).

Schami not only indicates his views about a multicultural society with the help of Tuma but also uses the storyline itself to underscore his views. In bringing together eight men, all with different backgrounds, a different story to tell, in order to save Salim, their friend, Schami emphasizes the importance of each individual in a multicultural society. Only by bringing the different personalities together to restore the voice, the lifeblood, of one individual, can the group and the story, reach a happy conclusion. Each one is important in reaching a successful outcome. Schami reminds his reader that only when they appreciate what others have to offer can a multicultural society function peacefully.

Aygen-Sibel Çelik, in her book *Seidenhaar*, also helps to break down stereotypes in a multicultural society, focusing mostly on dispelling Western stereotypes of Turkish and Turkish-German culture, though she also offers contrasting views of stereotypes from a non-Western perspective through various characters. Sinem's family, for instance, is somewhat indifferent to religion. Her father is not a believer of anything religious, while her mother does practice Islam but only seems to adhere to customs as she sees fit. Sinem, herself, does not engage in religious traditions. She knows some of the prayers from childhood and has tried to fast during Ramadan, though she quickly casts this aside, when her younger brother tempts her with food. "... [N]ach drei Tagen hatte ich keine Lust mehr auf das Fasten gehabt. Ich meine, eigentlich hatte ich mich von Erdem [ihrem Bruder] verführen lassen. Immer wieder hatte er haufenweise Pudding und Chips und Schokolade gegessen. Vor meinen Augen. Extra! Nein, zu hungern war nichts für mich" (Çelik 104). When a Turkish female relative, who lives in London and wears a headscarf, visits the family, Sinem is irritated by her when she asks to pray in her parents' bedroom during the afternoon. Sinem, in a fifteen-year-old's typical fashion, tries to

purposely aggravate her by giving her a colorful beach towel as a prayer rug. “Ich weiß nicht, plötzlich hatte ich Lust, gemein zu sein. Auffällig lange wühlte ich im Schrank. Dann gab ich ihr ausgerechnet ein mit bunten Muscheln und Fischen bedrucktes Strandtuch“ (Çelik 6). To Sinem, the headscarf is a symbol of Islamic radicals, of the oppression of women: “Sie hat so getan, als sei Canan eine Radikale, eine radikale Islamistin. Als könne sie nicht selbst entscheiden, ob sie ein Kopftuch tragen will oder nicht” (Çelik 94). She finds it hard to believe that women may choose to wear this of their own will, as is the case with Canan. „,Kopftücher lösen ein [sic] Mechanismus von Vorurteilen aus’, sagt die 39-jährige Autorin aus Neu-Isenburg. Ihr sei es wichtig, dass die betroffenen Frauen als Individuen wahrgenommen werden, ,von denen jede eine andere Geschichte hat’“ (Schubert). Following Sinem’s emotional development allows Çelik to dispel the idea of a homogeneous Turkish culture — “Bei der Besichtigung [einer Moschee] hatten wir auch gleich gebetet. Das heißt, eigentlich nur meine Mutter. Ich hatte bloß versucht ihr alles nachzumachen. Mein Vater hält sowieso nichts von Religion“ (Çelik 40) — , while also breaking down close-mindedness against Muslims and stereotypical symbols of Turkishness. Çelik presents a Turkish culture that varies in its beliefs, contrary to some Western perceptions that all Muslims share a collective identity and wear the headscarf as a result of religious or societal requirements.

The Qur’an class allows Çelik to further discuss myths and prejudices about the Muslim religion, sprinkling her own religious beliefs throughout. “In recent years, Islam has been central to German political and public debates about the integration of immigrants primarily of Turkish origin” (Ehrkamp 11). Sinem and the other students learn the meaning of the *Dschihad*, the headscarf and female cleanliness. The young

teacher, for instance, does not believe that women are *required* by Islam to wear the headscarf or that they are not allowed to touch the holy book when they are having their menstrual cycle. She goes so far as to suggest that the *hodscha*, her father, is “rückständig” for continuing to rely on an educational book that implies women are dirty when they are menstruating and should thus not be allowed to touch the holy book during this time. She also indicates that the word *Dschihad*, understood to mean *holy war* by many, is often misused to justify war in the name of Islam. It refers to a daily effort, such as the struggle to wear a headscarf in a society that makes this task a challenge, she explains. She suggests that the word actually means “»Anstrengung oder Bemühung. So ungefähr«” (Çelik 48).

