Borders, Belonging, and Otherness in African-German literature

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Chapter One

From Africa to Germany: Migration and African-German Literature

Migration flows from developing to developed countries have been on the increase for decades. Displaced by geo-political wars, oppressive regimes, persecution, droughts, famines, floods, and rising temperatures, migrants seek a better life somewhere else. Their journeys often prolong the experience of violence that initially caused the loss of home, properties, and family. Literature, particularly if written in the tongue of destination country, captures the experience of migrants and turns mere statistical numbers inside out. It is here where one learns about fears and hopes, anger, and joys. In opposition to the ever-rising scholarship on migration literature, my analysis focuses on texts that lend an emotional, traumatic experience a voice. Jenny Erpenbeck's novel *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen* (2015), Luc Degla's short stories (*Das afrikanische Auge*, 2006), and autobiographical works of Nura Abdi (*Tränen im Sand*, 2013) and Chima Oji (*Unter die Deutschen gefallen: Erfahrungen eines Afrikaners*, 1992), form the core of this contextualized close reading.

The depiction of migration in these fictional and autobiographical settings is seen through the topical markers of "borders," "belonging," and "Otherness," all of which signify essential emotional focal points from a German and three migrants' perspectives. Not only do all the authors of these texts write for a German-speaking audience, but three of them share an African background. Geography does play a role; this is but one element that is important since they share a common bond to the homeland they left behind. In this sense, Abdi, Degla and Oji constitute the African diaspora in Germany. As African diaspora writers they are cognizant of their migrant status as much as of their exposure to oppression and alienation in the country in

which they reside. Migration literature has gained attention among scholars of different fields; however, close readings are rare and do not cover the autobiographical and fictional works that are at the center of this dissertation. In addition to Arab-German literature, most research on minority literature in German are concerned with Turkish-German literary production, which makes up the largest minority group in Germany. Although scholars have begun to focus on Afro-German in recent years, the African diaspora is not yet to be covered by scholarship. This dissertation aims to be a groundbreaking study that discusses African-German migration literature. It combines texts from authors of German and African descent to foreground questions of borders, belonging, marginality and cultural difference that emerge from Africans' migration to Germany.

Diaspora has several meanings, depending on different scholars who reflect on it. According to Jana Braziel and Anita Mannur, the term "diaspora" refers to the "migrations and displacement of subjects," the voluntary and involuntary movement of people from one country to another (8). Paul Gilroy in his essay "Diaspora," describes the term as an ancient word ("Diaspora" 207). Gilroy sees the diaspora as a relational network characterized by forced and reluctant dispersal arguing that it "provides valuable clues for the elaboration of a social ecology of cultural identity and identification" ("Diaspora" 209). For Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, a historian and literary critic, diaspora is more indicative of the "state of being and a process of becoming, a navigation of multiple belongings" (41). Zeleza asserts that diaspora is "a mode of naming, remembering, living and feeling group identity molded out of experiences, positionings, struggles and imaginings of the past and the present, and the unpredictable future, which are shared across boundaries, time and space" (41). While Gilroy stresses the notion of relational network that underlines new understanding of self, sameness, and community, Zeleza's argument

embraces the notion of group identity that is characterized by the experience and struggles of crossing borders. Central to my argument is the view that the African diaspora constitutes migrants who either were forced to flee from Africa, who voluntarily traveled to Germany for financial reasons, or those who came to study. Within this diasporic community, these migrants are defined by their transversal of borders demarcating nations and the diaspora, they also experience different identification that are either fluid or transcultural forms of identity, which happens in Germany or while moving from their home country to Germany. In addition, the diasporic Germany is also a mirage home to some of the African migrants under study, a dislocated site that expresses their imagined space of economic stability.

Even though my primary goal is to study immigrant discourse within the literature representing Africans' experience in Germany, Erpenbeck's *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen* was added to highlight a difference in perspective. This contrast is intentional and not due to lack of options. Although Erpenbeck is a German, her work, like the literary works of the other three authors analyzed in this study, depicts African migrants, however, here from a German perspective by showing the experiences of Africans seeking asylum in Germany. Erpenbeck is no stranger to fiction writing, unlike the other African authors, and she writes from a perspective that differs in style and narration. Her focus on Africans in search of a better life in Germany, Germans, and the African societies challenges linear narratives, for example, by allowing the insertion of different types of experiences, including those of migrants and their interactions with Richard, a German character, and the German society at large. Despite the differences in these authors' nationalities, there is a shared pattern in the critical discourse they explore in their works.

By migration literature, I mean texts that depict the personal and fictionalized experience of migrants who are confronted with the shock of living in between cultures. Some texts as

discussed in this dissertation are autobiographical in nature, others are inspired by personal experiences. While much attention has been given to other contemporary works that similarly address issues of migration in German literature, such as Rafik Schami's *Die Sehnsucht der Schwalbe* (2000), Feridun Zaimoğlu's *Leyla* (2006), Melinda Nadj Abonji's *Tauben fliegen auf* (2010), or Abbas Khider's *Ohrfeige* (2016), my chosen texts have received little attention from German and migration scholars. Voluntary, forced immigration and immigrant status play a focal role in the diasporic interactions. Together, they enable a broader migratory experience that contributes to the multicultural encounter that shapes the migrant characters' identity either as nationals of the different African nations or as foreigners.

Borders, Belonging, and Otherness in African-German literature examines how Erpenbeck, Abdi, Degla, and Oji describe the experiences and issues associated with migration. Their texts demonstrate that migrancy is constructed upon the notions of identity and these challenges not only come with the search for home and belonging but with cultural encounters. In *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen*, for example, Erpenbeck shows that her migrant characters were housed in an old nursing home where they have a "Ghana-Zimmer, Niger-Zimmer" and "Nigeria-[Zimmer]" ("Gehen" 61). While this quote expresses an example of how African migrants cluster as citizens of the diasporic nation while demonstrating the search for home and belonging, I analyze the questions of cultural difference and diversity and examine their treatment in the selected works. Although the depicted migrants are from different African nations, I argue that the authors' construction of identity creates forms of solidarity, showing that home and belonging are constructed in a constellation of interconnectedness and nationality.

Tränen im Sand and *Unter die Deutschen gefallen* intervene from an autobiographical perspective. They show how the authors embrace the medium of the German language to narrate

their migrant experiences. I approach Degla's text differently since it contains a mixture of auto-, homo- and heterodiegetic narration. Degla and Oji's literature reveals the complexity of race and strangeness; I consider the representation of difference and look at how strangeness is being represented as the Other. I assert that being different or the Other constitutes the self as a migrant in search of home and belonging. Apart from the depiction of Otherness, the four authors whose works I analyze use different words to describe the general meaning of the term migrant.

The ambivalence and often similar use of "migrant" and "refugee" is indicative of a larger, underlying problem. For instance, Erpenbeck describes her characters as "Flüchtlinge," Nura prefers to describe herself as "Asylant." Degla uses "Asylbewerber, Asylant, Fremder, Ausländer, ausländischer Bürger," while Oji identifies himself as "Ausländer. " Although these diverse denotations capture the German word for someone who is an immigrant or seeks refuge in Germany, "Flüchtling" carries a negative connotation: the trauma of leaving one's home. In her 2015 article on whether "Flüchtlinge" oder "Geflüchtete" best describes people who are seeking refuge in Germany, Andrea Kothen argues that "wer 'Flüchtling' sagt, transportiert auch den historischen und rechtlichen Bedeutungshorizont." Citing Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Tucholsky, Willy Brandt, Else Lasker-Schüler, and Albert Einstein as examples of Germans who were "Flüchtlinge," Kothen stresses that the word reminds Germany of the consequences of the Nazi dictatorship and the country's collective history of flight and expulsion. Writing for *Der Spiegel,* Sarah Wiedenhöft similarly claims that the suffix "ling" in "Flüchtling" is dehumanizing, asserting that "Geflüchtete" is considered more appropriate since the word focuses on the process and the experience of the flight. These conclusions, which Kothen and Wiedenhöft discusses in their articles, add weight to the argument that Erpenbeck's preference for "Flüchtlinge" is problematic.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees defines a "refugee" as "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence." The United Nations further explains that a refugee is often afraid of persecution because of their race, religion, or even political opinion. The description of this term describes the African characters in my analysis. Erpenbeck sketches the movement of refugees who leave Ghana, Nigeria, the Republic of Niger, for Libya and from there, through the Mediterranean Sea to Italy and then to Germany. The International Organization for Migration defines a "migrant" as any "person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his or her habitual place of residence, regardless of the person's legal status; whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; what the causes of the movement are; or what the length of the stay is." The term migration, hence, represents a broader spectrum of individuals who leave their home due to the pressure of all kinds while "refugee" signifies a more imminent state of crisis that leads to immediate departure (See also Genova "Working the Boundaries;" Gollerkeri and Chhabra; Koser). It is pertinent that in using the definition from the International Organization for Migration, I use the organization's idea that the movement that leads to migration may or may not be voluntary for migrants in general and refugees in particular. For this reason, the latter is always included in the first and, hence, I will use the term "migrant" to refer to refugees as well as immigrants regardless of their various legal status while making my arguments. My usage also refers to the voluntary and involuntary immigration of African characters to Europe, fleeing violence, searching for a better life, or studying. However, I will use "refugee" when I associate the word with a specific meaning or identity.

As unprecedented numbers of Africans take perilous journeys in hopes of a better future, Germany is experiencing an increase in the number of refugees arriving at its borders. Based

on a 2019 data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), only ten percent of the 26 million world's refugees and a fraction of internally displaced persons were living in the EU in 2019, out of which Germany hosts 1,146,685 refugees. Compared to other EU countries like France that hosted 138,290 first-time asylum seekers, Greece 74,910, Spain 115,175, or Italy 35,005, Germany's large reception capacity and the strong willingness of local authorities to accept more refugees accounts for the high numbers of applications. Africans accounted for 24 percent of the total number of asylum seekers in the European Union in 2019. Parallel with the UNHCR report; the Human Rights Watch notes that "just under 101,000 people had arrived at EU borders in 2019 by mid-November, the majority by sea." Germany's Federal Office for Migration and Refugees reports that about 4,699 first time asylum seekers from Africa arrived in Germany from January to July 2020. Most of them from Eritrea, Nigeria, and Somalia (7). While many of these refugees from Africa give safety, education, or a better future for their children as their reasons for leaving their countries, unequal growth, insecurity, and economic hardship appear to be the situation of developing countries, with most of these countries in Africa. Therefore, migration becomes an escape route out of these challenges and, subsequently, a developmental strategy for Africans who set out for Germany.

Not all migrants come from outside of Germany. Although my research focuses on Africans who migrate to Germany, Germans have also relocated within Germany for one reason or the other. In his book, *The Long Nineteenth Century,* David Blackbourn notes that Germany became an increasingly urban society due to the influx of people to the towns. According to Blackbourn, "by 1910 nearly two-thirds of Germans lived in towns. More than a fifth lived in the forty-eight 'big cities' with populations exceeding 100,000. Berlin, still just under a million in 1875, crossed the 2 million thresholds in 1907, of whom 60 percent had been born outside the

city" (352). Apart from the new experience of life becoming easier in the urban areas with tram, bicycle, and special trains, Germans migrated to cities like Berlin, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Leipzig, and Cologne in unprecedented numbers (Blackbourn 353-355). Blackbourn emphasizes that industrialization and the search for a better life drove migration numbers. In another related study on Germans' migration, this time outside of Germany, Sebastian Conrad, and Philipp Ther declare that between 1820-1913, six million—more than ninety percent—of all German emigrants settled in the United States (575). Conrad and Ther opine that "the promise of a life relatively free of state and religious interference" was one of the many reasons for migration; however, the majority left for economic reasons (575). Blackbourn, Conrad and Ther's arguments point to searching for a better life outside one's present place of residence. In this context, migration becomes emblematic of an attempt to leave an unpleasant past—both the historical and the more recent one—behind while hoping to find comfort. Not only does the undertaking of leaving one's home show tremendous resilience, courage, and openness toward new cultures, but also desperation due to food insecurity and a lack of economic stability which leads to departures in the first place. This despair reflects the willingness to give up literally everything to start a new life. In sum, African's migration—like Germans who move from the rural to the urban areas in search of better future—starts with the perception that there is a better life, economic prosperity, safety, and a flourishing means of support in Germany.

Hypotheses

In opposition to most scholarship on migration literature, scholars like Leslie Adelson, Sandra Vlasta, and Venkat Mani have focused mainly on Turkish-German, Asian-German, Arab-

German, Russian-German or Bulgarian-German migrant literature while analyzing the works of Ermine Sevgi Ozdamar, Feridun Zaimoglu, Rafik Schami, Vladimir Vertlib, Dimitre Dinev, Yoko Tawada, Anna Kim, and Ilija Trojanow. My dissertation adds to the body of research that highlights the depiction of migration from an African-German literary perspective. The novels that I analyze deserve attention since the authors are African migrants and Germans who write from their unique experience of migration, revealing their diverse insights on the problems and difficulties African migrants are confronted with in Germany.

The field of migration literature appears to be the focus of researchers considering the migration crisis, the influx of migrants in recent years and the growing number of literatures written by migrants as well as non-migrants on the challenges of migration. Through her readings of texts that deal with Turkish migration, Adelson's *Turkish Turn in contemporary German literature* offers a productive analytical tool to reconsider transnational migration to Germany. Analyzing figures of ethnicity in the tales of migration, Adelson addresses the growing Turkish presence in German literature and culture. Her study is pivotal for an understanding of Turkish-German migration literature, situating migrants "between two worlds and national cultures" (29). Venkat Mani offers insights to the immigration status of Turkish workers who came to Germany in the early 1960s. Categorizing this body of literature as "Literatur der Gastarbeiter" instead of Gastarbeiterliteratur (guest-worker literature), Mani argues that the former "emphasizes the inadequacy of the latter term and criticize the efficacy of the word "guests"—a peculiar status attributed to authors" (5). Like Adelson, Mani validates the presence of non-German ethnicities in the field of German literature, asserting that most of these authors "were either born in Turkey or in Germany of Turkish parents" (5). While Adelson and Mani's research circles back to interpretating literatures on migration, Sandra Vlasta argues that

reading and interpreting migration literature helps readers to better understand migrants experience and the difficulties immigrants encounter in the process of migration (5-6). Although Vlasta compares anglophone and Germanophone literatures, these three authors offer persuasive arguments on the concept of national identity, transcultural literature, transnational past and what it means to speak of Turkish presence in German literature.

Migration literature denotes literary works of authors who may have undergone a major cultural or linguistic shift in their act of writing. This shift often refers to the migrant experience of authors, altering their linguistic range and influencing their views on politics, religion, gender, security, and education. The experience and the encountered problems of integration and belonging result mostly in a hybrid of cultural traditions and assumptions, sometimes in the form of clashing views that the author seeks to reconcile. Just as Adelson, Mani and Vlasta employ the term, I use "migration literature" to designate texts that negotiate between cultures whose authors may or may not be migrants themselves (Adelson 5; Mani 9; Vlasta 29). This literature is often considered as inter- or transcultural because these texts transcend the linguistic environment of their origin. Analyzing the works of African migrants who write in German since the late 1990s, Dirk Göttsche defines "migrant novels" in the German language as intercultural *German* literature since they originate from authors who come from former European colonies in Africa and write in German ("Cross-cultural" 55). Göttsche also explains that "interculturality" can be understood to bear the testimony of authors who may or may not be migrants, but whose points of view and/or subject matters are influenced by multiple cultural environments. These novels also tackle the experience of living, being or moving between cultures (Göttsche "Cross-cultural" 56; Chiellino 62). The production of "African" literature in German—whether by authors of African descent or not—could be also be grouped under the umbrella of minority

literature. Accordingly, my usage of the term "minority" refers to literary production in German by members of minority groups in Germany. The concept of "minority" is employed in the sense that Africans are not the original inhabitants of Germany. Following Göttsche and Chiellino's assertion, migration literature as an intercultural production includes a synthesis between multiple cultures and cultural practices, the challenges of integration, and the search for a new "home" in a foreign world. Thus, inter- and transcultural literature allows readers to cross borders, to alter their own views, and to encounter a rich diasporic memory of the African homeland.

What then is African-German literature? Why does this description matter? By hyphenating African and German, I am not only concerned with literature within Germany, using *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen* as an example, but I also include African writers who write in the German language. The language of writing is not my primary mode of definition here, but the nationalities of these authors whose works depict the peculiarity of Africa. Defining African literature, the Africanist scholar, Abiola Irele, writes that, among other things, African literature includes "the written literature in languages not indigenous to Africa, in particular the European languages English, French, and Portuguese" (51). African literature exists in the context of texts and works by Africans, which are situated in relation to a global experience that embraces both precolonial and modern frameworks (Irele 52). In this sense, German becomes the language to capture the challenges of cross-cultural experiences of German and African lives. While writing on the reintroduction of colonialism in German literature, Göttsche points out that literary texts that focus on African-German discourse "offers a comprehensive account of how contemporary German literature represents, reflects, and redefines the relationship between the colonial past and the postcolonial present" ("Remembering" 2). Not only does literature become a

battleground for expression, but for narrating the experience of crossing borders, and interpreting the world in which African migrants find themselves outside Africa.

The debate about the audience of African writers and the categorization of their work have been a subject of concern by Chinweizu et al., Chinua Achebe, and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'O. Does the fact that Degla and Oji write in German make their works German? For whom do they write? Does their nationality count in categorizing their works as African? Is the audience of African literature written in German restricted only to those who speak the language? Incidentally, their audience comprises people who are affiliated by language. I do not claim that African literature can be neatly defined given the breath of Africa and the diversity of its cultures and the vast range of languages spoken in the more than fifty nations that make up Africa. While Chinweizu et al. see African literature as works done by Africans for African audience and written in African languages (11-12), Ngũgĩ seems more interested in what is not African literature. In his book *Writers in Politics*, Ngũgĩ underlines that a foreign language cannot correctly reflect the African historical consciousness. Apart from the African indigenous languages, Ngũgĩ defines the European languages as foreign languages ("Decolonising" 28; "Writers" 53). In sum, his argument emphasizes the notion of language in defining African literature.

In his recent article, Biodun Jeyifo argues that English has become an African language "on account of it being one of the constitutive cultural foundations of postcoloniality" (137). In his reading of Ngũgĩ's position of English as a foreign language that would not and would never be an African language, Jeyifo posits that English, like other languages of the colonizers, is a lingua franca in several African nations and serves as "the language of official administrative, judicial, commercial, scientific, and technological transactions and operations" (137). Refuting

Ngũgĩ's claim, Jeyifo concludes that it is therefore wrong to categorize works written by authors of African descent in English as Afro-European literature. Rather, it is simply African since the literature is written by Africans, regardless of where the writers are living or the language of narration. Chinua Achebe's influential examination of the education of a British-protected child carries the question into the discussion of contextualization and categorization by assessing the politics of language in African literature. On the issue of indigenous or European languages Achebe stresses that he differs from Ngũgĩ in that while the latter believes it should be either/or, the former always thinks it could be both English and Igbo language, his mother tongue (97). For Achebe, writing in English does not suggest his praise or approval of colonialism, but a choice to use the language as a tool for transaction, "including the business of overthrowing colonialism in the fullness of time" (120). While it may be worthwhile to emphasize that Jeyifo and Achebe's views differ from Ngũgĩ with regards to the language of African literature, Jeyifo and Achebe point to language, be it European or an African indigenous language, as a tool for narration, transaction, communication and celebrating humanity in our contemporary world. At this point, it would not be wrong to say that Irele's definition of African literature was shortsighted when he pointed out that European languages such as English, French, and Portuguese are not indigenous to Africa (51). Instead, Africans have indigenized and claimed the languages of colonial enterprise to communicate their experiences through writing.

By assigning the continental notion *African* to German literature, I stretch the concept of African literature, denouncing the notion that African literature must be written in African languages as Chinweizu et al. (11-12) and Ngũgĩ (60) claim, but share the view that the German language carries the experiences of Africans and African authors and therefore qualifies as a language for African literature. My categorization of Degla and Oji's texts as African-German

literature stems from the position that the German language in which they chose to write embodies their collective struggles of immigration, integration, blackness and lastly, the cost of being an African in Germany. To borrow from the words of Achebe (348), Degla and Oji have mastered the German language, and therefore should use it to express themselves in the field of literature. Here, language serves as the means of communication and narration. Returning to Göttsche's argument on intercultural German literature, where he stresses that the "interculturality" in German literature concerns authors who may or may not be migrants and whose works tackle the experience of living, being or moving between cultures. In line with Göttsche, these African-German literature under study fulfil the notion of interculturality since they also share the challenges of migrating and living in a culture that differs from theirs.

Regardless of what constitutes this idea of migration literature, migration is an essential component of writers who write about their struggles and experiences of crossing borders. By writing about what it means to leave one's country in search of a better future elsewhere, this dissertation examines migration, remittance, the search for better living conditions and how it complicates belonging and identity. Through migration we become aware of the inequalities around the global system. In a globalized asymmetric world in which migration is the norm, the interdependence of nations becomes obvious. However, migration is not limited to the movement of people from poor to rich countries and from one continent to another but could simply indicate—and most often describes—the movement of people from one country to a neighboring country: the so-called regional migration. In his article on "Migration, Remittances and Development" where Phillip Jung studies labor migrants on the island Boa Vista, Cape Verde, the author notes that war and hardship or simply a search for work opportunities are among the reasons why Senegalese move to the Island of Cape Verde (85). In addition, we would have to

consider, that people not only leave Africa, where most of the countries are considered developing countries, in search for independence and improved living conditions, but that people also move from Europe to America or from Asia to Africa.

Immigration raises questions of identity and labels of Otherness. Emigration to a global city like Berlin or Munich, as with the above examples of Germans moving to bigger cities in the early nineteenth century, comes with the offer of improved social and economic opportunities. Although there are greater economic and social opportunities that are expressed through remittance and better healthcare facilities for the migrants, migration could also be experienced as restrictive because of language barriers, bureaucratic obstacles, and xenophobia. Both liberating and limiting factors define migration as a (trans)formative and (re)constructive element of identity-building through the process of integration and application for residence permit as well as the search of gainful employment. Migrants are usually faced with the challenge of being labeled "migrants," "outsiders" and often feel "strange" in the land of destination. As Oji's text shows, calling migrants "schwarz" was common in Germany in the early nineties. The denotations "schwarz" and "Neger" come up in Erpenbeck, Degla and Oji's texts. Here they raise questions about the relationship between literature, the notion of race and racism under the Nazis, especially in the way they thematize the institutions and the connections between blackness, migration, and minoritization. Being "black" and being a "person of color" often defines the identity of such a person as being a stranger or the "other" as Julia Kristeva and Edward Said argue. Thus, strangeness and Otherness does not only define migrants' identity and represent how they are perceived in Germany.

Mobility and identity meet at the crossroads of the border of migration. Migrants embody the confrontation and pain of hostility and the reality of exclusion due to their status. They are

often confronted and left in a world of in-between, a neither here nor there. In the pursuit of challenging stereotypes, racism, and marginalization that affects migrants, they sometimes show different identities and often fluid identities in the quest for survival (See Hall, "Introduction" 4; Benessaieh 19; Bauman "Liquid Modernity", "Liquid Times;" Bhabha 66). The challenges of migrancy often bring alongside identity change. Such consciousness could arise through gradual assimilation and reaffirmation. As a result, most commonly we see "survival" as a strategy for adjustment, but at the same time, new identities are formed in the diasporas. Identities change as migrants adjust their lives to accommodate their new residence. However, in the face of migratory difficulties, I show how identity is constructed and negotiated.

Just as identity is (re)constructed and negotiated, so are the notions of "Heimat" and "belonging." In recent years, the concept of "Heimat" has received increased interest as an effect of and a reaction to the migration crisis of 2015 and the increase of migrant literature, especially, Turkish-German migration literature. Migrant writers and authors of migration literature depict characters, who try to find a home outside their place of origin. Emigrants usually construct and search for a home upon arrival in a new place. Heimat or "home" as some scholars prefer to call it, refers to the emotional attachment to a place (Shortt 6), "a particular constellation of space and belonging" (Eigler and Kugele 3), and "the locale of human warmth and material sustenance, moral probity and spiritual comfort" (Tuan 227). Thus, I situate "Heimat" as a place of safety and rest, a space of connectedness and warmth for migrants.

Scholars have noted the impact of migration on the living standard and the financial stability of developing countries (Kusunose and Rignall; Jung; Newland). According to Kusunose and Rignall, remittance and business establishments create income for the families left in home countries (420). Such remittance, small-scale business and transactions help to lift

families out of economic hardships. Degla, Erpenbeck, and Abdi describe events in their narratives as a representation of migration and development. Their texts show how their protagonists send money home to help their families. While affirming that the value of money in the discourse of migration is transactional, I demonstrate that money drives remittance-flow and the search for a home in Germany. In this sense, I show that money is used to measure reasons for migration. For example, Degla's character starts a car export business while waiting for his refugee status in Germany but the enterprise could not survive the taste of time due to his family's false conception of Europe and Germany in particular.

Africans' migration to Germany in the German colonial and post-colonial period had an effect of literature and had become acknowledged and reflected by scholars and critics like Dirk Göttsche and Janos Riesz. Migration, however, continues to leave scars on the continent of Europe and Germany especially. Immigration has brought students, refugees, and migrants turned 'writers' to Germany and has become a topic of literary discussion. The questions of cultural identity, migration, globalization, and inclusion motivate my investigation.

German colonial period and the African diaspora in Germany

The relationship between African countries and Germany paces the seventeenth century, long before the Berlin conference of 1884 under Otto von Bismarck—itself a historical turning-point in German colonial politics. The result of the conference was the scramble for and partition of Africa by European nations like France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and Great Britain. In their book *Showing your colors*, May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz believe that there is no factual data is determining when the first Africans came to Germany. Thus, attempts

to trace this migration leads to German-African trade. Claudia Kalka's article on the history of Africans in Hamburg shows that seventeenth and eighteenth-century German travelers brought Africans back to Germany as household servants. These servants, according to Kalka, were considered slaves (26). Kalka argues that these slaves came with Portuguese Jewish merchants to Hamburg to work and live in their homes. Eve Rosenhaft, however, traces the African-German relation from another perspective. Rosenhaft states that the presence of Africans in Germany during this period was more of an "importation" of Africans, considering them as ornamental household servants (211). Rosenhaft further notes that "records of black prostitutes, seamen, and traveling entertainers go back at least as far as the eighteenth century" (211). One aspect that seems common in the research of Kalka and Rosenhaft is the idea of bringing along or forceful carriage of Africans. Since this transatlantic journey appears like the Africans have no choice but to follow their masters, it could be implied that the first Africans in Germany were 'dragged' into the country.

The nineteenth century saw an explosion of adventurous trading enterprises that pushed Bismarck to start a more official, state-supported form of colonialism and ultimately to the Berlin Conference. The German colonial period in Deutsch-Südwestafrika and Deutsch-Ostafrika marked another stage of Africans coming to Germany either by force or free will. In tracing Africans' migration to Germany between 1884 and 1945, Oguntoye focuses on the Woermann Linie with its highly frequented "Schifffahrtsverbindungen." According to Oguntoye, the Woermann Linie grew because of the German-African "Handelsaustausch" (17). The trade relationship, Oguntoye claims, led to the transportation of many Africans to Germany from Duala (Cameroon), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Lomé (Togo), or even Walfischbucht (Namibia). Joachim Zeller's essay on Africans in Germany accords with an earlier argument by Rosenhaft

and Oguntoye on how Africans found themselves in Germany. Zeller (99) argues that some men from Anecho in Togo, who rebelled against the German colonial rule, were forcefully taken to Germany. Citing Albert Adjetegan and his eight-year-old son as instances of Africans who were deported and forced to stay in Germany, Zeller's contention points to my previous idea of the displacement of Africans forceful transportation to Germany. Since German traders benefited from this harsh migration, this movement from Africa to Germany reflects entrepreneurship and power dynamics during the colonial era.

The German colonial rule in Africa starting around 1884/1885 also led to the increase in Africans' presence in Germany. The upsurge of Africans was due to what May Ayim describes as "importation," since the German colonies were considered "Schutzgebiete" and Africans, therefore, Germans (49). The German concept of colonization seems more of civilization than of rulership since they were more focused on making Germans out of Africans. Frank Codjoe (9) validates this concept calling it "eine Sendung der Zivilisation, um aus Negern Menschen zu machen" while Michael Schubert (347) calls this civilization expedition "Europäisierung der Afrikaner," adding that the mission was more of making the colonial Africans Germans. Schubert notes that in ensuring this expedition's success, Protestant and Catholic mission stations were established at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the German "Schutzgebiete." The stations, Opitz et al. assert, formed the basis for establishing the early school system in Deutsch-Südwestafrika and Deutsch-Ostafrika (40). However, Germany's defeat in World War I saw the end of the Wilhelmine Reich's colonial rule and subsequently the loss of its colonies and disruption of immigration as a form of "import" of Africans to Germany and "export" of Germanness to the African continent. One may argue that Germans' presence in Africa, which led to African "immigration" to Germany, was beneficial to the German colonial

civilization since Germany set out to expand its territorial and national population by making Germans out of Africans.

Until World War I, German trade and missionary expeditions increased the migration of Africans to Germany. This migration resulted from the already established colonial relationship. Kalka (27) chronicles the increased African migration, expressing that Africans who worked with the colonial officers and traders in Sansibar, Douala, and Lomé accompanied their employers to Hamburg to continue working either as slaves, cooks, personal assistants, or even language translators. She makes the case that after learning merchant trade and understanding German values, Mpundo Akwa, from Cameroon, played an essential role while translating for some Cameroonian chiefs who traveled to Germany in 1902 to brief Kaiser Wilhelm II of the arbitrary rule of the acting governor. In his attempt to foreground the Cameroonian's expedition to Germany, Wolbert Smidt elucidates that Mpundo Akwa indicates the success of Africa's "systematische Ausbildung" and "Bildungsmigration von Afrika nach Europa" (41). According to Smidt, Mpundo Akwa was among the numerous Africans who embarked on what he calls "Schwarze Missionare nach Deutschland" for further education (42). Smidt's study shows that the German Catholic and Protestant mission schools brought some of their students to Germany. Thus, it seems that the German civilization mission achieved its aim, bringing more Africans to Germany, who embarked on study trips which were part of the colonial "Germanization" of Africans. The German christianization and civilization mission also produced teachers from African colonial migrants. Africans did not all end up as slaves, cooks, or household helps in Germany. For instance, Amur bin Nasur ilOmeiri, who lived in Berlin from 1891 to 1895 studied "Schul- und Berufsausbildung" in Germany and later became a prominent "Sprachlehrer" and "Swahili-Lektor am Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen" at Humboldt University in Berlin

(Zeller 100). Zeller's research shows that Africans also came to study in Germany in the early nineteenth century. Putting Smidt and Zeller's studies together, I describe Africans' migration to Germany first as a coerced migration that indicates the exile, deportation, and transportation of Africans and secondly as migration by choice. This more nuanced rendition of relocation accounts for Africans like Mpundo Akwa and Amur bin Nasur ilOmeiri who set out to Germany for education and work-related purposes as well as entrepreneurial intentions.

World War I also saw the voyage of Africans to Germany but for very different reasons. From 1914-1918, Africans possessing German colonial identification cards fought for the Germans. Aitken and Rosenhaft (123) claim that the war brought numerous Africans from Germany's overseas territories to Germany, especially to cities like Berlin and Hamburg. Although these Africans came as soldiers, Aitken and Rosenhaft insist that they were identified as Germans and hence possessed German proof of identity. With Germany's defeat after the war, this identification was revoked (123). The identity card termination resulting from Germany's defeat in World War I and the subsequent loss of German overseas territories entitled Africans to be treated as members of former German colonies, thereby encouraging them to stay in Germany. Furthermore, Africans under the former colonies of France and Britain were also part of the Rhineland occupiers after World War I. With the occupation of Rhineland, the number of Africans in Germany increased. Apart from this increase, interracial sexual relations and marriages between the former soldiers and Germans boosted the number of mixed-race children or Afro-Germans. This growth complicates Germany's history of race, which accounts for the tiny multiracial population, which could be traced back to Germany's colonial history in Africa. Interrogating Germany's occupation and the end of World War I, scholars agree that The Third Reich, was a hyperracialized society, determined by Nazi race thinking as the desecration and

bastardization of the White race, violation of German women's racial purity, and the racialization of Afro-Germans. Also, the end of World War II saw the unprecedented mixing of peoples, as the interracial marriages with black soldiers was as one of the unintended consequences of the Allied occupation (Hoffman 600; Wigger 5; Chin and Fehrenbach 6). Again, the Nazi's seizure of power led to the deportation of approximately 2000 "blacks" to concentration camps and the forced sterilization of about 800 Afro-German children (Ayim 50). In sum, Germany's presence in Africa could be said to have opened the door for Africans to migrate to Germany on their own, initiating the convergence of race, nationhood, and class.

Africans' migration to Germany also includes a socio-economic dimension to this day. Germany's loss of colonies, World War I and II, and the horrible events of the Nazi era did not stop Africans from migrating to Germany either because of former colonial ties, economic hardship, or for insecurity reasons. The 1960s were the eras of independence for most African nations and coup d'états for some countries like Ghana (1957), the Republic of Benin (1960), Nigeria (1960), and Somalia (1960). According to Codjoe (30), the strict military rule led to the persecution of some Africans that were critical of their countries' regimes, like Amma Darko, who later migrated to Germany. Darko would later publish her first novel in Germany, *Der verkaufte Traum* (1991). Bad economic policies, the continuous increase in the inflation rate, and mass unemployment drove many Africans from Ghana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and other Sub-Sahara African countries to Germany, the USA, and Canada (Codjoe 25-32). Similarly, with the post-independence situation that characterized most African nations, Africans still migrate to Germany either to study, for economic reasons, or to seek shelter and safety from violent conflicts or political persecution in their respective countries. These reasons are all represented by different protagonists in the four selected novels of my project.

Methodology

This project uses postcolonial studies and cultural studies theory to gain a deeper understanding of African-German literature. Postcolonial studies provide a framework that analyzes literary and cultural productions by former colonized peoples as they relate to the colonizer(s). Although this might not be the case of the African authors that I study since Germany never had colonies in Somalia, the Republic of Benin, or even Nigeria, their works count as literary production from former colonies in Africa; however, they do not have a postcolonial relationship with Germany. Exploring the varied ways in which these African authors use autobiography to write about migration reveals the complex relationships that exist in a postcolonial world. Although Germany is not rich in postcolonial literature as Sara Lennox (620) argues, a Germanophone analysis such as this project aims at creating a dialogue with authors who write in German. In accentuating her argument on what constitutes postcolonial German literature, Lennox contends that "writers from formerly colonized countries [who write in German], though not just from those colonized by Germany" fall within the categorization of the postcolonial. Lennox notes that postcolonial German works are within the larger context of cultural production of migrant and minority communities (623). Lennox's foregrounding of postcolonial German literature captures the categorization of Abdi, Degla, and Oji's writings as literary and cultural productions by immigrants from the minority community in terms of racial categorization who write in German.

This dissertation examines two geographically distinct groups, the work of Erpenbeck as representative of German writers without migrant background and authors with an African

migrant background. This juxtaposition helps to reveal postcoloniality at work in two different groups under the same dominant factors. Postcolonial criticism theorizes the clash of cultures, particularly attitudes of cultural superiority with its exercise of power, enabling a critical reading and interpretation of the texts under study in their historical contexts. Seminal and foundational works in postcolonial studies include the works of Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, and Frantz Fanon. Edward Said's 1978 *Orientalism* focuses on the forces of oppression and coercive domination that still operate in today's globalized world and its politics of anti-colonialism and neo-colonialism, race, culture, nationalism, class, and ethnicity. Said argues that there exists a relationship of power as well as domination between the Occident and the Orient (5). His argument focuses on the perceived conception of the Orient as being primitive, despotic, and even inferior to the West. By referring to Michel Foucault's concept of power and discourse, Said describes orientalism as an established Western construction of the Other. Said's thesis centers on the notion of cultural representation as a means of domination and control, and it helps to explain the Occident's justification for colonial oppression of the Orient.

Gayatri Spivak, another significant postcolonial theorist follow Said closely. Spivak's 1988 "Can the Subaltern speak?" refers to the least powerful in a society, the lowest economic and cultural class, the masses who exist outside of the structure of power—the subaltern. Although Spivak specifically focused on the Indian subaltern women as a case study, she asks "when confronted with the questions, can the subaltern speak? And can the subaltern (as woman) speak?" (296). Spivak's essay is a direct response to Antonio Gramsci's work on the "subaltern classes" that extends the "class-position/class-consciousness argument." (283). Spivak does not use the word "speak" literally, instead, she uses the "speak", to ask if the lowest members of a society can express their concerns, enter dialogue with those who hold power in a way that they

are heard and listened to. For this dissertation, the "subaltern" recasts in the context of migration, designating the representation of what I describe as the "migrant encounter"—the dialog between the lowest class and those who hold power within the German society.

Within my project, postcolonial criticism concerns itself with the writing of migration, displacement, and cross-border experience. Regarding the novels that deal with African migrants from the Orient and Occident's perspective, Robert Young maintains that "[p]ostcolonialism offers a language of and for those who have no place, who seem not to belong, of those whose knowledge and histories are not allowed to count" (15). Young asserts that postcolonial criticism centers upon the diversity of cultural experiences and how the relationship between the "western and non-western people are viewed" and constructed in literatures (15). In this sense, postcolonial criticism concerns itself with the ways in which Erpenbeck and the other authors of African descent articulate (their) migration experience, the dynamics of race and power. In another related article, Young stresses that there is "a remain of postcolonialism" that deals with the struggle of the invisible African diaspora that is "made up of refugees, displaced persons, asylum seekers, illegal economic migrants, and [(ir)regular] migrants" ("Postcolonial" 26). According to Young, migrants remain invisible because they struggle to survive even after arrival, "working in unregulated conditions in building sites, hotel kitchens, brothels, cleaning lavatories" ("Postcolonial" 26). Postcolonial theory offers a ground to approach texts that deal with migrants' struggles, power dynamics, race, and the complexity of cultural identity and minority groups.

In analyzing cultural representation, my project draws some of its theoretical approach from cultural studies. Like postcolonial theory, cultural studies allows us to look critically at the interpretation of power, class and race that cuts across language and culture. The academic field

of cultural studies takes a broad view of human communities and provides space for answering critical questions of race, class, power, and the politics of racism and Otherness (During 14; Hall "Cultural Studies" 104). In the postcolonial context, understanding literary works as expressions of culture becomes an essential point of departure and analysis. Stuart Hall has written extensively about culture and representation. In his essay on "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", Hall emphasizes the cultural impact on identity construction and the critical role that such "cultural" identity plays in postcolonialism ("Cultural Identity" 223). For Hall, cultural identity expresses shared cultures, and, as a result, a sort of collective "one true self" hiding inside the many others.

Hall holds that culture emerges as a complex criticism of industrial capitalism. According to Hall, cultural studies seeks the life one is obliged to live because of the conditions into which one has been born. He further claims that these circumstances have been made meaningful and hence experienceable because certain frameworks of understanding have been brought to bear upon these conditions ("The Formation" 33). Here, Hall posits that this complexity of culture lies in the condition in which one finds himself, the experience lived and interpreted in the encounter with difference. In the same way as Hall who understands cultural difference as a process of identification, Bhabha sees it as an alternative to cultural diversity. Writing along these lines of culture, Bhabha asserts that "the borderline work of culture demands an encounter with newness that is not part of the continuum of past and present" (10). In other words, I deploy cultural studies to understand culture as the expression of marginalized groups like African migrants in Germany, analyze the coercive force which subordinates one group, in this case, immigrants, in another, that is citizens, the articulation of race and how characters are identified and

represented. Thus, identity presents itself in the postcolonial world and mirrors the representation of individuals and the construction of being different.

In addition to the careful, sustained interpretation of texts, I will draw on the theory of autobiography. This literary genre is non-fiction, a self-written account of one's life concerning one's own existence (Lejeune 3-10; Wagner-Egelhaaf "Introduction" 5; Wagner-Egelhaaf "Autobiographie" 6; Holdenried 10; Olney 20). The genre bridges the gap between the author-as-subject and the author-as-self. The narrators call attention to themselves in the process of writing as the author and a character that signals the use of the autobiographical "I" as defined in the autobiographical pact (Lejeune 2-30). In distinguishing between autobiography and fiction, Lejeune shares the notion that autobiographical pact calls for sameness in the identity of the author, narrator, and protagonist (5). Narrating as the "I" becomes a model to put one's life out as a discourse while sharing the contours of life in time. In his research on the style of autobiography, Jean Starobinski describes autobiography as the representation of the present writing self and the past written self (73). Identical with Lejeune's assertion, the "narrator and the hero are one;" they are "the same person and such a process is expressly a depiction of a series of important events in which the editor puts himself into the scene as one of the principal actors" (Starobinski 288). Similarly, James Olney (20) postulates that "the bios of autobiography could only signify 'the course of a lifetime' or at least a significant portion of a lifetime." In this sense, the autobiographer narrates his life in a "manner at least approaching an objective historical account and make[s] of that internal subject a text existing in the external world" (Olney 20). Olney's postulation summarizes self-writing as a mirror image of the author. For the African authors under study, their novels depict the transformation of their migrant experience into literature.

Through writing of the self, Abdi, Degla, and Oji contribute to postcolonial autobiography by constructing an identity, laying claim to agency, and securing advocacy. As Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin put it, these authors "write back" about their lives, their experiences with migration and moving across borders. Postcolonial autobiography charts the complexities and contradictions of transnational lives, plots intersections of the postcolonial and globalization (Spivak 7; Holden 128; Mouzet 160). Postcolonial autobiography, Aurélia Mouzet argues, serves as a medium to reinstate the neglected chapters of history by reclaiming the past from below (161). Mouzet's argument foregrounds the idea that autobiographical narratives serve a purpose in the lives of the writer. According to Mouzet, through their stories, postcolonial autobiographers "rewrite history from below" (162). In other words, Abdi and Oji's autobiography and the autobiographies in Degla's *Das Afrikanishe Auge,* serve to denounce Female Genital Mutilation, the challenges of cultural encounters, migration, and living among white Germans. These texts focus on the everyday life in postcolonial Africa and German society, allowing for the insertion of different types of experiences, including migrants and minorities. The assertion I make here is that from the point of view of postcolonial criticism, autobiography allows the writer to explore a personal experience of migration and to relate their journey outside their birth country alongside the broader ambiguity of creative works.

In the engagements of Oji, Degla, and Abdi's texts, the authors assume the narrators and historians of their lives' journey outside Africa. Their works project the authors as protagonists while at the same time treating them as subjects of literary criticisms. Oji, Degla, and Abdi inform their readers about their journey outside Africa, persuading readers to become part of their migrant experiences. Oji's writing about his arrival in Germany, studying at the Universität Münster and Abdi's living in an asylum home for a few months after being arrested at the

Düsseldorf Airport on her way to America draws their readers to the tensions of migration. In both novels, the writers' lives remain central, leaving their migrant's experiences for criticism. However, their lives appear not to be chronological but seem to come as they put down their thoughts in writing.

Organization of Dissertation

My dissertation project is divided into four different chapters, each of which approaches the subject of migration as discussed in four different novels. Six interlocked issues relating to the post-independence of African societies and Africans' migration to Europe and Germany guide the following exploration: 1. Cultural diversity; 2. Borders; 3. Race and Otherness; 4. Identity; 5. The concept of home, or "Heimat"; and 6. Belonging. I am particularly interested in the themes presented in the texts that describe experiences of migration from Africa to Germany. After the introduction, my analysis is dedicated to the four texts, *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen, Tränen im Sand, Das afrikanische Auge* and *Unter die Deutschen gefallen*. I devote a chapter to each author, presenting the works starting from the most recent of them—that is Erpenbeck's novel—and arriving at the one with the earliest publication date, Oji's *Unter die Deutschen gefallen.* Since the four texts largely revolve around the same themes, I shall situate my argument focusing on the perspective of migration.

With her vivid depiction of African migrants, identity, and borders, Erpenbeck's *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen* is the focus of my second chapter, "Heimat, fluid identities and borders." The chapter adds to the body of research on Erpenbeck's work through the lens of the African migrants' experience and the main character Richard. The migrant characters, upon arrival in Germany through different routes, confront the inner borders of Germany in their search for

work and a new life. Against this background, Erpenbeck situates migration at the center stage of her narration, where Africans are experiencing what it means to be seeking for asylum in Germany. The novel turns the compass so that readers could understand the migrant characters through the lens of the protagonist Richard, a retired professor of Classical Languages, but also orients the migrants' move from the African nations to Libya and then Germany. Though the plot and characters are integral to the novel, they also function primarily as an examination of identity and the search for home. I begin my discussion by highlighting how the concept of Heimat intersects with the migrants' search for attachment. I argue that belonging goes beyond identification, it reflects the experiences of exclusion within a community, the ways in which social bonds and detachments are manifested. Migration changes the characters' perception of home. Thus, the picture of home changes as migrants relocate in search of safety, jobs, and shelter. Furthermore, I also contemplate the notions of borders. This concept, as I show, forecloses the refugees' uneven stereotyping, and describes how the novel depicts a racialized identity of African migrants.

The notion of transculturality is at the core of my argument in the third chapter and relies upon "The Female Body, Self, and Transcultural Identity," which considers the autobiographical narrative of Abdi, the protagonist-character who was circumcised at the age of five. Although one might find the names of two authors, Nura Abdi and Leo Linder, in the "about the author page" of the book, I argue that the presence of Linder as the ghostwriter of Abdi's autobiography does not make the text a collaborative form of writing. Rather, readers regard the book as an autobiography that is written and narrated by Nura Abdi. Considering the issues surrounding Abdi's text, I explore how *Tränen im Sand* stands as a medium of resistance against female genital mutilation (FGM). The chapter develops the idea that Abdi's migration and culture-encounter autobiography is the response to a question that haunts her Self as it deals with

physical and mental trauma. I argue that migration paves the way for Nura's readjustment, cultural understanding of Germany, and transcultural identification. Abdi narrates her story starting from her birth in Somalia, her flight to Kenya and finally her planned trip to America which landed her in Düsseldorf, Germany. While I address the post-independent Somalia and Kenya in which Nura finds herself as a refugee before migrating to Germany, I show that the protagonist does not only find a new home outside Kenya and Somalia, but also searches for another Mogadishu in Germany. My definition of home differs from that of the previous chapter. For Abdi, "home" means to recreate and thus "find" Mogadishu. I argue that the author's construct of home is a place of safety, a community outside of what she knows and what resembles her life before her circumcision.

My contention in the fourth chapter, "Passport Stories and Translated People on the Margin", is that money does not only drive remittance-flow and the search for home in Germany, but also aids migrant characters in facilitating their journey. In Luc Degla's *Das Afrikanische Auge,* I pay particular attention to how strangeness in Germany and the Republic of Benin is framed and what this ideological positioning suggests about Germany's history of mixed race and migrant characters. Although Degla writes short stories using diverse narratorial voices, he depicts issues that concern migration and the difficult bureaucracy of the contemporary Benin society. The author seems cautious about presenting his literature differently from Nura Abdi, such as depicting different migrant characters and their experiences in Germany as refugees or migrants. On different occasions, German parents denied approval of their daughter's relationship with an African character because of his skin color. Besides the different stories connecting with similar African struggles of migration, it is important to look at the characters and their confrontation with identity and strangeness.