As a result of the Qur’an class, Sinem also experiments with wearing the headscarf, prompted in that she needed to wear it to enter the mosque. Interestingly, she finds that many of the younger women wear the “piece of cloth” in a quite stylish and modern manner, dispelling the notion that the headscarves and Islam are unprogressive. She goes so far as to wear the headscarf at home and to school but finds that both her family and friends do not readily accept this new choice. When she walks past some of her classmates with students from her Qur’an class, all wearing headscarves, her classmate, Tom, pokes fun of the group of Turkish girls by putting his jacket over his head to imitate a veiled Muslim woman. Here, Çelik points out some of the ridicule and prejudices that Turkish women face in German society without seeming overly negative toward German society. Ironically, even Sinem refers to veiled Turkish girls as “Kopftuchmädchen”. In the end, Sinem goes back to not wearing the headscarf simply because she feels more comfortable with her *Seidenhaar* showing and not as a result of

wanting to avoid conflict. Through Sinem and Canan's reconciliation, Çelik goes one step further in presenting her contrasting views to break down stereotypes. Not only do they renew their friendship, but they also listen to each other, accepting the other's point of view. In this way, Çelik unites two opposite worlds to result in a peaceful co-existence. The author hopes to make the young reader feel that it is acceptable and quite common among teenagers to be confused about their own religious or other identity issues and sorting through the confusion to reach one's own conclusion. She encourages her readers to think for themselves by allowing the characters in her story to choose their own identity and destiny. Like Schami, Çelik encourages the act of listening and speaking to reach a mutual, respectful understanding.

Çelik is successful in breaking down stereotypes not only by presenting contrasting views in her main characters but also by employing a particular narrative technique. By using the "I" point of view for Sinem's chapters in the novel, the author is able to bring Sinem's confusion, feelings and fears, including her own prejudices, much closer to her readers. Writing a story in first person encourages the reader to place him/herself directly in the position of Sinem's character, gaining a better insight into her thoughts, identifying more closely with her character. This narration technique is not uncommon in literature in order to inject a certain sense of intimacy between the reader and the narrator. Hans Peter Richter uses this successful technique to present stereotypes in his young adult book *Damals war es Friedrich* (1961). Through the first person perspective of the nameless German boy who befriends a Jewish boy during the time from 1925 until 1942, Richter aims to teach his young readers about Jewish customs and traditions, about the laws the German government created against Jews, about historical

events about the time, and about the growing discrimination and the hatred against Jews during this time.

What makes Çelik's narration particularly effective is that, in addition to allowing the reader to learn about Sinem's story in the first person, she presents Canan's chapters, which are interjected into Sinem's narration throughout the novel, in the third person. This technique gives the reader a mental jolt, jumping from 'one's own' (i.e., Sinem's), at times self-absorbed identity crisis, to the contrasting picture of Canan. Çelik encourages the reader to see Canan's reaction and emotions in response to the actions and emotions presented in first person by Sinem. By presenting this action-reaction cycle, it does not allow the reader to remain a passive bystander in the story but rather pushes the reader to acknowledge one's own wrongdoings and prejudices that have a direct impact on the lives of people around them. Canan's reactions offer a more immediate picture of the results of stereotyping.

“The problematic relationship between Muslim and Western cultures originates in the fact that each sees the other through a distorted lens. Each one evaluates the other by its worst and most superficial qualities” (Shaaban 11). Schami and Çelik try to change the way in which Muslim and Western cultures view each other by presenting and breaking down stereotypes and prejudices within their novels. Much as other writers of children and youth literature, who “often strengthen their message by means of contrasting characters” (van Coillie 91), Schami and Çelik use their characters, plotlines and narrative techniques to emphasize the need for thoughtfulness and open-mindedness on the playing field of multiple cultures. Breaking down stereotypes and prejudices are an integral part of creating a multicultural society built on tolerance and understanding.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Migration has been influencing and shaping today's society, and globalizing cultures and societies for centuries. Out of this ever-changing scene has emerged a new buzz word in political and even public discourse, namely multiculturalism. As cultures continue to meet, merge and morph, socializing today's children and youth to a new meaning and understanding of cultures takes on added importance. As children and youth literature is widely recognized for its role in the socialization and education of children and young adults, it can help in portraying multiculturalism, constructing multicultural identities and breaking down stereotypes and prejudices against seemingly foreign cultures. In the case of *Erzähler der Nacht* and *Seidenhaar*, this study shows that literature can introduce the young reader to the concept and meaning of multiculturalism. Findings suggest that the authors' background, values and views have a direct impact on the rich multicultural picture in youth literature.

As previously discussed, Germany has struggled with its cultural identity for centuries, a struggle that has been renewed in the face of globalization and migration as Germany has, over time, become a land of immigrants. In conjunction with Germany's rich tradition of literature, literature can, in fact, help children, teenagers and adults learn about their own culture and the culture of others in order to peacefully live in a multicultural society. As youth literature is continued to be called upon to teach and socialize children and young adults about the cultures and societies, scholars must continue to better understand how multiculturalism is portrayed in youth literature.

In his novel, *Erzähler der Nacht*, Rafik Schami presents his readers with a picture of 1950s Syrian culture, issues and politics, many of the same issues still being present in

today's Syrian society. In fact, Edward Said suggests that the way in which we understand and portray our past will influence and shape our understanding of the present (*Kultur* 38). Schami's personal background and experiences certainly play a role in his writing. It is indeed noteworthy that Schami, given his migration from Syria to Germany due, in part, to political reasons, more than likely would not be able to present some of the cultural issues and topics in the same way if he were writing from Syria. In fact, writing from Syria would likely change his perspective on multiculturalism, resulting in a different point of view.

The study shows that Schami portrays multiculturalism in his novel by calling upon Syrian images and traditions to introduce his Western reader to a different culture. Schami's novel is built around the idea of story telling, an Arabian art form that is slowly disappearing due to modernity. Yet this craft, while linked to Syrian culture, will also seem somewhat familiar to Western readers, particularly many German readers who are typically introduced to the tales of the famous Brothers Grimm at an early age. Interestingly, Schami chooses to tell the stories about Syrian culture and life and present his ideas on multiculturalism through the eyes of eight grandfatherly men. Whereas many children and youth literature is told through the eyes of children and teenage characters, Schami makes a conscious decision to capture his readers' imagination and attention through much older characters. Here, I think the author not only wanted to stay somewhat true to the form of the Syrian *hakawati*, who are all men, but likely also wanted to appeal to the wisdom that is generally associated with grandparents. By using Salim and his friends to paint the picture of Syrian culture, he removes the search for identity that is often connected to young protagonists and adds another level of credibility

to the tales. The reader may be more likely to accept some perspectives more readily when told through the voices of wisdom.

Findings further suggest that Schami's own political and social views are woven throughout the stories to help construct a multicultural society. The author's criticism of Syrian politics and government actions is repeated again and again in his tales about kings, who neglect their subjects, and also through the experiences of Salim and his friends. Though Schami presents a mostly patriarchal society, he also attempts to subtly break through traditional molds with certain female characters. Progress toward changing the traditional gender roles has been made, yet women must continue to struggle against these societal prejudices. Schami helps to move this progress along by challenging tradition.

In *Erzähler der Nacht*, stereotypes and prejudices against other cultures are effectively broken down through the use of the characters, as well as the story itself. Schami presents Syrian culture as a rich multi-layered culture in the backgrounds of Salim and the others, each one portraying a different part of Syrian culture, to counteract the Western stereotype of Arabs as a collective entity. Friendship, to Schami, is part of this multiculturalism as it acts as the uniting agent. Tuma's voice and story are also vitally important to help encourage Schami's readers to keep an open mind toward other cultures. Through Tuma, the author is able to depict Western and Eastern culture side by side from both perspectives. Though unsuccessful in helping his friends understand and accept the other culture, Tuma negotiates multiculturalism perfectly for the reader by uniting both cultures in himself.

Through simple yet meaningful stories, Schami encourages his reader to think and aims to suggest his way of multicultural thinking. “The implicit theme in Schami’s tales is, in sum, that people should develop an understanding for each other and a unity among themselves, notwithstanding ethnic, social, religious, cultural, and gender differences” (Khalil, *Fairy Tales* 123). Schami’s concept of multiculturalism does not promote a harmonious existence side-by-side, rather, he aims to encourage a cultural exchange and cooperation built on mutual respect, in which its participants approach each other openly (Khalil, *Multikulturalität* 209). Winfred Kaminiski suggests that „seine [Schami’s] Märchen dienen ihm als Werkzeuge zur Verfeinerung des Weltbildes“ (386). Through his literary work, Schami contributes to the socialization of children and youth in multiculturalism.