I begin chapter five, “Fathers, Mothers, and Children in Oji’s immigrant autobiography” by asking the following questions: How does the concept of power work in the mapping of race and foreignness? How do migration shape racial oppression and minoritized populations? What does it mean to be characterized as a minoritized individual in Germany? Does the argument surrounding race and migration affect German citizens? Since migration brings diverse people of race and color to another place or a country, these questions allow us to approach autobiographies as works that are deeply rooted in an aesthetic tradition that is at the center of migration studies. I argue that there is a possibility within the definition of the word “migrant” that may assist in contextualizing German women and children who encounter the same experience as Chima Oji, a black African and other African characters. I investigate Oji’s *Unter die Deutschen gefallen* analyzing the concept of foreignness in relation to race and migration. The grouping of exclusion in the context of foreignness is particularly useful in understanding how racism is manifested through power in the autobiography. The depiction of difference, skin color, and the denotation as “schwarz,” “Mischkind,” African or even as “Neger” reveals common stereotypes with which Oji, his wife, and child are confronted. Considering migration from Oji’s personal experience, I analyze the ways the autobiographer conceptualizes Otherness, showing how race disrupts the lives of Oji’s family. While discussing the issues of skin color and race as the formula of alienation, I examine how the writer’s background influences his worldview, his experience as a Black African while situating the concept of victimhood and Otherness as an integral part of migrants’ identity in Germany.

These authors despite their intrinsically versatile and diverse narrative style, add meanings to migration studies. This understanding shows in the way Erpenbeck, Abdi, Degla and Oji’s writings complement each other despite the differing nationality and background of these

authors. Their stylistic choices add to the role they play in the dissemination of migration narratives. These narrative voices, despite the diverse genres, demonstrate that in this context storytelling is not just a creative practice, but also a window into race, cultural and transcultural identity, the economics of migration and Otherness.

Chapter Two

Gehen, Ging, Gegangen: Heimat, Borders, and Fluid Identities

The title of Jenny Erpenbeck's *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen* (2015) indicates two movements: a geographic motion from one place to another and a chronological shift from the present to the past. The German movement verb "gehen" along with its past and past participle points to an earlier migration to Libya before entering a boat to Europe, while the present indicates a constant flux. The verb forms invite readers to think about mobility either in the form of Africans fleeing from Libya or Richard, the novel's German lead character, who goes out to enquire African migrants, albeit with limited success as will be shown in this chapter. Connecting time and space, Erpenbeck's novel deals with the theme of migration, a movement that means leaving one's homeland behind in hopes of finding a better life somewhere else. Europe's *migrant crisis* of 2015, its aftermath, and its impact on German society and the migrants could be seen as the immediate rationale for Erpenbeck's novel. More importantly, the story touches upon the human condition: What makes us human? What does it mean to help, to suffer, to live, and to die?

The 55 chapters of *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen* is narrated from an omniscient third person perspective. The novel depicts migrant characters of various African origin with stories of violence and homelessness that characterize people who are in the search for a new Heimat outside their national space. These themes surface throughout the novel. Readers follow Richard, a white German retiree and an emeritus professor, who embodies a ubiquitous ignorance throughout society. Richard's deliberate effort to get to know migrants in person unveils how little he knows about African countries despite his level of education. Through Richard, Erpenbeck depicts the many ways in which Awad, Raschid, Osarobo, and other Africans are

unaccepted and unwelcomed, and why they cannot escape stereotypes and Othering. Erpenbeck's novel was published in August 2016 and shortlisted for the Deutscher Buchpreis.

The war in Syria and Germany's extension of welcome to refugees under Angela Merkel's Chancellorship led to an influx of an already large pool of refugees and migrants from a variety of countries and regions to Europe. Besides Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia, and Niger are listed as African countries of refugees' origin. Many of the people who seek to build new lives in Europe cite their children's education as their primary motivation. Their arrival reached a staggering new level in 2015, dominating headlines and prompting a political and societal *Flüchtlingsdebatte.* Among the many headlines, editorial writers like Matthias Drobinski (Süddeutsche Zeitung), Liz Sly (Washington Post), Kimberly Hutcherson, Melissa Gray, and Frederik Pleitgen (CNN), and Christoph Hasselbach (Deutsche Welle) covered most of the topical issues on migration. Among the topics that were highlighted was a debate on how many refugees Germany ought to take in or, in some cases, if they should accept any at all. Although the word "crisis" is usually associated with "a time of intense difficulty, trouble, or danger," or "a situation that has reached a critical phase" as defined by Merriam Webster, the term *migrant crisis* used by media reporters is more indicative of a record level of displacement. The phrase also reflects the unusual number of sea crossing from Libya to Italy with capsized boats and unaccounted deaths on the Mediterranean and the "[nearly] half a million people who applied for asylum in Germany in 2015, and another 750,000 the following year" (Hasselbach).

Erpenbeck's appears to weave news coverage in her book, depicting an in-depth and personal approach to the migrants themselves, their fates, stories, and struggles. The narrator mirrors this crisis in the novel as Raschid narrates his journey to his new friend Richard:

> Dann fiel der Kompass aus. Drei Tage führen wir einfach herum, ohne die Richtung zu wissen. Der Kapitän übersah nachts ein paar Bojen, da schrammte das Boot über Felsen. Der Motor ging kaputt. Panik brach aus . . . Fünf Tage insgesamt ohne Essen und Trinken. Es ging uns allen sehr schlecht. Einige sind gestorben. Und die, die noch lebten, hatten überhaupt keine Kraft mehr . . . es gab einen Tumult. Die vom Rettungsboot wollten uns helfen, sie warfen Essen und Wasserflaschen zu uns herüber, alle versuchten, etwas zu fangen, und das Boot geriet dadurch ins Schwanken. Und dann kippte es plötzlich um. ("Gehen" 239)

The meta-history of migration is largely fictionalized in *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen*. As a result, the reader does not need to be well versed in African-European history to grasp the overall themes. In comparison to the statistics-based news reports of 2015 and 2016, Erpenbeck focuses on the emotional impact of the African migrants' journey to Europe and the ordeals they go through, including, among other things, the capsizing of their boats on the Mediterranean Sea. The novel documents this story through the fictional character Raschid, one of the African asylum seekers with whom Richard comes in contact. From an addendum to the novel, in which the author thanks different persons who do not bear typical German names but Islamic and native African names ("Gehen" 350), we learn about the sources of her inspiration. As fictionalized as the story may be, we can rightfully assume that events discussed in the narration might have been real, even if names, locations, and the order of events may have been altered.

This chapter adds to the body of research on Erpenbeck's *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen*. I discuss how the concept of Heimat intersects with the experience of migration. The novel depicts the specific predicament of African immigrants at the mercy of migrancy and the helplessness they feel while searching for shelter and legal residency in Germany. I argue that belonging goes beyond identification; it reflects the experiences of inclusion within a community, the ways in which social bonds and ties are manifested. Next, I investigate cultural contact and fluid identities. I lean on Mary Pratt's definition of "Contact Zone" to analyze how through migration, the African

culture and Richard's (mis)interpretation thereof meet and grapple with each other. While this migration experience shapes and transforms the Africans' identity—whether as migrants, Richard's friends, or even as "stateless" and "rightless" persons, to borrow from Hannah Arendt—their identification is illustrative of the dynamics of border creation and crossing. Through focusing on the migrants' friendship with non-Africans, I argue that German characters could be considered representatives of a Europe that fosters stereotyping and uses borders as mechanism of exclusion.

Gehen, Ging, Gegangen appears to be unusual for Erpenbeck since she captures the core elements of migration from Africa to Europe while adhering to known historical facts. In contrast to her other novels like *Heimsuchung* (2008) and *Aller Tage Abend* (2012), which focus on histories of families from the 1920s to the 1990s and various cultural and historical references like the Soviet Committee for State Security (KGB) and the daily life in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen* documents mobility and the new Africa-German relationship from a contemporary perspective. Peter Blickle (66) confirms that *Heimsuchung,* for example, is narrated in chronological order, centering on a house on Lake Brandenburg, twelve resumés, stories, gardens, and fates from the twenties to today entwine themselves. The house and its inhabitants experience the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, the war and its end, the GDR, the end of the Cold War, and the post-reunification era. Axel Goodbody, writing about *Heimsuchung*, notes that Erpenbeck emphasizes buildings and garden design as instances of the human attempt to make oneself at home in the world (138). On the other hand, *Aller Tage Abend* (2012) consists essentially of five "books," each leading to a different death of the same unnamed female protagonist. I consider *Aller Tage Abend* as a novel of incredible breadth and amazing concision that offers a unique overview of the twentieth century Hapsburg Empire,

Vienna after World War I, and communism's impact on society. In *Gehen, ging, gegangen,* Erpenbeck shifts from the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich history to the most recent events surrounding migration.

Indeed, her recent novel shares some characteristics with the documentary novel as defined by Barbara Foley in her essay "The Documentary Novel and the Problem of Borders." Foley claims that a documentary novel holds two major forms—the fictional autobiography and the meta-historical novel (239). The author holds that a fictional autobiography depicts a character "who assumes the status of a real person inhabiting an invented situation" while the meta-historical form references a historical process, making its documentation to depend on the "very indeterminacy of factual verification" (245). Although fictionalized events form the foundation of the novel, I argue that it could be regarded as a documentary novel. The breaking of the compass, staying five days without water or food on the sea, and the evidence of "ungefähr 550 von den 800 Leute sind ertrunken" suggests that Erpenbeck uses authentic historical and documentary materials but presents them through the techniques and forms of creative writing. What distinguishes *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen* from newspaper reports or more obvious fact-based genres is the combination of factual elements—"[das] Boot, das dadurch ins Schwanken [geraten war]. Und dann kippte es plötzlich um" ("Gehen" 239)—and fictive discourse of the events and the characters to protect the actual identity of the contributing African migrants. Although the author has no migrant background, in an interview with Sebastian Naumann, a reporter from the Berliner Sport Zeitung, Erpenbeck explains that she would not regard her novel as a documentary since "[sie hat] mit Flüchtlingen gesprochen und deren Geschichten im Buch verarbeitet. [Sie hat] dann ein ganzes Jahr lang diese Menschen in ihrem Alltag und bei vielen Quartierwechseln begleitet. In der Zeit dieser Recherche habe ich

sicher weniger Zeit mit dem Schreiben verbracht als mit den Flüchtlingen selbst." While she disagrees that her novel reads documentary, Erpenbeck's response to Naumann suggests that she fictionalizes her stories of the migrants, with whom she spends most of her time writing.

Erpenbeck's novel portrays Germany's *Flüchtlingsdebatte* as Richard learns about ten asylum seekers from Africa who are on a hunger strike and want nobody to know their names. For Richard, the sight of a dead, washed out body of an African migrant at the lake signifies a gradual shift in his life ("Gehen" 17). The novel creates a visible boundary of what could be seen, the drowned man at the lake and the invisible migrants gathered at am Oranienplatz. The text weaves these layers of boundaries contextualizing Richard, who is moved by empathy. As the news report that "einer der Hungerstreikenden ist zusammengebrochen und wurde ins Krankenhaus abtransportiert ("Gehen" 27)" and "sechs Menschen seien allein am heutigen Tag in den Gewässern rund um Berlin bei Badeunfällen ertrunken" ("Gehen" 29) Richard wonders why he never met them at Alexanderplatz. Richard contacts the African migrants, takes down notes, and tries to build a relationship with them. He interviews the men individually, listens to their stories, and later becomes friends with most of them. Richard could not tell where Burkina Faso, Ghana, Sierra Leone, or even Nigeria is located. As if the text wants to make Richard feel good, the narrator details how "selbst der amerikanische Vizepräsident hat neulich von Afrika als von *einem* Land gesprochen" ("Gehen" 33). By no means is Richard simply ignorant due to poor education since he is an emeritus professor. He embodies the ubiquitous ignorance in all levels of society, even among the most educated and highly placed, when it comes to migrants and their reasons for migration. Although the novel portrays scenes from Libya, Nigeria, Ghana, and the Niger Republic, it is set mostly in a nursing home where the African migrants are housed temporarily, Oranienplatz in Kreuzberg and *am Roten Rathaus* in Berlin, a place not too far from

"Am Rand," close to Richard's house and the former Berlin Wall in Berlin East ("Gehen" 18). Oranienplatz appears to be a convenient place where the Africans draw the attention of the German authorities in their bid to get papers to live and work in Germany, a location that resonates with border crossing and the deaths of Germans trying to reach West Germany in search of a better life.

The Migrants' Experience, Heimat and Belonging

Migration is a shared experience in Erpenbeck's novel. This experience intersects with finding a safe home and belonging. By following the narrator's lead, readers do not simply learn how African migrants move across borders or cross the Mediterranean Sea, but encounter how Germany provides accommodation for migrants, contain them while processing their asylum claims. How do these Africans interpret their status in Germany? By understanding how the asylum seekers experience their stay in Germany in relation to "Heimat," a place and belonging, readers can learn how their rationale for crossing borders becomes expressed through the bigger picture of migration. This understanding is expressed through Heimat and the search for belonging.

The term "Heimat" has gained a strong presence in German Studies and Migration discourse. Tracing the figurations of Heimat discourse, researchers have explored its multiple meanings. Celia Applegate's historical investigation of Heimat holds that the word itself means the "history of a certain way of talking and thinking about German society and Germanness" (5-6). Johannes von Moltke's *No Place Like Home* delineates Heimat "as a limited terrain that affords its inhabitants respite and protection from incursions originating in the more intangible

and abstract spaces beyond its boundaries" (11). In Peter Blickle's *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (2002), the author argues that the idea of Heimat interpenetrates German notions of modernity, identity, gender, nature, and innocence. Blickle defines Heimat "as a place where one feels at home with oneself" (19). Friederike Eigler and Jens Kugele's *Heimat at the Intersection of Memory and Space* introduces the notion of space and spatiality to the analysis of home, arguing that "Heimat carries with it a long history of usages and appropriations that are tied specifically to German national and cultural history" (1). Eigler and Kugele perceive Heimat as a hybrid construction that opens new spaces and challenges static notions of place and belonging. There seems to be a centrality of focus in the theorization of Heimat, the agreement on place-locality, cultural-historical-identity, and place-belonging. While it may seem difficult to generate more definitions for a word that has been approached from different interdisciplinary perspectives, I understand Heimat, or the English word "home," as a space that speaks of job security, community, and an individually constructed notion that reflects migrant's search for belonging.

bell hooks writes of the way in which the notions of place unfolds into a source of belonging and cultural identity. "Home is no longer just one place. It is locations. Home is that place which enables and promotes varied and everchanging perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference" (hooks 148). hooks argument captures the derivation of home from locations that are constructed out of movement and the complex product of shifting geographies from the past to the present. The definition of home, just as hooks argues in relation to experience of alienation and estrangement, reverberates notions of place, a source of security, belonging, and nostalgia. My approach draws on hooks'

concept along with earlier research on the notion of "Heimat" that emphasizes financial and physical security, national identity, and space for memory reconstruction.

Bearing resemblance with Heimat as a space that mirrors new realities of life, the accommodations given to the migrants reflect the broader disrespect they experience. Initially, they were housed in an Altersheim. The Berlin's Senate lodged the asylum seekers in a place where "die Zimmer entsprechen nicht den Standards für eine längerfristige Lösung. Im Grunde genommen sollte das hier schon eine Baustelle sein. Es gibt zu wenig Küchen, zu wenig Waschräume für alle, und die Zimmerbelegung ist nicht ideal, mit all den Liegen" ("Gehen" 57). The migrants' sojourn in Germany seems dependent on the whims Berlin's Senators. The room's sub-standard condition alludes to the fact that the migrants were subjected to the dictates of migrations. The text further shows similar mistreatment of the African migrants, depicting as "[d]er Leiter klopft und öffnet eine der Türen, ohne auf Antwort zu warten, so wie ein Arzt oder Pfleger auf einer Krankenstation" ("Gehen" 59). This example of knocking and entering without getting the permission to come in exposes the migrants' undignified treatment, their helplessness and powerlessness, as if they were second-class humans without the right to privacy and autonomy over who could be allowed into their rooms.

Migration comes with the quest to find a new home outside one's country. The migrant characters left their various nations of origin for different reasons. For instance, Awad, the Ghanaian, was forced to flee to Italy through the Mediterranean Sea after war broke out in Libya ("Gehen" 62-63). Osarobo, a Nigerian who grew up in Libya, also came to Italy through the same route as Awad ("Gehen" 124). Ithemba's story seems different from the first two. While he was unable to profit from his shoe business in Ghana, Ithemba pays a smuggling syndicate for his trip to Libya, and after the war broke out, he further paid his way to Italy ("Gehen" 143).

Raschid, who left Kaduna, Nigeria, because of religious violence for Libya, was also forced to leave the same country for Italy through the sea ("Gehen" 239). While the migrant characters were forced out of Libya at the outbreak of war, Libya was where they all settled before the forced migration to Europe. "Forced" because none of them intended to arrive in Europe anymore after Libya provided them with a "womb-like security" (Boa and Palfreyman 26) and a place like home (Moltke). For a while, it seems, Libya could in fact not only be *like* home, but instead *be* home. What Libya did not offer, though, is an opportunity to thrive professionally and to secure a stable income. As a result, Osarobo, Rufu, and Awad remained in a heightened state of alertness and maintained their search for a place where they could earn money, an essential means to live in dignity as suggested by the first article of the German constitution: "Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar." Their reason for moving to Germany ties with the hopes of finding a home, a place that provides work, social connections, and finally, a sense of belonging. In the novel's second chapter, the narrator borrows the voice of curious police officers and various city employees who are confronted with the sudden presence of ten men in front of Berlin's Town Hall: "Was wollen die Männer? Arbeit wollen sie. Und von der Arbeit leben. In Deutschland bleiben wollen sie" ("Gehen" 18).

The European law not only complicates but poses all kinds of problems for asylum seekers, and the EU's bureaucracy itself. For example, requests for asylum should be made outside of the EU. However, many asylum seekers do not live in a safe environment and cannot wait for months until a decision is made. Towards the end of the novel, it becomes clear that migrants, for reasons other than political persecution and threats to their lives, are rarely granted asylum status. This, however, does not deter migrants from entering the EU in hopes to stay once its borders are crossed. The 2003 Dublin II Regulation determines that asylum seekers must be

registered in the first country of arrival (particularly if entering the EU illegally) and remain there for the time being. It was this restrictive law that led to many migrants' march through the Balkans northwest and from Italy northwards to reach countries such as Austria, Germany, and even Sweden, causing what is commonly referred to as "migration crisis." Indeed, the Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission suggests that each member state of the European Union is responsible for examining an asylum application, and member states can choose to return asylum seekers to their country of first entry for asylum processing claims as long as that country has an effective asylum system. This system of accepting and checking asylum seekers claims is also reflected in *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen*:

> Zuständig für den Inhalt Ihrer Geschichte ist einzig das Land, in dem sie zum ersten Mal europäischen Boden betreten. Nur dort dürfen sie um Asyl bitten, nirgends sonst . . . Mit Dublin II hat sich jedes europäische Land, das keine Mittelmeerküste besitzt, das Recht erkauft, den Flüchtlingen, die übers Mittelmeer kommen, nicht zuhören zu müssen. ("Gehen" 85)

Why, then, do so many migrants and asylum seekers decide to move to Germany after staying in Italy for some months? Rufu, for example, "hat keine italienische Krankenkassenkarte, denn sein permesso ist abgelaufen, und um zur Erneuerung nach Italien zu fahren, war er schon seit längerem zu krank. Rufu hat auch keine deutsche Krankenkassenkarte, denn er darf in Deutschland kein Asylbewerber sein" ("Gehen" 290). Although, Rufu's point of entry to Europe is Italy, where he possesses an invalid resident permit, he seeks a home in Germany, forgoing his legal right to file for asylum and to achieve legal status. Awad equally explains his disappointment and frustration of Italy to Richard:

> ein Dreivierteljahr war er in einem Camp auf Sizilien, mit zehn Leuten in einem Zimmer. Dann musste er raus. Von dem Moment an, in dem sie dich aus dem Haus rausschicken, musst du selber einen Schlafplatz finden, du bist frei! Kein Job, kein Ticket, kein

> Essen, du kannst keine Unterkunft mieten. Ich schlief im Bahnhof. Tagsüber lief ich herum, abends kam ich in den Bahnhof zum Schlafen. (“Gehen” 81–82)

Awad’s emotional state reveals the gap in a safe country like Italy, where he finds nothing to eat or a place to sleep. In his search to fill this hole, he invests 80 Euros in transporting himself to Germany. For him, “home” symbolizes a place fulfilling basic needs: “Am Oranienplatz bekam er zu essen. Und einen Schlafplatz. Der Oranienplatz sorgte für ihn, so wie in Libyen sein Vater” (“Gehen” 83). Am Oranienplatz provides a Libya-like feature that brings his basic human need to the forefront. Juxtaposing the 2003 Dublin II Regulation with asylum laws in Europe, the absence of home complicates this law and makes it difficult for migrants’ adherence since its availability, for the African characters, is the defining factor for their stay in a particular country.

Heimat, Linda Shortt (5) argues, “is perceived as a ‘thick place’ and used to counter the increasing placelessness caused by acceleration, globalization and hypermobility.” Unlike Boa and Palfreyman who metaphorize Heimat as a “womb-like security” (26), Shortt notes that the concept relays historical attachment to a place. Evoking the characters’ encounter with placelessness and displacement from their origin via Libya, the multi-layered concept of Heimat is exemplified through Richard and how he recalls Oranienplatz as something he seems to be familiar with, as he:

> begreift plötzlich, dass der Oranienplatz nicht nur der Platz ist, den der berühmte Gartenbauarchitekt Lenné im 19. Jahrhundert konzipiert hat, nicht nur der Platz, an dem eine alte Frau täglich ihren Hund ausgeführt, oder ein Mädchen auf einer Parkbank zum ersten Mal ihren Freund geküsst hat. Für einen Jungen, der unter Nomaden aufgewachsen ist, ist der Oranienplatz, den er anderthalb Jahre bewohnt hat, nur eine Station auf einem langen Weg, ein vorläufiger Ort, der zum nächsten vorläufigen Ort führt. (“Gehen” 70)

The narrator introduces one of the migrants from the Tuareg tribe of the Republic of Niger, a nameless character who is constantly described as "der Junge." The Oranienplatz as Heimat is here evoked as the boy's newfound home, a place of interconnectedness, albeit a fleeting one. Richard's familiarity with Oranienplatz is constructed in the boundary with East Germany, which links to his East German background and the border to West Berlin. Born in Silesia, East Germany, Richard was an infant when his family moved to West Germany ("Gehen" 25). Not only does Oranienplatz express Richard's historical attachment to East Germany, the place parallels between the nomadic sense of home and the temporary camp, a transitory home that historicizes East Germany. The former border space resonates with Richard's sense of home since it is congruent with his life story. The "vorläufigen Ort" echoes migration and globalization that aligns with Richard's parents' move for safety and better opportunity in West Germany.

Apart from Richard's reception as an adult, Oranienplatz speaks to the Nigerien's nomadic life. The text reinforces the migrants' home that underlies this first installment of the boy's place of rest in Germany. The author depicts the nostalgic construction that produces architectural safety. In his conversation with Richard, the boy pulls images from the internet to show him how the Tuareg people of the Niger Republic lived and adds that "wenn man weiterzieht, … legt man die Hütte nieder und geht—die Blätter, das Schilf, die Asche vom Feuer, das verschwindet alles bald wieder in der Wüste" ("Gehen" 69). The boy's idea of home describes mobility influenced by his nomadic lifestyle—a way of living that seemed out of place and time through the migrant experience in a globalized world. In describing what constitutes a mobile home, the boy always travels with "die Lederhäute und Matte. . ., das Geschirr, den Hausrat, die Kleidung, alles, was man besitzt . . ." ("Gehen" 69). Similar to his mobile home, he says, "man belädt die Kamele, legt die Hütten nieder und geht. Er macht mit den Händen eine

Geste, die zeigen soll, wie flach das ist, was man zurücklässt und sagt: Oranienplatz" ("Gehen" 70). The Tuareg's stop at the Oranienplatz reflects the beginning of his experience of another home away from Niger Republic, one that is immobile and mobile at the same time as well as timeless and present. Taking his nomadic background into consideration, Oranienplatz embodies a deep connection as he perceives home to be a place of rest while on transit.

The notion of home is mobile and sparks old memories. This mobility and remembrance come at a price since any disruption of one's life story leads to a desperate search for a new chapter. In his discussion on how our sense of place and identity is realized, Ian Chambers argues, nomadism implies a sense of home. "It means to conceive of dwelling as a mobile habitat, as a mode of inhabiting time and space not as though they were fixed and closed structures, as providing the critical provocation of an opening whose questioning presence reverberates in the movement of languages that constitute our sense of identity, place and belonging" (Chambers 4). Although the Tuareg has been on transit, being dislocated from home, the spatial Oranienplatz reflects the emotional investment to a place of rest while traveling and the mobile desire for attachment. Besides a resting place, the fictionalized site, according to Olivia Landry, bears connection with "recent political and social justice movements" and is an actual refugee protest camp that existed in Berlin-Kreuzberg between 2012-2014 (398). Landry maintains that refugees turn this site of struggle into "an urban campsite for survival and politics" (403). Oranienplatz manifests as a relay station for the Tuareg's long journey and migration from the Republic of Niger to Libya and Germany relate to his nomadic lifestyle of travelling on seasonal basis.

Having permission to work is synonymous with the migrants' definition of home. Although they receive some form of money, the Africans were interested in financial

independence even as Raschid explains to Richard that "wir wollen arbeiten, . . . aber wir bekommen keine Arbeiterlaubnis" ("Gehen" 63). Raschid's statement evokes home that is migrant-inclusive, a space that speaks of unrestricted liberty to work. Apart from Raschid, Awad is another character that demonstrates the desire to work. As Richard wonders if they receive financial support from the German government, Awad responds, "Ja, seit zwei Wochen, . . . aber das ist nicht gut, ich will lieber Arbeit. Arbeit Arbeit" ("Gehen" 71). Awad's reply shows how home intertwines with his wish to make a living even as Heimat, Boa and Palfreyman (50) note, represents a complex network of physically and economically connected places housed with material and imaginary values. In as much as the characters do not share any tie with Germany's colonial past, they place value on Germany as a home that embodies physical and economic interconnectedness. In this sense, Raschid and Awad verbalize the imaginary value that connects with work or work permit.

Italy did not fulfill their hopes to find work or a sense of belonging. The Africans migrants expect jobs instead of monthly stipends from the Italian government. Where if not in Germany, the fourth largest economic power in the world, could they expect to make themselves a living? Their perception of home connotes material and economic sustenance. Monetary factors, Sara Ahlstedt (304) and Marco Antonsich (648) assert, are essential in migrants' search for a new location. In the second chapter of the novel, as the migrants were on a hunger strike, they request "Arbeit wollen [wir]. Und von der Arbeit leben. In Deutschland bleiben wollen [wir]" ("Gehen" 18). Their motive of gathering in front of the Rotes Rathaus in Berlin without eating or drinking denotes their search for a home with economic security. Antonsich (648) stresses that migrants consider themselves members of the place where they live when considered amongst the country's working force. The sense of belonging is independent of

Germany's refugee stipends. Still, it hinges on economic security that accentuates their conception of home, referring to their need for a stable income and independently supporting their stay in Germany.

Connecting work with money, the novel also emphasizes remittance. In the study of migration, remittance means the practice of sending money, often by a migrant to an individual in their home country (See Supriya Singh 37; Asis et al. 200; Gollerkeri and Chhabra 219; Schmalzbauer 1320; Jung 80)**.** The novel exemplifies the implicit and explicit economic value in the characters' choice for migrancy. For example, Osarobo's search for belonging outside of the familiar space could not be understood without considering his strong desire to help his family in Ghana. While narrating his sojourn in Italy, he tells Richard that "so lange, wie ich in Italien im Camp war, bekam ich 75 Euro im Monat, 20 oder 30 davon schickte ich meiner Mutter" ("Gehen" 144). For Osarobo, Italy represents home in the form of material support, evoking the significance of being able to sustain himself and his family. In their articles on mothering from afar and living abroad, Leah Schmalzbauer, Maruja Asis, Shilerna Huang, and Brenda Yeoh emphasize the importance of migration for supporting the family from abroad. Although Schmalzbauer et al. studies the Honduran transnational families in America while Asis, Huang, and Yeoh focus on unskilled female migration and the Filipino family living in the United States, their conclusions help to understand what motivates migrants around the globe. Schmalzbauer, Asis, Huang, and Huang conclude that migrants are not only interested in searching for wages but are willing to parent their families from abroad. The story of Karon Anubo highlights similar family ideals of migrants who take care of their parents while on the move. Congruently, in a conversation with Richard, Karon notes, "[n]ormally I send 150 Euro to my mom, my sister and my brothers. Aber diesen Monat habe ich noch einmal 50 Euro extra geschickt, weil mein Bruder

sich bei der Arbeit auf dem Feld mit der Cutlass geschnitten hat und ins Krankenhaus musste" ("Gehen" 250). This narrated dialogue with Richard gives credibility to Karon's support for his family, weaving his search for home and his migration-value to Germany. His ideas about home emanate from his understanding that "der älteste Sohn muss für die Familie sorgen ("Gehen" 250). This shared value influences his desire to provide for his family financially, even if he must do it from Germany. Home is relational and represents a space where migrants fulfill their family duties and carry out their cultural obligation as the eldest son in the house.

Safety is of paramount importance to the African migrants as it was, for a while, what attracted and tied them to Libya. The novel makes violence comprehensible through individual stories about bloodshed and trauma. Migration, then, becomes a metaphor for the very process of seeking security from violence. Raschid, Osarobo, Zair, Ithemba, Karon Anubo, and Awad fled from diverse places to Europe for fear of their lives. Consequently, their feelings towards home are characterized by the search for security. Awad, whom Richard surnames Tristan, "arbeitet als Automechaniker und [hat] ein gutes Leben in Libyen" ("Gehen" 76). Similarly, Raschid is married with two children, Ahmed and Amina, but lost his father and mother in the Muslim-Christian violence in Kaduna, Nigeria, which led to his migration to Libya. In search of safety and belonging, he becomes established in Libya, "Meine Firma war in der Nähe der Schule. Zwei Gebäude, außen zwar nicht verputzt, aber innen. Und ein Hof. beinahe genauso groß wie die Firma, die ich in Kaduna hatte. Die Miete 500 Dinar, das sind ungefähr 300 Euro" ("Gehen" 236). Obviously, Libya was already a safe space outside Nigeria that suggests an embodied relationship with home. Besides, Libya evokes the times and places of the past better, giving Raschid a place to establish himself financially. Raschid's move to Libya captures his search for home since Heimat provides a "womb-like security" (Boa and Palfreyman 26).

Language is a strategy of survival and necessarily a topic within the novel. For Ali, Heimat denotes a geographical place of shared linguistic conventions; hence, learning the German language becomes his goal. Although readers are provided a few details about Ali, the Chadian, the narrator compliments him as "Richards fortgeschrittenem Deutschschüler" ("Gehen" 216). According to Erpenbeck's novel, the German government considers German language fluency a cornerstone for integration and spends a considerable amount of money to achieve this goal. As the argument goes, this would serve migrants also as an essential part of the German identity. As Blickle notes "contemporary Heimat constructs are little identity centers of the many minorities" ("Gender" 63). The German identity extended to Ali reflects a new form of accepting Ali as a minority since it reflects his subjectivity within the German world. Alternatively, the possessive attached to Ali as "Richards fortgeschrittenem Deutschschüler" represent, like Richard, his ability to express himself in German. Furthermore, Ali stands out amongst the other migrants since he cares for Anne's mother, Richard's friend. His "fortgeschrittenes Deutsch" enabled him to adapt quickly. In an email exchange with Richard, Anne praises Ali's advanced German: "Er hat tatsächlich *Brücke in dieses Land* gesagt, er ist unglaublich talentiert" ("Gehen" 242). Castles and Miller (203, 245) suggest that assimilation means incorporating migrants into the community and treating them as "New-Germans." The German language here represents a distinct community of people who understand each other. In her essay "Heimat – Begriff und Erfahrung", Marita Krauss asserts that "durch die Rückkehr in eine regionale Sprachheimat ist [jemand] wieder in der Heimat angekommen" (21). Although Ali is a learner of the language and did not return to his "regionale Sprachheimat" but emigrated to a place where he masters the "Ausdrucksmedium," "Sprache" as Krauss points out, "spielte daher eine zentrale Rolle fur das Sich-Zuhause-Fühlen" (21). The German language becomes Ali's

Sprachheimat, functioning as a safe space since it allows him to freely communicate, express his wishes and desires, and give care to Anne's mother all within the same space.

So far, the concept of Heimat allows for an interpretation of how the African migrants perceive Germany, highlighting their reasons for leaving Italy, their first port of entry into Europe. Heimat captures the model for home, assimilation in the face of German identity, and security. While I depart from this concept, the migrants' presence in Germany questions the idea of belonging. In as much as home means from where migrants can support their family, does this translate to the feelings of attachment to the German community? Are Erpenbeck's migrant characters interested in finding a home in Germany without an emerging sense of belonging? Arguing that home and belonging are essential for migrants, who find themselves outside their birth country and particularly for undocumented migrants, Ricardo Gomez and Sara Vannini argue that migrants' search for belonging involves building a future in place (6). While I associate this spatial future with home, "belonging is not just about social locations and constructions of individual and collective identities and attachments but also about the ways these are valued and judged" (Yuval-Davis 203). By this definition, Yuval-Davis underlines the notion of belonging, stressing the emotional investment and attachments to specific places or groups, individual's identification to social categorization, the desire for inclusion in certain rights and privileges of a nation outside one's birth country. Like Gomez and Vannini, Gurucharan Gollerkeri and Natasha Chhabra opine that the need to belong is the migrants' top priority after leaving their country. The authors assert that "belonging is the sense of being part of a larger group, of feeling at home, of feeling safe" (112). In other words, the subject matter of belonging is marked by a sense of belonging to a 'migrant community' that shares common struggles and identity. By struggles, I express the difficulty accessing employment or residency

status and territorial identification as migrants. belonging in this sense allows for a varied vocabulary to express attachment to a place.

Communities are constructed among migrants themselves before non-migrants attach a label by regarding all of them simply as "migrants" regardless of their origin, values, and motivations. In a nursing home where the African migrants were temporarily lodged, migrants were divided by descent: "Es gibt auch ein Ghana-Zimmer, ein Niger-Zimmer und so weiter" ("Gehen" 61). The rooms are static notions of place and belonging (Eigler and Kugele 3) in an ever-changing and -shifting world as they signify national identity where no nation exists. The national space provides the basis for "being part of a larger group" according to Gollerkeri and Chhabra, but an "imagined community" of migrants with shared history and nationality. Benedict Anderson, in his reading of Ernest Renan's famous essay "What is a nation?", identifies the birth of the nation-state: the development of nationalism during the nineteenth century while exploring notions of identity and belonging. Community, Anderson declares, is *imagined* because of shared fraternity, history, and narrative (6-9) all of which are become manifest through and are expressed through ideas. Returning to Erpenbeck's novel, these ideas unfold, for example, during the hunger strike at Oranienplatz when principles of national identity, fraternity, and history apply to each sub-group of migrants. Raschid tells Richard: "So haben wir es auch auf dem Oranienplatz mit den Zelten gemacht, dann kennt man sich besser aus, . . . Also hier, in Zimmer 2017, sind wir sozusagen in Nigeria" ("Gehen" 61). Recalling their living situation at the Oranienplatz with the "Zelten, "Ghana-Zimmer, Niger-Zimmer," etc., Raschid and the other migrants cluster as most of us would do in search for commonalities in a location of hostility and rejection. And yet, hostility and rejection are not enough to eradicate the difference among each of the sub-groups of "migrants," a label that was applied by others and adopted by necessity.

Although migration brings diverse people together through culture mixing and interaction in their search for jobs and a better life, they stay apart as groups, identified by national or ethnic origin—a marker that is espoused voluntarily and due to lack of options. While migrants live in a state of "in-between"—not quite gone as their original home continues to occupy thoughts and actions, but also not yet arrived as arrival is mutual and needs an open mind on both ends—they are not given a real chance to adapt to the new culture until lawfully accepted into the country and granted at least temporary residence permit status. They are trapped in this same spatial home and disrupted belonging within the German boundaries that demonstrate their limit as migrants.

Ithemba, for example, seeks modes of belonging that extends beyond the geographical delineation of Germany. The depiction of Ithemba's echoes the notions of Heimat in Germany. Heimat, I propose, serves as a dual code for the authentic display of the culture of origin and its specific constructions for the migrants in their new location. This is the case when the omniscient narrator chronicles famous Nigerian music and a festival. As Ithemba connects to Nigeria through his cracked phone, allowing Richard to see his country far away, he tells him:

> Jeder in Nigeria kennt dieses Lied. Das Eyo-Festival auf der Insel von Lagos. Lagos? Weiße Hüte, weiße Kleider bis zum Boden und weiße Bärte und Netze vor den Gesichtern, so geben die Geister ihrem verstorbenen König das letzte Geleit. Manche von ihnen vollführen Sprünge, auf dem Foto krümmen sie sich einen halben Meter über der Erde, es sieht so aus als kämen sie gerade aus der Luft und wollten nun landen. ("Gehen" 62)

This quote brings readers in contact with twentieth-century Nigerian history and cultural practices to grasp the character's search for home through a mobile device. "Home," in fact, is mediated, a location somewhere between dreams, hopes, imagination, and image. Eigler and Kugele (1) write that the search for "belonging may involve attachment to a material or virtual

place, and these forms of attachment are necessarily mediated—and thus shaped" by our attachment to a material or the memory of home. Being temporarily transferred to Nigeria, Ithemba reminisces on his home country. His desire for belonging is mediated by his memory of Nigeria, the cultural festival that bolsters the bond to his home country. The notion of home juxtaposed with belonging, in this sense, accounts for the important accessories of Ithemba's culture, the valuable discourse that negotiates his sense of self as a Nigerian.

Besides security, the African migrants are also interested in legal residential status in Germany. Tracking how the African migrants settle down in Europe, the narrator shows that mobility and the sense of home come at a high price. Osarobo, Awad, Raschid, or even Yussuf, must first be legally allowed to stay in Germany before being allowed to work. The hunger strike in front of the "Roten Rathaus in Berlin" ("Gehen" 18) expresses the urgency of clarifying their legal status and the wish of "von der Arbeit [zu] leben" and "in Deutschland [zu] bleiben" ("Gehen" 18). Having the permission to live and work in Germany marks a legal form of belonging to the German community as a migrant. In as much as they voice their quest for belonging, the migrants' requests refer to belonging to a specific territory. In his discussion about the lives of Black Africans in Hamburg, Frank Codjoe notes that "[d]ie Aufenthaltsgenehmigung bestimmt das Leben eines jeden Zuwanderers in Deutschland. Ob ein Einwanderer ein Bleiberecht in Deutschland haben wird oder nicht, hängt von der Gewährung oder Ablehnung der Aufenthaltsgenehmigung ab" (12). In a more recent publication, the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge in their online glossary explains that "für [ein Asyl oder] einen Aufenthalt in Deutschland brauchen [Migranten] grundsätzlich eine Erlaubnis." The work permit affords migrants the opportunity to take up any legal work. Residency, in this sense, reflects the Africans legal desire for belonging. Antonsich (264) confirms that legitimate factors like resident

permits and *asylum status* are equally features of belonging. This formal structure shapes one's feeling of belonging. Osarobo and his friends, I argue, are not interested in getting a job or being paid from the asylum seekers' purse but are looking for an Aufenthaltstitel which establishes their formal residence in Germany, making them residents of Germany. Being entitled to asylum which also comes with residence permit from the German immigration authority, serves as the legal point of attachment for certain common rights to live and work in the country.

Not surprisingly, *Gehen, ging, gegangen* emphasizes the meaning of money as a means for social belonging. In this context, Richard takes on the role of a benevolent patriarch—a *providing* and caring elder who represents a potential source of wealth as well as social connection. Along these lines, Ludewig considers Richard as the German symbol of "Vater Staat," "die deutsche Gastfreundschaft der afrikanischen Migranten," concluding that he represents the "bürgerliche Kultur in Deutschland" and considering him to be "ein provisorischer Ersatzvater" of the migrants. While Richard empathizes with the migrants, Brangwen Stone argues that Richard's friendship with these men is faulted at some point (6-7). The protagonist's flaw proves the hidden prejudice behind his benevolence, since he is merely the narrative center of the novel—an alter ego of the narrator whose perspective merges with that of the German Bildungsbürger. Through Richard, readers gain access to the ephemeral identities of migrating individuals who happen to have ended their journey in Europe while searching for belonging and economic independence. The narrator captures the migrants' experience. Their search for Heimat is synonymous with security, legal stay in Germany and a community of shared history and struggles which connects with the search for belonging. Consequently, the novel opens a discussion on how Germans label migrants and how the migrants, in turn, see themselves in Germany. However, the question remains, what type of experience underlies these identities.

Such identification is important when we discuss cultural contact and how Erpenbeck constructs the notion of identity while the migrants are on the move.

In addition to money reflecting a means of social belonging, it brought Karon closer to Richard. The friendship and meeting between Richard and Karon begin on Richard's way downstairs from the nursing home where Karon shares his story about coming to Europe. He tells Richard that "mit acht oder neun Jahren haben meine Eltern mich bei der Stiefmutter gelassen, der ersten Frau meines Vaters, und sind mit meinen zwei Brüdern und meiner Schwester in anderes Dorf gezogen" ("Gehen" 136). As Richard listens, Karon explains his difficulty thriving financially and his journey to Kumasi, Ghana, searching for greener pasture. Out of financial stress and frustration, he plans to drink DDT, but the insecticide seller talked him out of his plans ("Gehen" 141). While Karon's stories revolve around poverty and the eagerness to survive, Richard empathizes with Karon and his family. This empathy draws Richard closer as he discovers that Karon paid a smuggler syndicate to bring him to Libya while a friend lends him 200 Euro for the trans-Mediterranean journey ("Gehen" 144). In Europe, he embodies the role of a husband to his mother and father to his siblings. For Karon, Richard becomes "ein provisorischer Ersatzvater" as Stone (5) argues, giving him 3,000 Euros to buy a plot in Ghana (278). But as the story unfolds, the novel paints a relationship of dependence that goes beyond Karon's search for home and belonging: "Am morgen schickt Karon eine SMS: hi richard, i just want to see how are you doing. Richard. I don't no how to thanks you. only God no my heart, but anyway wat i can say is may God protect you. always Good morning. Karon" ("Gehen" 282). The novel uses language to provide a new perception of friendship beyond the mere surface of an SMS. Richard considers this message a thank you for his kind gestures, but it serves Karon as a confirmation of brotherhood on the grounds of money. This fraternity becomes

clear as Karon's suddenly shows up at Richard's house without any formal invitation and Richard receiving a pictorial message from Karon's family friend in Ghana: "die Bilder vom Grundstück und vom Kaufvertrag" and "ein Bild von Karon's Mutter, seinen zwei jüngeren Brüdern und halbwüchsigen Schwestern . . ." ("Gehen" 324). Richard's financial help to Karon and his family suggests his place as a family member. While analyzing stories of migration from India to Australia, Singh (13) maintains that "money shapes and is shaped by social relationships and cultural values." Richard reads this message without fully understanding its meaning; Karon's SMS confirms Richard's role as a new-found family member whose relationship to the other members is shaped by money.

Drawing on postcolonial and migration studies, Christiane Steckenbiller's comparative study of Jenny Erpenbeck's *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen* and Bodo Kirchhoff's *Widerfahrnis* focuses on the narrative strategy and the ways Richard evaluates the current mass displacement of migrants. Richard's contact, Steckenbiller argues, with the African migrants takes him through a learning period (73). Along the same lines, writing on Richard's contact with the Africans and how it expands on his awareness of their background and lives, Marike Janzen attests that, "[l]earning about Africans leads [Richard] to see Europe from the perspective of Africans, a process that reorients his worldview" (281). This learning process proves advantageous for Karon who gains a financial brother. In this sense, financial assistance becomes the blood that connects Richard with his Ghanaian family. He emerges as Karon's "German brother" and is therefore entitled to see his land documents, his African mother, and siblings.

Different Cultures and Fluid Identities

The argument I have been developing on the experience of migrants and what defines their concept of home and belonging is closely connected with questions of identity. Home, be it as a dwelling, a homeland, an imagined community, or a constellation of relationships, is a relative term and much in flux as it is integrally associated with the experiences of migrants. In addition to the tracing of diasporic home through travel and migration, the novel, not surprisingly, also depict how Africans experience German culture. The Africans' displacement from Libya, their immigration from other African countries, and their resettlement in Italy and Germany leaves traces, both among the migrants and the Germans.

I focus on how the cultures affect the African characters and analyze the impact of this culture on their perception of Germany, Italy, or the African migrants. As cultural theorists and critics put it, culture influences the way we think, live and experience things. Culture enables us to make sense of the society we find ourselves in (Johnson et al. 10; Hall "Culture" 351; Saukko 38; Gay et al. 11). With Awad, the narrator exemplifies this cultural influence in the novel, expressing that "als [er] in Italien angekommen ist, im Lager, hat er zuerst nicht glauben können, dass die Männer da nebeneinander pinkeln sollen, ganz ohne Scham, so wie die Tiere" ("Gehen" 168). The narrator portrays the character of the Ghanaian Awad as a representation of cultural difference. This idea of culture displayed in the novel connects with Awad's religion as he is shocked by what he witnesses on his arrival in Italy. Awad's sight of the shameless "nebeneinander pinkeln" illustrates his own perception of how men should urinate. He is submerged in a different cultural environment, which Bhabha (10) describes as encountering

newness which manifests as an attack of practiced cultural norms. From within these norms Awad's identity emerges in its volatile and defenseless state. Hall explains cultural identity as

"a shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves'" ("Cultural identity" 223). Hall further reiterates that "identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by and position ourselves within the narratives of the past" ("Cultural identity" 235). Hall not only sees identity as part of histories but as an experience that undergoes multiple transformations throughout one's lifespan. It is a conglomerate that builds on many previous experiences and is, thus, ever-changing and always exposed. This transformation exists in a diverse form concealed as a term that deceivingly simulates singularity where there is a multitude. While Awad views Italians from a different lens, he appears to have stepped into what Mary Pratt calls "Contact Zone." In her 1991 article on *Arts as a Contact Zone*, Pratt refers to the contact zones as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other" (34). Although she uses the term in contexts of "asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery," her thesis of the contact zone offers a compelling view of the image of culture (34). Struggling to understand the world around him, Awad holds firm to his culture while interpreting his environment in Italy, adding to what could be considered part of his own self. This addition and interpretation of shame—in the case of urination practices—impact his understanding of the people and leads him to associate their behavior with animals.