Study findings also suggest that Aygen-Sibel Çelik, in her novel *Seidenhaar*, portrays a rich multicultural Turkish-German society through the search for identity of two young protagonists. Unlike Schami’s link to wisdom through his grandfatherly characters, Çelik uses her character’s identity crises to portray differences in Turkish-German beliefs and values, emphasizing that despite some Western beliefs, Turkish society is inherently heterogeneous. She presents a diverse Turkish world in German society to encourage tolerance and understanding in a multicultural society. Cultural diversity is a societal aspect that can enrich the young reader’s perspective, and, like Schami, Çelik wants to counter the Western perception of homogeneity in the East. Çelik also adds another layer to her multicultural presentation by adding an educational component to her novel through the use of a glossary and the teacher’s didactic explanations regarding the headscarf, touching Qur’an while menstruating, the meaning

of *Dschihad*. Without appearing as having a particularly instructional or moralistic agenda, she gently educates the reader about the possibility of the diversity of beliefs and people within a culture. “Authors who write about immigrants often want to give information about the other culture. They assume that better knowledge creates a better understanding” (van Coillie 95). Çelik’s work does indeed seem to echo this notion of education and understanding.

Seidenhaar also addresses a current social and political issue, namely the ‘headscarf debate’. Çelik presents the various arguments surrounding this topic mostly through Sinem and Canan, allowing her readers to follow their thought processes in order to encourage independent thinking. Çelik helps bring the debate closer to her readers by allowing them to experience one side through a first person narrative and then learning the other side through a third person narrative. In going back and forth between the two characters, the author is able to suggest the idea of a debate. Because the headscarf triggers a number of prejudices, both in the Western and the non-Western perspective, it is important to present different ideas and possibilities to the young reader, as is the case with traditional gender roles in Turkish society. The author indicates that many Muslims hold misinterpretations of the religion that have led to certain views of femininity and masculinity. Çelik attempts to change some of these notions through this novel.

Findings of the study further show that stereotypes and prejudices are further broken down by the contrasting views throughout the novel. Not only do Sinem and Canan help to break down stereotypes regarding the headscarf debate and the diversity of the Turkish-German community, but the Qur’an teacher also helps to explain many of the misinterpretations of Islam within the Turkish community. Çelik emphasizes throughout

her novel that knowledge, communication, mutual respect and tolerance are crucial in fostering a peaceful multicultural society. As is the case in *Seidenhaar*, “writers who choose to deal with the topic of immigrants often write with a distinct purpose. They want young readers to adopt a positive attitude towards people from other cultures. Their most important message is one of tolerance” (van Coillie 89). Çelik emphasizes that integration does not require forgoing one’s own beliefs and customs.

Through the young adult novel in this study, Çelik urges representatives of Eastern and Western cultures to approach each other with mutual respect and understanding. “There is a desperate need to build a true bridge of understanding between Muslim and Western cultures, a bridge based on mutual respect rather than the desire to prove the superiority of the one over the other” (Shaaban 111). This bridge between East and West is particularly vital to Germany as its Turkish migrants “have long been encoded as inarticulate foreigners in the public imaginary, while dialogue is nonetheless expected of them, albeit as representatives of an alien national culture they are mistakenly held to represent” (Adelson, *Turkish Turn* 6). Çelik closes her novel with a seemingly random chapter, in which Sinem, now two years older, is flying to London by herself. During the flight, an older woman seated next to Sinem inquires about where she is from originally:

»Und wo kommst du her, ich meine, ursprünglich?«

Mir wird richtig übel. Diese Art Gespräch habe ich schon hundertmal geführt.

Sie laufen immer auf die gleiche Weise ab. »Meinen Sie mich oder meine Eltern?«

»Ähm, ja, natürlich, deine Eltern.« (Çelik 134-135)

The older woman admits that she was wondering why Sinem was not wearing a headscarf... Çelik herein concludes that society is still working towards a multicultural society in which people from seemingly foreign cultures are approached without bias and assumptions. Rather than exploding in rage at the ignorant woman, Sinem handles it with a quiet resignation, reinforcing Çelik's call for tolerance and respect.

Rafik Schami and Aygen-Sibel Çelik are successful in portraying a peaceful, multicultural society in their novels, effectively breaking down stereotypes and prejudices, due, in large part, to their ability to portray them with contrasting views, injecting their own call for a peaceful co-existence of multiple cultures. Presenting stereotypes to children and young adults through literature can be particularly dangerous as these young readers are still in the process of their mental and social development. It is important then to read youth literature carefully and critically in order to fully understand the stereotypes depicted in the text, which may be particularly challenging if authors do not responsibly present and break down stereotypes. Like Schami and Çelik attempt to do in each of their novels, my analysis of the two texts leads me to the conclusion that it is vital that authors of children and youth literature take a clear stance on issues in order to dispel prejudices, a difficult task considering that these authors also face the challenge of using simpler language and entertaining their readers. Here, parents and teachers can play an important role in helping some of the young readers to better understand the debates and issues presented in novels. *Erzähler der Nacht*, for one, is a novel that is widely read by school classes, followed by thought-provoking discussions and debates, as the many messages from German school children on Schami's Web site indicate. Youth literature can be an important tool in presenting readers with different,

even uncomfortable, perspectives and issues, while offering solutions and new attitudes to help foster the peaceful co-existence in a multicultural society.

In considering the important role youth literature can have in opening the multicultural dialogue and building bridges between cultures, one may also apply Homi Bhabha's concept of Third Space in the context of multiculturalism and youth literature, though he views the term multiculturalism as somewhat problematic because it views cultures as relying on cultural diversity rather than cultural difference. Bhabha, a postcolonial theorist who coined the term and concept of Third Space, looks at the meaning of cultural diversity and cultural difference in his article *Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences*, suggesting that the "revision of the history of critical theory rests ... on the notion of cultural difference, not cultural diversity" (206). Bhabha defines cultural diversity as "an epistemological object – culture as an object of empirical knowledge" (206) that aims to understand the various cultures. This concept then gives rise to multiculturalism, cultural exchange. Cultural diversity is linked with a homogeneous culture, not influenced by other cultures.

Cultural difference, on the other hand, "is the process of the enunciation of culture as 'knowledgeable', authoritative, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification" (206). He suggests that "cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic in relation of Self to Other" (207). Both subjects meet, overlap and influence each other in a Third Space. As a result, a hybrid develops. "A cultural text or system of meaning cannot be sufficient unto itself [because] the act of cultural enunciation – the place of utterance – is crossed by the difference of writing or *écriture*" (Bhabha 207).

I would suggest that youth literature enables this meeting of cultures, opening up a Third Space, which can also be imagined as a stairwell. Cultures moving up and down the stairs happen upon each other on a landing. Here, they meet and mingle to form a hybrid, then moving on. Thus, youth literature, most, if not all, literature for that matter, can be viewed as an opportunity, a Third Space, a stairwell, in which cultures can mix and meet each other. The reader is able to interact with them through literature, ideally, walking away with a new perspective and understanding. Important in this interaction is the reader's willingness to meet the cultures with respect and tolerance.

5.1 Suggestions for Future Research

The aim of this study was to analyze texts of authors who were not born in Germany yet are writing for a German audience. The number of texts that fall into this category is relatively small. Thus, the findings of my study should be interpreted with caution and should not be generalized beyond this limited sample.

This study serves as a springboard for future researchers in continuing to analyze multiculturalism in youth literature. Due to the complexity of the topic, scholars must continue to build on research on how youth literature is enriched by multicultural perspectives and how it may be a tool in the socialization and education of young adults.

In earlier multicultural discussions, Arlene Teraoka contends that “missing from the German discussions is a sense of the fluidity, contingency, and multiplicity—the constructed, contradictory, and changing nature—of social identity ... What constitutes “Turkish,” for example, or “German” identity and how such identities are constructed and maintained are never questioned (70-71). I hope that, in part, this study has begun to identify the constructs of Syrian and Turkish/Turkish-German culture and can be a point

of departure for future research to further explore these identities. In order to attempt to offer a comprehensive picture, future researchers could incorporate additional works of youth literature, including works from native German authors. Native German authors may be able to help begin the construction of what constitutes German culture and will also likely offer a different perspective on multiculturalism. Even though I would argue that native German authors are not able to give a perspective of foreign cultures that is as rich as that from authors who are native to those cultures, they could nevertheless offer a comparative perspective for a study on multiculturalism. Future research would benefit from a comparison study of how multicultural perspectives in youth literature differ between native German and non-native German authors.

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