Migrants in Erpenbeck's novel are culturally depicted. In a conversation Osarobo wonders if Richard lives in his house with his family and has children. Richard replies that he has no child and "[s]eine Frau lebt nicht mehr" ("Gehen" 150). Osarobo's amazement that Richard has no child and lives alone validates his Africanness and culture. His astonishment

articulates an ancestry practice that links marriage with having children. While it seems that Osarobo gives value to the meanings of marriage and childbearing, he approaches Richard's reply from his experience of culture, perpetuating a misunderstanding of Richard's way of thinking. While both cultures meet each other, Osarobo's interpretation of culture stands at variance with Richard's. In another instance of clash of culture, Zair, the Nigerian migrant, confronts Richard and the descendants' culture in Germany. The narrator embeds the conversation between Zair and Richard in the narrative process to reflect the culture of children in an African society:

> Zair fragt Richard, wieviel Kinder hast du? Wie viele Enkel?
> Keine.
> Wirklich, du hast keine Kinder? Fragt Zair.
> Richard zuckt mit den Schultern.
> Das tut mir leid für dich, sagt Zair, in einem Ton, als sei jemand gestorben. Offenbar geht er davon aus, dass nur ein sehr großes Unglück dazu führen kann, dass ein Mann, der so alt ist wie Richard, gar keine Nachkommen hat. ("Gehen" 204)

This passage establishes a link between children and descendants, hinting at Zair's thoughts and what seems like concern about Richard's childless future. The African migrant characters are used to counter the German perception of children. Although Richard understands that Zair, and likewise Osarobo, could not comprehend why he voluntarily decides to die without an offspring, Zair's "Ton" speaks volumes. Although one must not have children, from Zair's perspective, children are considered offspring and descendants to further one's name. Gabriel Idang affirms this proposition in his discussion on African culture and value*,* asserting that "children *are* seen as social security and economic assets and parents took pride in having many of them. A man who marries a woman expects her to give him children" (108). He further opines that it is part of all African cultures to have children to keep the family going. Closing in on Richard from Idang's assertion, his generation is already wiped out, even while he is still alive since he

possesses no social security and the economic asset of having children. Osarobo and Zair's interaction with Richard shares a common cultural belief of children as descendants evolving out of a marital relationship.

The formation of a synthesis between multiple cultures and cultural practices allows readers to experience the phenomenon of living across and within borders and experience what is commonly referred to as "interculturality" and "transculturality." In his proposition, Welsch argues that the concept of interculturality presupposes ways in which cultures could probably get along, understand, and recognize one another (196). Another prevalent issue in the text concerns the African migrants being taken away from their original culture and surroundings, leaning towards transculturalization. Lars Allolio-Näcke conceptualizes transculturalism as a "concept of cultural encounter and its consequences for society, political, and economical structures as well as cultural identities" (1985). However, Fernando Ortiz's (98) notion of transculturation[1] expresses the transmutations of culture taking place, for example, in Cuba in the early 1990s. According to Ortiz, transculturation appears in what he calls the unbroken stream of white immigrants from the Iberian Peninsula and the steady stream of Africans from Africa's coastal regions to Cuba. These "immigrants" as he terms them, were "snatched from their original social groups, their own cultures destroyed and crushed under the weight" of the existing cultures in Cuba. Each of these immigrants were "torn from [their] native mornings, faced with the problem of disadjustment and readjustment" (98). The novel provides a view of African migrants living across borders, forced into migration by violence and fear of their lives. The universal meaning of Ortiz's argument is obvious since the characters in Erpenbeck's novel were also "torn from [their] native mornings" in Libya or their native countries and further faced with the adjustment

[1] I discuss this notion of transculturality in details in the next chapter.

and readjustment of living in Europe—the burden of residency and employment. The migrant characters encounter the interaction, interpenetration, and misunderstandings of cultures while experiencing resettlement and adjustment in Germany. However, both interculturality and transculturality could be read as idealizations that often miss the unsuccessful element of cultural interactions and transfer efforts. Misunderstandings, misconceptions, and tensions among individuals with different cultural backgrounds are common in the text.

Curse words give an example of cultural misconceptions. The novel builds a cultural identity while sketching Raschid's ordeals in the hands of the Bundespolizei. I consider the encounter with the Polizei as another social meeting point of culture. As Richard and the migrants prepare to stage a demonstration in Berlin against their evacuation from the nursing home, they run into an argument with the supervising officer while trying to get a demonstration permit. As the officer questions their motive for demonstrating, implying that they were not allowed to protest, Raschid shouts at the supervisor, "God will punish you!" ("Gehen" 268). The text shows the Nigerian-curse word as a senator struggles with his cultural assumptions, beliefs expressing "Raschid ist wirklich schwer herzkrank, ich mache mir Sorgen" ("Gehen" 268). Apart from the senator, Richard also falls short in understanding Raschid since he believes that a mention of God could be interpreted from a terrorist perspective. Stefan Hermes agrees that despite cultural differences, Richard feels connected to the Africans migrants regardless since he too knows what it means to have to give up his Heimat, the former GDR ("Gehen" 182). The demonstration site becomes a "contact zone" where Raschid's understanding of words clashes with Richard's and the senator's. The misunderstanding of the curse words for a terrorist call foregrounds the complexity of cultures. Hall defines representation as using language to say something someone may or may not understand. ("The Work" 15). Expressing the view that

language's essence is communication, Hall further explains that language seems insufficient in describing what a speaker intends to say. While Raschid uses language to communicate, he is still submerged in his cultural usage of words as he pours this anger on the Bundespolizei. However, his listeners interpret him as being sick in the heart and connect the word God with terrorism. Exposed to two cultures and two languages or representation, there happens to be a misconception of Raschid and his cultural background as Richard takes his "God will punish you!" expression for a terrorist vexation. In this zone, both cultures do not get along and recognize each other but clash due to their interpretation.

Hall's definition of representation seems to be closely tied to the migrants' identities. As I have argued earlier, Erpenbeck's characters are culturally defined and depicted. Movement across international boundaries brings along the questions of legal and illegal migration while highlighting the question of citizenship, borders, and migrant status. I am interested in the construct of citizenship that arises from the meaning that surrounds the sovereignty of a state and the rights of individuals and how Erpenbeck's narrator depicts the migrant's characters and their identity construction. Observation plays a key role in Erpenbeck's narratological strategy and how she constructs her characters' identities. Through observation, readers perceive what constitutes identity on the surface without penetrating the hidden layers underneath. Step by step, these surface images are stripped away and unveil a complex web of mutual references between the migrants and Richard, whose altruism is dismantled along with his inherent prejudices as he is challenged by German institutions as well as by his encounter with the African migrants. To understand the concept of identity deployed, I turn to Sheldon Stryker and Zygmunt Bauman in tackling identity theory. Stryker's identity theory is based on his outline of the symbolic designation of roles and position. Stryker argues that "identities are part of self, positional

designations. They exist insofar as the person is a participant in structured role relationships" (60). Stryker first orients his readers to the basic tenets of his position, stressing that people may have multiple identities that speak to the role in which they are involved. By interacting with others, they learn how to identify the persons they are in communication (54). In other words, in interactive situations like the migrant-citizenship example, people give or take up names and roles as legal status or occupation become part of migrants' identity.

As individuals with their own identity, the migrant identification turns into a dehumanizing stigma. Without this stigma, the individuals in Erpenbeck's novel alter their Selves, characters whose identity projects from their skin color and the languages they speak: "ihre Hautfarbe ist schwarz. Sie sprechen Englisch, Französisch, Italienisch. Und noch andere Sprachen, die hierzulande niemand versteht" ("Gehen" 18). The narrator stands afar while recognizing the African migrants by their race and language, a projection unto the Other. To be called a migrant is an identity, and it interfaces with the characterization of individuals who have crossed borders and the multiple positions they occupy in life. Besides this identity construction, the migrants experience a change from above-the-surface identification to a more legal and specific term.

At first, the African migrants were described as Flüchtlinge and Schwarze. The denotation of "Flüchtling" fits other descriptions of the displaced men from the African continent who are forced to cross national borders searching for a haven. This identification connotes the Africans' displacement or their forced migration to Europe and articulates the reason for their presence in Germany—in search of asylum. In addition to recognizing their immigrant status in Germany, the narrator describes them as Schwarze Männer. Repeatedly, the German word "Schwarzis" resurfaces—an abbreviated albeit derogatory act of othering by referring to skin

color only. We find in Erpenbeck's novel the articulation of blackness within a racialized context. Fatima El-Tayeb, Katharina Oguntoye, May Opitz and Schultz Dagmar's works on *Schwarze Deutsche* define the word Schwarzis or Schwarz(e)r in the semantic proximity of "Neger," which emerges from the same Latin word as "schwarz" and has a negative connotation, evoking "Ausbeutung, Versklavung und Fremdbestimmung" (Oguntoye et al. 20-21). Similarly, El-Tayeb (11) argues that the concept of "schwarz" as a description of black Africans establishes the black African race's inferiority. Considering twenty-first century Germany, Erpenbeck's novel does not shy away from diminishing the African migrants into an inferior, foreign state that brings back memories of slave trade and oppression. The depiction delineates Africans' identity within a past colonial context that still dominates the German imagination. In her elaboration of this meta-blackness, Joanne Melish takes on the stand that being identified as "Schwarzis" resonates with a "constructed aspect of identity" and "functions as a tool of both domination and resistance" (3-4). Color functions as a defining factor in describing who the migrants are; their identification is derived from their race and status.

The sense of recognition plays a huge role in self-assertion. Awad's identity signifies his "homelessness" as he views himself through the German lens. The narrator does not only illuminate "Fremdheit" but characters who identify themselves as being fremd. In his conceptualization of Fremdheit, Michael Hofmann describes "der Fremde" as "der von weit her Kommende" (14). As Awad starts to get along with Richard, he details the war and the bombings that led to his migration to Germany, describing himself as an outsider in Libya. Shedding light onto his distinctiveness, he tells Richard that "[wenn] man ein Fremder wird, . . . hat man keine Wahl mehr. Man weiß nicht, wohin. Man weiß nichts mehr. Ich kann mich selbst nicht mehr sehen, das Kind, das ich war. Ich habe kein Bild mehr von mir" ("Gehen" 80). Awad's

proclamation as being "fremd" denotes an affiliation to migrancy and a shifting self-perception. In his book *Memory, Narrative, and Identity,* Nicola King (31) illustrates identity as the dialectic between characterization and the establishment of the self as distinct and different from the Others. King considers identity to be a product of memory, which leads to the distinction between self and differentiation from others. Although Awad recalls the incident while in Germany, he, however, identifies himself as being distinct from other people around him, which indeed makes him a "Fremder." This distinction points to his memory of Libya, the experience of being a foreigner, and the reflexive thoughts that consider his dissimilarity from Libyans.

Although migrants move in search of better jobs, for Erpenbeck's characters, their occupations are distinguishing factors. The narrator represents characters based on the job they find in Germany. Hence, the Africans are often simply labeled by their positions, not by their actual talents and original education. For example, we learn about "Yussuf der Tellerwäscher aus Mali" and "Ali der zukünftige Krankenpfleger aus dem Tschad" ("Gehen" 263). Peter Burke and Jan Stets, in their 2009 book *Identity Theory,* draw a connection between position and identity, arguing that "positions are patterns of interaction, the names and the meanings conveyed are not isolated from other names and positions. The meanings also form the basis of the expected behaviors (role) associated with that position as it relates to other positions in the overall social structure" (16). The occupations "Tellerwäscher" and "der zukünftige Krankenpfleger" convey meanings about the jobs they perform; nevertheless, it reinforces their identity as migrants, signifying the work they could find as asylum seekers. In addition to their status, language becomes the denominator in a competition for jobs that are below the level of what Germans would deem acceptable. Consequently, Yussuf's identity is articulated in response to his inability to pronounce the "ä" in the Tellerwäscher and his occupation in Libya before his flight to

Europe. Physical markers, such as skin color or body size, are other characteristics that are coupled with professional qualifications. Accordingly, Ithemba is not only "der Koch" (212), but also "der lange Ithemba" ("Gehen" 190). Ultimately, though, readers will never thoroughly learn what talents lay beneath a level of identity that is limited by institutional constraints because migrants are not allowed to work in Germany since they have no residency permit, which boxes them into the occupation they find. Their occupation and physical attributes are part of who they are and constitute what defines their personalities.

Racial identities are created in the way security agencies and the Berlin city officials question the migrants. As a result of their attempt to make contact with the migrants, the police officers and city employees wonder "was wollen die Männer? Wer seid ihr? Wir müssen prüfen, ob ihr wirklich in Not seid, sagen die andern . . . vielleicht, sagen die andern, seid ihr Verbrecher, das müssen wir prüfen" ("Gehen" 18). The questions posed could indeed be read as generalized and normal, but they resurrect a racialized identity. Arndt (149) challenges the "wo kommst du her" question asserting that such inquiry is, in general, rarely posed when two unknown white persons meet, "es sei denn, ein Name klingt in den eigenen Ohren ungewohnt oder jemand spricht mit einem Akzent." In the creation of a racist identity, Arndt further stressed that "wenn eine der beiden Personen eine Person of Color ist, fällt diese Frage sehr häufig—und zwar adressiert an die Person of Color" (149). As Stryker stresses, through interacting with *migrants*, *the officers* learn how to identify the persons with whom they are in communication (54, my emphasis). The novel destabilizes the convention of migratory stories as the African migrants become the focus of a racial narrative that is known to us all too well. The "wer seid ihr?" and "was wollen die Männer?" constitutes questions of identity since the police officers and various

city employees' confrontation with the migrants signals the idea of difference and racial connotation.

Awad's journey from his country to Libya and finally to Europe is as fluid as his identity. Being born in Ghana entitles him to both "jus sanguinis," referred to as birthright citizenship having one or both parents who are citizens of the state, and "jus soli," citizenship by birth in the Ghana territory (See Gollerkeri and Chhabra 114, 124). Although the narrator leaves readers in the dark about Awad's migration status in Libya, I assume that his move to Libya and continuous stay over a decade also qualifies him for legal residency. Although he tells Richard that he grew up in Libya, citing the same country as his home ("Gehen" 79), his forceful ejection from Libya creates a shift in his identity as he journeys to an unknown land. This exile signifies a construct of another phase of life as he crosses the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. This entrance replaces the old Awad, establishing the move from having a constitutional birthright in Ghana to legal residency in Libya, his "Heimatland," and then as a migrant in Europe. Awad's status refers to the crossing of international borders. In this sense, migration makes the character of Awad fluid as he finds himself at the crossroads of migrancy, ousted from Libya, and entering Europe illegally.

The novel highlights the challenges of legal over illegal migration. Like I mentioned earlier, Awad's father brought him to Libya at the age of seven, where the "arbeitet in Tripoli als Fahrer für eine Ölcompany" as "Awad wird eingeschult" ("Gehen" 76). Raschid, on the other hand, had his own business as a metal worker. My analysis here relies on the definition of a migrant. Migrants make a conscious or unconscious choice to leave their country due to conflicts and political or economic reasons, leading to a "permanent or semi-permanent change of residence" (Lee 285; Koser 17; Gollerkeri and Chhabra 278). The International Organization for

Migration defines a migrant as "any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his or her habitual place of residence, regardless of their legal status; whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; what the causes of the movement are; or what the length of the stay is." Hence, migration depicts a broader spectrum of individuals who leave their home due to pressure of all kinds. It is pertinent that the definition from the International Organization for Migration and the novel's characters describe the idea that the movement that leads to migration may or may not be voluntary. Furthermore, Raschid and Awad's residence in Libya and jobs as "Schlosser" and "Automechaniker" sound legal since they were part of the state system and were not obstructed by the borders of migrancy. Awad and his father's decision to leave Ghana for Libya appears voluntary, while the involuntary departure stands for Raschid's forced migration from Nigeria to Libya.

The narrator pushes Awad's role further, situating him between several different identity roles. Awad can either voluntarily take on these roles or is forced into them. In any case, his identity remains fluid. "Liquidity" is the key concept in Zygmunt Bauman's large, several books encompassing analysis of modernity. Individuals' main requirement in modern societies is their "fluidity," i.e. their adaptability and willingness to change their identity. Bauman argues that "fluids" travel easily, "and do not keep their shape for long. Shaping them is easier than keeping them in shape" ("Liquid Modernity" 7). Bauman's concept sheds light on the trajectories of Awad's identity, his mobility, and changing roles that substantiate new beginnings. The military men stripped him of every detail of identity except his put-on clothes. He recalls the faithful event that forced him out of Libya: "Dann haben [Soldaten] aus den Telefonen die SIM-Karten herausgenommen und vor unseren Augen zerbrochen, dann die Speicherkarten herausgenommen, zerbrochen. Keinem von uns haben sie irgendetwas gelassen außer T-Shirt

und Hose oder Rock" ("Gehen" 79). Although the diction in the passage paints a vivid picture of Awad's agony, Erpenbeck uses it to unmask the façade of a lost phone, sim card, which in this context represents means of communication and might have been used to store memories of Libya. On reaching Italy, Awad has no documents, no passport, nothing to corroborate his previous stay in Libya. Without any means of identifying himself, he starts afresh, adapting to the change in residency—migrant to refugee—and facing the beginning of a life.

As the novel progresses, Erpenbeck draws from Richard's knowledge of classics to relate with the above-mentioned boy from the Tuareg tribe in Niger, displaying techniques that connect texts and cultures. Encounters among cultures necessarily evoke the literary techniques of intertextuality and interculturality. Renaming is one the tools Erpenbeck uses frequently. In Richard's desire to connect with the nameless character, whom he thinks could be his grandson, he imagines the Greek god Apollo. Richard oscillates between strangeness and familiarity in his practice of assigning the asylum seekers names from Greek and Germanic mythology (Steckenbiller 73). Despite knowing his new friends intimately, Steckenbiller concludes, Richard "westernizes them by adopting names familiar to him while at the same time purposefully exoticizing them" (73). However, this new Greek identity suggests a close look at his Niger-story in the novel. Originally described from his tribal identity; "der Junge [hat] auf jeder Wange vier Striche untereinander in die Haut eingeritzt" ("Gehen" 69), Richard sees the writing as a sign associated with the Greek god Apollo, which is similar to Michael Grant and John Hazel's claim that "Apollon diente zweimal sterblichen Menschen als Knecht" and "diese Knechtschaft war eine von Zeus gesandte Strafe" (58). Erpenbeck's "Apoll" from the tribe of Tuareg in Niger passively seeks alignment with his new Greek name. His job while working as a slave for a particular family before fleeing Niger was to take care of animals: "Sklavenarbeit jedenfalls

musste er machen, solange er denken kann. Bei den Kamelen, den Eseln, den Ziegen, von morgens bis abends" ("Gehen" 70) The boy embodies the character of the Greek god, his pastoral deity, and shepherd quality. Hall establishes that "identification is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group" ("Who" 16). Hall's argument is relevant to the question of the boy's identity since it is developed in the context of shared commonality and vicissitudes of life. In sync with Apollo's past as a slave, an exiled and "convict," the boy has scars, "die die Schläge der sogenannten Familie an seinem Kopf und an seinen Armen hinterlassen haben. Totschlagen wollte sie ihn" ("Gehen" 67-68). While the scars refer to his ethnic identity, the Nigerien's migrant now unwillingly personifies the Greek god's identity and deity.

Richard further uses the Greek Apollo's mythical unhappy love life to connect the boy's identity in Europe. Apollo's love affair with Cassandra, King Priam's daughter, Kathleen Daly and Marian Rengel (13) assert, was a bitter and frustrating love. She was untrue to Apollo, who conferred on her the gift of prophecy as a token of love. Grant and Hazel (59) also describe Apollo's love relationship with Daphne as "Mißgeschick" since she prefers to be turned into a "Lorbeerbaum" rather than to surrender to Apollo's love. Confiding in Ithemba and the other migrants, he believes that "nobody loves a refugee," although he has a girlfriend, "heiraten würde ich sie nicht" (345). The Nigerien's love story resonates with a similar ancient identity since "wenn [er] jetzt eine deutsche Frau heirate[t], denkt sie, [er] heirate[t] nur, um Papiere zu bekommen" ("Gehen" 345). Erpenbeck's indirectness conveys an analogical pattern with Apollo and Daphne, attributing their unstable love to her character. In comparison with Apollo, the boy's love reflects an unhappy and an untrue one. Although marriage for the boy with a German could secure him a permanent stay in Germany, he appears to be searching for true love. For

him, love connects with the process of finding one's identity in Europe since "Würde zu bewahren," the narrator says "ist eine Anstrengung, die den Flüchtlingen täglich auferlegt wird und sie bis in ihre Betten hinein verfolgt" ("Gehen" 345). The use of the Greek mythology in exploring emotional connectedness simultaneously tells the boy's love story and creates a unique narrative but ties multiple meanings to his identity as a slave with shared commonality and someone in the search for true love.

Richard further employs new naming schemes in a way that is consistent with the migratory depiction of identity. He follows this tendency and intensifies it by identifying Awad as Tristan, who could be traced back to Gottfried von Straßburg's medieval epic for "es fällt [ihm] schwer, sich die fremden Namen der Afrikaner zu merken" ("Gehen" 84). The naming of Tristan appears to be outside of Richard's classical philological training, but close enough to be just another example for the literary canon of a German "Bildungsbürger." In his intention to turn to something familiar, Richard leans on his reading of von Straßburg's story to surname Awad. His purpose is evident as Michael Batts shares that Tristan's conception was not a blessing for his mother but rather a curse since his birth was tragic (48). Batts remarks that his father was already dead before Tristan's birth while his mother dies in giving birth to him. Historicizing Tristan's biography, Christoph Huber (54) points out that "Riwalins Marschall Rual hat ihn als Kind adoptiert." Equally as the medieval Tristan, Awad was raised by his grandmother up until the age of seven before his father took him to Libya. However, he lost his father during the uproar in Libya ("Gehen" 85-86). Like Gottfried's Tristan, Awad's new nickname justifies its meanings: loss, sadness, and tragedy. Huber confirms that Tristan was "in Trauer empfangen und in Trauer geboren, denn: 'Triste' heißt 'Trauer'" (66). The multiplicity of identity construction is typical of Awad's biography and shifting life events. From birth, Awad

plays out multiple roles as a child born out with grief and sadness, which equivocates with the loss of his Libya as his "Heimat." Towards the end of the novel when the German authorities finally conclude on the African migrants' asylum case, Awad faces the final "Trauer" of his life for "gehen muss Tristan" ("Gehen" 327) since Ghana is considered a "safe country" for its citizens. For Richard, Awad leads, much as Tristan, a life full of tragedy, ending in the return to the origin of sorrow: asylum denied. Like Tristan, Erpenbeck's character fluctuates between grief, sorrow, and sadness.

In a similar convergence of identities, Richard views Rufu from an architectural lens; the "Moor of Wismar." For instance, the text shows the literal interpretation of Rufu by discussing who he is, where he comes from, and his personality. In German architecture, the facade of the Wismarer Dom with its interior decoration and altarpiece are unique. In its cathedral, Richard has previously seen a Madonna standing on both feet upon the head of a moor lying on the ground. But his further reading of the Wismarer Dom shows that:

> es war nicht der Kopf eines Mohren, sondern sollte in Wahrheit der Mond sein, der zur Entstehungszeit des Altars um 1500 noch silbern bemalt war, aber die silberne Farbe ist mit den Jahren dunkel geworden. Fünf Jahrhunderte hat es gedauert, bis die Madonna nun einen schwarzen Mond in den Staub tritt, und dieser Mond hat, fünf Jahrhunderte später, so ein Gesicht wie Rufu, der auf der Welt ganz allein ist, keinen Freund hat und mit niemandem spricht. ("Gehen" 158)

The narrator reinterprets the connection between Rufu and the architectural edifice, giving the character agency, a multi-faceted identification that suggests intertextual codes. From Burkina Faso, Rufu finds himself in a country with Christian traditions (Wismarer Dom) and identified with the shifting concept of the "Schwarzi," or: moor, but also with a silver shining "moon" as it was unearthed in the cathedral. His "Christening" reminds readers of the loneliness of an outsider who also became a hero, at least for Richard, who undergoes a tremendous change

along with the other African migrants. Regardless, in the context of Richard's vision and reading of the Madonna and her facial appearance, the very inviting and depiction of the Wismarer Dom reference indicates these identity shifts. While details of Rufu's migration story from Burkina Faso to Europe appear sketchy at best, Richard leans on the dark façade of the moon rise to identify Rufu, which links to his skin color, "Rufu ist jedenfalls sehr schwarz" ("Gehen" 163). Richard re-enacts blackness as he aligns the color of the moon with Rufu's face.

Towards the end of the novel, Ithemba and his friends come to terms with the Europeans' refugee-assertion given to them. Their group dynamics illustrate how quickly they could accept their status in Germany after being denied asylum. At this point, the African migrants seem eager to start a new life. In a conversation on finding a lover or someone to marry in order to gain legal documents, Ithemba expresses his thought to the boy that people do not love refugees, referring to women and their choice of partner ("Gehen" 345). Erpenbeck privileges fluid identities that speaks of her characters' acknowledgment of their refugee status. More precisely, it is the interaction between migrants, Richard, and the social context which makes identities fluid and changeable.

The Case of Migrants: Asylum and Refugees

The African migrants' stories interweave with that of refugee and asylum cases. Erpenbeck depicts characters fleeing Nigeria, Ghana, and Libya to Europe for safety. Although not rare, they are not treated as refugees in Libya but as part of the citizenry. To what extent does the narrator provide details of their lives that categorize them as asylum seekers or stateless people who have been subjected to violence? What rights do the migrant characters possess upon

entering the European territory in search of safety? Does fleeing a country for fear of one's life automatically grant one an asylum status upon arrival in another nation? And finally, to what extent does European jurisdiction allow these migrants to appear as equals before the law?

These questions are crucial starting points for understanding Erpenbeck's novel, the problems associated with forced migration—which the African characters experienced—and how rightlessness and statelessness continue to haunt their asylum and refugee status in Germany. Given the significant migration stories in *Gehen, ging, gegangen*, Hannah Arendt, the twentieth-century political theorist, provides an understanding of the questions of statelessness and asylum. In her book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt argues that wars result in the unexpected migration of groups who seek refuge in another country. Although her book focuses on totalitarianism, the aftermath of World War I and the Nazi Regime, Arendt asserts that once migrants had left their homeland, "they remained homeless, once they had left their state, they became stateless; once they had been deprived of their human rights, they were rightless" ("The Origins" 267). According to Arendt, the term "stateless" applies not only to those who have officially lost their nationality but also to people in another country such as refugees, asylum seekers and economic immigrants who could no longer benefit from their citizenship rights in another country ("The Origins" 278-280). Arendt's grasp of war and migration summarizes the situation of the African migrants in *Gehen, ging, gegangen* since most of these characters are on the run and finally find refuge in Europe after the outbreak of war in Libya. Like Erpenbeck's characters who are displaced and applied for asylum in Germany, Arendt describes stateless people as refugees, political exiles, mostly Jews during the Nazi regime, who were stripped of their citizenship. Although the African characters are refugees, they are not stripped of their various national citizenships, but are subjected to the laws and definition of a refugee.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) 1951 definition of "refugee" clearly captures the characters Erpenbeck creates in her novel. The Convention was approved at a special United Nations conference on 28 July 1951 and entered into force on 22 April 1954. According to article I of the Commission, a refugee is a person who

> owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (14)

The article was initially limited to protecting European refugees during the post-World War II era, with Denmark being the first state to ratify the treaty on 4 December 1952. However, it now covers countries that are member states of the United Nations. Seeking protection in Europe and Germany, the African characters fled mostly from Libya for fear of their lives. Detailing an enticing set of notes on refugees that goes beyond attributions on the African characters, their migration stories start at their home countries even before they arrive in Libya. For example, Raschid remembers the usual Eid Mubarak Muslim Festival in Nigeria, which ends in disaster since "den Abend und den nächsten Tag gab es in dem Jahr nicht mehr" ("Gehen" 111). For Raschid, it was the beginning of his first refugee journey to Libya as he recollects the very event in Kaduna, Nigeria, when he and other Muslim faithfuls had just finished prayers. He tells Richard,

> wir wollten gerade nach Haus zu unseren Familien fahren, um mit dem Festessen zu beginnen, da überfielen sie uns. Mit Knüppeln, Messern, Macheten. Mein Vater wollte eben sein Auto aufschließen, da kamen sie angerannt, trieben uns auseinander, begannen, auf uns einzuschlagen, mit Knüppeln, und einzustechen, mit Messern, Macheten, dann stießen sie meinen Vater ins Auto,

> stiegen zu dritt bei ihm ein, er musste mit ihnen wegfahren, das war das letzte, was ich von ihm sah. (“Gehen” 111-112)

The narrator unfolds Raschid’s thoughts built with emotion about war and violence in Kaduna, Nigeria. Giving readers a more immediate encounter with the character’s consciousness, Raschid’s stories revolve around mass displacement, reflecting a by-product of conflicts and bloodshed. Arendt’s description of a stateless person is mirrored in Erpenbeck’s laconic statement that “these persons had lost the protection of their government” (“The Origins” 279). Kaduna, enveloped in violence, particularizes a city without government protection of human lives and properties. The reader notices Raschid’s condition for fleeing Nigeria for Libya—violence and the loss of his parents.

In contrast with Europe, Libya plays the role of harboring fellow Africans, giving them economic stability and a home away from their home. The immigration laws appear far less strict than in Europe since characters like Raschid could settle and start a firm. The depiction of Raschid’s journey from Kaduna to Libya looks like an easy migration rather than fleeing for safety and subsequently applying for refugee status. Raschid explains to Richard, “[ich hatte] in Tripoli auch so ein Wohnzimmer, auch so einen Salon wie den hier, und dazu drei Schlafzimmer, Flur, Bad und Kuche . . . Meine Firma war in der Nähe der Schule, Zwei Gebäude, außen zwar nicht verputzt, aber innen. Und ein Hof” (“Gehen” 236). Raschid’s situation in Libya, in comparison with Germany, appears better, but the peace enjoyed in Libya was short-lived with the eruption of violence. Upon the outbreak of war in Libya, there were, “[ü]berall Tote, auf den Straßen. Überall Blut. Baracken, nicht nur Männer, auch Frauen, Kinder, Säuglinge, alte Menschen” (“Gehen” 238). Raschid’s description paints a clearer picture of Libya and speaks powerfully to the documentary of violence in the text. As the narrator of this event, Raschid

presents the outbreak somewhat bleakly, but his representation mirrors reality. In becoming a refugee, Schaechterle confirms that "wer um sein Leben und das seiner Nächsten fürchten muss, weil es von Bomben oder anderen Waffen bedroht wird, wird seinen Aufenthaltsort verlassen, wird flüchten" (9). Here, Schaechterle's assertion of 'fear of lives and fleeing' collaborates with Raschid's narration of dead bodies scattered and blood flowing on the streets in Libya. Stripped of her German citizenship in 1937, Arendt who equally faced fear for life and property asserts that, "the second loss which the rightless suffered was the loss of government protection, and this did not imply just the loss of legal status in their own, but in all countries" (294). Important is Awad's position not only outside his country's protection but also the framework of Libyan state-people territory that contests his right to remain in Libya as a migrant. The depicted predominant images of violence echo the reality of refugee, who would rather leave a place to avail themselves the protection of another country while searching for refuge.

Apart from Raschid, the uproar in Libya and Awad's subsequent aimless and forced journey signal the beginning of Awad's refugee sojourn in Italy and statelessness in Europe. His migration from Ghana to Libya was voluntary, since he migrated with his father when he was seven years old. Awad's story implies that he was already an adult when he fled to Europe since "[er ist] in Libyen aufgewachsen. Libyen war [s]ein Heimatland" ("Gehen" 79). Libya as his "Heimatland" references a notion of space that is filled with nostalgic memory and evokes a sense of belonging (Eigler and Kugele 5). The emanating representation of locality includes an imaginative citizenship, a narrative of shelter and the interconnectedness of socio-historical place and historical time. Awad has no national affiliation with his birth country upon arriving in Europe since he has no citizenry connection with Ghana. He tells Richard: "Dann wurde mein Vater erschossen . . . Ich rannte los. Aber als ich zu Hause ankam, war die Eingangstür schon aus

den Angeln gerissen, die Fenster waren zersplittert. Drinnen was alles verwüstet, der Flur, die Zimmer, die Küche. Überall lagen Scherben herum, Möbel waren umgekippt, der Fernseher war zerschlagen, alles" ("Gehen" 77). The Libyan uproar renders him displaced as he waits on the streets, not knowing where to go or whom to turn to for protection. Awad's story incites the fate for a displaced, stateless person who occupies a political space haunted by the threat of violence and pulled by the desire to flee to another country for safety.

The Libyan war questions his belonging and imaginative citizenship. Just like any violent bloodshed that leaves many dead bodies and displaced persons behind, Awad tells Richard: "Ich habe die Toten auf den Straßen liegen sehen. Manche erschossen, manche erstochen" ("Gehen" 78). As Awad acquaints Richard on how he was forcefully ejected from Libya, internal and international displacement accompany the violent uproar: "In den Baracken waren schon hunderte Menschen. Die meisten von ihnen Schwarzafrikaner, aber auch ein paar Araber, aus Tunesien, Marokko, Ägypten. Nicht nur Männer, auch Frauen, Kinder, Säuglinge, alte Menschen, alles wurde uns abgenommen: Geld, Uhren, Telefone, sogar die Socken" ("Gehen" 78). For Awad, the displacement is filled with nostalgic feelings—which reminds him of his father. However, these memories come with the bitter taste of dislocation. His journey, sadly, begins as the soldiers shoot a salvo in the air warning him and other captives: "wer zurückzuschwimmen versucht, wird erschossen" ("Gehen" 79). The brutality of the war destroyed everything, "die Familie, die Freunde, den Ort, an dem man gelebt hat, die Arbeit, den Alltag" ("Gehen" 80). In *We Refugees*, Arendt describes similar loss of friends, family, and belongings in the Polish ghettos: "We lost our home, which means the familiarity of daily life. We lost our occupation, which means the confidence that we are of some use in this world" ("We Refugees" 2). Like Arendt, Awad's condition pinpoints the rupture of his life and stay in Libya,

which makes his eviction from the Libyan community remarkable. The warning from the soldiers not to return to Libya demonstrates a moment where Awad experiences a discontinued memory of a "Heimatland" as he previously hinted (79). Just like Raschid, Awad is left with the only choice of fleeing to another country where his safety would be taken into consideration.

The refugees are housed in camps upon arrival in Europe. The Oranienplatz, the meeting place of the ten men "vor dem Roten Rathaus in Berlin" ("Gehen" 18), is a camp—one that mimics the official asylum shelters. In contrast with the "Camp auf Sizilien," the Oranienplatz and the nursing home represent the transition period between getting an asylum status and being rejected. Discussing the concepts of "statelessness" and "rightlessness," Ayten Gündoğdu's *Rightlessness in An Age of Rights* rethinks Hannah Arendt's arguments and adds a nuanced understanding of "rightlessness." Detention centers like the Guantánamo Bay for the purposes of offshore processing of asylum claims, or the French established "waiting zones," "administrative retention centers," and the various detention centers located in North Africa (Gündoğdu 91) bear similarity with the various refugee camps in Erpenbeck's novel. Erected by the US, France, and the Australian government, these detention centers confine migrants with minimal access to the law and keep them from entering these various countries' major cities. Like the contemporary stories of migrants held out of territorial jurisdiction of lawyers and activists in Gündoğdu's book, *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen* shows how a similar process took place, as Germany exploits the 'statelessness' of these African characters. This similarity is expressed in the statelessness of most European migrants after World War I which Arendt describes in her book, not in the sense of losing their citizenship, but seeking protection under "international agreements for safeguarding their legal status" as displaced persons or asylum seekers ("The Origins" 279).

The limitation of migrants' mobility, including their right to work, presupposes a type of border that differentiates them from the citizen. As I shall argue in the next section, the concept of borders conveys the notion of exclusion and regulating membership of a state. The camps impress the idea of a prison, set up to contain 'intruders' and keep them under observation. Here, the Africans are confronted with the reality of what is lost through migration—the right to move freely and the access to work. Raschid, for example, who could drive a bulldozer and owns a firm in Libya, is plunged downwards from a highly professional, occupational, and economic status to a menial and imprisoned life. In keeping himself busy, Raschid "beschafft seinen Leuten Arbeit als *volunteers*. Unentgeltlich harken sie Laub in den Parkanlagen Berlins, putzen in Kindergärten und Schulen, waschen Teller in einem Wohngebietsclub" ("Gehen" 205). Raschid's stateless situation could only be summarized in Arendt's words as she notes that the stateless is "without the right to residence and without the right to work" ("The Origins" 286). Arendt's understanding of rightlessness, Gündoğdu maintains, is a "condition that challenges conventional understandings of the plight of migrants in terms of the loss of specific rights" (94). The condition of rightlessness, in the case of immigrants, enacts the legitimacy of a country's territorial sovereignty, distinguishing a foreigner from a national (Gündoğdu 94-95). In the case of Raschid, this structural legitimacy expresses what being a refugee, being under the protection of Germany, and subjected to the internment that accompanies asylum status entails.

Raschid's voluntary work reflects the conditions of stateless migrants. According to Raschid, he is "happy" he has something to do, even if this kind of "happiness" is a mere euphemism for the lack of utter despair. Writing on the plight of the African refugees, Doheny confirms that migration and being a refugee could render "a highly educated person with professional competence a nonentity overnight" (4). Although we are unaware of Raschid's

educational background, he was already a metal worker before he arrived in Europe; he possesses entrepreneurial skills, which might be equivalent to someone who graduated from a German Berufsschule. Doheny's claims expressly describe Raschid's situation as he is left with no choice but to make himself useful while waiting for his asylum status. Similarly, Awad works as an Automechaniker before the Libya crisis. Still, his uncertain refugee status leaves him with no Aufentheitstitel and, therefore, not eligible to use his mechanic skills for gainful employment. In Gündoğdu's words, "Arendt's notion of "rightlessness," [highlights] a fundamental condition that can undermine the very possibility of claiming and exercising even the rights that one formally has" (94). In Raschid and Awad's case, "rightlessness" undercuts their right to work and earn a living as migrants.

Despite being stateless, the African characters are not accommodated by the German immigration law. The novel ends with a sad moment as the German authorities close their applications, sending almost all of them to their various countries. The first few pages of chapter fifty-four are dedicated to listing who must leave Germany; "Ali aus dem Tschad, der bei Annes Mutter als Pfleger gearbeitet hat, muss gehen. Yussuf aus Mali, der Tellerwäscher, der Ingenieur werden will, muss gehen. Und Karon muss gehen, der Dünne. Gehen muss auch Raschid" ("Gehen" 327). The denial of asylum status puts their hopes and aspiration of joining the Germany society into thin air and provokes acts of utter desperation: "An dem Montag, an dem [Raschid] den Brief erhält, übergießt er sich auf dem Oranienplatz mit Benzin und will sich verbrennen" ("Gehen" 327). His decision to end his life in public objects to the limitation of his fundamental human rights, his right to asylum. The denial letter underscores Raschid's statelessness since he has lost the Nigerian government's protection while the German government refuses to acknowledge the international agreement that safeguards his legal status

as a refugee in Germany (Arendt "The Origins" 279). This disavowal symbolizes unacceptance especially for Raschid, but also for his immigrant friends. The state's rejection seems to be only one of the obstacles asylum seekers and migrants are exposed to when entering what they hope to be their future home. While they struggle with their refugee status in Germany and Italy, they are faced with stereotypes of being Blacks in Europe and furthermore with borders that enforce exclusion.

Borders and Stereotyping

Erpenbeck places before her readers' figures who cross physical borders only to be exposed to cultural ones. The issue of socially erected borders that shield citizens from migrants and deny migrants access to full membership of residential communities is tangible throughout the novel. Discussing movement across space becomes difficult without mentioning people crossing borders, as they serve to differentiate one nation from another. In "Migrations, Diasporas and Borders", Friedman (273) turns a critical eye on "borders and borderlands," insisting that borders "enforce exclusions, the state of being alien, foreign and homeless." Friedman reiterates that "borders are imaginary lines of separation with real effects, as in geopolitical boundary between nation-states" (273). As Nicholas De Genova discusses the condition of deportable non-citizens and the borders within Europe, he argues that borders are material practices of immigration enforcement ("The borders" 6; "Border" 492). According to Genova, Borders represent the spectacle of enforcement, whereby the presence of legal and illegal migrants is rendered spectacularly visible. Genova compares borders with tools of control, stressing that

> The Border Spectacle, therefore, sets the scene—a scene of ostensible exclusion, in which the purported naturalness and putative necessity of exclusion may be demonstrated and verified, validated and legitimated, redundantly. The scene (where border enforcement performatively activates the reification of migrant "illegality" in an emphatic and grandiose gesture of exclusion) is nevertheless always accompanied by its shadowy, publicly unacknowledged, or disavowed, obscene supplement (the large-scale recruitment of illegalized migrant labor) (493)

Genova's thesis about borders rests on the policing of legal and illegal migrants, the practices of border creation within the sovereignty of a nation-state, and even the movement of people. My interest here in applying the word "Borders" is Genova's association with the word "spectacle." In this sense, borders, in the plural, signifies not only a stationary zone of demarcation between two nations but also mobile spaces or institutional laws that objectify exclusion and pronounces a fortified territorial limit on migrants. Accordingly, the concept of "borders" as I use it, includes both the dividing line between political or geographic regions and a frontier that demarcates citizens from migrants. Analyzing this demarcation as a human and national construct that has implications on the rights of migrants and how they are seen and treated, I show how stereotyping weaves into the normative notions of African migrants. Language is the most apparent border that separates us from others. As Friedman argues, borders enforce exclusion. I impose the definition of the frontier in this sense as a structure that excludes with the intent of keeping those who do not belong out and preserving the perceived identity of specific places and populations. Although language is not a human-made structure, linguistic challenges appear to be another border that Karon faces in Italy. This communication wall prevents him from having a conversation with a waiter in the cafe. Karon illustrates his feeling of being linguistically incapacitated at a cafe in his failed attempt to place an order: "Einmal in Italien habe ich mich

am Bahnhof in ein Restaurant gesetzt, weil ich warten musste, sie haben mir eine Speisekarte gebracht, aber die konnte ich damals noch nicht lesen, da bin ich aufgestanden und wieder gegangen" ("Gehen" 281). Language unquestionably evokes the struggles and the confrontation with others, i.e., inhabitants of a country that is foreign to migrants. In their research on language barriers, Anne-Wil Harzing and Alan Feely assert that language is an essential element of one's national identity in Europe, arguing that "language barriers are therefore likely to play a key role in any multilingual group relationship" (53). Harzing and Feely affirm that this barrier becomes pronounced between multinationals who do not speak or understand the same language. Karon's inability to speak and understand Italian renders him speechless as he quietly stands up and leaves without making his orders. While Karon is barred from communicating, the inability to speak a foreign language categorizes him as a migrant, further cementing his not-an-Italian status. The Italian language becomes that linguistic border, delineating the imaginary lines migrants are exposed to.

Apart from language, legal documents form the representation of the border. As Rufu continues his stay in Germany while waiting for asylum status, the narrator uses valid migrant documents and health insurance to depict European borders' complexity. Rufu's dental pains land him in a dental clinic where the financial department asks for his health insurance, which is tied to his asylum status in Italy. Surprisingly for Richard, Rufu's residence permit from Italy has expired. He has no access to Italian health care; however, "[er] hat auch keine deutsche Krankenkassenkarte, denn er darf in Deutschland kein Asylbewerber sein. Für eine Behandlung akuter Schmerzen könnte das Sozialamt einen Antrag bewilligen, aber dazu musste der Patient erst einmal einen Antrag stellen und nachweisen, dass ihm etwas wehtut" ("Gehen" 290). In contrast to a physical border that separates people and geographical area, asylum papers and

health insurance card denote the migrant's legal boundaries. They are documents that "preserve all the sovereignty of [a] state, dispersed a little everywhere, whether in the movement of information, people or things" (Balibar "We the people" 1). I draw emphasis from Balibar's argument on the preservation of sovereignty to stress the invisible boundary and the power exercised within the German territory that enforces legal documents as a recognition of residency within a state and as a contract of legitimacy. Balibar's notion of borders discloses the presence of the Italian borders in Germany in the form of the permesso that prevents another application for asylum in Germany. The permesso symbolizes control that the Italian government exerts on Rufu's movement while assigning boundaries to assess health insurance. The residence permit and the "deutsche Krankenkassenkarte" equates the European policing of the borders against migrants. Mountz asserts that border policing involves regulating a nation-state's perimeter and the control of migration, thereby producing boundaries (205). A variety of legal documents mark out borders along the Italian and German territory and further draw a line of exclusion inside of one country. The juxtaposition of these border creations with the depiction of policing through legal documents marks a distinct identity of Rufu as being out of status in Germany.

The case of Raschid is another example of the exclusionary function of borders. While Richard was giving Rufu and Raschid a ride after they attended language school, he learns that "Raschid nicht nur Auto, sondern sogar Bagger fahren kann, aber seine Fahrerlaubnis hier nicht anerkannt wird, weil er weder einen Aufenthaltstitel hat noch einen Nachweis seiner Identität" ("Gehen" 198). Raschid's unrecognized drivers' license by the German immigration office places a territorial exemption on his mobility in German. This exclusion captures different forms of access and rights within the German territory. Furthermore, this differentiation puts Raschid in the spectacle scene, as De Genova would note, where his privilege to operate an excavator or

even drive a car is watched and controlled. The migrant character is being deprived of an "Aufenthaltstitel" and a "Nachweis seiner Identität;" these are documents that represent symbolic means to reinforce exclusion and control within Germany.

Borders are further manifested through Germany's law. Considering the identity of the migrants as Flüchtlinge, the appellation sets the tone of exclusion as a linguistics form of setting boundaries. As I have shown earlier, the African characters have been forced to cross national boundaries and cannot return home safely. Consequently, "identities come with labels and ideas about why and to whom they should be applied" (Appiah 12). The detailing of the characters' migration story and the reasons they feel unsafe returning home explains why the German government applies labels to their identities. The narrator depicts this exclusivity through the existing judicial codex. However, this law does not seem to treat every person as equal in the spirit of the German constitution. Still, it is used in a stricter, harsher manner once one is described as "Schwarzer," "Flüchtling," or "Schwarzhäutiger."

> Wenn ein Schwarzer, der schwarz hier ist, schwarz mit dem Bus oder der S-Bahn oder der U-Bahn fährt, muss der, wenn er zum ersten Mal erwischt wird, wie alle zum ersten Mal Erwischten 40 Euro Strafe bezahlen, sagt das Gesetz. Wenn er zum zweiten Mal erwischt wird, sagt das Gesetz, kommt schon ein Strafbefehl: dann kann er einsitzen oder eine gewisse Anzahl von Tagessätzen bezahlen. Bei den ärmsten der armen Teufel sind es oft nur 10 Euro. 60 Tagessätze à 10 Euro zum Beispiel nach dem dritten Mal Schwarzfahren wären für einen Deutschen, der lieber bezahlt, statt ins Gefängnis zu gehen, eine noch glimpfliche Strafe. ("Gehen" 223)

Although the law surrounding "Schwarzfahren" is a standard procedure in Germany, there seems to be a bias of this law against migrants. Although one may argue that similar laws that differentiate between citizens and non-citizens of a country are distinctions any Western democracy draws, I make the case that such procedure describes a militarization of the nation's

borders against (il)legal migrants. In his book, *The Deportation Machine*, Adam Goodman discusses non-US citizens' stories in the jaws of the US immigration bureaucracy. In his analysis of US-Mexico border crossings, Goodman argues that "[the US] Immigration officials and legislators implemented policies and treated migrants as dangerous lawbreakers at best and potential terrorists at worst" (6). According to Goodman, immigration laws criminalized migrants because of who they are and how they entered the United States. Similar interpretations of existing laws can be found along the EU border where the European Border and Cost Guard Agency (or Frontex) functions as the executive branch's powerful will, similar to the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The different application of the law for Germans on the one hand and "Flüchtlinge" in the other unveils exclusivity. The prioritization of Germans overs migrants perpetuates the act of militarizing the German borders and shines a light on how inclusion in a sphere or society can involve various degrees of rules, disenfranchisement, and exploitation (Casas-Cortes et al. "New Keywords" 79). As Casas-Cortes et al. calls it, this differential inclusion stands as a watchdog for deterring any form of illegality from migrants. Refugees are placed outside the confines of the German borders since "so stellt für einen Ausländer die geringe Höhe einer Geldstrafe durchaus keine Erleichterung dar, denn sein Asylverfahren wäre bereits in dem Moment, in dem er zum Beispiel 60 – wenn auch noch so niedrig bemessene – Tagessätze als Strafe bekommt, für immer entschieden. Das alles weiß das Gesetz" ("Gehen" 223-224). The special law for "Flüchtlinge" and "Schwarzhäutige" affirms the sentiments of alienation, a form of othering based on skin color or immigration status. This alienation objectifies the racial representation of difference that prescribes harshness to offenses committed by migrants. As De Genova explains, this concept of differential inclusion describes the unbalanced scale of judgement for migrants, which validates the narrator's choice of words – Ausländer – further defining the migrant characters as people with a

migration background and non-nativeness (Roberts 39). Hence, the connotation of Ausländer with the German laws that emphasize exclusivity and border control through the criminalization of migrants compels an object of representation. While this registers a handle for understanding the link between migration and border policing, border crossing often creates spaces for generalities that members of a society impose on migrants with whom they are unfamiliar.

The application of stereotypes precedes the institutional use of harsh judgement and of violence towards migrants. My discussion of stereotyping borrows from Hall and Bhabha's discussions of representational practice and racial difference in the stereotype. Hall defines stereotyping as a "signifying practice that is central to the representation of racial difference" that reduces people to a few (Hall "The Spectacle" 257). For Bhabha, stereotyping is "knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always already known, and something that's repeated" (94-95). Departing from a colonial discourse and his reading of Franz Fanon *Black Skin, White Masks*, Bhabha insists that the colonizers used stereotyping because it creates an identity of a large group of people. My understanding of stereotype as racial attitudes, prejudice is further shaped by the scope of inclusion allowed by John Brigham's theoretical approaches to stereotyping in psychology as "incorrect generalizations" and "products of a 'faulty' thought process" (18). The use of stereotyping in my analysis of migrant characters incorporates within its distinctiveness the generalized identification of a racialized group that might have arisen because of a single past incident. This system of representation employs the practice of exclusion that reflects the shared knowledge of a particular group within a society.

Osarobo's experience on a train compliments Italians' perspective about migrants. He recalls that "in der U-Bahn stehen die Italiener auf und setzen sich woandershin, wenn ich mich neben sie setze" ("Gehen" 245). Osarobo's experience reveals a disquietude regarding black

immigrants' presence: "Sie denken, ich bin kriminell. Jeder Schwarze" ("Gehen" 245). The narrator uses Osarobo's thought to create a more visceral tale of how the Italians perceive black migrants, thereby depicting the notion of skin color as a symbol of perception and deprivation. In this light, Bhabha (112) notes that skin color is the "key signifier of racial difference in stereotype" and, therefore, plays a considerable role in racial drama. Although Bhabha's argument on racial stereotype emerges from an unorthodox intersection of post-structural and psychoanalytic theory, his analysis of Fanon' *Black Skin White Mask* adds understanding to the color to a broader and more complex process of identification. As a black African and migrant, Osarobo's identity thus prevents the cultural exchange between Italians and Africans, enforces the exclusion of the blacks as migrants, and distorts the basic underlying identity of Blacks in Italy not simply as human beings but as criminals of whom Italians should be mindful.

Even Richard, despite his "goodness" and his willingness to help migrants, is not free of biases and, hence, ends up stereotyping his supposed "friends." Although Ludewig and Steidl argue that Richard represents Germany's "Gastfreundschaft," I hold that he is not entirely friendly with the migrants either. His friendships wavers and depends on the condition in which he finds himself. His thoughts differ from friendship gestures, when he, for example, mistakenly misplaces his wallet while checking out in a supermarket. Richard's suspects Rufu, who stands directly behind him, betrays his friendliness. As he is wondering "ob Rufu vielleicht, aber nein, das will er nicht glauben, obgleich, er steht schließlich direkt hinter ihm, und hätte leicht in seine Tasche, gerade da hält Rufu der Verkäuferin einen Zwanziger hin ("Gehen" 161), Richard's suspicion suggests that he is guided by prejudice. While it seems plausible to argue that Richard's accusation of Rufu mirrors a "'faulty' thought process" (Brigham 18), his presumption validates the creation of an identity that is in sync with preconceived notions of black migrants.

Richard's finds out later that "liegt im Flur auf dem Boden, da wo Richard vorhin seine Schuhe zugebunden hat" ("Gehen" 162). His stereotyping underscores Rufu's and other African migrants' difficulties in feeling welcome when exposed to Europeans and their incorrect generalizations.

A burglary at Richard's house sets the tone in which supposed "friendships" turn sour. Upon his return from Frankfurt am Main, where he gave a talk on "Die Vernunft als feurige Materie im Werk des Stoikers Seneca," Richards finds out that someone burgled his house, and Osarobo appear to be the prime suspect since he was the only one who knew that Richard was away. According to him, the stolen items are primarily of personal value, despite their undeniable material value:

> der Ring seiner Mutter, das einzige Schmuckstück, das sie auf der Flucht von Schlesien nach Berlin mitgenommen hat, . . . der goldene Armreif, den er seiner Frau einmal aus Usbekistan mitgebracht hat, und ein Ring, den sie vom Zahnarzt Krause ihrem Liebhaber vor seiner Zeit, einmal geschenkt bekommen hat – mit einem Saphir in der Mitte, ringsherum kleine Brillanten. ("Gehen" 314)

While readers feel empathy for Richard, it appears that the burglar could not see "[d]en Umschlag, in dem Richard immer einige Hunderter aufbewahrt, damit er nicht dauernd zur Bank fahren muss" ("Gehen" 315). It remains open whether "einer von [m]einen Afrikanern, der Klavierspieler [Osarobo]" may have been behind the burglary. Since Richard's gravitates towards Osarobo as he searches for the burglary, his thought process validates Hall's idea that stereotyping "facilitates the 'binding' together of all of Us who are 'normal' into one imagined community, and [excludes those] who are in some way different" ("The Spectacle" 258). Being racially different from the Germans excludes Osarobo from the 'normal' who are not likely to be burglars. In this ambivalence of normality, the text re-enforces Richard's initial stereotype of

Rufu. While Osarobo is another example, he is just another African migrant whose desire for money might be big enough to break the law, thereby drawing a line between being German, the 'Us' and being a migrant in Germany, the 'Them.'

These kinds of boundaries come to the foreground as Richard talks to Anne. During their discussion, he finds out that she had become an advocate for the migrants whom she treats as equal to any other human being. Anne is a photographer and once had an affair with Richard ("Gehen" 89). She had moved to Berlin after the fall of the Berlin wall to take care of her aging mother. In her defense for migrants, she talks about Ali, who is her mother's caregiver: "[Er] hätte doch, als er bei uns gewohnt hat, im Prinzip alles mögliche stehlen können. Er hätte mich auch erschlagen können. Oder meine Mutter. Aber stattdessen wollte er nicht einmal, dass ich ihm am Ende mehr Geld gebe, als ausgemacht war" ("Gehen" 315). Notwithstanding Anne's defense of Ali's ingenuousness, Richard discredits Ali, by questioning his motivation, asking Anne: "Hattest [du] etwas mit ihm?" ("Gehen" 315). Although Richard's problematic past with Anne beclouds his opinion of her as a woman with chaste morals, his statement suggests that Ali cannot be this impeccable for no reason, further solidifying his stereotypes of African migrants. Correspondingly, upon being asked to try and find out whether Osarobo was behind the burglary or not, Richard concludes that "[e]r hat immer nach Arbeit gefragt. Er weiß wahrscheinlich nicht, wovon er sonst leben soll" ("Gehen" 316). Again, Richard counts Osarobo's continuous search for jobs as a shred of evidence that supports his suspicion of Osarobo as the prime suspect. Apart from understanding Richard's expressed language, he demonstrates what Hall describes as one of the stereotyping features. According to Hall, "stereotyping tends to occur where there are gross inequalities of power" (258). This inequality surfaces when Richard silently speaks about his job, the money attached to his emeritus status, and being a German citizen, which contrast

with a jobless migrant in search of employment to sustain himself. These different statuses—on the one hand "retired" and "citizen" on the other hand "migrant" and "unemployed"—express the inequality of power between Richard and Osarobo; the difference in status separates Osarobo, as the excluded in the burglary discussion, from the comparably powerful and rich Richard whose name for good reasons reminds readers of the German word "reich." Arguably, Osaboro has already been declared a thief and a burglar because of his African background; however, Anne tells Richard: "Du denkst also, dass er es war. Du verurteilst ihn, ohne dass er eine Chance hätte, sich zu äußern. Das ist nicht schön" ("Gehen" 316). Although Anne voices her defense of Osarobo, equally important is the prejudicial and more immediate encounter with Richard's consciousness that corroborates the silent workings of the "the notion of difference" between him and Richard and "the perception of foreignness" (Bartram et al. 19). Seeing Osarobo through Richard's eyes, this notion punches his innocence, emphasizes a shared perspective of migrants within the German society viewed as single individuals who embody the collective identity of few.

A further manifestation of stereotyping is the usage of pictorial and biblical references. After taking Anne's advice to confront him, Richard decides to give Osarobo a chance to prove his innocence by agreeing to meet with him at 2 pm, the usual meeting time. Unfortunately, as Osarobo cancels their half-past two appointment, the cancellation further raises Richard's suspicion when he changes his profile picture. He replaces his image with "Aquarell in Hellblau, Rosa und Lindgrün, auf dem sieht man einen segnenden Jesus, neben sich einen knienden Sünder, der den Kopf geneigt hält. Um sich absolutieren zu lassen" ("Gehen" 320) Upon gazing on this new profile picture, Richard wonders if "der Kniende einfach nur jemand [ist], der betet?" ("Gehen" 320). Their relationship mirrors that of the one in the picture, Jesus and a

sinner on his knees begging for forgiveness. The narrator appears deliberate in choosing this pictorial depiction, leaving the image for Richard to interpret and act as he chooses. Accordingly, the profile picture validates Richard's earlier suspicion, mirroring Osarobo's self-assertion as a thief that now seeks forgiveness.

Osarobo's profile pictures were the evidence Richard needs. In his search for the stolen ring, he decides to meet with Osarobo. To Richard's disappointment, Osarobo does not show up but simply writes that he cannot make it anymore ("Gehen" 322). While Osarobo's cancellation communicates a guilty conscience to Richard, he notices that Osarobo has changed his profile picture once again: "Ein Gemälde, auf dem Daniel in der Löwengrube zu sehen ist. Mit gefesselten Händen steht er vor den Löwen, die nicht wagen, ihn aufzufressen. *If God is for us who can be against us*?" ("Gehen" 322). The narrator's pictorial and biblical reference converges with Richard's mindset of Osarobo, using the picture of Daniel to represent himself on his profile. The biblical imagery refers to Daniel, who breaks the law by praying to his God as against the decree that "anyone who says prayers to any god or human being except you, [*King Darius*], Your Majesty, will be thrown into a pit of lions" (Daniel 6:7).

Similarly, with the biblical Medes and Persian administrators and governors, the picture, more than any words communicated to Richard, occasions the imagination of a convicted offender, who at this point is left to face the consequences of his offense. Correspondingly, Richard displays uneasiness upon seeing Osarobo's new profile picture, and he writes to him: "wenn du mir etwas sagen willst – ich warte morgen auf dich am Alex. Weltzeituhr 3 pm" to which Osarobo replies, "okay – see you tomorrow" ("Gehen" 322). Richard's restlessness and message to Osarobo seem to validate his assumption that he must be the thief, an alibi that further strengthens his suspicion. Osarobo might be speaking with Richard through those profile

pictures—an attempt to seek redemption for his "deed" and come out clean to him. However, the "biblical" profile picture responds to Osarobo's innocence since, according to the biblical account, Daniel, just like Osarobo, was accused of wrongly. Daniel serves, in this respect, to exonerate Osarobo of Richard's stereotyping accusation.

The closing chapters of the novel show the final judgment of the migrants' asylum status, where most of them were asked to leave Germany. Richard opens his own home for the immigrants, playing a considerable role in helping Raschid, Rufu, Karon, and some other migrant characters to find a temporary place to live. While this help suggests "Gastfreundschaft," as Ludewig and Steidl argue, it denies Osarobo exoneration since Richard believes he has something to clear up with him ("Gehen" 339). The character of Richard matches the internal struggle of being sympathetic to migrants, showing the drive to help but his silent actions with Rufu at the supermarket and Osarobo with the burglary incident are proofs that there is another side of Richard. His interaction with these two characters evidences the capacity to judge based on a system of representation, beliefs, and labels as migrants without means of livelihood.

Conclusion

Erpenbeck's migration novel plays out in the reader's mind, while incorporating not only familiar historical events of East Germany and the Berlin Wall, but also mirroring contemporary political and societal occurrences. I have argued that the novel convinces readers that its fictionalized characters and the happenings within the fictional world keep links with reality like the capsized boats in the Mediterranean Sea and the appearance of refugees in Berlin asking for

legal residence and work permits, most prominently in 2015. References to facts lend the novel a documentary feature. As a documentary novel, *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen* insists in a particular authenticity when describing the journey of the African characters, thus reinforcing and dismantling, Germany's ignorance of and relationship with black African migrants.

Most notably, readers are guided by an educated and open-minded German citizen, Richard, who experienced the loss and reappropriation of "Heimat" in his life before the story sets in. As I noted in the introduction to this chapter, the question of migration entails home and belonging in Erpenbeck's novel. Heimat—with its attendant connotations of stability, safety, historical attachment to a former geographical nation, and identity—as a sense of place and belonging, draws a connection between seeking forms of attachment and belonging. As I have shown, the ways in which social bonds and ties are manifested in the characters' motives for migrating to Germany. For these refugees, belonging captures both their desire for attachment to places or living outside the German government stipends for asylum seekers. Within the novel, the German authority's treatment of the Africans while awaiting asylum status decision indicates their powerlessness and their undignified treatment, as if they are second-class humans. Despite the unusual treatment they receive at the nursing home, the Africans focused on their search for home as they live communally in individual 'countries.' In several of the examples that I analyzed, the concept of "Heimat" signifies a place of safety, rest, social connection, and economic security. Because of forced migration, the ideas associated with home and belonging are constantly shifting. On one hand, belonging is a process of seeking acceptance and being accepted, while on the other hand, forced migration is based on a need for safety. As the migrant characters once migrated and underwent grief as part of losing their home, either Libya or their country of citizen as the case of Raschid, the desire to achieve a sense of belonging sets in.

Although we learn little about the political and economic causes for migration in general, readers get a sense of immigrants' fates and their touching efforts to find a better place—a place they can eventually call "Heimat."

As the migrants move across borders, the novel shows the prevalence of fluid identity. There are three prime cultural encounters one can surmise considering the interaction of cultures. First, as mentioned at the outset of the chapter, the characters' identity is shaped largely by their migration from their various countries to a hub, here: Libya, from whence they flee to Europe for safety. Second, the characters' fluid identity signifies a shift from citizenship of their various African countries to statelessness as refugees in Europe. Finally, identity change is fostered and solidified by a domestic agent, in *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen* through Richard. Thus, these fluid identities are confronted by a European system of rigid stereotypes, resulting in labels and limiting further professional and personal life trajectories. In all the cases that are shown in Erpenbeck's novel, identity construction was forceful and self-asserting act that begins with the ejection from Libya, signifying the beginning of a new life in Europe with no means of identification and taking refuge in a safe country, to the struggle with stereotypes and labels in Italy and Germany. These migrants are depicted as characters with fluid identity, depending on who they are relation with, their relationship with the said person or government. Indeed, migration shapes the lives of these asylum seekers—from the start of their existence and place of birth as can be seen through the biographies of Raschid, Awad, and the boy whose ability to move from one country to another is restricted.

The novel's depiction of migration from Oranienplatz to the nursing facility follows mirrors the evolving nature of borders. The narrator starts and ends with the stories of the African characters, their sudden appearance and subsequent strike at Oranienplatz, and their

deportation letter from Germany towards the end of the novel. Their presence in Germany—where to live, how to earn a living, etc.—were limited by existing borders in the form of legal documents. Borders, I have argued, are not only there to prevent migrants from entering Germany, but to exact the lines separating nationals from foreigners. The migrants encounter borders either in their need for a driver's license, health insurance card, or residence permit. These frontiers enforce exclusion in the same way they secure the national territories against external invasion. I have shown that Erpenbeck creates these frontiers by introducing legal documents like "Aufenthaltstitel." For Raschid, the borders of migrancy denied him the right to work with his drivers' license despite his ability to operate a tractor. Valid migrant documents and health insurance were the cause of oppression in Rufu's case. My analysis does not contradict previous works on the relationship between Richard and the African refugees. Still, it suggests the character's complexity since Richard joins the other Europeans in stereotyping his new friends. I do not read Osarobo's profile picture and the frequent change as an apology to Richard since readers are left in the dark about his knowledge of the burglary that happened at Richard's apartment. Although the novel concludes without pointing out the actual burglar, however, I argued that Osarobo was not the thief since the pictorial Daniel, who was a slave, and a refugee turned a friend to King Darius, was wrongly accused. Osarobo was only a victim of a globalized world that serves the global players at the cost of those who cannot survive in their countries of origin.

In the chapter that follows, I explore the subject of Female Genital Mutilation and the identity shifts Nura Abdi experiences while narrating her past. Abdi's *Tränen im Sand* (2013) sheds light on a cultural practice that is for good reasons seen as gruesome and despicable in the Western world. As I would argue, Nura's migration paves the way for her cultural understanding

of the German society she finds herself in, an experience that shapes her transcultural identity. The concept of transculturality, as I rely on Fernando Ortiz's theorization to explain, does not signify the end of culture(s) but the adjustment migrant characters experience during their stay in a new country.

Chapter Three

Tränen im Sand: The Female Body, Self, and Transcultural Identity

Nura Abdi's *Tränen im Sand* (2013) breaks the cultural silence on female genital excision. The text documents a painful cultural practice in Somalia, while also serving as an account of personal experience growing up there. The narrative is framed, so readers encounter 'Dhulka,' the Somalian word for Heimat in the first chapter. Abdi uses the first chapter to introduce Mogadishu, her hometown, the evenings spent at the Indian Ocean coastlines, and the nomadic life of the inhabitants with their Islamic religion. The text is divided into three parts; the first- and second part focus mostly on Somalia and Kenya, while the last section describes Nura's unexpected migration to Germany.

This chapter considers how Nura takes up the story of her body and migration to Germany through narrative practice. I explore how Abdi's text serves as a medium of resistance against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Immersed in the visuality of memories, the authors recreate the subject of genital mutilation and migration as an "I" who observes life. Migration empowers her to oppose FGM by revealing the oppression, violence, and deprivation of her sexual identity through her encounter with the Germans. Nura's identification shifts in the process of narrating her past. By focusing on the character's transcultural formation, I analyze the meanings Nura bestows to taste, culture, and religion as a crucial component in representing the problematics of cross-cultural encounters. These meanings also interact with her search for contact, community, and a sense of home in Germany. Reading the narrative in the context of theorizations of home and migration, I show how motifs such as food, safety, work, and money define Nura's idea of Mogadishu and, more broadly, her homeland Somalia.

Although the first part of *Tränen im Sand* is heavily focused on portraying Nura's family, her circumcision, and the outbreak of civil war in Somalia, Abdi is quick to highlight the two contrasting sides of culture in different countries. The depiction flashforwards to Nura's stay in Germany, her of common women bathing cloths, and German women and their perception of childbearing. In taking the narrative forward from the childhood days in Somalia to the current time in Germany, the narrator represents Nura's encounter with western culture while narrating her perception of difference from the Somalian perspective. The text includes Nura's escape to Kenya and further move to Germany, where she is arrested at the Frankfurt airport with a fake passport. Recounting these moments allows the authors to explain the aim of their book:

> [V]iel mehr liegt mir daran, diese Metzelei zu bekämpfen, die in meinem Land und auch in anderen an jungen Mädchen verübt wird. Beschneidung ist barbarisch, es werden Menschen bei vollem Bewusstsein verstümmelt, und damit sollte ein für alle Mal Schluss gemacht werden. Natürlich habe ich mir nicht einmal im Traum vorstellen können, einmal ein Buch darüber zu schreiben. Aber ich habe doch immer gehofft, eines Tages den Frauen, die davon betroffen sind, helfen zu können. ("Tränen" 347)

Abdi's engagement with writing conceptualizes the knowledge she gains through transcultural migration. This form of migration produces a wealth of new encounters and sheds light on evidence earlier ignored while living in Somalia and Kenya. Her story stages the female body from a migrant and self-narrating perspective: What happens when the place of experience is characterized by a constant shift between two homes, two cultures, and two countries? How does this continuous crossing between two cultures affect the autobiographer's identity and self-expression? I read the text and the depiction of FGM as a terrible cultural practice that actualizes the oppression of women in Somalia. Female circumcision symbolizes how male dominance plays out, bringing about violence, sexual repression, dependency upon women, and oppressive cultural practices that are forced upon women by a male-dominated patriarchal system.

Nura Abdi was circumcised at the age of four by her mother. She grew up in Mogadishu, but because of civil war riots, her family fled to Kenya, where Nura and her parents lived as refugees. In her search for "ein besseres Leben" ("Tränen" 292), Nura plots her flight to the United States with the intention of a stopover in Germany. However, the fake passport of the cousin she is traveling with is discovered in Frankfurt, a development which abruptly thwarts her plans. Unable to continue to the U.S., she remains in Germany. Her migration and further encounter with the German culture and German women enables Nura to experience western culture. Reflecting on her forming years in Somalia, she breaks away from her cultural roots, delineating the sufferings caused by female genital excision. The text, having Leo Linder as a ghostwriter, calls for an end to such barbaric acts and the torture they inflict on Somali and other women worldwide.

Abdi repeatedly uses the personal signifier "ich," in such lines as "ich denke oft an Mogadischu" ("Tränen" 8) "Ich habe meine Tapferkeit später noch manches Mal gebraucht" ("Tränen" 73). "Meine Eltern hatten mich ja als Erste in eine bessere Welt geschickt, weil sie wussten, dass ich die Letzte wäre, die sie vergessen würde" ("Tränen" 292). The use of the first-person pronoun "ich" and "meine" points to the personal experience of Abdi, who documents her life story. Immersed in the visuality of memories, Nura recreates the specificity of female genital circumcision and migration as an "I" who has been an observer of her life as it occurs. Despite the double authorship of the text, *Tränen im Sand*'s subtitle *Erfahrungen* suggests authorial voices since the book includes memories and dialogues between Nura and her sisters, Yurop and Fatma. Nura's self-narration and life-narrative remain embedded in the broader concept of autobiography. On experience and autobiography, Raymond Williams writes that autobiographers convey "knowledge gathered from past events, whether by conscious

observation or by consideration and reflection" (126-127)—which could include the author's feelings as well as thoughts as part of the autobiographical experience. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson further specify in *Reading Autobiography* that experience is personal and usually an interpretation "of the past and our place in a culturally and historically specific present" represented in an autobiographical narrative. They further argue that through experience, an author becomes a certain kind of subject with specific identities in the social realm (31). Nura maps her past and present—linked by the central theme of her engagement with female circumcision and living in Germany as a migrant. In this view, the story is as much historical as personal. Nura retraces her family history, which coincides with the tradition of female genital excision, the war outbreak in Somalia, her further search for safety in Kenya, and finally, her attempt to find refuge outside of Africa.

Autobiography, as a literary genre, typically means a self-written account of one's life (see Lejeune 3-10, Wagner-Egelhaaf "Introduction" 5, Wagner-Egelhaaf "Autobiographie" 6, Holdenried 10; Olney 20). The French theorist Philippe Lejeune conceptualizes self-narrative in his seminal study *On Autobiography*, defining the genre as a "retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular, the story of his personality" (4). Lejeune calls for sameness in the author, narrator, and protagonist's identity (5). In a more precise definition, Schwalm refers to autobiography as a narrative account of a person's life or a substantial part of it, written by him- or herself (Schwalm 503). These definitions complicate the classification of *Tränen im Sand* as an autobiography, since Leo Linder is not a protagonist, nor is the text a narrative account of his life. Linder, an author, director, and producer, was born in 1948 in Haan, North Rhine-Westphalia. He presently lives in Düsseldorf, where he and Nura met and ghostwrote *Tränen im Sand*. Since Linder is

male, was not born in Africa and is not an immigrant, his identity and life events differ dramatically from those of Nura. Linder is featured as an author on the title page but not on the book's cover.

Defining autofiction, Serge Doubrovsky coined this term in 1977 in his novel *Fils*. Doubrovsky (1) argues that autofiction is not the same as autobiography, nor is it a type of autobiographical novel. Doubrovsky explains that autofiction can be based on the facts and events of an author's life, assembled in a radically altered form. The homonymous author, narrator, and protagonist "deconstructs and reconstructs the narrative according to its own logic with a novelistic design of its own" (1-2). Doubrovsky's definition suggests that *Tränen im Sand* fits imperfectly into the genre of autofiction. Abdi's narration could be seen as autofictional since she recounts her life by including fictional elements in the search for self. "Fictional," then, would be an approach to reality that considers the fact that experiences are transformed through memory and appear in narrative form. The aesthetic formation of experiences assigns a co-equal status to fiction and reality, underlining their interdependency.

More precisely, "autofiction occupies a liminal space between fiction and nonfiction that requires continuous adjustments to the reading process as the novel vacillates between biographical facts and outright fiction" (Worthington 1). Ferreira-Meyers (40) claims that autofictional authors, through their writing styles, "transform an instance of personal reality into a public literary work, because the text's fictionality showcases questions about authorship and authority, fiction and reality, truth, and authenticity." Following the ideas of Worthington and Ferreira-Meyers, the genre blends fiction with self-writing since autofictional authors translate their life experiences and memories into a literary text. Clearly, there is a distinction between

autobiography and autofiction since the former does not mix reality with fiction, if possible, at all.

Could *Tränen im Sand* be considered a memoir? This classification, too, is imperfect. Nura book depicts the overall life and times of Nura in Somalia, Kenya, and Germany. Memoirs, by contrast, are a depiction of an individual's life or a "memorable part of it, within which the era in question and the effect an individual has had on a historically important political or public event is brought to the fore" (Lahusen 628). Lahusen's reference to a memorable part often denotes narrower memories or feelings in the life of the author. Memoir also includes life writing in a smaller context of an individual historical event. The boundaries between autobiography and memoir appear fluid; however, the genre classification of *Tränen im Sand* as autobiography reflects Nura's entire life story from childhood, her circumcision at the age of four, the uproar in Somalia and her search for safety in Kenya and then Germany.

Gérard Genette's concept of paratext brings us closer to the authorship of the text. Genette coined the word as a combination of peritext (all the materials inside the book) and epitext (materials outside the book including interviews and reviews) (4-5). A paratextual element communicates information such as the name of the author and date of publication (Genette 10-11). Peritexts are accompanying materials, typesetting, or editing words added in the publishing process, such as cover designs, the author's name, the dedication, titles, prefaces, epigraphs, and explanations made by authors in other texts explaining the why and how of the book (Genette). Although *Tränen im Sand* narrates Nura's life, the publisher intentionally includes two names as the authors of the book. Linder's presence evidences the presence of peritext.

Abdi's peritextual ghostwriting with Linder situates her story within the German context. The "über die Autorin" page unfortunately only gives information about one author. In an email conversation between Leo Linder and myself in May 2019, Linder wrote:

> ich war bei diesem Buch der Ghostwriter. Sechs Wochen lang hat mir Nura Abdi im Hinterzimmer eines äthiopischen Restaurants ihre Lebensgeschichte erzählt, ich habe diese Geschichte mit einem Diktiergerät aufgenommen und dann ein Buch daraus gemacht. Nura sprach Englisch besser als Deutsch, deswegen war das Ausgangsmaterial teils englisch, teils deutsch . . . Als dann drei Jahre später ein deutscher Verleger von mir ein Buch über das Thema Beschneidung haben wollte, fiel mir Nura ein – und sie war gleich einverstanden.

Examining the boundaries between authorship and ghostwriting, Linder's message revolves around the dynamics of collaborative writing, suggesting some kind of collaboration. As the ghostwriter, he writes *Tränen im Sand* on behalf of Nura Abdi, "bleibt anonym oder [verschweigt] zumindest seinen Anteil am Werk" (Meilke 989). Meilke's definition stays true to Linder's statement from his email; however, Linder remains "visible" on the book's paratextual pages. Furthermore, Volkening describes Linder's contract with Abdi, designating him the "Schreiber im Übergang von Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit. Er schreibt das Redemanuskript, das im Vortrag des Sprechers [Abdi] als dessen authentische Rede gelten können soll" (57). Evidently, Linder translates Abdi's voice into writing. Both authors' names fulfill the contractual function of anonymity, whereas the testimony's credibility rests on Nura as the sole witness of the events she narrates. Although the narrative centers on her life-narration, inserting Linder in the paratext does not make the text a collaborative work. Though Nura grew up in Somalia, where English is the official language, she gains a creative (German) voice and narrative mediation through her ghostwriter.

An autobiography is collaborative when some collaboration exists. Such works include "as-told-to" stories, written by more than one person, or in collaboration with a ghostwriter, an interviewer, or a transcriber (Smith and Watson 240-241). Similarly, Mita Banerjee (339) argues that such collaboration complicates authorship since it may be difficult to "disentangle one author's voice from another." This complexity, Banerjee contends, suggests a form of fictionalization (339). Her argument distinguishes Nura Abdi, the I-narrator and the autor, from the narratized Nura, who is also the protagonist. However, Lejeune autobiographical pact implies that when there is a sameness in author, protagonist, and narrator, it is an autobiographical work. In this sense, the collaboration in the form of ghostwriting and transcriber does not complicate the autobiographical authorship of *Tränen im Sand.*

Although the autobiography narrates Nura's life, the publisher intentionally includes two names as the book's authors in the 'about the author' page. Linder ghostwrites *Tränen im Sand* while "[remaining] anonymous, or at least its part in the work is concealed" (Mielke 989). He transcribes Abdi's voice into writing, which is otherwise regarded as an authentic speech. Both authors' names fulfill anonymity's contractual function, whereas the narrative's credibility rests on Nura as the sole witness of the events she narrates. Lejeune describes the ghostwriter as the "model," whose functions is to listen, note and tell what they know while capturing taped story in writing. Lejeune further argues that the author of a text is most often the one who wrote it, but the fact of writing is not sufficient to be declared an author (190-197). In their work on Ghostwriting, John Knapp and Azalea Hulbert also points out that apart from contributing to their client's knowledge and self-confidence, ghostwriters play explicit or implicit professional roles which allows them to remain visible or invisible to their audience (10-11). While Knapp Hulbert thesis focuses on whose idea do ghostwriters communicates and who expresses these

ideas on words, their definition of who is an author highlights the person who is behind a literary creative work. As I noted earlier in the email exchange between me and Linder, the creative spoken words are Abdi's, but Linder transcribes the as-told-to story into German. Furthermore, since Linder remains invisible to reads, he communicates Abdi's idea and FGM, however, in German words.

We do not know from the text in what way Linder's cultural heritage and self-understanding changed through the process of writing as he provides a creative (German) voice for Abdi, who grew up in Somalia, where English is the official language. Abdi recalls most of the information from memory and narrates the account through questions and discussions with others (family, friends, and associates). The narrative voice makes plausible that she writes about her body and migration but frequently lets her readers hear her characters' voices, enabling her to confront the fate of FGM victims in Somalia.

Female Genital Mutilation: The Authors and the Activist

Abdi uses the first chapter titled 'Dhulka,' the Somali word for home to introduce Mogadishu, her hometown to readers, how she spends the evenings at the Indian Ocean coastlines, the inhabitants' nomadic life and Islamic religion. "Und meine Heimat war Mogadischu, die Hauptstadt von Somalia. Sie war es, weil es nach zwölf Jahren Krieg mein Mogadischu nicht mehr gibt und ich längst in Deutschland lebe" ("Tränen" 8). Abdi introduces her readers to her hometown, Mogadishu, and country, Somalia. In their description of the country, Asha Mohamud and Agnes McAntony say that about 98 percent of Somali women and girls have undergone some form of genital mutilation. Mohamud and McAntony further describe Somalia

as one of the poorest countries in the world, suffering the after-effects of the civil strife and clan battles that followed the overthrow of President Siyaad Barre in 1991 (11). These are the circumstances Abdi refers to when depicting the violent cutting of the female genitalia and its aftermath. According to Mohamud and McAntony (2004) in a report for the World Bank and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), FGM denotes the "traditional practice in which part of or the entire external female genitalia is removed" (12). The authors refer to a definition of "Sunna," the Arabic word for circumcision, in the glossary. Sunna is religiously motivated and "sei eine Beschneidung, bei der entweder die Klitorisvorhaut oder die Klitoris selbst entfernt wird" ("Tränen" 349). Abdi's definition captures the religious connotation to FGM practice and religious repression of the Somali womanhood.

FGM stands out as a cultural and religious practice of the Somalis. Abdi's story foregrounds the connection in that culture between being cut and coming of age as a woman. A day before the circumcision day, Nura's mother and others of the soon-to-be circumcised young girls encourage the girls, giving them reasons why they need to be mutilated. While encouraging the girls in that they should not bring shame to their family, the mother adds: "Morgen wird sich zeigen, wer von euch die Tapferste ist, wer von euch die Zähne zusammenbeißen kann und wer es ohne Weinen hinter sich bringt" ("Tränen" 61). The phrase emphasizes the drama that goes with circumcision, a theatre that should be performed with brevity and strength, symbolizing the girls' toughness. Furthermore, the mother's statement associates tears with weakness since it conveys disdain about the family and the said girls' unwillingness to go under the razor.

Abdi's view regarding FGM before her migration to Germany embodies the idea of purity in relation to womanhood and religion. While presenting herself as a medium to understand her previous cultural perception of genital mutilation, the narrator recollects that

"Beschneidung ist für uns doch die Voraussetzung dafür, in die Gemeinschaft der anständigen Frauen aufgenommen zu werden. Wir werden doch erst durch Beschneidung rein. Nur Huren sind unbeschnitten. Wer respektiert werden will, muss rein sein. Reinheit ist ein ständiges Erfordernis unserer Kultur. Ein Grundbedürfnis jedes Somali" ("Tränen" 74). Although Nura recounts her story as an adult who has lived in Germany for some years, nevertheless the text depicts a Nura submerged in the Somali culture. The cultural initiation inducts the girls into the society of womanhood. The induction symbolizes the purity of the female body, with its scared responsibility of purity to the future husband and children upon childbirth.

Equally, the mutilation practice paints pictures of the female bodies in pain. In revealing the process, the narrator explains how Yurop was cut: "eine Frau griff sich ihr linkes Bein, eine andere ihr rechtes, ein drittes Schultern, zwei weitere hielten ihre Arme fest, und am Ende waren es sieben oder acht Frauen, die irgendein Körperteil meiner Schwester zu fassen bekommen hatten und so festhielten, dass sie sich eigentlich nicht mehr rühren konnte" ("Tränen" 64). Bearing witness is not enough, however; Abdi uses language to convey Yurop's pain and horror during circumcision. Yurop's plight does more than simply reflect the abject state of girls in Somalia but illuminates her pain before the actual surgery. Yurop bursts into tears before the *Halaleiso* (circumciser) touches her. As can be learned from the text, Abdi's outburst is met with a slap ("Tränen" 65). There seems to be a relationship between experience and language in the narration of this traumatic event. Although words seem inadequate in expressing the trauma of female circumcision, language reflects the experience even as the narrative is represented through memory of the past. The authors' word choice constructs the evidence of painful sensation as the body parts are held by seven to eight women just to keep Yurop in place. Nura can recount only the physical scene since body pains can only be imagined (Scarry 162). The

imagination of Yurop's pain can only be translated through the imagery of eight adults holding the legs and other body parts of the toddler.

Abdi's mutilation story elaborates further on the trope of bodies in pain. The text accentuates her intention of making her experience public to remonstrate FGM. Recounting Abdi's painful surgery suggests the rewriting of her experience in the hands of the *Halaleiso*.

> Als ich an die Reihe kam, brach ich in Tränen aus. Ich hatte Angst. Ich konnte nicht einmal weglaufen. Ich schrie, als sie auf mich zukamen, ich schrie: "ich will nicht!" Das nutzte gar nichts. Ich schrie, strampelte und wurde von allen Seiten gepackt. Keine dieser Frauen machte Anstalten, mir zu helfen . . . Ich saß da wie in einer Arena, um mich herum ein dichter Kreis von Frauen. Sie umklammerten mich, schlugen meine Schürze zur Seite, zogen meine Beine auseinander, und das war der Augenblick, in dem eine der Nachbarinnen zu singen anfing. ("Tränen" 66)

This story portrays a visual image of Nura. The memories of her circumcision intermingled with painful emotions places her pain at the center of her experience. I understand the traumatic experience as a narrative construction and a way to understand the complexities of female circumcision in Somalia. The first-person pronoun invites the reader to witness the forceful and unwilling genital surgery. Her description, tagged with trauma, conveys a historical and cultural significance to which she was subjected to by the women and the circumciser. As a female, it becomes a history that Nura has been circumcised while on the other hand, she becomes the woman her culture expects her to be—a woman of purity. As the circumciser begins the act, Abdi recalls the other women's excitement: "ja, ja, die Seite ist gut!" . . . "So, das war's!" "schon fertig! Schon erledigt!" ("Tränen" 67). This incident is described with great details and significance in the narration. The narrative voice's emphasis on this circumcision moment creates a larger understanding of self and of the cultural act's significance from the circumciser and the other adult women's view. Abdi does not only reconstruct her past in Somalia but

soothes her trauma with written words. Her migration to Germany provided the setting in which she narrates what happened to her at the age of four since she gives voice to the ills of circumcision as she screams in a helpless effort to stop the act. Her scream, though vivid, is amplified through her narration and becomes embodied in the narrative. The written word targets the cultural practice of her former homeland and highlights her in-between-state: not to be part of Somali tradition anymore and yet deeply connected to it through her memory while speaking in English to a ghostwriter in Germany.

FGM expresses a male-dominated culture with feminine enforcement. Although the Somali woman performs the genital mutilation, the men are the passive custodians of the culture. Nura's father was not present on the blessed day. "[Mein Vater] wollte mit der ganzen Sache nichts zu tun haben und war verschwunden. Und die Väter der anderen Mädchen ließen sich nicht sehen" ("Tränen" 64). However, I argue that the father's absence promotes the practice, by enabling it. His absence allows the cutting to procced and shows acceptance for the cultural norms that portray the practice as part of Somali womanhood. It is a shared norm since that the family and the communities are the most significant transmitters and guardians of the excision culture. Hirut Gemeda (13) asserts that mothers and grandmothers are the conveyors of the FGM tradition, and it is therefore a "woman's affair." The Halaleiso and other women circumcise the toddlers as they enforce and transmit the cultural value to the younger generation; meanwhile, the men's absence during the ritual demonstrates a mark of approval to the practice.

Looking more deeply into FGM, the story chronicles Nura's father's tacit acceptance of the practice. After the circumcision, Abdi recounts her father's silence and passive endorsement.

> Bis heute sehe ich das Gesicht meines Vaters vor mir, am zweiten Tag ging die Tür auf, er kam herein. Das heißt, er blieb in der Tür stehen und schaute auf uns Mädchen am Boden. Ich sehe seinen Blick noch vor mir. Er war den Tränen nah. Er sah uns da liegen,

> und die Worte blieben ihm im Hals stecken. Er sagte nichts, wandte sich nach einem Augenblick ab und schloss die Tür hinter sich. (“Tränen” 69)

The recollection seems to place her father as a weak man who was opposed to the circumcision but could not stand against it. Considering the father’s role, Tobe Levin clears a new path in the study of female genital practices, arguing that Nura’s father shows empathy towards his daughter (“Female” 289; “Assaults” 5). By foregrounding Nura’s father role in the circumcision, Levin highlights the role of men as it concerns FGM in the Somali culture. Evidently, his speechlessness even as he stands at the door plays an important role in comforting his girls after circumcision pains. However, his looks, the close-to-tears physiognomy, and words stuck in his throat do not only display empathy but give voice to the circumcision culture. O’Neill et al. in their reports, confirm male support for FGM, as they engaged with migrants with Sub-Saharan African backgrounds in Belgium. Their female and male respondents certify that by not speaking out against it, men consent and play a crucial role in having their daughters circumcised. *Tränen im Sand* provides a view of the Somalis and their way of living, especially the men; a perspective that is shared through the narrator in her nuance of the father’s silence, making fathers co-perpetrators of the circumcision ritual.

Non-medically trained women perform the mutilation procedures. Nura critiques the genital surgeries since the circumcisers are self-trained and were never schooled in any medical procedure. She was treated with local anesthesia when she started bleeding days after the circumcision since the trained doctors refused to treat her upon her arrival at the hospital. Nura, however, questions the trust placed on these women: “Sie sind womöglich nie zur Schule gegangen und haben auf keinen Fall eine medizinische Ausbildung genossen – woher wissen sie also, wo sie die Klinge ansetzen müssen und wie tief sie schneiden dürfen, wo die Venen

verlaufen und wie sie die Stiche zu setzen haben? Wie leicht kann ein Kind dabei verbluten!" ("Tränen" 77). Abdi aims to unmask the ills of FGM by showing the unschooled background of the perpetrators. This unmasking heightens the traumatic experience in the readers' minds and serves to create an understanding for Nura's motivation to tell her story. Nura's questions, however, illustrate her encounter with migration, since her move to Germany sheds light on the cultural mutilation practice that she had once considered normal. Nura reveals the complexities of her life as she confronts the practice of FGM and the circumcisers' medical illiteracy. Migration brings her to learn about the medical details since a procedure as cruel as FGM requires to meet at least basic standards of Western medicine.

Before Nura's flight to Germany, she associates her circumcision with her identity and cultural traditions. The essence of her feminity is expressed in an ideology of circumcision. Her identity construction reveals the symbolic element of Somali cultural practices. After the experience of excruciating pain, she confirms that "ich durfte mich nun also rein und beinahe schon erwachsen fühlen" ("Tränen" 77). The circumcised identity enhances Nura's consciousness about who she is as a Somali and reinforces her sense of cultural purity. Now in Germany, her views have changed. A different cultural context alters her very understanding of femininity. Migrancy involves encountering another culture. Before Nura's migration to Germany, the violence to her body has always remained invisible. Living in one's home country makes it difficult to discern what is distinctive about it. The country of destination sheds light on the invisible. Invisibility and migration reflect the evidence of being culturally different, for example through the food we eat or the places where migrants gather. The invisible becomes visible in the crossing between cultures.

Casting Blind Eyes: Abdi's Experience in Germany

The authors divided the book into three parts, dedicating the last and third part to the discussion of Abdi's experience in Germany. In the "Welcome to Germany" chapter, Nura tells her experience with the German border security personnel and her arrest at the Frankfurt Airport. As Nura is cleared by the immigration personnel, she recalls being asked: "Bitte, sagen Sie die Wahrheit. Ist das wirklich Ihr Pass?" ("Tränen" 234). The border police's careful investigation reveals that Nura possesses a fake passport and "[wird] nicht weiterfliegen [nach Amerika]. Sie werden in Deutschland bleiben und können Asyl beantragen" ("Tränen" 234). For Nura, her experience at the airport reflects a key topic in her narration, as she turns to telling how her passport was seized and how she was escorted into a "kleine[r], neonbeleuchtete[r] Raum mit mattgrünen Wänden und einem schwarzen Plastikstuhl" ("Tränen" 234). The importance of Nura's Frankfurt Airport experience is undeniable; however, her narration helps the readers to see her confrontation with the German language since her first language is English.

For Nura, her story facilitates the creation of a new self—a refugee.[2] Her arrest and questioning at the airport are clouded by a communication barrier. Under the custody of the German immigration police, she wonders if she will be deported to Kenya or Somalia. While she is amid this thinking process, the border policewoman returns to the holding room in her quest to interrogate Nura. She recalls that "die Frau redete auf mich ein, seltsamerweise in Deutsch, und auf alles, was sie sagte, antwortete ich mit 'Somalia'" ("Tränen" 235). Nura's linguistic

[2] Nura's arrest at the Frankfurt Airport and further lodgment in a refugee home puts her in this category. I do not deny the notion's legal implications for Nura as I will further use the word "migrant" to describe her status. As discussed in my previous chapters, a refugee is a displaced person who has been forced to cross national borders and cannot return home safely. However, I propose to use the term "migrant" to refer to refugees as well as migrants since both have moved across an international border or are away from their original home, regardless of their legal status or whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary.

incomprehension reveals that she is at the mercy of the German border agents. Describing her border and language experience, she recalls that "als Nächstes musste ich meine Tasche öffnen, die Schuhe ausziehen und die Kleider bis auf die Unterhose ablegen. Kontrolle, sagte sie. Wie ich so dastand, fast nackt, begutachtete sie mich erst von allen Seiten und nahm sich dann meine Kleider vor" ("Tränen" 235). Although the Border agents are carrying out their normal routine upon the arrest of a refugee, the narrator's description of this routine challenges the repression of Nura's feminine privacy. Her insistence on identifying discomfort with the German word "Kontrolle," "die Kleider bis auf die Unterhose ablegen," and being "fast nackt" testifies to the narrator's desire to convey Nura's border experience.

Tränen im Sand depicts the pain of Nura's migration custody and her ignorance about her location of arrest before the public. In dialogic engagement with the border agent and a translator, Nura realizes she is being held in Germany and not in America as she previously thought ("Tränen" 236). This realization puts a little smile on her face for the first time since her arrest in Frankfurt. Furthermore, within the airport, Nura was taken to "einem großen Raum voller Menschen. Menschen aus aller Herren Länder. Menschen jeder Hautfarbe. Männer, aber auch viele Frauen und Kinder darunter" ("Tränen" 236). Abdi paints a picture of where she is being held, recalling "wenn dies unmöglich ein Gefängnis sein konnte, so war es doch auf jeden Fall ein Ort, den man nicht einfach verlassen konnte, denn die Fenster waren aus dicken Milchglas, und die einzige Tür nach draußen war gut bewacht" ("Tränen" 236). These passages, taken together, depict Germans as invested in keeping illegal migrants in place. This investment highlights the reality of national sovereignty and illegal migration- the German border as within the airport as a symbolic place of control that shapes distance between legal and illegal migrants

The holding facility, while repressive, also serves as a place of social connection with other migrants. Nura wastes no time in getting acquainted with an arrested migrant. “Zehn Minuten später hatte ich einen somalischen Jungen kennen gelernt und erfuhr, dass ich mich in der Abschiebehaft des Frankfurter Flughafens befand” (“Tränen” 236). This acquaintance elucidates to Nura that her Frankfurt Airport arrest exemplifies a common misfortune, since the fellow Somali confirms that “[h]ier landet jeder…jeder von uns Pechvögeln” (“Tränen” 236). Colloquially, the young Somalis describe their dehumanization through border crossing misadventures, thereby creating a collective imagery of the unpleasant situation.

As migrants move from their home country to their country of destination, food remains an important part of their lives. It is not only a source of sustenance and nutrition for migrants but a form of self-expression. Food conveys a language that provides symbolic means to communicate with (Belasco 37, Bourdieu 6, Barthes 25; Douglas 12). Food consumption also mirrors culture and identity. Ott writes that “was wir essen und wie wir uns ernähren, ist aber, . . . eine Sache der Kultur. Unsere Ess-Identität ist also immer schon eine kulturelle Identität, geprägt von sozialen Diskursen und kollektiven Phantasien” (10). The autobiography encapsulates Abdi’s experience with food and eating; expressing the relationship between her identity and food consumption.

Nura and her fellow Somali are faced with the challenge of quickly adapting to new food culture while in the detention facility. They leave their country with a particular definition of food, only to be confronted with another kind of food in Germany. For Nura, good food would be “viel Reis mit Fleisch,” “schwarze[r] Tee” (“Tränen” 242), “Leber mit Zwiebeln” (“Tränen” 170), “*Injera* mit Hühnchen in scharfer, roter Soße,” (“Tränen” 171) and “*Khat,*” a flowering plant that is common to the Somalis (“Tränen” 100, 275). In contrast, the German border agents

serve her “Pfefferminztee” (“Tränen” 236). It is her first sight of “Pfefferminztee” and even the smell makes her sick. The food tells Nura that she is in a kind of prison and a place where her right to food and movement is suspended temporarily since she prefers “richtigen Tee, guten schwarzen Tee mit Milch” (“Tränen” 237). She prefers hunger to eating the “deutsche Brötchen. . . deutsches Schwarzbrot” and “Käse” (“Tränen” 237). Ultimately, Nura is left with no choice than to eat German food, although she finds the food “schauerlich” (“Tränen” 237). It appears that the young Somali, one of Nura’s acquintances, has spent more time there than Nura, in that he advises her: “in Europa musst du alles essen, was nicht nach dir schnappt” (“Tränen” 237). The food becomes a challenge that Nura must adapt to if she would want to survive in Germany.

Nura’s experience as a refugee and her further transportation to her lodgings are filtered through her opinions and expectations. It comes to her as a surprise that the Germans make no distinction between an African and a European. Abdi shows that the German officials “[reagieren] gelassen und freundlich, egal welche Hautfarbe man hatte” (“Tränen” 238). I argue that the narrator’s subjective judgment about the Germans emanates from the history of Somalia and civil war. As the first-person narrator, Abdi is interested in showing the ancestry of Somalia. The Somalis come from a single progenitor, “wie ein Baum, der viele Äste hat, aber nur eine Wurzel” (“Tränen” 136). Despite their being of one father, civil war broke out that forced Nura and her family to leave for Nairobi, where they lived in tents and struggled to survive. The civil war made enemies out of married couples; pregnant women were raped in the open streets (“Tränen” 140). The contrast further accentuates the make-believe of German society. The hatred that was a product of the civil war defines Nura’s personality. The recollection of the violent uproar colors her judgement of the Germans as surprisingly tolerant.

Nura and other illegal migrants' lodging in Lüdenscheid express sentiments of comfort and belonging. The text provides details of Nura's quest for a safe home and "besseres Leben" outside Somalia and Kenya. I consider the description of her accommodation to be with mixed feelings. The narrator portrays Nura's accommodation as "zwei große Gebäude mit je vier Etagen und breiten Fluren, geräumigen Zimmern, einem Kindergarten, einer Krankenstation und obendrein einer Wäscherei" ("Tränen" 248). Nura is blinded by the German migration politics, forgetting that she is in a prison and housed in an abandoned barrack. In her opinion, the "ehemalige Kaserne [ist] reine[r] Luxus, ich übertreibe nicht, das war Luxus" ("Tränen" 248). The description of the building and space accentuates her notion of luxury, along with the weekly 18 Marks, "zum Frühstück schwarzen Tee" ("Tränen" 248) and the good food. The use of adjectives like "groß," "breit" and "geräumig" accentuates Nura's portraiture of comfort and grandeur. In contrast to the Frankfurt airport holding facility meal, "man hatte die Wahl zwischen Spaghetti und Makkaroni, Reis und Kartoffeln mit diversen Soßen . . ." ("Tränen" 248). The food provision shapes her interpretation of "Luxus" and reenacts her culinary ideals. Furthermore, the barracks give migrants access to a television which Nura describes as a facade of the lodgings. In describing the small screen, she points out that "es gab einen Fernsehapparat für hundert Leute, und obwohl keiner von ihnen Deutsch sprach, entbrannten um diesen Apparat täglich aufs Neue wilde Kämpfe" ("Tränen" 249). Thus, the Kaserne serves as a site for social connection, an idealization of the concept of home and food, while expressing the migrants' quest for media content. "Die einen wollten Fußball sehen, die anderen eine Musiksendung, die Nächsten eine Serie" ("Tränen" 249). The media gadget infantilizes the migrants as they struggle for entertainment, however, their desire to watch German programs on the television echoes their search for belonging in Germany.

Abdi's story establishes chains of events and confirms her need for social connection with other migrants. In the previous chapter, I argue that home designates a place of a community and social security. Nura claims that she and other migrants make sense of their commonality using their identification with each other to build a sense of belonging. The text mirrors a vivid portrayal while describing their living situation: "es [gab] Afghanen, Kurden, Ceylonesen und Afrikaner aus vielen Teilen meines Kontinents" ("Tränen" 248). Beyond mere self-representation, Abdi recollects a similar lodging arrangement at the Frankfurt holding facility: "Dort saßen wir Afrikaner zusammen und redeten viel und lachten viel" ("Tränen" 238). It can be inferred that the narrator unintentionally fictionalizes their communal living style outside their homeland but consigns meanings to identity through migration and belonging. The migrants cluster to find commonalities, peace, and joy in a location of hostility and incarceration. Moving across the national border forces migrants to fit into a new environment and live with other nationalities. Migration, therefore, forces Nura to seek belonging with other African migrants while adjusting to communal living.

If Lüdenscheid is a dream for Nura, Düsseldorf embodies reality. Her luxurious living is brief, as she is then transported to the refugee camp in Düsseldorf. Her treatment in the hands of the Germans puts her in an identity crisis as she realizes she is a second-class citizen in Germany. The narration mobilizes features of memory, providing insight into Nura's experience of being a migrant: "Ich wollte kaum glauben, wie sie mit uns umsprangen, als wir im Sozialamt standen und jetzt auf Containeranlager in verschiedenen Stadtteilen verteilt wurden" ("Tränen" 253). In their definition, Schneider and Toyka-Seid see the German Sozialamt as part of the city administration which takes care "[zum Beispiel um kranke, arbeitslose oder alte] Menschen, die nicht arbeiten können und deshalb auch kein Geld verdienen" (6). The Sozialamt determines the

validity of applicants' claim for social security. Nura's comparison of her treatment with that offered in a social security office demonstrates her status as a migrant, and thus in need of the German welfare package. To recapitulate the "Sozialamt treatment," Nura further shares the experience of her second-class citizenship in Düsseldorf. The narrative captures these dimensions of reception: "wir waren Luft für diese Menschen. Alles was ich bekam, war eine Adresse, mit der ich nichts anfangen konnte. Keine weitere Erklärung. Da stand ich in einer fremden Stadt, in einer ziemlich großen fremden Stadt, wo ich keine Menschenseele kannte, und niemand sagte mir, wie es weiterging" ("Tränen" 253). Nura's transportation and her "Luft-treatment—an exertion after the random kicking of balloons—evokes a self-objectification, and further maps the Sozialamt's denial of her personhood and humanity.

The Sozialamt's depersonalization of Nura finds expression in Orlando Patterson's conception of social death. Although his book focuses on slavery, Patterson defines social death through the state of enslavement. He describes slavery as one of the "most extreme forms of the relation of domination, the limits of total power from the viewpoint of the master, and of total powerlessness from the viewpoint of the slave." Patterson argues that the power relation between slaves and their masters "involves the use or threat of violence in the control of one person and the means of transforming force into right, and obedience into duty" (1). The author describes social death as the condition of people who are not fully accepted as humans by wider society. In his description, Patterson compares slaves with people of lost identities claiming that they have lost their former status and need protection (43). With this dialectical construction in mind, I stress that the mechanisms of social death in *Tränen im Sand* manifests in migrancy. Nura, although not a slave in Germany, falls within Patterson's concept of social death since she lost her citizenship status upon her arrest at the Frankfurt airport and subsequent application for

asylum. Her migrant status and balloon-like treatment underscores her minority identity while expressing utmost dependency on the Sozialamt's will. The German agency exercises authority on Nura by depersonalization. Her preference of lodging or taste seems unreal since she is confined to the dictates of the Sozialamt. Her new address and her stationing in a strange city establish parallels between goods that are transported, delivered at a specific destination, goods that cannot speak or state a preference on their "fate." Nura's objectification thus captures her migrant status in Germany—a refugee and an illegal immigrant.

In another scene taking place in Düsseldorf, she describes Germany once again as welcoming. The description of a sudden abdominal cramps which starts as minor pain but worsens gradually, begins her journey to from an ambulance to a German hospital. From Abdi's view, it is an experience of radical cultural encounter, as she leans on her identity to explain her astonishment that "sie [holen] mich kleine Asylbewerberin überhaupt mit dem Krankenwagen [ab], dazu mitten in der Nacht" ("Tränen" 267). Nura considers herself inferior to the Germans because she is an asylum applicant. She uses the adjective "klein" to further stress her inferiority. In opposition to the "Sozialamt" experience, she is not worthy to be treated like a human being given that she entered Germany illegally. Nura's first job exemplifies both the positive and the negative sides of immigration. She joins a fellow immigrant, Hanna, in the search for work. Their experience while seeking a means of survival brings them to a factory as cleaners. At first both are joyful to find jobs even though they have no work permit. The joy is momentary, as they discover that they are treated not better than slaves. The working conditions are unpleasant:

> es herrschte immer noch eisige Kalte, und wir standen in unseren Jacken und Mänteln in einer riesigen, ungeheizten Halle und musste wie die Maschinen arbeiten, im Akkord. Duschgel verpacken, Plastikstrohhalme knicken und verpacken, Korken in

> Flaschen drucken, Parfümfläschchen mit einem grünen Bändchen versehen und ebenfalls verpacken. 500 Flaschen dekorieren und verpacken brachte 30 Pfennig. 500 Strohhalme knicken und verpacken brachte ebenfalls 30 Pfennig. Und das zwölf Stunden täglich. Im Stehen. ("Tränen" 270-271)

The description of her job underscores the exploitation and dehumanization of migrants. Nura points out that it is not only newly arrived Africans who work at the factory but "eine Versammlung armer Hunde . . . Kaum waren sie in Deutschland, wurden sie als Erstes ausgebeutet wie Sklaven" ("Tränen" 271). The job also places Hanna in a difficult position since she leaves her daughter alone at home with no supervision. The struggle for survival, the bad working condition and need to start from somewhere without much return evokes bitterness in both. The working conditions in the factory represents a reification of African migrants—the inhuman exploitation of Africans working like machines to fulfill their job tasks.

In addition to the inferiority, the narrator recounts Nura's stories of othering in Germany. Circumcision, which was part of her "positive" identity before migration, suddenly turns into a "negative," barbaric social norm and thus sets her apart from others. Othering, as I deploy it here, denotes an articulation of difference based on identity or origin (Bhabha 96; Mountz 248). Nura had previously believed that every woman is circumcised but upon her arrival in Germany, she learns otherwise: "nachdem ich einige Wochen in Deutschland war, ging mir schlagartig auf, dass ich anders war und ganz und gar nicht normal" ("Tränen" 73). The discovery makes her see herself as different from other women. Circumcision speaks to her otherness not only as a woman but as a migrant. Migration reshapes Nura's beliefs about FGM and thus brings her to understand "dass es so etwas gibt: eine unbeschnittene Frau!" ("Tränen" 73). It appears to Nura that her move to Germany erases all that circumcision means.

As a marker of difference, being a circumcised woman continues to take on deeper connotations for Nura. She puzzles if she could even explain to her mother what it is like to live as a circumcised woman in a world of uncircumcised women. Abdi uses her circumcision to contemplate her strangeness and thinking: "wie hätte ich ihr begreiflich machen sollen, welchen Schrecken ich in Deutschland bekommen hatte, als ich verstand, dass ich anders war und dass mir seither die Angst im Nacken saß, für alle Zeiten an Körper und Seele beschädigt und als Frau ausgelöscht zu sein?" ("Tränen" 296). Nura's contemplation hinges on her migrant experience, since she does not only feel different as a woman, but also thinks differently confirming her Otherness as a circumcised woman in Germany. Her friendship with a German seems to confirm this strangeness. In a dialogue, the German friend tries to make Nura realize the stigma of circumcision, asking: "Fühlst du dich irgendwie ausgeschlossen? Hast du den Eindruck, anders zu sein als andere Frauen? As Nura replies "Nein log ich, das tue ich nicht. Mir geht es gut" ("Tränen" 298). The friend pushes back, stressing "dann ist es höchste Zeit, dass du dir klar darüber wirst, was mit dir geschehen ist, nimm dir einen Spigel, spreize deine Beine und schau dir an, was sie mit die gemacht haben. Kommst du mit einem Finger hinein?" ("Tränen" 298). Using dialogue to emphasize the dramatic tension between Nura and her friend, reveals how she resisted and challenged the judgment passed on her otherness, "du bist nicht ganz gescheit! Du weißt nicht mit wem du sprichst! Der Ärmste" ("Tränen" 298). Her friend serves as a cue in invoking the scattered bits of difference and the connotation of being circumcised in Germany. In yielding the narration to the protagonist and her friend, the narrator dramatizes the feelings of both characters while portraying how different Nura feels that she lies to cover this difference. The dialog questions Nura's Otherness; however, she denies this distinctness. Circumcision highlights her recognition of "anders zu sein," nevertheless, her friend understands the cutting as

a marker of difference and her feminine abnormality. Indeed, being born and raised in Somalia shapes Nura's cultural mindset. In Düsseldorf, the foreignness of German culture comes into play. In her narratorial report about the German border agents in Frankfurt and Abdi's life in Lüdenscheid and Düsseldorf, where she is finally stationed, the narrative voice shares in detail the protagonist's feelings of unease and distress while in contact with the German culture and norms. Germany becomes a challenge for adjustment and the reconciliation of cultural differences.

Cross-Cultural Transition

Nura's migration necessarily leads to intercultural and cross-cultural encounters. Her experience with the German culture forms the core of her autobiographical narration as she becomes exposed to a new world. Nura comes to Germany as a circumcised young woman. She holds all that has to do with circumcision in high esteem until her contact with the Germans and other migrants suggest otherwise. Her encounter with a new culture reveals differences about the female body and circumcision. These differences are, as gender roles in general, culturally created as defined by Judith Butler. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler disrupts the binary view of gender, sex, and sexual orientation, arguing that gender is not a biologically determined quality or an inherent identity. She asserts that "there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (34). Butler maintains that a person's conception of identity and the self, including their gender and the form of their body, is circumscribed, and constructed by their social environment and their place within it. In Butler's theorization, gender is not fixed but "proves to be

performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. Gender is always a doing" (34). Migration becomes the social construction that determines how Nura perceives herself. Difference appears in Nura's praise of FGM:

> In Somalia war über Beschneidung nur in schönen Worten geredet worden, wie über ein Glück. Jetzt war ich von Menschen umgeben, die mit Entsetzen darauf reagierten. Ich zählte eins und eins zusammen und kam zum selben Schluss wie alle anderen: Mit mir stimmte etwas nicht. Ich wurde mir selbst unheimlich. ("Tränen" 263)

Butler's assertation provides a framework to analyze Nura's identity. Her view that gender is performative seeks to show that what we take to be an internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body. In other words, Nura's identification is performed through the post-circumcision design of her genitals. Her gender is built from the moment she was born but constructed upon her circumcision at the age of four; however, her female identity describes a feature of her experience growing up in Somalia. It means her identification produces some effects that are seen in her body. Her gender identity is constructed upon circumcision.

Furthermore, this cutting of Nura's genitalia becomes the inflicted acts to assert her femininity. Nura performs her gender as a circumcised woman which is produced within the Somali culture since circumcision creates and reinforces her identity. How she communicates this gender in *Tränen im Sand* is a culturally determined performance rather than an innate biological expression. Besides this cultural expectation that comes with being circumcised as a female, there seems to be a weight put on Nura since her culture imagines her to act in specific ways. When Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talks about the need to start a conversation around gender and gender norms internalized from childhood, she states that "[t]he problem with gender

is that it prescribes how we *should* be rather than recognizing how we are. Imagine how much happier we would be, how much freer to be our true individual selves, if we didn't have the weight of gender expectations" (34). Adichie's salient point expresses the pressure put on Nura as a female functioning through a circumcised body. Although Nura's gender is reinforced through circumcision, I would argue that Nura's migration to Germany offers a compelling voice for her to unlearn and interrogate her Somali culture since *Tränen im Sand* seeks to undo FGM. Gendered performance requires that Nura talks about "Beschneidung nur in schönen Worten" ("Tränen" 263), contradictory, the text functions as an affirmation of cross-cultural transition experienced through migration.

Nura's immersion in a new cultural environment makes her re-evaluate herself and her culture. Her presence in Germany and interaction with other migrants highlights her difference. As I have stated before, Nura is a migrant, but also a circumcised female which differentiates her from other migrants. Although "postcolonial [Germany] . . . acts as space for Nura's coming to terms with her cultural identity as a circumcised woman" (Göttsche 6-7), her identification as a circumcised Somali opens up new cultural horizons that shape her identity. Nura's circumcision story brings the Germans and the other migrants in contact with her personality. The protagonist-narrator remembers that "die Reaktion war jedes Mal erstaunlich: Sie fielen über mich her und nannten mich eine Lügnerin. Keine wollte glauben, dass es so etwas wie Frauenbeschneidung überhaupt gab!" ("Tränen" 288). Through the narrator, Nura brings her listeners into an encounter with the Somali culture, revealing its distinctness. Deconstructing strangeness, Hofmann (14) argues that "Fremdheit kommt einem Objekt der Erfahrung zu." Significantly, FGM immerses both parties in a state of weirdness since it destabilizes their experience of femininity and genital mutilation.

Nura's standards of her culture are confronted and debased by other migrants in the Düsseldorf container home. The beginning of this confrontation is activated in the first week in Düsseldorf as she discovers that not all women in the world are circumcised. Nura's stay in Düsseldorf challenges her cultural standards as she discovers what she describes as "ein wildes Treiben" ("Tränen" 260). The "wildes Treiben" suggests distinctiveness for Nura, as well as a cultural shock as "[sie] dachte sich nichts dabei. Mädchen, die jünger waren als ich, ließen ihre Freunde bei sich übernachten. Und offenbar schliefen sie tatsächlich mit ihnen, denn am nächsten Morgen prahlen sie damit" ("Tränen" 260). The narrator shows that the weight of this new norm seems to bear down on Nura as she recognizes this practice as "pervers" and "peinlich." Zooming in on Nura's cultural experience, marriage is the only umbrella under which men and women can express love and physical intimacy for each other. A man must ask for the hand of the woman in marriage from her parents and pay the bride price before he can take his bride home for marriage consummation ("Tränen" 33; 35). The autobiography voices a modus operandi of how intending couples should approach marriage, portraying the practice to symbolize sanctity within the boundaries of cultural expectation and fulfillment. It is also expected that the bride remains a virgin until the day of her marriage; otherwise, she brings shame and disgrace to her family. Living in the Düsseldorf container provides Abdi a setting to weave her migration experience with the Somali cultural practice. The sexual activities practiced and discussed by the other migrants gives an apathetic connotation to the meaning of sex and conjugal bond in contrast to Somali's faith in chastity. In other words, the casualness with which Nura's colleagues discussed and engaged in sexual acts questions her expectation of intimate relationship.

The cultural contact exposes Nura as being different from her fellow migrants. Hanna, a famous musician from Ethiopia, fled her country as war broke out. She becomes friends with Nura and welcomes her to the refugee home in Düsseldorf ("Tränen" 255). Again, Nura's contact with the outside world reveals that she is perceived as a victim of FGM rather than its proud representative. Hanna reveals to Nura while referring to her and other Somali girls: "Ihr seid ja glatt wie eine Wand da unten. Sie haben euch eure Gefühle genommen. Sie haben euch kaputtgemacht!" ("Tränen" 262). By inserting Hanna's voice, Abdi lends vividness to the narrative, bringing readers close to Hanna's perception of Nura's genitals. Although Nura pushes back, claiming that she is a normal human being like any other woman with feelings, her understanding of the purity and glory of her circumcision is already debased through cross-cultural contact. Her communication with Hanna rescripts Nura's thought about her dignification into womanhood through circumcision. Again, as a female and African, Hanna's statement gives prominence to the protagonist's sexual and genital repression. She sees through the manipulation and debasement that Nura's genitals were subjected to through culture. Nura's contact with Hanna, therefore, exposes her as being distinct from other African migrants.

Assimilation erodes the cultural practices she brought with her to Germany. Clothing provides additional information about Somalia and its religious cultural norms. The *Dirrah*, a long colorful dress of transparent fabric that must be worn by women even in a swimming pool or on a beach, reflects Somali beliefs and values. The text reveals that "[i]n Somalia ist es völlig undenkbar, dass eine Frau ihren Körper zeigt, sie riskiert, gesteinigt zu werden" ("Tränen" 15). Nura's *Dirrah* symbolizes what Hall calls "lived practices" (7) in his definition of "culture." Swimming with the *Dirrah* instead of a swimsuit underlines the religious value of modesty and purity that are connected to gender expectations. Notwithstanding, living outside her community

presents puzzles for Nura as she encounters the summer season in Germany. She recalls her first summer and bikini in Germany and how ashamed she felt wearing it: “es waren überall nackte Frauenkörper. Entsetzlich, ich war wirklich schockiert. Aber es war Hochsommer” (“Tränen” 15). Her perception of nudity is based on the exposure of body parts she is used to keeping concealed. Nevertheless, she cannot enter an outdoor swimming pool with the *Dirrah.* Migration leaves her no choice than to assimilate to the bikini culture: “Ich habe mir damals also einen Bikini gekauft, den ersten meines Lebens” (“Tränen” 16). In his discussion of assimilation as a form of cultural encounter, Delanty (94-95), argues that a dominant culture assimilates the weaker culture it encounters. Nura experiences a cultural shift as she buys “einen Bikini mit Leopardenfellmuster. Etwas Afrikanisches” (“Tränen” 16). In her dire need to cover her body, “[sie wickelte sich sein] Handtuch so um den Leib, dass möglichst wenig Haut zu sehen war” (“Tränen” 16). The narrative reveals a process of acculturation that dislocates strong ties to culture and a particular location. In this sense, a new Nura emerges as she adopts the ‘bikini culture’ as a transition process in embracing the actualization of her migration to Germany.

In addition to translating the feeling of nudity and shame into symbolic signifiers, Abdi engages in cultural translation. Although the wears the African styled bikini, her choice of swim suite implies a notion of culture. Cultural translation, as defined by Eugene Nida and Charles Taber in their 1982 book *The Theory and Practice of Translation,* involves “a translation in which the content of the message is changed to conform to the receptor culture in some way” (199). In line with Nida and Taber’s definition, Nura’s bikini involves a change that yields to the trend of summer. It appears that she is not against bathing suits but for flesh covered trunks, a little closer to the concept of *Dirrah.* With this acclimatization and staying close to the target culture, she clothes herself in cultural significance from the lens of the German outdoor culture.

The German educational system foregrounds the cause of further cultural shock. Nura comes to Germany without her educational certificate but decides to continue her education after six years at a community college. The text reveals that she lost all her documents during the war in Somalia. Nura takes an entrance examination to determine her academic skill level which the Germans used to offer her admission into a German university. Learning the German language becomes a struggle. Abdi points out her difficulty in class: "Ich konnte mich nicht so gut auf Deutsch ausdrücken wie die meisten anderen" ("Tränen" 321). However, the language barrier not only justifies her low performance in the class but heightens her awareness of German-Somali differences in education and learning. The German system confounds Nura's expectations: "[In] Afrika muss man in der Klasse still zuhören und darf den Lehrer auf keinen Fall unterbrechen. Aber in Deutschland wird auch die Beteiligung am Unterricht bewertet, und nach dem ersten Semester bekam ich nur deswegen schlechtere Noten als erwartet, weil ich zu still gewesen war" ("Tränen" 328). The classroom anxieties reveal the cultural gap, which becomes an open space for contest and conquest. Edward Said affirms that "culture can even be a battleground on which causes expose themselves to the light of day and contend with one another" ("Culture" xiii). Her cultural understanding of education fosters a negative perception of the German classroom. She further shifts position: "ich beschloss, meinen Mund in Zukunft aufzumachen . . . Kaum zu glauben, aber damit hatte ich bei meinen Lehrern Erfolg" ("Tränen" 328-329). This shift signals her assimilation into the German educational system and culture of class participation. She adjusts to the classroom practice of participating during lectures in her goal to achieve success in her educational pursuit.

Nura continues her narration uncovering the cultural difference between Somalia and Germany. After ten weeks in Germany, she feels confident having observed how the Germans

live. While in Lüdenscheid, she becomes acquainted with an African and her German husband, a doctor. The narrator reveals that the doctor invites Nura to a party at their house where she gets an opportunity to observe the inhabitants of Lüdenscheid through the eyes of the fellow guests. She ascribes meaning to the party culture she encounters and takes note of how the guests were seated:

> [D]a bildeten sie kleine Gruppe und unterhielten sich im Stehen, jeder sein Glas in der Hand – nette junge Frauen, nette junge Männer und nette ältere Herren. Bei uns in Afrika muss man auf einer Party sitzen, auf dem Stuhl oder am Boden, und sich in einer großen Runde miteinander unterhalten. Aber hier? Nichts da. ("Tränen" 251-252)

As a Somali and an African, she recognizes the dissimilitude between the German party and African togetherness. In contrast to the African lifestyle, she misapprehends why the Germans "standen nur herum, in allen Ecken, selbst auf dem Flur, und stecken die Köpfe zusammen wie Verschwörer. Später legte jemand Musik auf, aber niemand tanzte. Das Einzige, was sie interessierte, war zu reden" ("Tränen" 252). Her culture shock results from the absence of "all familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" with regards to social gathering (Oberg 1). Nura fails to realize how cultures can differ as migration allows her to see various cultural practices that deviate from what she was accustomed to in Somalia. Her sight of the men's apathy to music brings Nura into a state of regression as she glorifies her Africanness and social gathering culture.

Migration makes Nura a critic of Somali culture and social norms. For example, during her hospitalization for abdominal pain, she places the German hospital system side by side with its Somali counterpart. While praising the medical institution, the narrator chronicles her experience: "Ich lag in einem hübschen, sauberen Raum in einem hübschen, sauberen Bett, und jede Stunde kam eine Krankenschwester herein, erkundigte sich nach meinem Befinden und

sprach sogar Englisch mit mir! Diese Leute hatten ein Herz" ("Tränen" 269). Narrating this experience in Germany as part of her story, Abdi contrasts that level of care with what she has previously experienced: "In somalischen oder kenianischen Krankenhäusern kümmert sich kein Mensch um dich. Da kannst du liegen und vor Schmerzen schreien, und kein Arzt würdigt dich eines Blickes, kein Pfleger schenkt dir die leiseste Aufmerksamkeit" ("Tränen" 269). The taste of both worlds gives the protagonist no choice than to compare and contrast the best of both healthcare system. Abdi's hospitalization and further contact with medical care in Germany give her the opportunity to express direct criticism of how people are taken care of in her country of origin.

Abdi's hospitalization disorients her feelings about Somalia and Kenya, bringing about xenocentric feelings. Kent and Burnight coined the word "xenocentrism" to express a "view of things in which a group other than one's own is the center of everything, and all others, including one's own group, are scaled and rated with reference to it" (256). Within the concept of cross-cultural encounter, I consider xenocentrism to be the act of judging another culture to be superior to one's own. Nura's medical treatment by the German nurses and doctors leads her to develop negative feelings about her homeland in Africa. The positive reception at the hospital compels the protagonist to stand as a zealous defender of the negative stereotype against the Germans. She questions and concludes that "da behaupten welche, die Deutschen wären herzlos? Dann sollen sie mal nach Kenia kommen. Da sitzt man den ganzen Tag in einer langen Schlange von Wartenden, bevor man einen Arzt aus nur zu Gesicht bekommt, und am Ende eines solchen Tages geht man vielleicht mit einem halben leeren Röllchen Aspirin nach Hause, wenn man Glück gehabt hat" ("Tränen" 269). The protagonist's judgment about Germans and their medical practices sequences the past and thus crafts pictures of Kenyan hospitals acting as anterior to the

present time of narration. Her experience in the hands of the German nurses and doctors leave an impact on Nura as she appropriates and idolizes the local German hospital. Her Kenyan medicare experience lays the groundwork for her xenocentrism.

Further contact with her colleagues and superiors at work reveals more about her identity. While waiting for her asylum application to go through, she starts working for a cleaning firm at the Düsseldorf Airport for eighteen hours a day, where she cleans the interior of airplanes. The airport becomes a space of cultural encounter between cleaners, the stewardess, and the pilot-class. Nura remains conscious of her persona as a refugee and a cleaner when "ein Lufthansa-Pilot mit anfasste! Er schämte sich überhaupt nicht, uns Putzfrauen zur Hand zu gehen" ("Tränen" 287). In thematizing herself as a character within her workplace, the narrator shifts focus on class structures. The narration moves towards self-critique and self-worth, equating the pilot's touch as Nura's recognition of her personality, not only as a migrant and second-class citizen—cleaner—but, possibly, as a co-worker in the airline industry. She loves the idea that "die Menschen hier [haben] nicht diesen entsetzlichen Dünkel" ("Tränen" 287). The workspace becomes another cross-cultural encounter for Nura as she contrasts the German working atmosphere with the African: "bei einer afrikanischen Fluggesellschaft wäre das undenkbar gewesen. Da kommandiert dich jeder Steward herum – 'Hier, schmeiß das weg! Bring das raus!'" ("Tränen" 287). The pilot's working and the Africans' supposed insensitivity convey cultural norms. Again, Nura appears xenocentric in her comparison, describing the German work atmosphere as more respectful and cordial and seeming to lack class structure. Nura's source of identity is her Somali culture. Germany constitutes the battleground for her "lived experiences" as it becomes juxtaposed with her migrant experience. This juxtaposition produces a

transcultural identity—a transmutation between, and at the same time, simultaneous presence of former and current home, of past and lived social encounters.

Transcultural Identity

Abdi's migration provides a crucial context to situate her transcultural identity. Transculturation leads to the creation of a new identification with cultural aspects in a country of destination (whether this destination is desired or, as in Abdi's case, forced upon someone). In my previous chapter, I defined transculturality as transmutation and intersection of cultures. The migrants' culture, Fernando Ortiz claims, includes "different phases in the process of transition from one culture to another" (102). Transculturation allows for the creation of a new cultural phenomenon, which Ortiz refers to as neoculturation. His concept is relevant to Nura's transitional process as a migrant. Abdi's past and contact with Germany play a crucial role in her autobiographical narrative. Through experience and her recounting of events, readers encounter how her past and present stay in Germany shaped her identity. Gradually, her cultural past and identification begin to wear away as migration makes the invisible difference visible. Coming from a culture where female circumcision is held in esteem, her circumcised persona embodies a dehumanizing practice upon border crossing. Being circumcised in Germany as a female assigns her the role of a victim, despite her claim that "Beschneidung war für uns genauso natürlich, wie die Tatsache, dass einem die Milchzähne ausfallen, und über seine Milchzähne redet später ja auch keiner mehr" ("Tränen" 181). In addition to my previous argument on how Nura's pre-Germany travel places her circumcision within the space of a glorious ritual, migration, on the other hand,

effeminates the power behind female circumcision by removing the effectiveness of this glory. In other words, Somalia stands as a place without a dehumanizing stigma for the same kind of cultural practice that is condemned elsewhere.

Migration brings Nura and her sisters to come to terms with their circumcised identity. As time progresses, Yurop moves to Denmark and Fatma to London. Their move to Europe and contact with other women dissect this 'glorious' ritual and a shared past. This post-migration encounter reshapes their previous feminine identity. As Nura decides to have surgery to repair her genitals, she confides in Fatma. Fatma encourages her and confirms that her journey to London made her realized "dass nicht die Beschneidung die Moral einer Frau ausmacht, sondern ihr Charakter" ("Tränen" 308). In recounting her sister's post-migration point of view, the narrator stands as an agent who recounts the events, shifting between presenting FGM as an autodiegetic and a heterodiegetic narrator. With reported speech, the first-person narrator insights into Fatma's thought to signal the readjustment of her circumcised identity, since the topic was previously not up for debate. Fatma's encouragement as pieces of remembered conversation with Nura further dislodges the former conception of circumcision as pre-requisite for purity and marriage. Also, the narrator uses Fatma's speech to simultaneously convey her attitude towards the reported utterance, recognizing that Europe exerts an external influence on Nura and Fatima. Ortiz argues that such significance emerges from readjustment to a "new syncretism of culture" (98). Both sisters embody transculturation as a shift of identity when moving from Africa to Europe. Abdi here interrupts the sequence of account to share her reflection about Fatma's readjustment: "[D]ass wir überhaupt [über Beschneidung] reden konnten – und dann noch, ohne dass sie die Hände über dem Kopf zusammenschlug – das hing sicherlich auch damit zusammen, dass wir nicht mehr in Afrika lebten" ("Tränen" 309). Africa

wields a specific influence on their identity, which upholds the sanctity of FGM. Europe, in contrast, brings about the transmutation of character: "Europa veränderte meine Landsleute" ("Tränen" 309). The continent modifies their cultural understanding, which in turn affects their identity. Migration becomes the aperture for Nura's objectification, a process that positions her for femininity and body-shaming.

Abdi's openness brings her in contact with a London surgeon who helps her to get through the surgery in Saarbrücken. At first, the surgery is a matter of concern as she prefers to be identified as a Somali. Her preference for identification with her Somali heritage resonates with not only where she grew up but with her cultural implication of being circumcised. Somali convention dictates that she has to remain circumcised before marriage and a virgin since "[Sie darf es nicht] vor ihm schon mit anderen Männern getrieben haben" ("Tränen" 304). *Tränen im Sand* provides a picture of the first few days of marriage for a Somali woman by representing the marital bed as the primary space for sexual discovery and pain. This image abstracts from religious expectations to capture the unwritten laws surrounding the pre-marital relationship. In her quest to transform, she accepts the advice of her friends—"vergiss Somalia!" ("Tränen" 304). Nura's friend's recommendation is tinted by an aggressive rejection of the cultural expectation of being circumcised and the rejection of the Nura's overbearing sexual constraint by the Somali culture. Transculturation, Welsch explains, is a "consequence of the complexity of modern cultures . . . which interpenetrate or emerge from one another" (197). Welsch's thesis focuses on the idea of motion, the movement of migrants from one place to another, gaining new knowledge, broadening their horizons, and adopting new identities. He further argues that the "acceptance of their transcultural constitution is a condition for coming to terms with societal transculturality" (201). From Welsch's standpoint, Nura's acceptance of surgically repairing her

mutilated genitals evidences the relinquishment of her migratory background and circumcised identity.

The post-surgery period reveals another phase of life. Although the surgery goes well, it leads to discoveries for Nura. The first-person narrator reports: [Ich ging] auf die Toilette – und konnte es nicht glauben: Da spritzte es nach vorn in einem kräftigen Strahl heraus" ("Tränen" 307). The new urine flow symbolizes change as Nura recollects that her parents simply identify uncircumcised females by their urine. Her recollection creates a basis or comparison between the surgically repaired and the circumcised Nura as the narrator confirms that "jetzt trommelte es gegen die Kloschüssel . . ." ("Tränen" 307). The narrating-self forms part of the unfolding reflective awareness even as she ascertains that her period "floss sogar das Blut, das immer nur zaghaft getröpfelt war!" ("Tränen" 307). The post-surgery moments become points of self-discovery for Nura as a normal woman who has been under the shackles of FGM. The successful reconstructive surgery restores elements of her feminine identity. The new identity becomes fundamental to the constitution of the self—the new Nura, who is no different from other women in Germany.

Considering her pre-migration to Germany, Nura and her family experience swift identity changes already during the Somali civil war and its aftermath. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, her story details her family's flight from Mogadishu to Nairobi before arriving in Germany eventually. The uproar in Somalia reflects the status and identity transformation and: from being Somali "citizens" to "stateless" and "homeless" (Arendt "The Origins" 267) and finally to "refugee" in Kenya. Arendt's understanding of war further explains Nura's family situation, as militias plundered their house, forcing them to flee for safety ("The Origins" 139). The narrator recreates the past in life writing, recounting a historical perspective of the war: "die

Gewehrkugeln hatten erneut ein Volk aus ihnen gemacht. Ein Volk von Emigranten und Flüchtlingen" ("Tränen" 141). The violence leaves Mogadischu uninhabitable: "Mein Mogadischu gab es nicht mehr. Jeder, den ich kannte, hatte sich in seinen vier Wänden verschanzt oder war geflohen" ("Tränen" 143). As can be learned from the text, the account of the civil war horrors conveys meanings to Abdi's hometown as she personalizes Mogadishu. The personal pronoun implies an emotional attachment to her hometown, the anxieties of the war on friends, and acquaintances and at the same describing her transition from citizenship to statelessness.

The war further illuminates the concept of refugee status. In the previous chapter, I defined the status of "refugee." Nura sheds more light on this definition:

> Die ganze Stadt zerfiel in verfeindete Parteien. Es wurde so schlimm, dass die Zugehörigkeit zu einem anderen Clan ausreichte, um Menschen zu erschießen und ganze Familien auszulöschen . . . Bewaffnete gingen von Haus zu Haus und sortierten aus – wer vom falschen Clan war, musste mit dem Schlimmsten rechnen. Anfangs wurde nur geplündert, später erschossen. ("Tränen" 138)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) 1951 definition creates an appropriate framework through which Nura and her family's journey towards refugee identity can be constructed. According to this denotation, a refugee is someone who has been forced to leave their country to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. Abdi's fragmented intimation of experience captures the reading of the protagonist since her family is persecuted for belonging to a particular clan. For fear of their lives, therefore, they give up their Somali citizenship for safety in Kenya. The flight to Kenya echoes the beginning of new identity and her refugee status, which precedes her second asylum status in Germany.

Abdi constructs a transnational identity while narrating her fake passport journey. As she and her family continue to live in Nairobi as refugees, she arranges with her cousin, who lives in America to buy a ticket to the US and obtain a counterfeit passport. The narrative before her trip recounts her development through a reconstructed past:: "[I]ch besah mich im Spiegel und fand, dass ich von einer schwarzen Amerikanerin nicht zu unterscheiden war" ("Tränen" 228). The new look makes her appear to have taken on an American identity. Likewise, to look like an American, "hatte [sie] Pullover für den amerikanischen Sommer dabei" ("Tränen" 228). This and the moment where Nura observes herself in the mirror are critical events in her life since she takes on an American identity to deceive the border agents at Nairobi. The American passport accentuates Nura's identity change. She wakes up and bathes as a refugee in Nairobi but dresses up as an "American." She boards the Lufthansa plane and lands in Frankfurt as an American but will later be arrested as a Somali by the German border agents who recognize her fake passport ("Tränen" 230). Nura's arrest during her layover alters her supposed Americanness to asylum seeker since the agents conjecture that the passport does not belong to her. Nura's identities are constructed across different continents and are "constantly in the process of change and transformation" (Hall 4).

Nura's unexpected stay in Germany delineates transformation. A short holiday in Nairobi reveals this transculturation, which the narrator refers to as "Veränderung" ("Tränen" 107). Abdi turns to the siblings to chronicle the self-narratives of how she remembers that Nura screams as her father tries to slaughter a goat, thus showing sympathy. Her outburst of emotion brings her family to laughter: "[W]as bist du für ein Weichling geworden! Wird man in Europa so weich? Dann komm lieber zurück" ("Tränen" 107). Abdi keeps the reader's gaze aligned with the family's rebuke, allowing her to provide their critique, which acts as a vehicle to depict her

family's disappointment in her show of sympathy. Abdi presents her family as a vehicle through which persons and memories come to life, the village of her childhood and animal slaughtering before the Somali civil war. The raconteur accumulates an inventory that is mimetically indebted to her real life. While the amazement brings the family to the picture of narration, articulating perceptible feelings and tempers, the narrator uses their words to relive Nura's past from a present-day perspective, pulling the threads of time before she migrates to Germany. Their exclamation confirms the evidence of another identity: "früher hatte [Nura] selbst mit angefasst, hatte die Beine festgehalten, das Fell abgezogen, die Eingeweide ausgenommen" ("Tränen" 107-108). Nura's transition shows the transcendence of "supposedly monocultural standpoints" (Welsch 201) which she underwent while in Germany:

> [I]ch war auch die Einzige, die sich an den Bushaltestellen von Nairobi über die alten Frauen wunderte, die sich genau wie alle anderen mit Ellbogenstößen und Fußtritten durch das Menschengewühl zum Einstieg vorkämpfen. Kein Wort der Entschuldigung, wenn du eins in die Rippen bekamst, nicht einmal ein bedauernder Blick, einfach weiterboxen, durchwühlen, vorwärts schieben. Und was soll ich sagen? Es ärgerte mich. ("Tränen" 108)

Migration has changed her expectations for sympathy and politeness. Abdi recalls the above scene as eyewitness and portrays Düsseldorf to be an orderly space: "jedenfalls dachte ich mit Befriedigung an die Schlangen, die sich in einem deutschen Supermarkt vor den Kassen bilden. Wo sie Entschuldigung sagen, wenn dich einer auch nur versehentlich anstößt" ("Tränen" 108). The narrator-character opens herself up for criticism as she makes a comparison between Düsseldorf and Nairobi, depicting the changes that come with migration to Germany. Her memory suggests the partial deculturalization of her past and the added creation of a new cultural identity.

Being financially independent reinforces Nura's family values. She achieves the family's vision when she gets a cleaning job at the Düsseldorf Airport. Although the job is exploitative since she works eighteen hours a day, the financial independence defines Nura's family identity. In her defense, she declares that: "von meinen Eltern hatte ich gelernt an die Arbeit zu glauben und an selbst verdientes Geld. Sozialhilfe zu bekommen wäre für mich erniedrigender gewesen als die stumpfsinnigste Arbeit" ("Tränen" 278). She further shares the last words from her mother before she departs from Kenya: "[B]ettele niemals einen Menschen an" ("Tränen" 278). Her mother's advice reinforces the reference point to her financial independence. This reinforcement confirms the formation of a distinct new identity as a migrant—someone who has shed parts of the old and adapted to a new cultural setting.

Religion and skin color individuate Nura's migrant identity. Nura's job at the Düsseldorf airport brings her in contact with Turkish co-workers. Her co-workers recognize Nura as a Muslim and perceive her to be their sister. The Turkish later discover that Nura "unter Islam etwas anderes verstand als sie" ("Tränen" 290). The discovery signals a swift change for Nura's co-workers; they stop identifying her as "Schwester" but "schwarzes Mädchen" ("Tränen" 290). For example, her Muslim "sisters" consider it a shame and an insult to the Islam faith, "zu tanzen und in Discotheken zu gehen" ("Tränen" 290). The narrator remarks that Nura has become a nameless being because of her religious beliefs. The inglorious representation is constructed from the stance that Nura's actions differ from her associates' religious beliefs. Her identity is produced within the confines of her faith and relationship with the Turkish co-workers, expressing a different identity in various situations.

In addition to Nura's religion and skin color, *Tränen im Sand* registers another intersection between food and migration. The narrative uses Nura's food-choice to create and

maintain a social relationship. Like I have argued earlier, the narrator expresses herself through her gastronomical consumption, choice, and self-expression. Nura's domicile at the Düsseldorf container creates an opportunity for her to meet three members of a trafficking syndicate who promise, as a way of escape from the German asylum house, to transport her to the Netherlands or England. Her willingness to accept the syndicate's offer to escape from Germany for its "bad" food suggests a connection between food and hospitality: "Ich war drauf und dran, zu verhungern. Mein Magen rebellierte, wenn ich diese Brötchen nur sah oder Pfefferminztee roch" ("Tränen" 242). The essential matter of the narrated experience emanates from an angle of acceptance since her hunger persists despite the offer of "Brötchen" and Pfefferminztee." The question of food responds to the understanding of self and narration, the defining feature of Nura's enticement. In a rather obvious manner, the Somali syndicates entice her with Somali delicacies. On their way to the Netherlands, they stop at Frankfurt, where a Somali woman welcomes them. To fulfill their promise, the smugglers tell the Somali woman: "[D]ieses Mädchen stirbt vor Hunger, . . . koch was Somalisches für sie, mit viel Reis und Fleisch. Aber als Erstes braucht sie richtigen Tee" ("Tränen" 242). The infusion of the smugglers' voice highlights Nura's most pressing concern—food—underlining Nura's desire for social identity. Up until this moment, Nura has been subjected to an unknown identification while in transit. "Viel Reis und Fleisch" establishes her sense of self since "eating is part of [her] identity" (Vlasta 107). In their article on food choice, Devine et al. claim that differences in identities are related to food choice and ethnic group affiliation (86). Nura's choice of food thus conveys information on her cultural upbringing. After eating to her satisfaction, the narrator records that "es [war] die leckerste Mahlzeit [ihres] Lebens" ("Tränen" 242). While the eaten meal patterns an avenue for social relationship, her satisfaction records her reception of the offered cultural hospitality.

Food expresses Nura's connection with her African identity. The accommodation in the "Containerdorf" in Düsseldorf comes with free food that disavows the affinity with her Somali roots: "[U]nsere Essensrationen bestanden aus Reis, Gurken, Tomaten, Öl, Salz, Zucker und türkischem Fladenbrot, zwei Fladen pro Woche [und] Hühnchenfleisch" ("Tränen" 265). The served food suggests an invite into German cuisine, which Nura, up to this point, sees as "kein Essen" ("Tränen" 265). Her rejection of this invitation symbolizes how she identifies herself as a Somali. Hanna's Ethiopian restaurant, where she survives, is a symbol of solidarity with the African culture.

Migration as a life-changing process has a significant impact on Nura's taste. After eight years in Germany, Nura's food choice began to change. In one scene, she meets a man at a club and becomes friends with the nameless character, with whom she falls in love. The narrator-character reveals that on their return from visiting her fiancé's father at the hospital, they stopped by at a local restaurant where she orders "Calamares – seit ich in Deutschland lebte, hatte ich eine ganz und gar untypische Vorliebe für Fisch entwickelt" ("Tränen" 326). The order underlines an undergoing metamorphosis that signals a shift from her past to the present desire for seafood. As a Somali and a descendant of a nomadic family who made their wealth through livestock, she is accustomed to eating meat, not fish. In the narrator's introduction of her family, she claims that "unsere Vorfahren kannten keine andere Nahrung als Fleisch" ("Tränen" 10). Nura is careful in outlining her food choice, keeping her description simple. It is clear that she acquired the switch in her choice through socialization and acculturation into Germany. She simply names "Calamares," a type of squid with an Italian origin, which is served mostly in Greek and Italian restaurants in Germany. Finding herself in a country where she has neither close relatives nor friends, Nura's life plays out similarly to that of many immigrants focused on

finding a home away from home. As the I-narrator of her story, she places these daily life events in the context of her migratory memories. In so doing, she gives meaning to the challenges of belonging and finding home in Germany.

Finding Mogadishu Outside Somalia

After leaving Somalia, finding a "new" kind of Mogadishu, her hometown, was given priority. Mogadishu offered her family financial security and stability. Her hometown gave her father a space for camel and livestock trade, which have made him rich (129). Abdi recounts that her family's flight for safety to Nairobi renders her father "von einem der wohlhabendsten Männer zum Straßenhändler in Nairobi" ("Tränen" 226). Consequently, the desire to help her family financially is a large part of her migration goal: "[I]ch war sicher, meiner Familie von Amerika aus am besten über diese schreckliche Zeit hinweghelfen zu können. Es musste doch einen Weg geben, die Amerikaner zu überlisten" ("Tränen" 227). Nura's determination to cheat her way through the American immigration process emanates from her financial goals. Germany becomes the substitute location for furthering financial stability and family support. Eigler and Kugele (1) point out that belonging involves attachment to places. Nura's search for belonging outside Africa represents mediated forms of attachment that are shaped by the desire to help her family financially.

People of other nationalities are also interested in finding ways to migrate to Germany. Nura meets other detained migrants at the airport, especially Nigerian women: "die kannte die ganze Welt, weil sie schon jede Route ausprobiert hatten bei dem Versuch, nach Deutschland zu gelangen. Sie erzählten unglaubliche Geschichten von Flucht und Ausweisung und erneuter

Flucht" ("Tränen" 238). Although Abdi keeps the readers in lacuna regarding the women's reasons for making several attempts to reach Germany, their stories are typical of the efforts migrants make to find new homes. In another encounter, the narrative shifts to the story of "ein Rechtanwalt aus Nigeria, ein Mann um die fünfzig" ("Tränen" 239). Although, readers learn little about this Nigerian lawyer, his that age and profession are attracting features for Nura in her search for economic stability.

Since Nura leaves Nairobi for another "Mogadischu" in America, work is an important connection between home and migration. In perpertuating the notion of financial freedom, Abdi's textual ego explains that "Freiheit ist, sein eigenes Geld verdienen zu können, und selbst verdientes Geld gibt dir Freiheit" ("Tränen" 278). This explanation, however, connects the notion of independence to remittance, stressing that she is happy when she could send money to her family, "1000, 1500, manchmal 2000 Mark im Monat" ("Tränen" 278). In tracing the morality of money and migration, Supriya Singh argues that "remittances are a currency of care" ("Money" 37). Singh further claims that when migrants send money home, they are not only meeting a need, but more importantly, "'caring about' and 'taking care' of the families they left behind" ("Money" 38). Likewise, a job reflects an essential space for Nura. She refers to the Düsseldorf airport as her "zweite Heimat" since she spends more time in airplanes than her place of abode ("Tränen" 285). Nura's job and remittances are ways for her to find a home outside Mogadishu, from where she takes care of her family.

Furthermore, the Düsseldorf airport job further enlightens Nura's concept of home. Her job starts very early in the morning and consists of scrubbing:

> von sechs bis acht Toiletten, wienerte Spülbecken, wischte Tische ab, verpackte anschließend Parfümflaschen oder Duschgel, lief kurze Zeit später mit Staubsauger, Wassereimer und Lappen durch zehn bis zwanzig Flugzeuge, um dort die Spuren des letzten Flugs

> zu beseitigen. Meinen Container sah ich erst nach Mitternacht wieder. ("Tränen" 278)

This description underlines her identity as a foreigner whose sole aim is to survive outside her fatherland. The working hours reveal the web that entangles Nura—the work-foreigner-survival web, showing that she still very much holds on to Somalia. Kristeva (18) considers the concept of "foreigner" as one who sees work as a vital necessity, as his sole means of survival. She points out that as far as the immigrant is concerned, the "foreigner" did not immigrate to another country to waste his time. They are ready to pick up odd jobs to survive, jobs that people would typically not want. From Kristeva's angle, Nura's decision to accept the cleaning job evidences the value she places on work. Home becomes inseparable from her ability to survive in Germany since her ultimate reason for migrating is to restore her family's living conditions after the Somali war.

Abdi's investigation of nightlife and the disco lands her in Somalia-in-Germany. At the age of sixteen, she had become accustomed to nightclubs and wants to have a taste of this life in Germany. At one point, she meets a nightclub owner, an older Somali man who asks her about her clan and further gives her the address of a Somali woman, where she could meet other Somalis. The man's suggestion brings Nura in contact with a Somali woman, a correspondence that envelops a corporeal Somali life outside Africa. The woman covers herself with a red *Dirrah* and leads Nura to her living room: "Auf Matten, die über das ganze Zimmer verteilt waren, saßen Männer am Boden, die Tee tranken und *Khat* kauten und sich mit so lauten Stimmen unterhielten als wären sie Nomaden am nächtlichen Lagerfeuer" ("Tränen" 275). It is difficult to overlook the description of the Somali woman's house, a portrayal that mirrors the presence of other Somalis and their culture. This account not only signals the presence of traditional Somali clothing in Germany but food, and communality of Somali nomads in the diaspora. The sitting

arrangement is reminiscent of the Somali "*Khat*runden" which encapsulates their "happy hour" ("Tränen" 95). Nura confirms that "[m]it dem Rauch aus einem Holzkohlebecken zog mir ein vertrauter Geruch in die Nase, und der Tee, den sie mir anbot, war so süß wie in Somalia" ("Tränen" 275). The living room stands as a meeting point as well as the Somali conception of community, a center point of Somali cultural roots and heritage.

The *Khat* strengthens the presence of home in the woman's living room. The account reveals that her parents were *Khat* businessmen and exporters. The plant is also the daily breakfast of M'alim Omar, Nura's Islamic teacher ("Tränen" 53). "Ohne *Khat* läuft in Somalia nichts. Auf Essen können die Leute notfalls verzichten, auf *Khat* nicht" ("Tränen" 95). Food and home are tightly connected, both part of the struggle to reconstruct nationality in the face of alienation. In fact, Somali food serves as a metonym for "Heimat" and Somali culture in general. *Khat* is the bridge with which Somalis traverse the water between "home" and "new home." Again, Nura points out that the *Khat* of the businesswoman "schmeckte wie daheim" ("Tränen" 275).

Conversely to her experience in the Somali kitchen, Nura accustoms herself to the German food. This becomes strikingly clear when she finds herself in a dangerous situation. When smugglers bring her to Frankfurt, she is offered typical Somali food with plenty of rice and meat to gain her trust. It turns out that these syndicates are still contemplating how to smuggle her out of Germany. They assure her daily, "[m]orgen bringen wir dich nach Holland. Wir müssen noch mehr Leute für die Fahrt auftreiben" ("Tränen" 243). Complications pile up and gradually Nura concludes, "für meine Freiheit war ich sogar bereit, wieder das deutsche Essen in Kauf zu nehmen" ("Tränen" 243). Her final thoughts to readjust to the German food captures the concept of home. Naficy writes that "home is anyplace, . . . it is movable; it can be

built" (6). Although the syndicates finally smuggle Nura to the Netherlands, she instead returns to Germany to "build" her home there. Since home lies within herself, she moves her "food-home" from Somalia to Germany, reconciling her expectations with her reality.

The *Khat* businesswoman's living room mirrors an extension of Somalia in Germany, which brings Nura to a crossroads. Since they are Somalis, the woman wonders why Nura lives in a container. She tells Nura: "[D]u bist meine Tochter, du kannst bei mir wohnen. Auf den Matten hier ist immer ein Platz frei" ("Tränen" 275-276). The woman's statement vehicles a cultural attachment which represents her acceptance of Nura as her family. Interestingly, Nura, confirms that the people she met in the living room live as they would in Somalia. Her observation shows that Düsseldorf offers a space for "viele afrikanische Splitter" ("Tränen" 276). For example, "unser kleines äthiopisches Reich auf elf Quadratmetern oder etwas mehr, . . . diese somalische Wohnung hier und womöglich noch viele andere . . ." ("Tränen" 276). For Nura, the urge to belong to the African continent is seductive. One would expect Nura to jump at the prospect of feeling at home with people of the same continent since this space of warmth also connotes brotherhood and collective identity of Africans. But Nura seeks an attachment to Germany as a home, too: "[I]ch hatte mich entschlossen, ins kalte Wasser zu springen und schwimmen zu lernen. Und das kalte Wasser, das war das deutsche Düsseldorf dort draußen" ("Tränen" 276). She comes to an intersection—a decisive moment in her stay in Germany—confronted with the choice of moving in with the businesswoman, which also implies connecting with other Somalis rather than living with at her container home in Düsseldorf with other migrants. Although Germany as a Heimat is incongruent with the living room, Nura is decisive: Düsseldorf would be her new home.

Nura finds a sense of belonging she had never felt before after coming to Germany. This sense produces the idea of home. The concept of Heimat signifies a basic human need and a place where one feels safe (Greverus "Der Territoriale"; Applegate "A Nation"). Coming from a war-torn country, Germany represents a place of ease: "ich fand es großartig, nachts um vier durch die Straßen von Düsseldorf gehen zu können, ohne beraubt oder vergewaltigt zu werden" ("Tränen" 108). Although Nura and her family fled to Nairobi, Kenya for safety after the outbreak of the Somali civil war, she never sees Kenya as home. She confesses that "Kenia kam als Heimat für mich nicht mehr infrage. [W]eil ich in Deutschland so vieles erreicht und erkämpft hatte, was ich nicht aufgeben wollte" ("Tränen" 334). It appears she chooses Germany over Kenya due to her achievement and her struggles; however, Kenya offers no shelter of warmth and security for women. Nura claims that "in Kenia aber musst du damit rechnen, vergewaltigt zu werden, kaum dass es dunkel geworden ist" ("Tränen" 338). Home thus represents Nura's basic need for security.

Germany ultimately defines Nura's idea of Heimat. While on holiday in Nairobi to visit her parents, she responds to numerous "hows" and "whys" about Germany. Nura's story reflects her family's amazement when she tells them how cold Germany becomes during winter and other question like: "[W]ie sind die Deutschen, wie schaffst du es, in Hitlerland zu überleben?" ("Tränen" 337). Through the narrator, we learn of the mother's thoughts about Germans as Nazis since she believes Nura "sei in der Höhle des Löwen gelandet, und zumindest in der Anfangszeit hatte [die Mutter] immer dafür gebetet, dass die Deutschen mich nicht umbringen. Sie war überzeugt gewesen, dass ich ohne ihre Gebete unweigerlich einen einsamen, schrecklichen Tod fern der Heimat sterben müsse" ("Tränen" 337-338). The passage sounds critical. It holds intimacy of the mother's stereotypical critique of Germany during the Weimarer Republic era;

through which Abdi indirectly represents her state of mind through a combination of vocabulary. The choice of words—"in der Höhle des Löwen" and "umbringen"—transcribe her impressions about Germany into verbalized thoughts. However, Nura believes the contrary. Having experienced war and asylum in Nairobi, she contests that Germany offers her "womb-like security" (Boa and Palfreyman 26). She explains to her family: "Deutschland ist wunderbar, ein schönes Land. Und die Menschen sind höflich, viel höflicher als in Afrika. Dort sagt man 'Entschuldigung', wenn man jemanden versehentlich anstößt " (338). Abdi defends Germany, drawing from the experience of living in both countries. She asserts her defense with firmness as an extension of her value judgment. This judgment is based on a sense of belonging. Germany is a place of safety, something that was absent in her home country. In bringing personal experience in contact with the public, the authors stand as activists whose aim is to depict the pains and trauma associated with FGM.

Conclusion

Abdi's *Tränen im Sand* is an autobiography that tells the story of Nura's migration to Germany. The autobiographical text recounts historical events and the challenging and unexpected formation of a Somali-German identity. The text takes a stand against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) while creating a space for cross-cultural encounter. It sheds light on a cultural practice that is for good reasons seen as gruesome and despicable in the Western world while at the same time the supposed "glory" behind being a circumcised adult female in Somalia is exposed and dismantled. Behind this practice is a patriarchal system that encourages and supports FGM as exemplified by the protagonist's father, a "silent" enabler. At the same time, the mothers carry

out the circumcision as a mutilating and highly dangerous violent act. Although through a mediated voice, the "as told" narration creates a particular form of authenticity as it recounts the life of Nura, from her birth, her flight for safety to Nairobi, and her "unwanted" eventual migration to Germany.

As Nura crosses international borders, the text shows the many different experiences that feed transcultural identity. Her unexpected arrest at Frankfurt and forceful asylum in Germany brings to light the transition not only of physical borders between countries but of cultural spaces ranging from Somalia to Kenya and the United States and finally, Germany. This transition leaves its traces in the transgressing individual. Germany, a place of (forced) rest and safety, brings to light the invisible in Nura. In addition to her sister, Abdi's journey to Europe shapes her identity, making both their past and contact with Europe a vital role in the autobiographical narration. Ortiz and Welsch propose the notion of transculturation as a way of looking at the migratory readjustment to a new cultural identity. Migration paves the way for the erosion of Nura's cultural understanding and identification. Analyzing Nura from this standpoint, moving from one continent to another changes her understanding of her femininity, which in turn defines her identity. As part of Nura's neoculturation process, food can be seen as a metonymic marker of her changing identity, expressing her connection with her African identity as well as her choice of a new life.

Her encounter with a *Khat* businesswoman creates a taste of nostalgia. The import and sale of *Khat* to Somalis in Germany, for example, construct the presence of Somalia in Germany since the flowering plant holds an essential place in the Somali culture. In the face of danger, Nura experiences that "home" lies within herself and could be moved and found in another physical space. Nura's "taste" helps her to discover Somali roots, but she also realizes that her

focus and desires have changed. The German cuisine symbolizes her regained freedom from a smuggling syndicate in the Netherlands. She switches from a Somali to a German "food-home."

Reading Abdi's life history and examining the double authorship of the text still leaves a trace of one real-life experience that is told as a first-person narrative. As difficult and complicated as it seems, I consider the "as-told-to" veracity and authenticity of the story as valid; I have shown that the double authorship does not affect how the book deals with the life events in narration. Furthermore, the narrated stories are plotted in different spaces, Somalia, Kenya, and Germany. I conclude that Linder's presence is not felt in the text. As a ghostwriter of German descent who ghostwrites a book that deals with a sensitive topic like FGM and the troubles of migrating to his home country, Linder remains invisible and convincingly inhabits Abdi's voice in documenting her life story. Thus, the text functions as an opportunity to recast Abdi's migrated self, the transcultural Nura and her identity.

In addition, *Tränen im Sand* conveys, through representation of characters, the message of cultural dissonance, and incompatibility of African and German values and behaviors. More often than not, Nura pays a price of transculturation through assimilation and cultural encounter, and even becomes a critic of her own cultural norms. This new and alien culture connects to what is already known and can be deemed conventional. It is this established cultural foundation which changes, too. The autobiography is the depiction of transculturation (more than in the story itself), not just a process of substituting an "old" identity for a new one but including and reconciling both by creating something entirely new, a character that includes parts of both cultures. Nura's long work hours, in this sense, show that she still very much holds on to Somalia while also being German.

The central questions driving this chapter have been: how does the narrator speak or write about her circumcision? How does this continuous crossing between two cultures affect the autobiographer's identity and self-expression? How did Abdi's migration to Germany affect her cultural understanding of FGM? To respond to these questions, the concept of transculturality proved helpful for engaging the autobiographical narration, enabling me to distinguish the narratorial features. Recurring characteristics such as the sameness of author, protagonist, and narrator, yielding of voice in the narration were central to the Abdi's autobiography. Close reading the text reveals that the narrative challenges the Somali culture of dignity, bringing to light the pains and trauma associated with FGM. In this sense, I argued that Abdi's circumcision and the post-event give voice to trauma in the form of reconstructed narration as she puts her experience of pain into words. In addition, *Tränen im Sand* conveys, through representation of characters, the message of cultural dissonance, and incompatibility of African and German values and behaviors. More often, Nura pays a price of transculturation and becomes a critic of her own cultural norms. Migration paves the way for the erosion of Nura's cultural understanding and identification. It changes her understanding of her femininity, which in turn defines her identity. She experiences transculturation as the necessity of seeking asylum in Germany, which enables her to exert agency and power to reconstruct their identity and voice her objections against FGM. Thus, the autobiography functions as an opportunity to recast Abdi's migrated self, the transcultural Nura and her post-migratory identity.

Chapter Four

Das afrikanische Auge: Migration, Passport Stories and Translated People on the Margin

The cover page of Luc Degla's *Das afrikanische Auge* (2007), the title of the collection suggests an eye that watches the German points of entry, the relationship between Germans and African migrants. In this book, some of the depicted characters are without legal resident status, travel for studies or move to Germany to start a new life entirely. Degla, born and raised in Benin, West Africa, and trained as an Industrial Engineer, migrated to Germany in 1994 after studying in the Soviet Union. Writing as someone who observed the risks Africans take to migrate to Germany, Degla, in his short stories, depicts how African students, economic migrants, and asylum seekers adjust upon arrival and their sojourn.

Das afrikanische Auge consists of fifty-three short stories, some of which have related characters and experiences. The stories are arranged non-sequentially and some chapters are unrelated to the previous ones. Several narrators recount stories from different points of view, ranging from first to third-person points of view. In sum, the narratives include events that appear to be closely connected. For example, similarities exist in "Die Erkundungsreise," "Heimat?," and "Der Preisschock" since they are set in the Republic of Benin and depict a narrator-character who is from that country but lives in Germany. Some of the short stories create links to the author's life and his biography, his country of birth, his place of residence in Germany, Braunschweig, and his time studying in Moscow, Russia. Most importantly, the use of the first-person narrator indicates an autobiographical narrative. These I-narratives play a unique role in shaping the ways Degla makes personal migrant narratives legible in his short stories.

This chapter builds on my previous approaches to the migrant experience and to identities with a focus on 'family migration' and strangeness in Germany, this time, however, with a focus on Benin. I build my analysis on the hypothesis that money does not only drive remittance-flow and the search for a home in Europe, as I have shown in the previous chapters, but also aids migrant characters to facilitate their journey to Europe. I pay particular attention to the way strangeness in Germany and the Republic of Benin are framed and what their opposing ideological positionings suggest about Germany's history of mixed race and migrant characters. Building on works addressing the issue of 'Rhineland Bastards,' I conclude that strangeness is represented from the perspective of the racialized object and the 'not-owner of the soil' gaze. Furthermore, this study investigates the notion of corruption in Germany and African society. To grasp this particular configuration, I follow Johann Galtung (1969), Paul Farmer (2006), and Bandy Lee's (2019) conceptualizations of structural violence to show how corruption constrains the characters from meeting their basic needs.

The short stories that I examine in this chapter provide many examples and phases of the migrant experience, either as asylum seekers or legal residents in Germany. I also analyze the interaction of African characters with Germans and the way their conversations underscore a deeply rooted feeling of strangeness. In addition to the narrations that are situated in Germany, this chapter includes stories that deal not only with migration narratives but also with characters who have not left Africa for Europe. These characters add to the stories about an imagined Germany from an outside and distant perspective. Through these characters, the stories depict a particular image of Germany as a desirable country, one with a stable economy and job opportunities for immigrants.

Nevertheless, the I-narrator-protagonist characterization is indicative of the way the short stories are positioned within systems of reading practices. In returning to the title of the book and its implicit connection between the author and the narrator, I hypothesize that Degla uses the short stories to highlight the turning points of his migrant sojourn in Germany and his short visit to Benin after many years of stay. His text provides an additional way of considering migrancy both in Germany and in Africa. One example is the narrative in "Der Nachahmer," in which the story is narrated from a third-person point of view and replicates the thoughts of African migrants. This contrasts with other self-narrating stories in which the first-person narrator portrays characters that interact with others. All in all, Degla's collection of stories offer a diversity of authorial, narratorial, and characteristic voices, consequently creating significant contrasts, tensions, and interactions between the African and German characters.

The narratives from a third-person point of view, for example, capture the experience of characters who permanently cross borders and live in a state of constant flux. Degla unfolds fictitious stories like "Der Nachahmer," and "Aida," from a third-person narrator. "Der Nachahmer," for example, zooms in on two main characters, Tunde and Jean, who arrive in Germany through different means and for distinct reasons. The fictional characters—Tunde from Nigeria, and Jean from Benin—have families who believe in Germany as a space in which a better future can be found. Their families are also collaborators in their migration process. Their stories represent the conviction of some African families and migrants that life outside Africa must be better. However, Degla not only captures reasons for migration, but contrasts their imagination and actual reasons with their daily experiences as migrants in Germany. For example, in the short story "Aida," Femi traveled to Germany to study. Until his intimate relationship with Maria, he was not considered as a stranger within the Müller family. Though

these stories are narrated from different angles and depict distinct characters, all the characters are faced with the struggles of living outside their homeland.

Ultimately, the characters' identities change upon reaching their migration destination. Examples appear in several of Degla's stories, including "Der Nachahmer," "Heimat?" and "Aida." Migrants are either identified as 'refugees,' 'foreigners,' 'strangers,' or even as 'trespassers' of the margin of familiarity. As this is such a prevalent motif, it deserves a closer look. An examination of these instances reveals complex interactions of various forces within the German community and immigration security agents. In the following section, I take a closer look at the imagined perception of Germany as a country for migrants to achieve their dream of economic wealth. Basically, I analyze the characters' reasons for migration, showing how they value migration to Germany. Thereafter, I examine how strangeness is portrayed in "Aida," "Der Preisschock," and "Die Erkundungsreise," and in the last section, I analyze the short story "Heimat?" showing how the relationship between the value of money, migration and the families migrants leave behind in Africa.

The Image of Europe and the value of Migration

The stories of migration in Degla's short stories paint a picture of the economic relationship between Europe and Africa. "Der Nachahmer" insightfully depicts refugee characters who react to the perception of Europe as an economic powerhouse and as an embodiment of wealth. Migrants believe that living in Europe/America would help them improve their lives and that of their families due to their perception of job opportunities abroad (Asiegbu, 3; Schapendonk and

van Moppes 7). The main character, Jean, is introduced early in the story as a refugee from Benin waiting for asylum approval before he meets Tunde, another supposed refugee from the Ivory Coast, on a bus. Tunde and Jean personify the immigrant experience as they enter Europe illegally in search of economic security. Unlike Tunde, Jean plans a journey through the Sahara Desert, crossing the Mediterranean Sea before reaching Europe. The auctorial narrator conveys their stories in pieces and pushes the voices of the characters' families to the foreground of the narrative. Jean and Tunde both have the single aim of declaring asylum upon arrival in Germany. Their migratory trajectories point to the hopes that are invested in leaving the African continent in search of economic opportunity in Europe.

Degla's migration narrative reproduces images of colonialism and the underlying reasons behind colonialist attempts to dominate other parts of the world. This reproduction replicates the reasons why the migrant characters in his story set out on their journey to Germany. His short stories reopen the dialogue between migration and Western imperial history that leaves its imprint to this day and continues with the domination of Western corporations that exploit cheap labor, resources, and, more recently, the digital transmission of information. In his book *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said reminds his readers that "neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition," since "both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination" ("Culture" 9). While Said points out that colonialism is almost always a consequence of imperialism, he lists words and concepts such as "inferior, subject races, subordinate peoples, dependency, authority and expansion" arguing that they are associated with the reasons for colonialism ("Culture" 9). Although colonial rule has ended in Africa and imperialism, too, seems to be a past era, Degla's text depicts characters who imbibe

the mechanisms behind colonialism and imperialism in their search for a superior economic life. His stories, particularly "Der Nachahmer," show the ongoing dependence of African countries on their former colonial occupying forces from Europe.

The colonial mission rests on the idea of expansion of power for economic gain. The economic motivation of the colonialist plays a central role in the European consciousness and offers a justification for economic migration. In his analysis, Said calls attention to the divergent ways in which the "Orient" is constructed in Western imagery as the "Other." In his application of Michel Foucault's technique of discourse analysis to the production of knowledge about the Middle East, Said describes "orientalism" as a set of vocabulary, concepts, and assumptions that have been used to interpret and evaluate knowledge about non-Europeans ("Orientalism" 36), particularly from the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. According to Said, "the Orient has helped to define Europe as its contrasting image, idea, personality and experience" ("Orientalism" 2). *Orientalism* emphasizes the classification of knowledge about the Orient, delineating the existing relationship between the Occident and the Orient as a relationship of power and domination ("Orientalism" 5). Said's argument reflects the notion of power imbalance and how the West is perceived as superior to the East. Migration in Degla's short stories suggests a mission for the expansion of wealth that is conceived under the impression of economic disparity. Not only do European countries act from a position of assumed superiority but they project their self-understanding onto non-European countries who, in return, often adopt the European construct: Europe seems to be a "better" place than any African country.

The dynamics of migration also stand in response to global inequality and the African characters' decision to migrate in Degla's "Der Nachahmer." The character's beliefs about the West, including the construction of Western imagery, vocabulary, and concepts represents a

consciousness that I would call Occidentalism. I use Occidentalism as a complementary notion to Said's criticism of Orientalism. My interpretation of Occidentalism consists of two parts—an image of the West and the use of that image to inform decisions about migration. Occidentalism, as I define it, is necessarily rooted both in the ideologies of colonialism and capitalism.

My usage of the term closely follows the already its existing conceptualization in the works of Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, Couze Venn, and James Carrier. Going beyond Edward Said's argument of the occident, Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit define Occidentalism as a modern phenomenon, as a "dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies" (5).[3] Venn's conceptualization of Occidentalism combines two definition: on the one hand, there is the reconstituted narrative of history, and on the other hand the European colonization of African countries. In the context of migration, these ideas of colonialism are still relevant from an African perspective. As at the start of colonialism, depictions of the West as superior to other places are used as a justification for travels, although this time it is Africans choosing to travel. This constellation of perceptions originated in past eras of imperialism and colonialism and continues into the present context.

Degla's fictional work reflects upon discourses, norms, and concepts endemic to mainstream nonfiction representations of immigration. Many of his findings remind us of Jeremy Rifkin's depiction of the European Union as an economic superpower and its self-understanding as a "city upon a hill" (358). Calling this idea, the "European dream," Rifkin asserts enthusiastically that it is "a beacon of light in a troubled world. It beckons us to a new age of inclusivity, diversity, quality of life, deep play, sustainability, universal human rights, the rights of nature, and peace on Earth" (385). Building on this idea, I deploy it to emphasize migrants'

[3] Carrier refers to the term as a "stylized image of the west" (2).

envisioning of quick acquisition of wealth, and the prospects of economic prosperity in Germany. For migrants, the European dream envisions a continent with less poverty, better quality of life, wealth, and sustainable economic development for its inhabitants.

In his study of migration flows, Belachew Gebrewold argues that many African migrants do not have substantive knowledge about their destination countries. These migrants, Gebrewold maintains, are only confronted with the reality of Europe upon arrival (89). While getting a residence or working permit as a migrant seems to be amongst the struggles of leaving one's nation for Germany, as Grebrewold explains, the benefits of moving are nevertheless perceived as outweighing the hardships experienced upon arrival.

The occidental dreams held by Africans also appeared in some of the 2019 news coverage on African migrants and their decision to depart for Europe. Articles such as by the Neue Zürcher Zeitung, television news features as, for example, the Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF), and reports released by public institutions such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) show the extent in which economic considerations are motivating factors for migration. Fabian Urech, in his interview report in Neue Zürcher Zeitung, shows that 60% of Africans migrated to Europe in search of better jobs and the ability to send money home. In a related interview with ZDF correspondents Beate Frenkel, Michael Haselrieder und Tim Röhn, Gassimou from Guinea said that "Mein Traum ist es, nach Deutschland zu ziehen, um dort ein besseres Leben zu führen. Ich will dort wieder von vorne anfangen und besser verdienen" (ZDF, Frenkel et al.). The UNDP's *Scaling Fences: Voices of Irregular African Migrants to Europe* highlights migration following Africa's view of Europe as an economic superpower and a place of refuge. In an interview, Drissa, an African migrant, explains that his journey was "all to earn money. Thinking of my mom and my dad. My big

sister. My little sister. To help them. That was my pressure. That's why Europe" (UNDP, "The Voices"). The interviewed individuals see Europe through a stereotypical lens that informs their decision to migrate. These interviews give a sense of what is involved in the thinking and processes of migration: ideas about Europe shaped by secondhand accounts and cultural depictions rather than firsthand knowledge.

Such commonly held, culturally constructed beliefs are central to migrant communities. In his 1983 book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* Benedict Anderson argues that imagined communities can be thought of as a formation of a shared national identity. Anderson asserts that mass media plays a role in the formation of the nation-state. In explaining the nature of communities, Anderson claims that "communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (6). Although his argument focuses on nationalism, which he likens to kinship and religion, Anderson's concept of imagined communities informs the way I engage with migrant characters and their fascination with Europe. The notion of imagined communities is applicable to a broader understanding of nations within the genre of migration literature. With the interview reports of migrants basing their decisions on where to live on images from mass media, such images of Europe, in return, cross continental borders to prospective migrants in Africa. Accordingly, Germany, in "Der Nachahmer," is a community that is "imagined" as a place of economic prosperity and means of social uplift from outside Europe.

Degla's short story, "Der Nachahmer" focuses on two major characters, Jean from the Republic of Benin, and Tunde, a Nigerian, who come to Germany through two different routes but apply for asylum upon reaching their destination. Unlike Jean who travelled through the Sahara Desert, then crossed the Mediterranean Sea to reach Germany, Tunde bribed his way to

the Frankfurt airport. As the title of the story suggests, Tunde appears to be the lead migrant who understands Germany not only as a European superpower, but a country, where he could achieve his financial dreams. His understanding is supported and perhaps impelled by his earlier visit to Germany as a student where he gathered that some of the nation's used car are still functional upon being abandoned. This awareness includes the notion that Germany's used cars require commodification, as well as exportation to his home country, Nigeria. on getting to know each other and their migration reason, Jean becomes Tunde's imitator, as he learns that he does not have to depend on the German Asylum process before he can commercialize his stay in Germany.

Jean and Tunde's meeting in Germany suggests a shared sense of community and identity. On seeing someone whom he perceives to be an African, Jean introduces himself to Tunde: "[W]ir sind doch Brüder. Du bist der einzige Afrikaner im Bus" ("Der Nachahmer" 31). The dialogue illustrates the fraternity amongst migrants from the same continent and the recognition of the ties of being from Africa that connect both parties. Although Tunde is from Nigeria, he introduces himself as an Ivorian, an identity that allows him to claim asylum in Europe because of the civil war in Ivory Coast. Migration influences his identity formation and subsequent decision to change his national identification. Being also from Africa, Jean recognizes that Tunde, with his Ivorian nationality claim, is responding to the dictates of the legal system, which grants the right to seek protection from places of war or conflict zones. Jean's recognition and knowledge of West African naming culture allow him to see through the deception since he knows that Ivorians do not bear the name Tunde.

The relationship between Jean and Tunde is key for understanding Degla's short story because it reveals the complexity of differentiating between economic migrants who flee poverty

and those who flee other problems. In his analysis of "Der Nachahmer," Dirk Göttsche argues that Tunde is an economic migrant whose story suggests the power relations between Europe and Africa. Migrants see Germany as Europe's economic force and seek to enter. Göttsche's analysis sheds light on the definition of economic migrants as distinct from refugees (42). I follow Göttsche in arguing that Tunde is an economic migrant; however, a closer look suggests that there is still a considerable ambiguity in Tunde's identification as an asylum seeker for political reasons. His move is meant to be short-term from the beginning and, thus, does not fit the typical description of economic migration. Tunde has no intention to stay in Germany for a long time: "[E]r sei nach Deutschland einfach für eine Mission gekommen. Er fühle sich ein bisschen wie die Missionare damals in Afrika. Die sind gekommen, [und] holten aus dem Boden Gold, Eisen, Diamanten und andere Rohstoffe heraus" ("Der Nachahmer" 33). Degla is aware of the connection between European colonialism and religious missions in Africa—both were means to exploit the continent's natural resources. In describing an African setting that is endowed with gold and diamonds, the narrator emphasizes the calculated and profit-minded motives of the colonizers. Apart from being an economic migrant, I describe Tunde as a 'strategic' migrant who shows no interest in obtaining a long-term position but is devoted to his mission to exploit Germany and take the proceeds to Nigeria.

The migration experience places Tunde's identity in a process of translation upon his arrival in Germany. In her work, *Post-Colonial Writing and Literary Translation,* Maria Tymoczko argues that translation involves the "activity of carrying across, *for instance a word or text*, which may not always have the exact meaning upon reaching its destination" (19, *emphasis added*). Translational identity, as I use it, describes Tunde's acceptance to give himself up for arrest after his arrival in Germany and his subsequent declaration of asylum at the

Frankfurt airport. His strategic choice to get arrested evokes his right to apply for refugee status and thus shift his identity; however, it carries the meaning of statelessness and rightlessness (Arendt "The Origins"). Tunde's identification at the point of departure in Lagos, Nigeria, differs from that of his point of arrival in Frankfurt, Germany. I do not see Tunde to be rightless in the Arendtian sense, since he purposely wants to get arrested, but a character who puts his migrant status in translation in his bid to enter Germany.

Despite his refugee status, Tunde is also a businessman on a mission. At first, he is neither interested in searching for belonging nor seeking another home in Germany. He refuses to take Jean's advice to build a relationship with a German woman that would end in marriage, "damit er überhaupt ein Chance bekäme, in Deutschland zu leben" ("Der Nachahmer" 32), suggesting a trace of resistance towards his exploitative mission in Germany. A marriage with a German woman would also be exploitative of Germany's marriage system, in which Tunde shows no interest. Jean's insistence that "die Heirat der sicherste Weg sei, das Aufenthaltsrecht in Deutschland zu erhalten" ("Der Nachahmer" 32) and Tunde's refusal further reveal this dynamic. He believes that his migration to Germany is to exploit the German economic system. The attitude informs his decision to bribe the Nigerian immigration service on his way out of Nigeria; his arrest and further declaration of a refugee status provide him free accommodation and time to start a car export business to Lagos, Nigeria. Tunde's short stay in Germany perfectly positions his migration and asylum as a strategic phase to gather the economic resources to start a business in Nigeria upon his return.

Tunde's migration experience displays transnational family relationship patterns. His sojourn in Germany could not have been successful without the help of his father, who ultimately clears more than a hundred cars at the Lagos seaport and sends back the proceeds to him. In her

investigation of migrants and the families they leave behind, Supriya Singh argues for the existence of a connected transnational family, a grouping that "includes the family members who have migrated and those who have been left behind" ("Money" 15). Tunde's trust in his father to help with his business deal embodies the "feeling of collective welfare and 'familyhood' even across national borders" (Bryceson and Vuorela, 3). Unlike Jean, Tunde "wollte das Land mit eigenen Mitteln verlassen" ("Der Nachahmer" 36), which also attests to his intention to benefit from Germany's economy and attain economic prosperity from his stay. His migration builds a connection between exploiting Germany's occidental structures and enriching himself therewith. Like other migrant friends, whom he meets in Germany, he shows no interest in hiring a lawyer to defend him to avoid deportation. His father's solidarity aids Tunde's survival in Germany where he identifies as a refugee and secretly as a car dealer.

Tunde's perception of Germany through an occidental lens and prior knowledge of the German language inform his decision to return to Germany for economic profit. The narrative includes an analeptic account of Tunde's previous visit to Germany as a student, where he discovers that abandoned used cars are still in good condition ("Der Nachahmer" 35). This discovery depicts Germany as a land of business and opportunity since these used cars are needed in Nigeria. Tunde's findings predate his knowledge of Nigeria's transportation and economic system: "die Leute konnten sich aufgrund der Währungsschwankungen kein neues Auto leisten. Er schlug seinem Vater vor, gebrauchte Wagen aus Deutschland importieren" ("Der Nachahmer" 35). His migration decision shows that Germany's waste and Nigeria's need exist in tandem. The existence of good quality, yet abandoned cars, implies a prosperous country that has more than abundant for the citizens—one conceived, to allude to Rifkin, as a beacon of hope for migrants. This beacon reflects a stylized image for Tunde, an impression that bears upon

immigrants' attitude towards Germany as a nation. The Nigerian's move represents the paradox of global inequality, which, as Jonathon Moses argues, is mapped along economic fronts (18). Moses notes that this inequality exists between third world countries and first world countries, and their disparities in opportunities and prosperity. The used cars that are no longer needed in Germany while Africa's currency fluctuations erase the foundations for a reliable exchange of goods represent economic inequality. Consequently, the political situations in many European and African nations are tied to their economic affairs and could not be more different. Germany is a safe space for (even alleged) refugees from war-torn countries, whereas many African countries struggle with establishing a public sphere of lawful interactions.

Tunde's migration equals diversification of income. In contrast with Jean, Tunde and his family are better prepared for his travel, arrest and return to Nigeria. He is already aware of the worth of his degree for "sein Studium [in Deutschland] würde nichts nutzen, wenn er in seine Heimat zurückkehrte" ("Der Nachahmer" 35). This awareness of his German acquired degree further impacts his choice to find an alternative way to sustain himself after his education in Germany. Although the narrator leaves readers in the dark about the type of degree, Tunde's years of academic studies reveal that he observed the economic environment before sourcing for funds to return to Germany. After he voluntarily returned to Nigeria, Tunde writes Jean informing him that "er Bauunternehmer geworden sei. Er wollte kein Geschäft ausüben, bei dem er auf Europa angewiesen wäre, seine Auftragsbücher seien voll" ("Der Nachahmer" 38). His letter towards the end of the short story, which Jean never received because he has been deported, depicts Germany as a place, where characters like Tunde could be financially stable despite the country's laws that limits refugee from working and being gainfully employed. While Tunde does not resemble a typical unprepared migrant, who finds the way to Germany with the

hopes of finding a better future, Germany was his source of income for the company he started in Nigeria since he recognizes that the nation's waste like second-hand cars could be turned around for economic gains in Nigeria. For him, Germany is not an "imagined community," to borrow from Anderson, but an occidental reflection that expresses economic stability which also informs his migration decision for financial expansion and exploitation.

Apart from Tunde, Jean's travel is also influenced by the idea of "occidental Germany" upon hearing that "die Deutschen waren auf der Suche nach Arbeitskräften" ("Der Nachahmer" 31). He aims to make profit in Europe, a goal he was denied pursuing in Africa. To finance his trip to Germany, Jean sells his belongings and business empire; a choice that represent those of the typical young African who would do anything to migrate to Europe "denn sein Ziel war, schnell eine Arbeit zu finden" after asking for asylum ("Der Nachahmer" 31). Being flushed with hopes and optimism as he looks toward Germany, Jean envisions a quick acquisition of wealth in Europe. Jean's obsevers that "der Asphalt ist so perfekt, dass ein Bus nicht mal ins Schaukeln kommt" ("Der Nachahmer" 31). However, his assumption that he will quickly find a job proves to be an illusion. Jean's perception of Europe with its ideals of "inclusivity, diversity, quality of life, deep play, sustainability, universal human rights, the rights of nature, and peace on Earth" (Rifkin 385) is soon crushed along with his optimistic idea that Europe will offer enviable payment to anyone willing to work.

Jean's migration was soon reduced to mirage after his arrival. As a refugee, Jean was housed in the "Asylantenheim", from where he attends hearing at the "Zentralen Anlaufstelle für Asylverfahren" for his asylum case. While waiting for his asylum case to proceed, he started considering ways to marry a German woman to cement his immigration process. In addition to his misapprehension of the state of Germany's economic and labor market demands, Jean has no

knowledge of the kind of workers the German job market is looking for before he sells his belongings and sets out for Europe. His decision to depart rests upon unreliable information and misunderstandings. Jean's experience in Germany functions to confront his pre-migration perception with a chillier reality. Jean's early days in Germany before his arrival demonstrates that he lives in a figment of imagination, a phantasm that has no physical apparition but is built or seen only from the Republic of Benin.

Jean's migration starts yielding gains upon encountering Tunde. Their friendship bears results, as Tunde lends him money to start a car export business. For Jean, starting this business signals the beginning of his European mission of making money and supporting his parents. With his first export, Jean instructs his parents on how to sell the cars upon their arrival at the Benin seaport:

> [Verkauf das] Auto, damit [ich] Tunde den Kredit so schnell wie möglich zurückzahlen konnte. Das zweite Auto sollte als Taxi eingesetzt werden, dafür müsste sein Vater nur noch einen Fahrer suchen, denn er war davon überzeugt, dass sein Vater im Gegensatz zu Tundes Vater nicht in der Lage war, in Cotonou die ganzen Geschäfte allein zu organisieren. ("Der Nachahmer" 36)

Jean has learned this from Tunde the art of shipping cars from Germany to the Republic of Benin. Jean's explanation illustrates the value he places on his migration, a representation of Germany as a place where he can profit from his illegal migration. His car export reflects his understanding of the imagined community and with the new business in play, Jean no longer believes in looking for "eine heiratswillige deutsche Frau zu finden, um in Deutschland bleiben zu können" ("Der Nachahmer" 36) as he previously planned but hopes to return to Benin one day and start a small business after many successful car exports. As a confirmation of his initial plan, the possible successful export business, accentuates profit margins that could not have been achieved if Jean had remained in Benin.

Jean's first and only car shipment is a failure. Although his father agreed to help and follow his instructions, his family diverts the cars from its intended purpose and keeps the proceeds for themselves. Jean's family uses the gain from the cars to help his grandmother fulfill the long-desired religious ritual of visiting Mecca as a Muslim. Thirteen days after the arrival of the car in the Benin seaport, Jean receives a letter from his father, explaining that "sein ältester Bruder eigentlich ein Auto bräuchte, um zur Arbeit zu fahren. Er würde also das Auto nehmen . . . es wäre auch keine geeignete Marke zum Taxifahren, und [du solltest] am besten keine deutschen Modelle, sondern das nächste Mal japanische Autos schicken. Sie wären als Taxen besser geeignet" ("Der Nachahmer" 37). The letter suggests a relationship between money, migration, and family relations. The father's phrasing mirrors Jean's earlier avowal of his reasons for migrating to Europe and the parents' readiness to reap benefits from their son's travel to Europe. It appears as if the parents took advantage of Jean's migration as "Das zweite Auto war im Sinne von Jeans Eltern zu passender Zeit da, denn Jeans Oma war Muslimin, und sie machte sich sorgen, vor ihrem Tod die Pilgerfahrt nach Mekka nicht mehr machen zu können. Die Familie beschloss, die Einnahmen des verkauften Wagens erst einmal dafür zu verwenden, der Oma die Pilgerfahrt nach Mekka zu ermöglichen" ("Der Nachahmer" 37). The cars symbolize European capitalism, a material replication of abundance and wealth, while the letter embodies the parents' perception of Europe—the belief that "there is more" from where the first came from. The choices of migrants guided by their image of wealthy nations in Europe expands to their families. Once arrived in the destination country, their reports in the form of shipped goods in the case of Jean, and wire transfers ignite the imagination of those left behind.

Cars play an intricate role in understanding the complex mother-child relationship in Benin culture. The brother's decision to use cars for personal use and the father's resolve to use

the proceeds for the grandmother's pilgrimage reflects the prevalent culture of the Republic of Benin and one of Jean's reasons for migrating to Europe. Like most African countries, cultural norms call for children to take care of their parents. The text shows Jean's wish before migrating to Germany: "Seinen Eltern von Deutschland aus zu helfen" ("Der Nachahmer" 31). While he believes that he can better take care of his parents from Germany than in Benin—the intending profits from the cars were his starting points, the parents capitalize on the same culture, turning the cars to both as status symbols and means of transportation. Accordingly, Jean believes "sein Bruder würde den Wagen benutzen, um seine unzähligen Geliebten durch die Gegend zu chauffieren" ("Der Nachahmer" 38). Notwithstanding his conviction that his brother is only interested in living a wasteful life, he enters a state of disbelief about the cars and his family's actions despite his desire to raise their financial standing. As Jean tries to understand his family's actions, his mother confronts him in a telephone conversation:

> [W]wie redest du mit mir? Du hast keinen Respekt mehr, ich habe dich neun Monate lang in meinem Bauch getragen, und du schreist so am Telefon! Es ist für deine Oma, tu ihr doch einen Gefallen! Ich an deiner Stelle wäre stolz darauf, dass ich meiner Oma die Reise nach Mekka finanziere. Die Familie nimmt das als Kredit, nicht als Geschenk! ("Der Nachahmer" 38)

The mother's pushback reveals a profound misunderstanding of her son's condition in an imagined Germany, in which Jean's asylum status and 'his sudden wealth' are linked to the car export to Benin. Jean's mother demand filial piety—a social and religious duty that is manifested by respect and obedience, show of support from the young to the old—represents the cultural understanding of her relationship with her son (Caldwell and Caldwell 416; Fortes 29; Oppong 655). Although scholars like Kyu-taik Sung, Chan Alan, David Jordan, Sor-hoon Tan and Alan Cole argue that filial piety is considered more of a key virtue in Chinese and other East Asian cultures, the African culture also demands that children take care of their parents and be good to

them. The conversation unveils the mother's beliefs about the purpose of Jeans' migrancy—parental care—which also translates to parental support. The response is typical of Benin society, where the children are meant to take care of their parents and never raise their voices at them. Again, his mother's words communicate this narrative of indebtedness that wields the normative power that the Benin culture has graciously conferred on her. In this sense, I would argue that this power equals a moral imperative since her expectation that Jean will be accepting contrasts vividly with his anger about the family's appropriation of the cars. While it appears that the family members speak from their understanding of filial piety, the incident registers tensions between his desires for economic security, opportunities outside his country and expectations from his parents upon reaching his destination.

The characters of Tunde and Jean show what way migrants create networks of interpersonal ties with their left-behind families. Different as Jean's situation is, he, too, maintains strong connections to his family. Unlike Tunde, Jean already has a business and livelihood in Benin but is drawn to the belief that he can earn more in Germany. His desire to help his parents when he gets a job further reveals his identity as an economic migrant who moves primarily for economic opportunities (Bauman "Strangers" 4; Chiswick 61; Dahya, 441; Terminiski, 107; Koser 17; Trager 12). Although Chiswick excludes asylum seekers in their definition of economic migrants, Koser argues that illegal migrants' reasons for leaving their countries of residence cover political, social, and economic reasons (54-55). For Dahya, economically motivated immigrants are concerned with obtaining a job, earning a livelihood, and securing long-term prosperity for their families (441). In this instance, Tunde's defense of his freedom to migrate complicates his economic and illegal migrant identity since he enters Germany without legal documents and is willing to declare himself as a victim of war in Ivory

Coast to sell his refugee story to the German immigration authorities. Tunde's intention of leaving Germany after he succeeds in establishing a business empire for himself and his family in Nigeria adds another layer to the definition of economic migrants. In other words, he is an economic motivated migrant because he neither shares interest in staying in the country of destination nor is he concerned about the better conditions of living in Germany or securing a job. Borrowing from the definition of economic migrants[4], I add that emigrating to Europe or North America for better opportunities describes one of the many reasons for migration, most importantly, these group of migrants like Tunde, show that their goal is to acquire the financial resources to establish financial stability in his home country. In addition, non-migrating parents are a key part of this relocation since they stand to gain from their children's remittances. The lives of the migrant characters in these short stories are intertwined, allowing for a complex portrayal of global inequalities, the European dream, and Occidental self-conceptions by characters who have not yet been to Germany but imagine the nation to be better than their homeland.

At the crossroads: Foreigner in Europe; Stranger at home

Migration envelopes the migrant in a world of strangeness. In Degla's short stories, this concept is portrayed within the notions of unfamiliarity, foreignness, and otherness. The short stories "Die Erkundungsreise," "Aida," and "Heimat?" lend themselves to an exploration of Otherness in its richly varied forms. Penned by a migrant author, these narratives portray people who are strange to both their adopted and home country.

[4] See Bauman, Chiswick, Dahya, Terminiski, Koser, Trager, Gollerkeri and Chhabra for a broader definition of the term "economic migrants."

The notion of the other or outsider is not unique to African migrants. The concept of strangeness is the object of investigation in Georg Simmel "The Stranger," Julia Kristeva's *Strangers to Ourselves*, and Zygmunt Bauman's *Thinking Sociologically* and *Modernity and Ambivalence*. In his 1950 book, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, Georg Simmel, the German-Jewish sociologist, proffers a structural theory of strangeness as a universal component of social relations. Simmel focuses on the strangers' social position in relation to a new group as "the person who comes today and stays tomorrow" ("The Sociology" 402). The stranger occupies a new position in the spatial group since he is new to the group and "has not belonged to it from the beginning" ("The Sociology" 402). Even when they develop relations with indigenous members, the demarcation stands sharply. Simmel argues that both in the physical and figurative sense, "the stranger is by nature no 'owner of soil'" ("The Sociology" 403). Indigenous members often refer to this boundary as a marker of exclusion in a social environment. Thus, the stranger occupies a unique position within the group. Such outsiders often engage in an occupation that the members of the group may be unwilling to carry out, like intermediary trade ("The Sociology" 403). In today's world for instance, migrants with or without valid documents enter society for low-paid work such as harvesting, working in meat plants, janitorial or construction work, etc. although they are exploited due to their undocumented status, these migrants consider themselves lucky to have a job in the country they find themselves.

Although different, the Nazi's distinction of race and who is a German appears similar to Simmel's conception of strangeness. The word "owner of soil" evokes the Nazi's idea of "blood and soil," a concept that defines German citizenship during the Third Reich and to this day. While this term functions a tool for racial prejudice during the Hitler regime, race was instrumentalized for making who could be described as an alien to within the context of German

blood (Dummett 28-35; Layne 189; Fehrenbach 7-10). In contrast with present day Germany, an immigrant is not automatically a German citizen if they are born on the German soil since there needs to be a blood relationship with the country. Whereas if they are born in a different country to German parents, their blood "automatically" ties them to the German soil, making them a German citizen. While I point this difference in terms of citizenship and race, Simmel's emphasis on strangeness emerges from the stance that the stranger has its origin somewhere else. In other words, the stranger could live in that society and interact with nationals and get the citizenship of the country they reside in but is still defined by their origins elsewhere.

Bauman believes that the stranger is to a large extent a seemingly familiar person, someone we believe to know ("Thinking" 55). Despite our 'familiarity' with the person, the dominant culture defines them and sets them apart as being different from the natives ("Modernity" 78). Bauman goes on to stress that the stranger is neither close nor a distant person to the natives of the land. They embody the borderline between the in-group and the out-group. Within the existence of the clear-cut margin, "we live among strangers, among whom we are strangers ourselves. Strangers must be lived with" ("Thinking" 63). As a result, the phenomenon as an object of investigation in the field of sociology is double-faced as much as in real life when we "observe" others around us. We are strangers to people outside our group and conversely, the people outside the group see us as strangers. To Bauman, strangeness is in flux and fits into his larger concept of modernity as a state of fluidity that require individuals to permanently shift roles, workplaces, and human relations ("Liquid Modernity" 105-106). Most importantly, the concept of strangeness carries the marker of segregation and exclusion.

Julia Kristeva comes to this idea of strangeness in her discussion of foreignness in a somewhat different way that throws light on specificity of foreignness and the experience of

being foreign. The notion of foreignness, she argues, is charged with a legal meaning: we call a foreigner "a person who is not a citizen of the country in which he resides" (41). Kristeva elaborates that foreignness exists not only without but also within the individual. The foreigner feels his or her difference (7). In the occupation of a place of difference, the foreigner constantly experiences the hatred of others. This detestation, which might be shown openly, informs the foreigner that he is an intruder (14). In her reading of strangeness, which parallels with Kristeva's contention, Susan Suleiman contends that a "stranger is often a foreigner" and "most foreigners are also strangers;" both words overlap but are not synonymous. More specifically, she holds that "foreignness implies passports and the questions of citizenship or national belonging" whereas strangeness speaks of someone who is "neither one's friend nor acquaintance" (473). Suleiman asserts that strangers are not always foreigners since they may carry the same passports as citizens but still do not belong or are referred to as "not one of us." The fact remains nonetheless that as people migrate or visit another country, they automatically become foreigners and can often face hostility since they are considered intruders and not "owner[s] of soil" (Simmel "The Sociology" 403) due to the legal framework surrounding nationality and passport. I deploy Kristeva's concept of foreignness together with Simmel, Schuetz and Bauman's concepts of strangeness, especially when I define characters who are migrants and not owner of the soil. My usage, however, recognizes the difference that affects citizenship and national belonging.

In "Aida," the question of foreignness is represented from the perspective of the racialized and objectified migrant. In this short story, the third person heterodiegetic narrator takes part in the narrative process, but on certain occasions, speaks in the first person and sometimes uses indirect discourse in the representation of figural speech and thought. The

narrative presents the encounters between the migrant and the resident, the outsider and the insider, the experience of race and feeling of being foreign, the perception of being close but perceived as an intruder in the German community. "Aida" parallels "der Nachahmer" since it concerns Femi, a Nigerian who came to study in Germany on scholarship at the end of the 1970s. Femi, like many foreigners, searched and found a job "als Bote in dem Blumenladen der Familie Müller, wo er Blumen auslieferte, Einkäufe erledigte und im Gewächshaus half" ("Aida" 55). Femi accepts the job due to his ambition to survive as an immigrant in Germany (Kristeva 18; Simmel "The Sociology" 403). Femi's job stands as a reflection of his foreign identity. Like Kristeva suggests, Femi's time in Germany is precious since he aims at profiting from his migration.

Femi's otherness is exemplified in his inability to overcome exclusion in the Müller family despite his industriousness. At first glance, Mr. Müller describes Femi to his visitors in a positive light and emphasizes "wie fleißig, pünktlich und aufmerksam der Afrikaner sei" ("Aida" 55). His tenacity at work sets him up for praise and an excellent working relationship with his boss. They understand each other's body language and expressions. But Femi is unaware of his formal relationship with the Müller family, as he goes on to have an intimate relationship with Maria, the daughter of Mr. Müller. This intimacy creates conflict around his work environment and raises questions of race, otherness, and acceptance. As a foreigner and non-German, he is accepted whilst he works for the family and receives praise for his hard work, but he never wholly fits into the Müller family either. On discovering that her daughter, Maria, is pregnant, Frau Müller asks with excitement "wer ist der glückliche Vater?" to which Maria is reluctant to answer. After much pressure from the mother, she gives in: "Na gut, kleiner Tipp, dein Enkelkind wird braun" ("Aida" 56). The narrator uses dialogues to reveal the characters'

reactions about the pregnancy. The dialogue explains the excitement of becoming a grandmother, and its deflation upon hearing the word "braun," which sends Mrs. Müller to moments of disappointment and sadness. Maria's initial refusal to answer her mother, and her further usage of words that designate skin color to describe her unborn child, reveal her recognition of the invisible border that exists between Femi and the Müllers. The "braun" designation, a term used to describe the mixing of Germans and US American soldiers during the Rhineland occupation (Ayim 50) after the First World War, solidifies Maria's perception of Femi's strangeness. In her articulation of the "Rheinland Bastards," Campts claims that the word "resonates with the biologistic construction of race, racial mixture and colonial conceptions of the social and political consequences of the racial mixture" (28). Maria's relationship with Femi thus challenges her family's prejudices. Femi's identity as a stranger is all the more sharply revealed in light of their intimate relationship. In addition to being a foreigner, his dark skin is problematic to the Müllers, and the sense of foreignness extends to the physical bodies.

Frau Müller's reception of the news of her daughter's pregnancy is mixed. Her joy of becoming a grandmother fades as she finds out about the skin color of the baby which makes her to scream: "Nein! . . . Oh nein! . . . Ist es? . . . Ist es Femi?" ("Aida" 56). Her exclamation reveals not only her acceptance of Femi as "neither friend nor foe" (Bauman "Thinking" 55) but as a person who occupies a spatial place of difference (Kristeva 7). Maria's initial hesitance in confirming the paternity of her child throws Frau Müller into despair: "Um Gottes willen, das kann doch nicht wahr sein! Was wird dein Vater dazu sagen? Was werden unsere Nachbarn sagen? Dein Onkel, deine Oma? Im Leben habe ich mir so was nicht vorstellen können" ("Aida" 56). In her explicit preference that her grandchildren have light skin, Frau Müller voices her anguish that her daughter has disregarded racial borders.

Her reaction illustrates the ugly discrimination associated with the "Besatzungskinder" after World War I. Fatima El-Tayeb's works on race, citizenship and racialized bodies further helps to situate the sense of foreignness between foreigners and German citizens. El-Tayeb's claims that "miscegenation is the ultimate sin" (El-Tayeb "We are Germans" 192) and "one drop of black blood was enough to poison the whole German nation" (El-Tayeb "Blood" 160) offer a compelling place from which to read Femi and Maria's experience. The "mixing of blood"—the result of their sexual relationship—blurs the existing boundary between the African and German races. Frau Müller's reaction accentuates her distinction between "us" and "them."

Maria's pregnancy also has a moral dimension. Her father, Wolfgang Müller, considers a multiracial pregnancy an act of mistrust and trespass. He is happy to become a grandfather, but not, in accordance with his wife, to a brown child. Analogous with the breaking of the pregnancy news to the mother, the narrator prefers to dramatize Herr Müller's joyous moment once again on finding out that his daughter is pregnant from his wife which he replies with excitement: "[N]a toll, ich werde Opa!" ("Aida" 56). The news that Femi is the father to his grandchild shifts Herr Müller's mood: "[N]ein, was erlaubt sich der junge Bursche? Ich gebe ihm einen Job, und jetzt missbraucht er mein Vertrauen. Er darf nicht mehr bei uns arbeiten. Er ist gekündigt! . . . schluss! Aus! Basta! Ich will ihm nicht mehr sehen!" ("Aida" 56). By casting the Müllers' rage and disappointment in the form of dialogue, the narrator, once again, creates a dramatic scene and makes vivid the family's views about the pregnancy and a relationship which, according to Herr Müller, should have remained formal. Femi, according to him, should have been grateful for the job he gave him and stayed within the zone of an outsider instead of trespassing his boundaries. At this point, Femi is neither a friend nor a foe and must remain that way—he is simply a worker in the family business. His position marks the margin within the Müller family;

a place fixed and determined "by the fact that he [as an immigrant] has not belonged to it from the beginning" (Simmel "The Sociology" 402). By associating with and impregnating Maria, Femi threatens the very foundation of the Müller family since he "[brings] the outside into the inside and poisons the comfort of order with suspicion of chaos" (Bauman "Thinking" 56). The pregnancy not only lands him in crisis but alters the character's world—an alteration that leads to his firing as Herr Müller expresses how disappointed he is in him and forbids him to ever be seen near his daughter. It appears that Femi is blind to his position as a stranger in the Müllers' house and a foreigner in Germany, as he pushes back on Herr Müller's advice, claiming that the decision never to be seen with his daughter rests on Maria since she is an adult. Femi's firing reveals his position as a stigmatized and unwanted character within the Müllers' family lineage.

Maria's unborn child is already the subject of racial stereotypes. Herr Müller wastes no time in inviting a doctor to the house to examine her daughter and suggests possible abortion procedures. Her opposition to the father's idea makes the mother yell: "[S]ei doch vernünftig! überlege dir das nochmal, wo willst du mit einem schwarzen Kind leben? Du hast schon einen Fehler gemacht, lass uns dir helfen, bevor es zu spät wird!" ("Aida" 57). Frau Müller's yelling conveys her vivid sentiment of difference towards Femi and his offspring, as she stresses that the "schwarzes Kind" is a mistake that resulted from and an unwanted visitor in the family. The usage of "schwarzes Kind" and "Fehler," as Frau Müller calls the child, highlight her racism. Femi and Maria's Afro-German child, nearing the "occupation babies or Rhineland Bastards" under the Nazi regime, bears the blame of being a half-breed (Opitz et al. 92; El-Tayeb "Schwarze Deutsche" 172; Campt 28). Not only does Frau Müller articulate the illegitimacy of the child, but she also restates her rejection of Femi as a would-be member of the family.

Socially, Femi is a stranger to the Müllers, and legally, he is a foreigner and an immigrant within the German community. The multiracial child occupies the same space as his father.

Maria's pregnancy leads to family chaos. Due to the Müllers' unwillingness to accept the unborn child, Maria moves in with Femi. She suddenly becomes a stranger to her family as her parents "brachen den Kontakt zu ihrer Tochter ab. Für ihren Vater war es eine Schande, dass seine Tochter ein schwarzes Kind bekäme" ("Aida" 57). Cutting ties with the daughter accentuates the parents' decision to shift the border of strangeness to the carrier of the black child and to whoever fails to recognize the significance of this margin. They put the pregnancy blame on Maria for being color-blind since her parents consider her as not being firm in affirming the precise boundaries of strangeness, which causes "confusion and anxiety" (Bauman "Thinking" 55) in the family.

The birth of Aida is a major turning point for the Müller family. A meeting in a supermarket and the sight of the grandchild puts a smile on the new grandmother's face who reaches for the child with joyful remarks: "Ach bist süüß, mein Schatz!" and "gab ihr einen dicken Schmatz auf die Wagen" ("Aida" 57). Frau Müller's intonation and remark expresses the freedom she feels at the abrupt meetup, which suddenly clears the shameful feeling pointing out that "sie hatte kein schwarzes Kind in den Armen, sondern ihre Enkeltochter" ("Aida" 57). Her acceptance of Aida as a grandchild illuminates her newly cosmopolitan ideology. The sight of the grandchild further challenges Frau Müller's racist consciousness, as she later communicates the birth of the grandchild to her husband, which causes Wolfgang to forget the anger surrounding the pregnancy. The Müllers' shifting attitude is a recognition of their prejudice and racial stereotypes, their acceptance of Aida overcomes distancing, stigmatizing, and othering.

Maria's parents transform through their conflict. Degla's story is, thus, signaling hope and expresses optimism for a world in which people can live together in peace and with open arms, regardless of their skin color. Maria's pregnancy represents her family's avowal of strangerhood for immigrants and mixed-race people, once a sign of shame and betrayal, has now become a symbol of acceptance. The transformation does not include Maria's parents alone, but encompasses herself and Femi, too. The birth of Aida blurs their experience of strangeness as well as of foreignness. They undergo a dramatic change from being "border officers" to strangers and immigrants like Femi who transgress the racial and family line of demarcation. The Müllers' personal development is a major theme in "Aida," so the narration focuses on elements that have contributed to that, including their confrontation and interactions with Femi. As the story unfolds, we learn of Femi's return to Nigeria and his job as an engineer in an oil company; his father-in-law takes pride in the man Femi has become.

Once migrants leave their country of citizenship, they enter another nation as people who do not belong and are out of place. As a migrant who comes to study or for economic motives, these characters are usually confronted with the issues of strangeness and foreignness in their daily interactions with the natives of the land. Migration in this instance does not only signify movement in the sense of crossing international borders but also metaphorical crossing into the role of a stranger. Migrants are considered strangers due to race or skin color or because they are living outside their usual residence or working outside their country of citizenship. But they may also be strangers when they return home. A citizen becomes estranged when he is cut off from his community for a long time—the 'citizen-stranger' sits at the crossroads where it becomes difficult to convince fellow citizens of his citizenry or show that he belongs.

"Der Preisschock" is an autobiographical short story that seems like a self-narration of Luc Degla. In this story, the main character, who remains nameless throughout the narration, undergoes a series of transformative experiences which lead him to explore and come to terms with his identity as a native of the Republic of Benin. Apart from Mama Ben, a restaurant owner, the same can be said about the other nameless characters readers encounter as they are either described as "Meine Schwägerin", "Mein Bruder." Having lived outside his country for a while, the narrator's German life and his fantasy-filled life are at first incompatible. He depicts his experience of returning to the Republic of Benin after staying in Germany for some time, centering on how the narrator-character faces the burden of adjusting to a culture that he once considered to be his own but turns out to be different from his memory, including prices of goods and services in Benin, even as he compares Germany to his country. In this context of strangeness that I discuss, migrants, upon return to their countries, become strangers who try to adjust to their new life. The experienced "Preisschock" is at the same time a culture shock, a common phenomenon for those who traveled or moved to a different country and no less to those who returned to a home that does not seem to be theirs any longer. The narrator's communication with people in Benin exposes the alienation of a migrating native who arrives back home but feels like a stranger.

The protagonist experiences strangeness as a cultural reader of his home country. According to Alfred Schuetz, the Austrian philosopher and social phenomenologist, the stranger is an "adult individual of our times and civilization who tries to be permanently accepted or at least tolerated by the group which he approaches" (499). Schuetz argues that the stranger also "interprets his new social environment in terms of his thinking as usual" (502). What is of interest to Schuetz is the stranger's integration and assimilation to the society he finds himself in.

For Schuetz, the stranger is new to the group and "his thinking as usual" is different from that of citizens, since he questions "nearly everything that seems to be unquestionable to the members of the approached group" (502). The questions he poses thus symbolize his difference and strangeness within the community he finds himself in. In Schuetz's view, people can become strangers to their own city or state when things around them seem odd, when they interpret materials and object from an old perception or idea, an understanding that underscores their unfamiliarity with the surroundings.

An unexpected change in the price of a motorcycle taxi causes the protagonist to feel this kind of strangeness. The protagonist flags the local Zemidjan to take him to Mama Ben's place, his usual eating spot. The narrator describes his experience with the motorcycle taxi, "er taxierte mich kurz und nannte seinen Preis: "500 F" ("Der Preisschock" 105). The taxi driver's asking price reinvents the protagonist's past in the light of the present which makes him cringe: "Wie bitte?" ("Der Preisschock" 105). His exclamation conveys his ignorance of the current price in Cotonou, as he reflects on whether the taxi driver wants to rip him off. His exclamation echoes his nonconformity to the recent increase in taxi fare since he still relates to the driver from his past knowledge. Upon discovering that the price from 5 years ago has drastically changed, he is forced to question the "validity of the habitual thinking as usual" (Schuetz 503). His reflection on the motorcycle taxi driver's possible profiteering from him expresses his position as someone who became unfamiliar with current prices and a stranger to Cotonou. In other words, his thoughts about the taxi driver being dubious puts in a position as someone who has lost touch about his country and could therefore be regarded as a foreigner in his hometown.

Being shocked by food prices further increases his experience of strangeness. When he arrives at Mama Ben's restaurant, he quickly demands a 100 F CFA plate of rice. The waiter's

amazement to the protagonist's demands signals unfamiliarity and the identity of being a newcomer to the restaurant, as she quickly asks "Aus welchem Land kommen Sie denn?" ("Der Preisschock" 106). The question does not only cast doubt about the autobiographer's familiarity with the restaurant but also suggests that he might have lost touch with the restaurant's menu and service. The waiter's question also asserts the main characters unfamiliarity with Mama Ben's restaurant as his request accentuates his novelty to his favorite joint. As the protagonist encounters difficulty trying to adjust to the society he once knew, his absence from Benin hints to his alienation from the community and his preferred restaurant, which as he pays his bill, he wishes he was in Germany where inflation hardly rise insignificantly. He temporarily turns to look at himself in a mirror, in which the reader observes the subject speaking to himself about the final price of his meal, "Das Fleisch? 1000 F CFA. Die Sauce? 200 Francs. Ich verzichtete schweren Herzens auf die Bohnen und das Gemüse, weil mein Teller inzwischen schon 2500 F CFA kostete, umgerechnet ungefähr 4 Euro. Das fand ich zu teuer im Verhältnis zu den beninischen Löhnen und meiner eher mageren Reisekasse" ("Der Preisschock" 106). Not only does the narrator use his shock to expose his anomalousness, but the monologue also communicates his dissatisfaction with the food he ordered, which does not seem to be commensurate with the price he paid. Again, his discontentment expresses signs of separateness from the happenings in his country, a sensation of feeling satisfied with services in Germany than in the Republic of Benin.

Social interaction paves the way to express how disconnected the protagonist feels in his town. As he considers the joy of spending his holiday in Benin where he does not have to pay attention to the weather forecast, he becomes discouraged by the thought of not having much money to spend. In a conversation with a motorcycle taxi driver where the narrator tries to

explain that goods and products are as expensive in Benin as in Germany: “Euer Land ist aber teuer geworden! Hilfe!” (“Der Preisschock” 108). Although the taxi driver laughs it off, stressing that “wir sind es gewöhnt” (“Der Preisschock” 108), his answer magnifies the acceptance of “euer” and “wir” and the difference between both pronouns. The possessive adjective “euer” emphasizes the line of distance and exclusion from his country, a pronoun that demonstrates his affinity for Germany and disconnection from his country. As a returning citizen of Benin, the protagonist experiences reverse culture shock, i.e., the disorientation which characterizes the citizen’s return, the process of readjusting, re-acculturating, and reassimilating into one’s own home culture after living in a different culture for a significant period (Gaw 83; Meintel 52). While cultural shock centers on migrants’ problems with a foreign language, strange customs, uncomfortable living, the disorientation that arises from encountering different social and cultural norms (Oberg 177), reverse cultural shock occurs as migrants who return home questions if they fit into their country as home is no longer home but somewhere that appear strange to them culturally, socially, or economically. The price escalation brings the protagonist to a point of choosing between “yours” and “ours.” Through the usage of “euer,” he evinces the difference between the two countries, thereby solidifying the stranger discourse; an espousal to foreignness in one’s country through the acceptance disengaged in the transformation process. Although it is not clear from the autobiography if the protagonist holds German citizenship, he uses the “euer” as a lens of differentiation for situations that are alien to the life to which he is accustomed to in Germany.

The protagonist notices suggestions to his novelty and adopts strategies to show conformism to the Benin society. In his effort to shed strangeness, he tells motorcycle taxi drivers and food vendors that “ich bin ein echtes Kind Benins, ich sehe nur schick aus, habe aber

kein Geld in der Tasche" ("Der Preisschock" 109). He intuitively turns to clothing as a marker of social status and tries to deflect any false labelling as a relatively wealthy home-comer, but to no avail. Initially successful in reducing prices by using his mantra, he soon switches to traditional Benin clothing with the intention of masking his exclusivity. Schuetz's argument about the stranger's search for acceptance or tolerance by the group which he approaches certainly defines the protagonist's mission to be accepted or tolerated as a Beniner despite his everyday clothes (499). His strategy—"echtes Kind Benins"—becomes a learning trajectory where he defines who he is, a re-adjustment identification into a society of shared belonging. Notwithstanding that people seem nice to him or at least neutral, the conformity as a Beniner stands in opposition with his clothing and pronunciation, which reveal his out-of-town identity.

In "Die Erkundungsreise" another short story, Degla uses an I-narrator to give voice to his exploratory journey back to Benin after studying in Germany. While this story, like "Der Preisschock" resembles details about Degla, a depiction about his short stay in his country, readers are left in the lacuna about the name of the narrator or the main character. Although, we learn about the narrator's friend, Marco, a law graduate from West-Africa, and Matthias, who works in a bank, Degla appears conscious about leaving his characters' details since names could be seen essential components for being part of a society. The short story centers on the narrator, his high school friends, Marco, who introduces the narrator to his colleagues as the "Rückkehrer" and Matthias ("Die Erkundungsreise" 15). Although the narrator's reasons to return sound plausible since "Deutschland ist nicht [s]eine Heimat, [er] darf dort nicht leben. Außerdem können wir nicht alle fern von der Heimat sein" ("Die Erkundungsreise" 16), Marco and his boss fail to comprehend why the protagonist chooses to return to Benin. Marco's boss tries to convince the "Rückkehrer" explaining that "Hier haben wir nichts," a statement that suggests his

evaluation of Germany and Benin, attributing superiority to the former. The utterance lends emphasis of his imaginative perception of Germany as a country that is desirable for migrants—one that provides all for its inhabitants.

Symmetric instances of oddity appear in the protagonist conversation with Matthias. As the protagonist tries to explain to his friends why he plans to finally return to Benin, Matthias questions his intentions: "Kannst du nicht dort bleiben? Was willst du hier machen?" ("Die Erkundungsreise" 18). Matthias's blunt question implies that the protagonist of the story does not belong there anymore and further suggests that he sees his friend as a stranger in Benin and, therefore, unwelcomed to make Benin his home after studying in Germany. Although the protagonist responds that he has finished his studies he wants to return and help develop his country. Matthias opposes this idea of returning: "Hör mit dem Idealismus auf! Es geht um dich. Dich meine ich. Du bist zu lange weggeblieben, das System hier wird dich brechen…überlass uns, die das Land nie verlassen haben, die Heimat. Wir werden schon überleben. Wir kennen das System und leben damit. Aber für dich gleicht die Rückkehr einem Selbstmord" ("Die Erkundungsreise" 18). The conversation once again foregrounds the central theme of migration and strangeness, from fellow citizens of the Republic of Benin who demonstrates that one becomes a stranger to one's country after living abroad for a period of time. By inserting Matthias' voice in the narrative, the story emphasizes the protagonist's unwelcomeness, constructing a "we circle," to which Matthias believes his friend does not belong, and an "us," different from the society once known to the protagonist.

Immigration makes a visitor out of the protagonist, a trajectory of choice and change. As the protagonist continues the investigative research for his planned return to his country, the I-narrator yields the narration to Matthias, who describes his two-and-a-half years' experience

working in the bank, a position he got with a simple application as opposed to the usual process of knowing someone at the top to help facilitate the employment. Matthias describes his approach to applying and securing jobs in Benin in a way that satirizes his incognizance of practices like gifting the personnel manager one month's salary at the end of the year, suggesting levels of meaning to the working culture in Benin in which the protagonist is not conversant within Germany. The frame narrative technique reveals, without description, information on Matthias' life that projects a sense of plausibility which gives the "Rückkehrer" an idea of the negative transformation that has occurred since he migrated to Germany. Continuing his story, the narrator reports Matthias' concluding remarks: "Die Leute [haben] keine Wahl, sie können nicht protestieren, weil jeder froh sei, überhaupt eine Arbeit zu haben" ("Die Erkundungsreise" 19). Matthias' frame narrative opens up spaces for sharing life history with the protagonist that gives him an idea of the country he wants to return to, making him conclude that "der Gedanke, dass ich zurückkehre, war für mich völlig normal gewesen. Aber nach dem Gespräch mit Matthias überkamen mich Zweifel. Ich befand mich plötzlich in einer Sackgasse" ("Die Erkundungsreise" 19). Their conversation projects self-defining moments that decide the fate of the "Rückkehrer"—either to return to his country as a citizen or to embrace his migrant identity in Germany. There seems to be a set of cultural norms—bribery and corruption—built around looking for and keeping a job, which connects to Bauman's claim that the native culture defines who should be called a stranger or a visitor ("Modernity" 78). In other words, the negotiated experiences where Matthias defines ways, he and other colleagues perceive themselves through participation in the culture of corruption reify them as a community that alienates the "Rückkehrer" from the citizenry.

The protagonist becomes aware that this culture describes him as a guest in his country, which brings him to reflect: “Wie könnte ich das schaffen [in Deutschland zu bleiben]?” (“Die Erkundungsreise” 19). This sense of alienation becomes most evident when the main character would not give in to the culture of bribery to get or keep a job, and as someone who was not part of the changes he learns from Matthias’ story. Although Matthias’ office experience sounds strange to the protagonist, his capitulation and further reflection on how to make his residency permanent in Germany suggests a withdrawal, a reluctance to adapt and a resolve to return to Germany. Notwithstanding his Benin nationality, the title of the short story, “Die Erkundungsreise,” imprints the notion of a visitor who makes formal visits of inspection to his country after a long stay in Germany.

Bauman, Kristeva, Schuetz and Simmel’s ideas provide a framework to understand the multiple identities of characters such as Femi in “Aida” who remains both a foreigner and stranger in Germany. Historical information that adds background to his conflict with the Müller family goes as far back as to the Rhineland Bastards after the Second World War, when the memory of Nazi ideology was still very much alive and added to forms of othering and racializing of immigrants. I use the concepts of strangeness, otherness, and foreignness to show the difficulties of migrants in Germany and explain their struggles with multiple identities, depending on perspectives from inside and outside of social environments. Migration pushes citizens out of their familiar zones and, upon their return, places them in spaces of guest and visitor within their own country as “Der Preisschock” and “Die Erkundungsreise,” shows. This movement triggers strangeness upon return, even if Germany is only the second departure point after migrants had left their initial country of origin, lived for a while in Europe, and arrive once again in their homeland. Although strangers might try to integrate into society, they remain

foreigners by virtue of their identity. Also, citizens upon return to their home country face readjustment and reacculturation as they reconcile with the economic and social change that causes alienation.

Passport stories, money, and corruption

Migrants need a passport to travel across borders. However, in the migratory trajectory, money, and corruption play an important role in shaping both decisions to migrate as well as the experiences migrants have along their journey. Of course, moving to another country would require legal documents, thus often attracting illegal migration. Indeed, migration scholars have long held that the need for legal documents invites corruption. The relationship between migration and corruption impacts peoples' decisions to leave their home country in search of opportunities (Ariu and Squicciarini; Merkle et al.; Lundgren and Lappo; Mangwanda). As I have argued before, Degla's fictional characters move to Germany with the hopes of finding a better life and supporting their left-behind families. Money not only drives the remittance-flow and the search for a home in Europe, but it mirrors how migrant characters facilitate their journey to Europe. The distribution of money to various agents involved in the planning and execution of the long journey ahead will be at the center of attention of the following analysis of anthropological details of everyday reality in postcolonial Africa.

While I focus on how corruption facilitates illegal migration and places limitations in the characters' lives in the texts, structural violence is necessarily a guiding concept. In his conception of violence as a point of influence, Johann Galtung holds that the roots of structural violence can be seen in social environments that do not allow individuals to meet their basic

needs. According to Galtung, the social institutions individuals rely on "[impede] free flow, and [create] all kinds of eddies and turbulences" (173). Paul Farmer et al. make the argument that "structural violence is one way of describing social arrangements that put individuals and populations in harm's way" (1686). They go further to illustrate that these structural arrangements are embedded in the political and economic organizations of today's world and therefore are injurious to people. Farmer et al.'s concept of structural violence includes the way illegal travel happens as much as the societal structures in the diaspora that suffers from this violence, even though seemingly.

In addition to money, corruption stands as an enabler of illegal migration. Tunde, without a Schengen visa in "Der Nachahmer," leaves his house in the hopes of bribing his way through the Nigerian airport to get to Germany. The set up at the airport emboldens his journey as "er besorgte sich ein Ticket und schaffte es durch Bestechung der nigerianischen Grenzbeamten, ins Flugzeug zu gelangen" ("Der Nachahmer" 35). The narrator tells in detail how Tunde finds his way into Germany as corrupt Nigerian immigration officers allegedly support his migration. Undoubtedly, government officials are well versed in the language of money. In his book *Symbolic Economies,* Jean-Joseph Goux (52) asserts that money functions as a capacity to measure value and is a medium of exchange but that its symbolic function reaches even further, developing a dynamic that overlaps with human forms of communication: what words can't express, money will "say" silently. Money, as seen with the fictional Tunde, opens the door to his migration and grants him access to the plane even without a visa. The text shows how Tunde recognizes the transactional value of money. In a more common sense, money, as Jochen Hörisch argues, informs us about the owner's ability to pay and to use it to trade for the value of goods (66). By bribing the Nigerian immigration officials, Tunde further displays his mastery of

money by exchanging it for an "visa" that eliminates the hurdles of reaching Europe by plane. While money plays a significant role in the next story, I juxtapose migration against legal identity to show how structural violence works in "Heimat?."

The short story "Heimat?" provides an insight into the protagonist's migrant experience in Germany. The story opens with the protagonist going for a bike tour in a park. The tour introduces him to the German monument of war with its inscription "Den Kindern Deutschlands, die für ihr Vaterland gestorben sind" ("Heimat?" 93). His imagination of the dead creates instances of sensitivity and further understanding of the word "fatherland" concerning his country. This creation links memories of his passport renewal with the consul of the Republic of Benin in Bonn. The narrative parallels the reader's awareness of the violence fictional Benin inflicts on its citizens and leaves the readers wondering if there is a correlation between the protagonist and the author. Arguing along the lines of Lejeune's (3-4) "autobiographical pact," there is no clear-cut identity similarity between the author, narrator, and the portrayed character since Degla like in "Der Preisschock" and "Die Erkundungsreise," writes this story leaving out a name for the protagonist. However, the stories are framed in a way that could be traced back to Luc Degla as the narrator makes clear: "Ich bin zwar ein gebürtiger Beniner, aber ich habe mehrere Jahre in verschiedenen Ländern gelebt" ("Heimat?" 94). This statement demonstrates the narrator construction of the Self, that provides insights to the narrator's place of birth and country, and an identity as a migrant who has lived in several country that resonates to the real biography of the author, Degla. While it might not be wrong to address the narrator and protagonist in "Heimat?" as Luc Degla, the story forges the apparent practice of the protagonist's non-identity while narrating a retrospective experience of renewing his passport in Germany and Benin.

The Degla's passport renewal experience is marked, once again, by structural violence. Upon the death of a bosom friend of Ghanaian descent, he applies for the renewal of his passport with the Republic of Benin Embassy in Germany. His intent to renew his passport puts him in contact with the Benin consul in Germany: "Die Pässe ließen sich nur in Cotonou ausstellen und nach seinen Erfahrungen könnte es bis zu zwei Jahre dauern, bevor ich einen neuen Pass bekäme" ("Heimat?" 94). The consul's telephone call sounds paradoxical to the protagonist, who expects a new passport within three months. Contrary to his belief and the damage his inability to promptly renew his passport would cause his job, the Consul suggests, "Es gäbe allerdings einen anderen, inoffiziellen Weg, den [ich] nutzen könne, um den Prozess zu beschleunigen. [Du könntest] über diesen Weg den neuen Pass innerhalb von fünfundvierzig Tagen erhalten. Es würde leider etwas mehr kosten. [Du solltest] dafür siebzig Deutschmark zahlen" ("Heimat?" 94). With a great sense of nuance, Degla uses his encounter with the consul to shift the focus of the narrative to depict a postcolonial Africa. Not only has he previously paid twenty Deutschmark for the passport renewal, but the extra fifty Mark stands in the way between him and his new passport. Despite calling his suggestion "inoffiziell," the consul makes structural violence look right in his attempt to exploit the citizenry in the disguise of rendering services. Degla's experience is not out of place, as Achille Mbembé, in his book *On the Postcolony*, points out that hardly any sector in today's post-independence Africa, "even the diplomatic service, is free of corruption and venality" (85). Mbembé's argument gives a better understanding of postcolonial Benin, even in the diaspora. Again, the "unofficiality" of the consul's recommendation opens him up as a beneficiary of structural violence since he gains from the structure. The extra fifty Deutschmark becomes a subjective notion connected to the consul's idea of power and diplomatic position to deliver the passport within an unofficial timeframe.

The consul's demand puts a question mark on the Degla's identity. Upon his refusal to pay the extra cost for his passport renewal, he starts pondering the role of the consul. His contemplation delineates how the consul uses his position to deny him his right to be treated equally. In his encyclopedia entry, James Gilligan stresses that structural violence explains the inequalities between the rich and poor in society and that societal structures are used to constrain people from meeting their basic needs (229). The consul's action and his position as a representative of the Republic of Benin exemplify the unavoidable restriction exerted on the protagonist from getting his passport renewed. The consul does not only occupy a diplomatic position but exerts the same power on Luc who occupies a lower class in the diaspora, as a migrant seeking the services of his country's embassy in Germany. He compares the treatment he receives from Germans to how the Consul's: "Wenn ich in Deutschland ein Büro betrat, wurde ich als ausländischer Bürger immer bedient, und in meiner eigenen Botschaft sollte ich noch das Personal bestechen, wenn ich ein Dokument brauche?" ("Heimat?" 94). If the protagonist recognizes his identity as a foreigner in Germany while his passport is still valid, he could feel more disconnected from his country with an expired travel document. Despite the lost validity of his travel papers three months after he contacted the consul, he got "eine vorläufige Aufenthaltsbewilligung, einen gestempelten Zettel" ("Heimat?" 94). The "gestempelter Zettel" leaves the protagonist unsatisfied since it limits his mobility outside Germany, giving him no valid and legal document to identify himself.

Degla discovers the value of his passport and travel pass on reaching West Africa. As the story progresses, he applies for a travel permit from the Benin Embassy in Germany that enables him to travel to Ghana for the funeral service of his friend. His journey to Accra, Ghana, features a stopover at Lomé, Togo, where he changes travelers' checks to cash. Without a passport, he

travels without an official document from his country's government that certifies his identity or nationality. However, the substantive issues surrounding his journey and the desire for cash are complex. This complexity is shown with the travel permit: the bank's refusal to change his checks to cash in Cotonou and the experience at the bank that reveals the damages the consul has inflicted on Degla due to his inability to present a valid identity card. In his disappointment, he demanded to talk with the Bank manager who further explains: "Aber lesen Sie mal, darauf steht, der Passierschein gilt als Passersatz, und der Stempel ist von der beninischen Botschaft" ("Heimat?" 96). In this instance, Degla shares his confrontational dialogue that images a ponderous disagreement with the cashier's decision to accept the travel permit, even the bank manager refuses to be of service. For the protagonist, the cost of a valid passport is not negligible as he is denied access to funds despite his travel permit, which further affects his emotions since he leaves the bank angrily because structural violence "constrains the individual from achieving the quality of life that would otherwise be possible" (Lee 123). Degla desperately needs cash to enjoy his stay in Cotonou but is unable to access it due to the unavailability of a valid passport, the existing bureaucratic order, and random institutional decisions that could only be swayed by money. In other words, the travel pass value lies in facilitating travel and not as a means of identification in Benin because of its non-acceptance in the Bank.

The passport renewal story further paints a picture of parent-child relationship. Degla's arrival in Benin is characterized by a dispute that indicates his mother's misunderstanding of his return for a friend's funeral but only sends a condolence letter on hearing of the death of his grandfather ("Heimat?" 95). Despite his mother's disapproval, Degla sets out for Ghana but leaves her with his passport renewal documents. Unlike in Germany where he is not ready to pay extra to get his passport renewed, Degla gives his mother ten thousand CFA to help him acquire

a new passport. His return from Ghana is greeted with disappointment as his mother diverts the money, claiming: “Sie hätte erfahren, dass die zehntausend Francs nicht ausreichen würden. . . im Durchschnitt gäben die Leute fünfzehntausend aus” (“Heimat?” 96). While the mother’s ideas are narrated in a transposed speech that explains her inability to renew the passport, Degla wrestles with his mother’s misunderstanding of the urgency of the passport and why she refuses to borrow money from neighbors to complete the task. In his understanding, his mother’s refusal to help him renew his passport speaks punishment for not honoring his grandfather’s funeral with his presence; however, the deprivation underscores the parent-child relationship in Africa and his mother’s sense of entitlement to his money.

Furthermore, the mother’s action embodies the cultural-financial-familial interplay. On demand for the money intended for the passport renewal, the mother’s decision to give the son an empty envelope is crucial in understanding the depiction of migration and money within this family circle. The mother was quick to respond to her son when asked about the missing money in the folder: “Ja, mein Sohn, du bist vergesslich geworden, deine Schwester hatte dir letztes Jahr ein Buch geschenkt, sie hatte das Geld von mir bekommen. Das Buch kostete 3000 Francs. Als du vor zwei Jahre im Urlaub hier warst, bist du krank geworden, erinnerst du dich? Also ich hatte die Arzneikosten übernommen, es war ungefähr . . . 2500. Und . . . und . . . und . . . Faktisch war das ganze Geld weg” (“Heimat?” 97). Meanings accrue through money as a vehicle of materialism, thus staging a phase in the relationship between the mother and son. The mother’s discretion to pay herself for the earlier incurred expenses insinuates an inevitable maternal belief that she should enjoy the fruits of her matriarchal labor. In her argument on money and family practices, Supriya Singh states that money stands as a “vehicle for cultural meanings” and could be a medium of fostering relationships (“The Future” 104). Accordingly,

the mother's voice further evokes a sense of cultural implication of which the son should be aware of and, consequently, repay her. There also appears to be a nexus between money, migration, and the mother's retention of the money. Families back in Africa erroneously believe that migrants pluck money from trees in Europe or America (Wong 367). The mother is disinterested in helping him get his passport renewed but is emphatic about getting back the money spent on her son. Her actions evidence money as a symbol of parental care, the seized cash and the accompanying value reads the mother's immoral expression in helping her son regain his legal travel document. For Degla, his mother's actions encroach the legal identity his passport embodies as a means of identification and for travel purposes.

If money can be equated as a store of value as Hutchinson et al. (12) and Douthwaite (72) assert, then it is not only the medium by which the exchange is transacted but measured. While Douthwaite (5), sees three main uses of money—store of value, exchange of medium and unit of account—Hutchinson et al. add that money could also be used as a standard of deferred payment (12). According to Hutchinson et al. (218) "money as a store of value can undermine its use as a medium of exchange" and such was the case of Degla's mother's requisition of his 10,000 Francs. Although the mother's total claim is 5500 Francs, the 10,000 Francs earned overseas symbolizes cheap income, thereby revealing the unrealistic expectation and mindset that there could be more money from the "tree" where the son plucked the first 10,000 Francs. Money plays the central character of guile in this mother-son relationship and thus represents the only language the mother understands instead of empathy for the Degla's expired legal document. In this sense, money because a standard of deferred payment as the mother records the son's debt in other to collect her payment later. This units of value are further expressed as a medium of exchange for maternal care. I use the word exchange not in the sense of equal value for value

since there is not exact relativity of measurement but in the equivalent unit of exchange. As Simmel argues, “money performs its services best when it is not simply money, that is when it does not merely represent the value of things in pure abstraction” (“The Philosophy” 165). In other words, the mother’s claim may not be valued for money, but she costs her deeds as a token of substance. Unlike money, there is no formal trade that existed between the protagonist and the mother but seizing the money and insisting that it is a repayment for the past bill expresses money as the units of measuring her matriarchal service.

As the passport renewal narrative climaxes, the story shows how privilege works in postcolonial Benin. As the protagonist realizes his return to Germany draws near, he employs the help of his uncle, a General in the army, to help him get his passport renewed. On hearing the unfortunate passport stories, the uncle reassures him: “Vergiss diese hungrigen Geier in Bonn! Komm morgen zu mir, wir fahren früh zu den Behörden, mach dir keine Sorgen” (“Heimat?” 97). The General’s reassurance insinuates class privilege, his acknowledgment of hierarchies and subjectivity in the Benin society. The uncle, who Degla believes knows the other law enforcement officers, constitutes a picture of class privilege in Benin. As Peggy McIntosh explains, privilege exists when people are granted specific rights and entitlement because of the group they belong to and not based on what they have done or failed to do (74). McIntosh goes on further to argue that privilege affords people the access “to be,” conferring the connotation of power to get something that other people in the same society or community would be denied (78-79). Although her argument centers on White privilege, McIntosh essentially emphasizes privilege as a position of advantage in a society that do not promote equality of class and human race. In reaching out for his uncle’s help, Degla seems to understand the societal structure of

inequality between the "haves" and the "have nots," and the concession that comes with occupying a higher position in the society while exploiting the class privilege.

The uncle's decision to help illustrates the relationship between power, morality, and money. The next day, the army general takes his nephew to the office of internal affairs where he hands the passport renewal documents to the director. The meeting at the director's office reaffirms the narrator-protagonist's earlier knowledge of fictional Benin:

> Nach Prüfung der Dokumente auf Ihre Vollständigkeit bat er mich, am nächsten Tag um dieselbe Uhrzeit vorbeizukommen, um meinen Pass abzuholen. Ich hinterließ keinen Franc mehr als für die Gebühr nötig war. Als ich meinen Pass entgegennahm, sah ich vor meinem geistigen Auge alles, was ich durchgemacht hatte, Bonn, die Bankangestellten natürlich und meine Mutter auch. Ich war sehr enttäuscht von meinen Landsleuten und meiner Familie ("Heimat?" 97).

This observation echoes the power associated with class privilege: the access to get his passport renewed in less than twenty-hours rather than waiting forty-five days and paying an additional fifty Deutschmark to the consul in Bonn. Although Degla was happy to return to Germany within a few days, the situation surrounding his passport renewal delineates the relationship between power and ethics. The narrator shows on the one hand the marginalized status of the Benin society, the privilege that comes with belonging to a class, and the denials surrounding the less privileged. On the other hand, the mother's action hints at her cold-heartedness towards her son, which also suggests the value she places on money in place of renewing his passport. It appears that the drive for money has altered his mother's delicate nature and the consul's position of dignity as a representative of Benin. Money as a value for exchange of service, thus, represents the only language the protagonist's mother and the consul comprehend. It is their way to communicate, a "cold" transactional language that substitutes words for numbers

Conclusion

My examination of the narrator-protagonists "Heimat?," "Der Preisschock," and "Die Erkundungsreise" aligns with Degla, the author of *Das Afrikanische Auge*. I showed that the depicted stories bear resonances with author's details at the back of the book. Although the autodiegectic narration in these short stories confirms the possibility of an autobiographical narration, we do not read explicitly about the author's confirmation of the stories' autobiographical nature. While one may claim that by intentionally not providing readers with the name or even crucial details about the narrator-protagonist, Degla adds to the mystery and secrecy of the short stories, his narrative technique of assigning nicknames like "der Rückkehrer" and "der Beniner" to his protagonists, points towards biography of Luc Degla. Also, from my conversation with him during one of my research stay in Freiburg, Germany, I would argue that the absence of names, mostly the protagonist, mother, can be recognized as a stylistic choice made by Degla as he began writing the novel.

My analysis of Degla's short stories focuses mainly on the stories that deal with migration, strangeness, othering, and transactional human relationships. I argue that the characters migrate for the value they placed on immigration due to an imagined Germany and the use of this perception as a premise for moving. I analyzed these dynamics in "Der Nachahmer," "Die Erkundungsreise," "Aida," and "Der Preisschock." In all these stories, the identity of migrants emerges in the unspoken but nonetheless intense narrative of the mission to Europe. Not only is this exploitative mission built on the premise of a better job and living conditions across the Mediterranean Sea but is also constructed on global inequality and on the perception and knowledge of Germany. Anderson's imagined community is, as we saw, quite elastic and

plays a major role in the migration decisions of Degla's characters. Characters like Jean soon realize that such imagined communities have no foundation in reality but exist only in the minds of migrants. The European dream, as I have deployed it in my analysis, describes an imagined Germany as a nation to live in, find work, earn money, and help left-behind family members financially. This kind of an imagined Germany is constructed upon the notion of economic superiority over migrants' countries and the belief in the usefulness of German "waste"—here: the value of Germany's secondhand cars in Benin and Nigeria.

In keeping with the perception of Germany and how it shapes migrant and non-migrant characters alike, Degla uses Jean and Tunde in "Der Nachahmer" to bridge the gap between imagined nation and visions of Germany. Jean's migration is decided upon hearing that Germany needs immigrant workers since he believes he would quickly secure a job and take care of his parents while Tunde's return to Germany was inspired by his exploitative mission of making fortunes off Germany's economic system. Furthermore, the identification of migrant characters is constructed in two distinct ways: either as a foreigner or as a stranger which I deployed interchangeably. Characters like Femi occupy the position of a foreigner because of his African origin and nationality, whereas Maria was conscripted into the same status for not recognizing the margins of strangeness that exists between her family and Femi. This conscription further shifts to Aida as a biological notion to denote her otherness in the Müller family. The way Aida, a mixed-race child, is seen brings back distant echoes of the Rhineland occupation by African and US-American soldiers after World War I and their sexual relationships with German women. I show that Germany's history of multi-racial relationships and children conflict with clear-cut ideas of nationhood, citizenship, and belonging. Rather, they confront the dualism of "us" and "them" and show the fluidity (Bauman) and shifting attributes of "strangeness" and

"foreignness." Vice versa, countries often become strange to migrants upon returning to their countries of origin. In "Der Preisschock," the protagonist's absence from Benin and subsequent short encounter with his cultural roots cannot exceed the perspective of a visitor anymore. In Benin he is treated as an unwanted guest by his friends, who consider him as a stranger. While his friends' actions suggest the narrator-protagonist to be an unwelcome guest, he begins to distance himself from what once was his home and hides that he is a citizen of Benin. In fact, what stands between him and his past identity are the changed prices of goods and services that highlight his strangeness.

This chapter also discussed the ways in which human relationship become transactional and dominated by economic underpinnings. As I have shown in my analysis of "Der Nachahmer," and "Heimat?," money is an essential commodity that also demonstrates how the families migrants leave back home demonstrate their relationship. While the free flow of money and goods in a globalized word does not only mirror the much more restricted and complicated "flow" of humans, but migrant's families also exchange this store of values for parental care, respect for parents and underscores maternal honor. Money in this sense represents a legal tender encultured in the minds of migrants as well as their left-behind families. Although the means of valuation differs for migrants and their families, the objectification lies in individual's interpretation of money and the step they take to demonstrate how they understand money in relation to its degree of exchangeability.

Chapter Five

Unter die Deutschen gefallen: Fathers, Mothers, and Children in Oji's immigrant autobiography

The second chapter focuses on Nura Abdi's autobiography, *Tränen im Sand* (2003). The text recounts different experiences that feed transcultural identity. In line with Ortiz and Welsch's theorizations of transcultural identity, I have argued that migration paves the way for Nura's readjustment to a new cultural identity, cultural understanding of Germany, and self-identification. Chapter Three discusses the economics of migration in Luc Degla's *Das afrikanische Auge* (2007). Although the themes of foreignness and Otherness have already made appearances in the previous three chapters, the following chapter expands upon these topics, by examining how Othering occurs in *Unter die Deutschen gefallen* (1992) while analyzing its complex multiple identities. I also draw attention to racial subordination and the unequal power relationships that affect the minoritized and the majority. Oji's autobiography combines elements of the transcultural and transnational experience with a discussion of culture and racism from an autobiographical perspective, being situated in a time span between 1967 and 1988, a few months before the collapse of the Berlin wall and Germany's reunification. Although different in style and genre from the other three texts I have analyzed, Oji's text fits well within the discussion of migration. Scholars like Sonja Lehner, János Riesz and Dirk Göttsche demonstrate that Oji's narrative, which centers topics pertinent to an African author writing in the German language, are at the heart of the current critical discourse.

The theme of Otherness is prevalent throughout Chima Oji's autobiography. The author, a Nigerian, was born on June 25, 1947, in Enugu, Nigeria. Oji left Nigeria in 1967 during the Nigerian-Biafran War, for the United Kingdom, but later migrated to Germany where he studied

Medicine and Surgery at the University of Münster (1975). In 1981, he became a Doctor of Dental Surgery. The relationship between racism and migration and specifically Oji's experiences of racism as a Black African while living in Germany as described in his work stands out. I specifically use adjectives of color—White and Black[5]—, to particularize my reference to German heritage, the German blood, and skin color (El-Tayeb "Blood"). As Saha Kamta notes, the novel depicts Chima's personal story with its racial polarization and the complicated love story between people of different ethnicities and races in a global world (72). As shown in my previous chapter, the concepts of soil and blood are frequently used to describe German identity. Oji's autobiography refers to these concepts in a similar fashion and shows racial differences from a historical perspective. Readers learn in what way the post-war history of West Germany haunts the notion of adoption and mixed-race children to this day. The descriptive adjective Black added to the noun African indicates Blackness or rather "Schwarz(er)" ("Unter" 11, 12, 77, 95) and "Neger" ("Unter" 9, 24, 95,) as used frequently in Oji's text to identify the protagonist as being from sub-Saharan Africa.

In this chapter, I approach Oji's *Unter die Deutschen gefallen* by analyzing how German characters use the language of race to map whom they believe to be a foreigner. First, I examine the history of *Rasse*, discussing how the word has underground changes in terms of meaning. From Antje Sommer and Werner Conze's encyclopedia entry, I study the term from Immanuel Kant's categorization of human race under four classes through Grafen Gobineau's assertion of the Aryan myth to Darwin's evolution theory. I argue that the concept of foreignness in the contexts of race and migration emerges from relating to the said person designated as Black. Following John French and Bertram Raven, Robert Dahl, and Stephen Lukes, I describe two

[5] As I continue my analysis, I drop the adjectives, white and black, before the nouns German and African and use the terms Germans and Africans. I insert the adjectives only where I want to emphasize race or color.

different meanings of "power." I analyze power as a form of determination to exclude and minoritize when used within the framework of migration and assert that the concept of legitimate power functions as a tool of influence and is wielded by groups of people through acts of domination or coercion. I also approach power from a position of influence and its relation to racial identity, the desire to exclude and to deprive migrant characters socially or professionally.

Second, I discuss minoritized population analyzing power relations between the subordinating dominant class and the racialized groups. In my discussion of minoritization, I place emphases on the power mechanism that identifies African migrants as not only as the Other but also as foreigners in Germany who are not entitled to fair treatment and should be profiled because of their race. Apart from studying power dynamics and how it works to minoritize African migrants, I critique how Germans perceive Oji's relationship between his German wife, Barbara, and their daughter, Enyi and other migrants with their families towards the end of this chapter. While researchers like Lehner, Riesz and Göttsche focus on the character of Oji and his relationship with his wife, I take a different position in analyzing children and spouses of African migrant characters. Rather than situating the children and spouses of migrants as Germans and individuals, I assert that they are semi-migrants and victims of African migrants in Germany. By semi-migrants, I refer to German citizens who associate with migrants as will be shown later in this chapter.

Recent research has focused on Oji's contributions to postcolonial criticism and the themes he addresses. The autobiographical style of narration, stereotypes, and the Germans' perception of Oji as a representative of the African community receive considerable attention in Albert Gouaffo's work, *Afrikanische Autobiografien in deutscher Sprache*. Gouaffo argues that Oji connects with the world through his autobiography while narrating his life experience in

Germany (70). He also focuses on identity construction, concluding that Germans identify Oji as "Schwarzafrikaner" and "Afrikaner in Deutschland," describing the identification as something that "wie ein Kaugummi an der Haut klebt." Gouaffo's conclusion, however, reveals Chima's three identities. Despite his extended stay in Germany, he is still perceived as an Igbo-man, a black African, who is confronted daily with stereotypes and racism, and lastly as an "Afro-German." Although Gouaffo's notion of the complexity surrounding Chima's identity is of interest, the author's focus on these three identifications does not appear to represent the way that Chima views himself in the text. I contend that his portrayal of Chima as an Afro-German is questionable. The term Afro-German, to my understanding, refers to someone whose parents are of German and African descent, which is not the case for Chima Oji as an author of and character in *Unter die Deutschen gefallen* (see Campt "Afro-German," Lennox, El-Tayeb "If You Can't;" Wright). Furthermore, Chima identifies himself as an African while speaking to Germans. Nevertheless, Gouaffo's findings provide insights for further research into Oji's racial profile as someone from Nigeria, as Guaffo argues, but as a migrant and black African.

Other scholars have examined the notion of otherness in Oji's autobiography. In *Die Verortung der Inter-Kultur: Autobiographie eines desillusionierten Migranten* Amadou Ba describes *Unter die Deutschen gefallen* as a portrayal of the life of an African living among whites. Her notion of the self as continually transforming shapes her ideas of identity and about Chima the protagonist who lives and studies in Germany, a society into which he does not seem to fit. He dangles between "eine Welt des Wir und die der Anderen," constructing a character who undergoes a significant personal "Veränderung" (660-661). I will draw on Ba from a specific standpoint, considering the protagonist not only from the perspective of Africans living among Whites, and argue that Chima is continually experiencing a new self or identity which, in

return, shapes his idea about himself as an African. I add to Ba's view that Chima does not fit in despite his near mother-tongue German proficiency and his medical degree from a German university. His identity as a migrant is portrayed as a marker of difference.

Oji's text contains a mix of heterodiegetic, homodiegetic and autodiegetic narrative modes through which to depict the author's life and important events relating to his family. Gerard Genette[6] holds that the autodiegetic narrator is the protagonist of the story, while the homodiegetic narrator is a minor character in the story he or she tells, or simply a witness to the experiences of the protagonist (212-262). As Genette explains, the heterodiegetic narrator is absent from the story he tells by using the third-person mode. Chima sometimes shifts from the first-person to the third-person narrator. He views himself and his own sense of otherness through these narrative lenses. These various narratological techniques, as I show, allow Oji to examine the minoritization and Otherness he experiences. The subtitle hints at the details of Oji's life in Germany. *Erfahrungen* added to the tile of the text explains how the self is a depiction of an African and a narration of his spouse and child in Germany. Highlighting the word "Erfahrungen" in an entire text, however, raises the question of what kind of experiences an African had while living in Germany, causing him to write a book with the word "Erfahrungen eines Afrikaners" in the subtitle. Chima as the narrator-protagonist writes about his past, the obstacles of living in Germany with the experience of having a mixed-race family in Germany in the early 90s. This noun delineates the negative subject under narration and the identity of the writer as an African. One very special form of the self as the Other is present in the word *gefallen*. From an experiencing self, the verb in the past participle state presents a powerless African who is also the target of racial oppression.

[6] For a larger discussion of these terms, see Gerard Genette's *Narrative Discourse*

In what the author describes as the other side of Germany, the preface titled "Gesichter Deutschlands" draws readers to Chima's friend's experiences of discrimination and alienation in West Germany. Oji describes as "erlebte Wirklichkeit" a horrible event of harassment and brutal racial profiling of a Nigerian family as a random German banged profusely on his friend's door, screaming: "Wo sind die Negerkinder? Die sollen rauskommen, die Bälger! . . . ich will sie umbringen!" ("Unter" 9). The N-word usage is tagged with derogatory meanings, a dehumanization of Nigerian migrants and hierarchization of certain races as opposed to others. The preface offers a flash-forward of a 1986 event before moving back to the author's birthplace, Enugu, Nigeria. The first and second chapters chronicle the remaining presence of Europeans, evangelistic missions and schools in Nigeria, as well as Chima's primary and secondary education in a Catholic school before his eventual departure to the United Kingdom.

Thus far, I have been using the word autobiography while categorizing Oji's text with specific reference to its genre and narration style. The narrative style points to an I-narrator: "Ich entdeckte zu meiner Überraschung, . . ." ("Unter" 55), in meiner Jugend bin ich . . . ("Unter" 58) ich könnte mir nun nicht langer verkneifen . . ." ("Unter" 201) whose life is ceaselessly tied to the narrative. Oji's text is told from his diverse perspective as an author, character, a first-, and a third-person narrator. This classification demands that the author be the subject of narration and the protagonist of the narrative. The author and the protagonist should be the same for the author to enter into a pact with the readers, giving a detailed account of his or her life. Phillip Lejeune calls it the "autobiographical pact" (5). Analogously, Jean Starobinski stresses the authority of the 'I' in an autobiographical narrative as both subject and object, interpreting autobiography as the representation of the present writing self and the past written self. He explains further, "the narrator and the hero are one" and "the same person and such a process is expressly a depiction

of a series of important events in which the editor puts himself into the scene as one of the principal actors" (288). Oji's narration stays within Lejeune's pact: the identity of author, narrator, and protagonist. It also conforms to Starobinski's oneness of narrator and hero. Likewise, *Unter die Deutschen gefallen* functions as what I would describe as *Erfahrungsbericht* of a continuous moment of discrimination.

From another perspective, I consider Oji's autobiography as an *Erfahrungsbericht* of his subjective experiences, a documentation of a marginalized voice. The author expresses his intentions: "Zur Aufklärung der Menschen in Deutschland und anderswo über den alltäglichen Rassismus hierzulande beizutragen. Sie sollen einmal aus der Sicht eines direkt Betroffenen erfahren, was es bedeutet, ein Schwarzer in Deutschland zu sein" ("Unter" 12). Chima Oji's experience amplifies the voice of a minority, thereby making a silenced history speak. The autobiography shares the act of testifying or bearing witness but in a context where the experience is understood as a collective one. Oji's autobiographical text responds to a human and universal need to bear witness while sketching his experience of being tortured as an outsider in Germany. The text stands as the narrator's affirmation of speaking for himself, telling friends, family members' stories from a third-person point of view. In the context of migration literature, the story embodies the social and economic imbalance of power between African migrants and Germans among whom his autobiography is published and consumed.

While the narrated "I" features Chima as the protagonist, the autodiegetic narrator ultimately personifies the overall autobiographical voice, making this position clear in the text:

> Zum einem möchte ich anderen Ausländern, besonders Afrikanern, die ihren Fuß bisher noch nicht auf europäischen Boden gesetzt haben, erzählen, wie es einem Schwarzen dort tatsächlich ergeht. Für viele von ihnen werden meine Schilderungen einen völlig neuen Aspekt in ihrer Betrachtung dieses Kontinents darstellen, denn das Bild, das die Menschen in den meisten Ländern der Welt

> von Europa und auch von Deutschland haben, weicht ganz erheblich ab von Wirklichkeit, die ein Ausländer hier vorfindet. ("Unter" 11)

Irrespective of the quickness to make his intention known, the desire motivating the narrator is not to leave a personal record, but instead to depict the reality of living among Germans as an African, causing his voice and tale to have a communal significance. In this sense, *Unter die Deutschen gefallen* models a fictionalization of self and the author's family. Chima does not only speak for himself but for the specific marginalized group in Germany. While narrating Barbara's (Oji's wife's) experience and that of other migrant wives at the hands of fellow Germans, the narrator often sheds light on his source of information, which is either Barbara's friends or a story recounted by a character who experienced Othering. Oji's text succeeds on multiple levels with diverse frames of reference, positionalities, and insight into the world of immigrant autobiographical narratives. I emphasize the role of the writer as an African, who is a witness to the oppressive experience he narrates and an advocate for ensuring that the discomfiting past is heard and discontinued.

Similarly, with migrant literature written in from a third-person point of view (see Amma Darko, *Der verkaufte Traum* (1994), Rafik Schami *Die Sehnsucht der Schwalbe* (2000), Jenny Erpenbeck, *Gehen, ging, gegangen* (2016), Abbas Khider *Ohrfeige*, (2016)), Oji tells his story as a narrative text that represents the collective experience of African immigrants in form of an autobiography. In William Boelhower's reading of autobiographical text written by immigrants, he asserts that the term "immigrant autobiography" "serve[s] as the real epicenter for the larger category of ethnic autobiographies" in which the "protagonist-narrator is both emigrant and immigrant, exile and discoverer" (21-22). He further argues that these features enroll him under the "sign of the voyager, the hero-adventurer" (37). According to Boelhower, immigrant

autobiography encompasses several facets of the immigrant experience, allowing readers to gain insights into unfamiliar cultures and the migrant identity "through mimetic fidelity to the historical reality of the immigrant experience" (30). In her classification of the genre of autobiography, Gabriele Linke prefers to name this group "life narratives" under the concept of transculturality since the stories being told is as "a result of encounters with other, 'foreign', cultures, that shaped the lives of travelers, migrants, refugees, ethnic [or racial] minorities and cosmopolitans" (420). Linke's preference for transculturality focuses more on encounters and less of the identity of the autobiographer, the migrant character, the process of immigration the experience of migration.

In her careful and nuanced study, Sau-ling Wong pushes for a more appropriate categorization and extensive usage of immigrant autobiography, arguing that Boelhower's analysis does not support the term in description. Wong proposes reserving the expression "immigrant autobiography for autobiography written by immigrants" since the autobiography of Americanization might be appropriate to capture autobiographical text in which the Americanization is explicitly in the foreground (303). The author concludes that grouping autobiographies by immigrant status is only one of the many possible strategies for eliciting insights; however, the term illustrates a handful of the various discourses, selves, and previous experience in which immigrant autobiographers are rooted (309). *Unter die Deutschen gefallen* is not only written by a migrant but is an immigrant autobiographical text. As an immigrant and protagonist-narrator of his autobiography, Oji describes his journey from Nigeria to Germany as a collective experience of dislocation, racism, and feelings of minoritization. Oji's autobiography stands among other works in German migration literature that mirrors experience of migration, the struggles of belonging, identity, and the complexity of race and power structures.

Race and Power Structures in Academia

Oji's migration narrative depicts the mechanisms of power with the intention to interpret race from the perspective of a marginalized African. The text addresses two relevant themes in current scholarly literature: 1. the dialogue within migration studies and 2. the construction of Blackness and Whiteness. While Chima's double status as a student and foreigner is ignored, his German colleagues and professors put his identity as a student ahead of his foreign status. The difference between his studentship and foreignness suggests unequal opportunity. While the idea of migration is the overall theme in the text, the emphasis on power and race is also prevalent. The community in which Chima finds himself marked by race and migrancy substantiate the ideas of representation displayed in the text. I utilize the word race to provide clues about Oji, the author, and protagonist of *Unter die Deutschen gefallen*. There is a pronounced racial division between the protagonist and Germans. For example, white Germans do not only treat Chima as a migrant, but also an African with the dark skin. In addition to being graded based on foreign identity as a medical student, Chima's medical practice was scrutinized and supervised on the same grounds. At this point, skin color becomes boundaries of categories as Whiteness represents position of power and acceptance within the German community while Blackness appears in the context of the racialized Other. By way of explanation, race dominates Oji's focus and his personal life as a medical student, manifesting itself in his discussion with Germans, his renting an apartment, or his looking for a place of internship to complete the residency for his dental practice.

I draw upon the combined legacies of Taylor, Fanon and Mbembé, to capture on-the-spot reactions of people of color in contact with the Europeans. Given the background of Oji's

protagonist, I argue that race and blackness are twin figures but play multiple roles across the dissemination of Oji's autobiographical narrative. Race, as Essed defines it, is an ideological construction with structural expression (43). Taylor gives the ideology of race as a social construct a closer look. He contends persuasively that when we talk about race, we talk about "the field of forces and dynamics that produce and follow from the linkage between body and social location" ("Race" 179). Franz Fanon, the Martinican psychiatrist and anticolonial activist, is explicit as to the way in which Blacks and Whites are bonded by the mechanisms of race. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon examines the impact of colonization on interracial relationships, observing that "both the black man, slave to his inferiority, and the white man, slave to his superiority, behave along neurotic lines" (42). The Martinican author ties race thinking to the psychology of superiority and inferiority in a manner that inflicts damage on the dominated group. Putting the word 'blackness' against race, I further build on Mbembé to argue that the term 'Black' is "linked to the emergence and globalization of capitalism, . . . invented to signify exclusion, brutalization and degradation" (6).

In discussing racial formation within my analysis, I follow Michael Omi and Howard Winant in rejecting the biological notions of race, but instead viewing race as a social construct—a widely held stance among scholars today. Literary critics, sociologists, and cultural theorists have addressed the definition of racism from different angles (Omi and Winant; López 965-968; Arndt; Essed 39, 45; Marable; Taylor "Race"; Tatum "Defining" 127; Todorov 64; Hall "New Ethnicities" 446; Kemdi, Gilroy "Postcolonial" 9). Tzvetan Todorov defines racism, as "a matter of behavior, usually a manifestation of hatred or contempt for individuals who have well-defined physical characteristics different from our own" (64). In her book comparing different shades of racism in the United States and the Netherlands, Philomena Essed identifies

racism as "the actions that tacitly or explicitly confirm or create racial or ethnic inequality in the existing framework or racial domination" (45). Similar to Ibram Kendi (19), Essed asserts that racism is about discrimination and includes actions that are consciously or unconsciously intended to inflict unfavorable consequences on any dominated race (45). The view of these scholars highlights the manifestations of hatred towards migrants and people related to them. Susan Arndt's assessment of who is considered White or Black captures my point on Oji's *Erfahrungen unter den Deutschen*: "Europäer_innen als allen anderen Menschen überlegen zu deklarieren" (20). Arndt stresses a landmass and borderline within which non-Europeans who are persons of color are considered the Other.

The history of the German word *Rasse* has undergone changes in terms of meaning. In their encyclopedia entry, the German historians Antje Sommer and Werner Conze argue that the word specifies groups of species in the plant and animal world that differ from other groups of the same species by constant and hereditary characteristics. While discussing the origin and development of the term *Rasse*, Sommer and Conze emphasize that besides its equivalents of tribe, people, and nation, the term appeared more frequently in the 18th-century romance and English language expedition reports and travelogues, signifying "'espèce,' 'classe' oder 'kind'" (141). Besides this distinction, Sommer and Conze's entry shows that Immanuel Kant, in his 1757 lectures on *Physische Geographie,* categorized *Rasse* under skin color, identifying four classes of human race—white, yellow, black, and the copper-colored red (148). Despite this categorization, Kant argued that all humans descend from a common lineal root genus in Europe. Unlike Kant, the French Aristocrat Grafen Gobineau indirectly defines *Rasse*, using the term to designate a homogeneous group's body and physical characteristics such as "ursprünglich reines Blut" (161). In their discussion of "Sprache," "Volk," "Rasse," Sommer and Conze establish that

around the early 19th century, Aryan corresponded to the self-image of Europeans. The authors further argue that "der Indien-Mythus verstärkte sich, als das Herrenvolk der Arier (arya=edel) zum pars pro toto nicht nur Indiens, sondern aller Völker der indo-germanischen Sprachfamilie gemacht und der Name 'Arier' für "Indogermanen" gesetzt wurde" (159). While foregrounding the Aryan mythology, George Fredrickson argued that Germans believed that they were not simply whites or Caucasians; but "were members of a superior branch of the Caucasian race—the Aryans" (90). In other words, the purpose of the Aryan myth was to propagate the distinction between Germans and other northern Europeans from Jews. In addition, Gobineau's *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races,* shows that the 'Arier' represents a historical-philosophical stimulus that designates the bearers of progress and the proof of the highest ethical values. While analyzing Gobineau's essay, Sommer and Conze reveal that the French Aristocrat uses and reserves the term Aryan for the White race, claiming that all races are not equal since the White race has taken the lead in civilization. Sommer and Conze (162) concludes that "Gobineau hat Rasse zum Schlusselbegriff der Weltgeschichte gemacht" since the Aristocrat equated language with race, believing that the Indo-European peoples were a racial rather than a linguistic group.

The English naturalist and biologist Charles Darwin emphasizes eliminating the weaker race, using his natural selection theory as another method to distinguish and rank races biologically. More importantly, Darwin's theory stresses the elimination of inferior species in nature over vast periods, a point that is strengthened as the White race were winning the struggles, evolving, and heading towards perfection (Sommer and Conze 163). According to Darwin, "das Überleben der Tüchtigsten, d. h. der zweckmäßig Angepaßten (the fittest), und das Scheitern der Ungeeigneten führe in natürlicher Zuchtwahl zur Veränderung des Erbguts und infolgedessen zu Abwandlungen der Art" (164). Darwin suggested that human races were in

competition, and that inferior breeds would not survive in the struggle for existence. In other words, Darwin implies that certain people become powerful in society because they are innately better. By examining "Hitler's ideology, the official biology curriculum, the writings of Nazi anthropologists, and Nazi periodicals," Richard Weikart argues that Nazis embrace human and racial evolution (537). Weikart affirms that Social Darwinism does not only justify the Nazi's imperialism, racism, eugenics, and social inequality, but help validate their belief that the "Aryan or Nordic race had evolved to a higher level than other races because of the harsh climatic conditions that influenced natural selection" (573). Historians claim that Nazi racial ideology such as the Nuremberg laws of 1935 and the 1933 law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service. This 1933 decree led to the expulsion, with a few exceptions, of "non-Aryan" civil servants from the German workforce. According to Fredrickson, the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 "prohibited intermarriage or sexual relations between Jews and gentiles, [emphasizing] the sexual threat that predatory Jewish males presented to German womanhood and the purity of German blood" (2). These ideologies promoted racism, the persecution of Jews and could be regarded as one of the main reasons for World War II (See Fredrickson 123; Geulen 97; Krokowski 73; Weikart 548; Wette 15).

Race and the language of race were largely expunged from postwar public discourse but resurfaced in another form. In *Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race*, Rita Chin argues that only after the Federal Republic started to accept Turkish guest workers as permanent residents did racialized notions of distinction become essential for comprehending these employees. Chin maintains that the relationship between racialization and labor was pronounced since "racial ideologies was a key tool for social differentiation" ("Guest worker" 81). According to Chin, the Turks' permanent presence within Germany made certain race-based

thinking useful in differentiating between guest workers and immigrants ("Guest worker" 82). Germans turn to use derogatory words such as "türken Tüte" to describe the cheap plastic grocery bag that references Turks or "telling off-color jokes about Italians and Greeks, refusing to rent an apartment to Yugoslavs" ("From Rasse" 5). While Chin argues that the Nazi legacy fuels racist thinking, she asserts "that race continues to be informed by the older notion of "Rasse," with its emphasis on biologically based conceptions of difference" and superiority ("From Rasse" 12). In response to Chin's foregrounding on race and Rasse, I would argue that similar gestures and derogatory remarks are present in Oji's autobiography. For example, Oji shows how a German professor claims that a German can never be academically worse than a foreign student (26). Basically, like the postwar years and during the presence of guest workers who would later stay in Germany, Germans displayed and expressed racism through words and actions akin to what Oji depicts in his text.

Part of the racial environment that Oji describes in his immigrant autobiography are power imbalances. Racially motivated generalizations about non-Europeans include the protagonist's wife and daughter as I analyze in the following section. This imbalance becomes most obvious through inflicting harm, exclusion, minoritization, exploitation, and dehumanization. Drawing upon the history of literature and art from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, Pierre Bourdieu challenges the idea that power is wielded by groups of people through acts of domination or coercion. He argues that "the field of power is the space of relations of force between agents or between institutions having in common the possession of the capital necessary to occupy the dominant positions in different fields (notably economic or cultural)" (215). Here the concept of power reflects the relational character of the two 'fields.' Bourdieu analyses the manner of hierarchical positioning that features symbolic struggles

between artists and the 'bourgeois.' From Bourdieu's point of view, the social-relational pattern to which literature refers reveals a certain social hierarchy, in this case, a migrant-citizen position. Coming from Bourdieu's conceptualization of power, I emphasize the presence of two opposite sides—the haves, i.e., the dominant or this case Germans—and the have-nots, i.e., the economically challenged, the oppressed, or the Black Africans.

Robert Dahl and Stephen Lukes have argued that power is a contested concept and might not fit specific research problems. Both agree that power involves the exercise of interest among groups, such that person A exercises his power over person B, because A stands in a position that allows him to enforce his interest. Lukes emphasizes "power as a 'capacity', a 'facility', an 'ability'" (34) that "serves to reproduce and reinforce power structures and relations or alternatively it may challenge and subvert them" (63). My understanding of power falls within the framework of interest groups through the reinforcement of power structures and relations in migrant narratives and the German society from which Oji's chronicles his experiences. My analysis of racism and power allows a connection between migration and race, adding to the scholarship on race-thinking that concerns actors with capacity as Whites and German citizens, while focusing on the ability to create and reinforce power structures. Power, as I deploy the term in my analysis, is derived from the position citizens and migrants occupy in the society in which they find themselves. I would show that Germans, according to Chima's autobiography, operate from the vantage point of citizenship, which leads to tension since it stems from the right to minoritize or distinguish between a student or a migrant.

In Oji's autobiography, we see depictions of race and blackness in Chima's first contact with Whites as he begins his secondary school days. Chima depicts the European presence in Nigeria and the European missionary education system set up after the Nigerian independence,

sketching the place of English in the country's landscape, as an official language imported by the English colonial officers. This masks the school's language of instruction as "fremde Sprache" ("Unter" 32). In what he describes as "aus nächster Nähe in einer Form des Zusammenlebens," the narrator depicts his education days and experience following an English-language education ("Unter" 32). Coming from a country with more than four hundred native languages, Oji expresses the difficulty of taking classes in a foreign language. The inability to follow teaching in English suggests a kind of oppression that Oji experiences in his country, where he feels at home but is also discriminated against because of his difficulty comprehending the language. Although, Chima stages this plot in Nigeria, the European missionary education system displays a similitude of suppression and bitterness through the contact with English.

In addition to Chima's exposure to missionaries, Europe is another place of contact with Whites. As a Nigerian who finds himself in Germany after spending a few weeks in London, he has his first encounter with racism. Although he earlier responded negatively when his sister asked if he had experienced any discrimination due to his skin color, his response changes within a couple of days in Germany:

> Ein Autofahrer, der sich von hinten näherte, machte sich einen makabren Spaß: Auf unserer Höhe scherte er aus seiner Fahrspur aus und fuhr schwungvoll durch eine gewaltige Pfütze, um uns mit dem schmutzigen Regenwasser naß zu spritzen. Wir standen besudelt am Straßenrand, und bevor wir noch richtig begriffen hatten, was geschehen war, beschleunigte er sein Tempo und fuhr hämisch grinsend davon. ("Unter" 64)

His sister is immediately aware of the driver's resentments and calls this incident "der Anfang" ("Unter" 64). The intentional splashing of water is an act, one that dramatizes a zero-tolerance policy towards people of color. The racist attack is a public shaming and set the seal on Ojis' Othering. The seemingly irrational motivation behind the driver's action is what Mbembé

(with Fanon) calls racism in essence—the name for bitter resentment and rage (Mbembé 10). Like Oji's contact with the Whites in Nigeria and his recognition of the foreignness of English as a language of instruction in Nigeria, the "Autofahrer" choses to discriminate against the protagonist based on his race.

Socialization at the University and its environs is enclosed based on skin color. To improve his proficiency, Chima attempts socialization at the discotheques, parties, and local clubs. He soon realizes the unwelcome nature of his attempt as he is greeted by bouncers who either demand to see his membership card or straightly tell him "Schwarze nicht erwünscht" ("Unter" 79). The bouncer's words echo Fanon's observation of the language of racism and that, in turn, the white man is enslaved by his idea of superiority (42). Denying Oji entrance into places of socialization is a comment on a wrongfully assigned identity that is purely based on skin color. Rejection is just another way of portraying Oji as the Other, yet without spelling the obvious word. The act of resisting confirms the existence of power and its operating network (Sadan 60). The stationing of the bouncers reinforces social groups and social deprivation along the lines of race, while shaping how power works within the local clubs.

Oji's presence at the Medizinischen Fakultät der Universität Münster highlights the social and racial divide between him and the Germans. The protagonist starts as an international student at the Chemischen Institut but later switches to Medicine and Surgery. His memories at the Chemistry department catch the pain that is inflicted through "soziale Isolation, in die mich meine deutschen Kollegen zwangen" ("Unter" 107). Although at this point readers are unclear why and how Chima feels isolated from the Germans, the words "zwangen" and "zwanghaft" embody a forceful action that Chima resists. In narrating the self as an "Ausländer," the text fuses a seemingly distinct social divide that is barricaded by the fence of citizenry and

foreignness. Indeed, particularly after World War II, German society has undergone challenges with the choice of words to refer to foreigners. Suin Roberts argues that Germans have only recently begun to use the term migrant,[7] since the word "Ausländer" is generally widely used to describe anyone with a migration background (39). Although both "Migrant" and "Ausländer" bear the same connotation of foreignness and non-nativeness, Roberts states that "Ausländer" bears a negative connotation that accentuates how Germans perceive people with a migration background primarily as outsiders. Since Oji lived in Germany between 1967 and 1988 and published *Unter die Deutschen gefallen* in 1990, his usage of "Ausländer" instead of the recent "Migranten" encases Germany's and the German's label for foreignness and Otherness. Despite his attempt at resistance, he identifies with the negative connotation of outsider that solidifies racial categorization. This import encapsulates the language of migration and projects a representation of otherness within German education.

Unter die Deutschen gefallen exposes Chima's mixed feelings about the binary of race. The careful enforcement of racial and social boundaries divulges the inequality that exists within the University of Münster hall of residence. Discussing the linkage between literature and race, Taylor argues convincingly that "race is socially significant in the sense that an agent's prospects in racialized setting are shaped to some degree" ("Literature" 464). Taylor's argument reflects an unbalanced scale in weighing what is considered as noise since Chima's music was "ein unliebsames Ärgernis" ("Unter" 111) while that of his German neighbors,'

7 For example, Berlin's Landesamt für Ausländerbehörde was recently changed to Landesamt für Einwanderung to reflect a more welcoming image of the state of Berlin and Germany and especially the immigration office as a "Willkommensbehörde." In a newspaper report from *Neues Deutschland*, a spokesman for the Senatsverwaltung für Inneres was quoted as saying: "Wir wollen deutlich machen: Berlin braucht und will Einwanderung sowohl aus humanitärer Verpflichtung als auch aus wirtschaftlichen und arbeitsmarktpolitischen Interessen."

described as “dröhnende Männerstimmen,” “schallendes Gelächter” and “Lärmbelästigung” (“Unter” 110), is tolerated as the German way of having fun. While Taylor’s claim questions the meanings associated with fun and the assigned tolerated volume, the discrepancy between noise and fun is racially shaped. Chima’s hall of residence represents the racialized setting that is shaped to some degree where a certain group of persons feel entitled to the social significance of race that promotes a divide and conquer strategy among persons of color. The racialized space feeds the dualism of identity—Whites and Blacks—a differentiation that nurses the recognition of sameness and otherness. This sense of identification refers to an indelible mark that deciphers racialized and national bodies.

School and examination periods function as grounds for staging not only inequality but more specifically parasitic relationships with German colleagues. Apart from the social isolation and sense of awkwardness Chima experiences while in class, he faces the struggle of finding a suitable group for his oral exams as a medical student. Race dominates the protagonist’s personal life, manifesting itself in his relationship with his colleagues and academic life, which also ends with unequal treatment of German and international students before the examiner. Again, Chima presents his feelings of isolation as vivid, depicting the character’s unsure feelings about his situation: “Warum unsere deutschen Kollegen es so verbissen ablehnten, mit uns zusammenzuarbeiten. Hielten sie sich etwa von vornherein für besser, und wollten sie ihr Wissen nicht mit uns teilen? Wollten sie selbst von einer Arbeitsgruppe profitieren, waren aber so voreingenommen zu glauben, dass bei einer Zusammenarbeit mit Ausländern immer sie die Gebenden wären?” (“Unter” 124). Chima’s internal monologue through unanswered questions projects his rational thoughts to which he soon realizes that there were exceptions. This rendition

of consciousness through the narratorial "I" discloses Chima's individuality as a character in transit. He soon realizes that:

> die Deutschen zogen sich fast immer in dem Augenblick aus ihrer gemischten Gruppe zurück, in dem sie erkannten, dass der eine oder andere Ausländer unter ihnen doch leistungsstärker war als sie selbst, und sie damit rechnen mussten, dass er das bessere Prüfungsergebnis davontragen würde. Einige besonders clevere Burschen unter den deutschen Kollegen hatten es hingegen verstanden, die Anwesenheit von Ausländern in einer Gruppe zu ihrem eigenen Vorteil auszunutzen. ("Unter" 124)

As the emphasis on social isolation with clever parasitic relations increases, the experiencing self becomes more aware of the tactics employed by the Germans to profit from his academic contribution. The migrant-citizen interaction only becomes valid when migrant characters are perceived as hosts. I emphasize this predatory attack on the migrants and the assimilation of nationness from the angle of skin color and migrancy. Writing about racism, Benedict Anderson notes that it is often perceived in the expression of national feeling and class ideologies (142-149). While Anderson's argument is built on the notion of patriotism that makes the distinctness of race noticeable, Chima's experience as a medical student elicits his colleagues' racial preference and national feeling when choosing a partner for group work and adapting socially when they could benefit academically from foreign students. Furthermore, this social adaptation hinges on the ideology of class that is associated with being a migrant. While it is evident that German students show patriotism based on the ideologies of race, the above quote references how they could suppress this nationalist feeling whenever they are disadvantaged, thereby exploiting the presence of migrants in group work.

Racism exposes how German professors exercise their position of power over foreign students. The narrator builds his autobiographical self upon his experience and that of other foreign students, portraying how the academic institution provided a systemic susceptibility for

inequality and the racialization of migrant groups as "der beste Ausländer bekam von [den Professoren] niemals eine bessere Note als der schlechteste Deutsche" ("Unter" 125). The narrating self is constructed owing to the perceived discrimination by his teachers. This construction images a divide that projects foreign students into a particular class which stands at the intersection of race, power, and migration. Such power in terms of scholarly exploitation includes the privilege to occupy a certain office and exert influence. In their article on "The bases of social power," the social psychologists John French and Bertram Raven identify "power" as a tool for social influence. Social influence and power, French and Raven argue, are "limited to influence on the person, P, produced by a social agent, O, where O can be either another person, a role, a norm, a group, or a part of a group" (260). Accordingly, "power" permeates all areas of behavior and in return receives its legitimacy through the social structure it helped to shape (265). Such an environment is the breeding ground for racism. His German professors perceive Chima's desire to study as a challenge and treat it as a forefront of exclusion, wielding their position over the student. Their "legitimate" power involves the perceived right of an individual to hold an office in a formal organization or setting. However, the professors abuse their power within the University and place Chima's migrant identity over his student status.

French and Raven's study offers a direction to approach the imbalance of power inherent in the teacher-student relationship. This necessarily impacts Oji's academic performance. On the one hand, the foreign students migrated from different countries to study in Germany, while on the other hand, they are attacked because of they are foreigners. The text shows: "In der Botanikprüfung fing es dann an. Der Professor weigerte sich, mir die Eins zu geben, die ich nach der übereinstimmenden Meinung aller Gruppenmitglieder verdient hatte. Wir sprachen ihn gemeinsam auf die als ungerecht empfundene Note an, und er antwortete arrogant: "Ausländern

gebe ich niemals eine Eins"" ("Unter" 125). This passage evokes displays of contempt directed at members of racialized bodies much in the way the psychologist Beverly Daniels Tatum describes it. She argues that racism resembles other forms of oppression that involve systemic, institutional practices and beliefs (127). While I focus on the German professor, I refer to his nationality and his profession since his position as a professor gives him influence over Chima as a student. Consequently, his word choice reveals meanings he assigns to how he perceives Chima which characterize the systemic disadvantage of being an "Ausländer." The professor recognizes his office as a privilege and exploits the foundation of the legitimate power vested in him as an examiner and grader. Operating from conditions of unequal relations, his decisive speech grants vividness to his action, heightening his racialization of students based on their migrant status. In this instance, the professor's involvement in systemic oppression incorporates racist logic on the grounds of foreignness.

The incorporation of racist slurs is based on identity labels. The professor's preference of "Ausländer" signals a burden on Chima and other foreign students which surrounds their categorization. In *The Lies that bind*, Kwame Anthony Appiah stresses that "identities come, first, with labels and ideas about why and to whom they should be applied" (12). While discussing identity from a subjective and an objective dimension, Appiah notes that in relation to people identity matters, giving reasons why certain people act the way they do and why they are treated differently by people in authority. Oji's characters share an identity with people whom the German language categorizes as lacking social equality. Like Suin Roberts, Barbara Marshall makes it plain that while France recognizes immigrants as persons who come in or chose to settle down, Germany preferred the expressions "Ausländer," "ausländische Mitbürger," "In-länder ohne deutschen Pass" up to the early 1990s (140). Marshall further argues persuasively that the

German expression "Ausländer" is an excluding term that refers to people "who have the center of their lives outside the country of (temporary) residence" (140). In essence the professor draws the line showing favoritism to citizenship status, creating a nuanced label for migrant characters. His perception of Chima and the other migrants as foreigners clouds his judgment. The professor is excluding Chima and his friends from the academic right to receive the best grade since their identification associated with citizenship denies them social equality.

As time progresses, Chima discovers that there is an unwritten preference with regards to employment. In addition to his adoption of and constant self-identification as "Ausländer," Oji discloses his experiences. For example, in contrast with his German colleagues, he finds it harder to secure a summer job. Despite this difficulty, he only gets either the most unpleasant work or jobs that demand more physical labor, "wie z.B. beim Straßenbau oder in einer Baumschule– alles Jobs, die normalerweise kein deutscher Student annehmen wollte" ("Unter" 131). The "die studentische Jobvermittlung des Arbeitsamtes" exercises a racial affinity that resurrects the notion of "Germans first, foreigners last." This concept reinforces Germanness but creates a border within the employment bureau. Elsewhere, I have argued that borders create exclusion in the same way that they secure the national territories against external invasion. Balibar confirms that they are used as configurations to generate frustrations and conflicts for all sorts of people while raising the questions of nationality and citizenship (110). Balibar's vocabulary captures the protagonist's frustrations with the student job agency for employment as well as it questions his nationality. The student job agency for employment punctuates exclusion that is targeted at *foreign* students only. This punctuation hinges on migration and accents international demarcation. These borders function as a divide to keep migrants out of the German system as Chima experiences not only during his job search, but also when he sought to find a place to live:

"Hinzu kam die ablehnende Haltung vieler Vermieter, die es ausländischen Zimmersuchenden fast unmöglich machte, eine Bleibe zu finden – dabei wurde es um so problematischer, je exotischer der Interessent aussah und je dunkler seine Hautfarbe war" ("Unter" 131). Oji recounts a process of marginalization, the distinctiveness of race depicted as an expression of being non-German that connects Blackness to a kind of representation and identification that project as frontiers. This projection seems to be an unwritten construct of identity. Although Chima later graduates as a dentist, his postgraduate experience not only highlights his work efficiency and intelligence but illustrates how Germans and Chima operate within "official spaces."

Chima's post-graduation year further mirrors the role of race within the workforce. Although he has experienced social isolation from his German colleagues as a student, he thinks the workplace would be different as he tries to secure a spot for his residency practice. Oji depicts racial preference either when he identifies himself as Black, when introducing himself on the telephone, or when he appears in person to discuss the nature of the job. This depiction colors the everyday racism he experiences as the Other in Germany. He refers the readers to specific incidents about his position as a medical assistant: "Es gehörte nicht viel dazu, ganz schnell zu merken, dass meine Arbeiten sehr viel schärfer kontrolliert wurden als die der deutschen Studenten (nicht nur fiel da auf!)" ("Unter" 213). Oji's work becomes the subject of narration in a manner that alerts readers to the difficulties of being a Black medical doctor by showing the complexity of his work: "Bei mir hielten es die Assistenten aber – von wenigen Ausnahmen abgesehen – so, dass sie meine Arbeiten mit haarspalterischer Genauigkeit nur auf Schwachstellen hin untersuchten und mir diese dann mit vernichtenden Worten und in bissigem Tonfall vorwarfen, gerade so, als wäre ich in ihren Augen von vornherein unfähig, überhaupt

etwas richtig zu machen" ("Unter" 214). The burden of being supervised accentuates his Otherness and differentiates his medical practice experience from that of the White German colleagues. The autobiographical character is left with the task of constructing his life narrative in a way that evokes a response from readers, fitting into the concept of power that Lukes associates with the capacity which can be exercised over someone (Lukes 109). The narrative adduces the Assistants' exertion of power, but also explains their intention to connect their position within the hospital with strategies of minoritizing Chima's work efficiency.

The perception of writing as a minority is thoroughly interwoven with Chima's experience. Navigating between being a dentist and his residency program, he faces the struggles of being a migrant in the program as he experiences difficulties in the "Phantomkurs in der Konservierenden Zahnheilkunde (KONS)" ("Unter" 215). In a conversation with his professor, he discovers why he was one of those who failed the course out of forty students: "Sie haben während des Semesters zu viel gefragt und dadurch Unsicherheit bewiesen" ("Unter" 214). As during his graduate education, the post-doctoral year seems similar as Oji notes that "die Machtposition der Professoren in der Zahnmedizin ist die von absoluten Herrschern" ("Unter" 216). In other words, power functions in a manner that decides who gets what and why they should get it. In *Power/Knowledge*, Michel Foucault argues that power and knowledge are inextricably related. Knowledge, according to Foucault, is an exercise of power and power is a function of knowledge and exists only when it is exercised or put into action (89). There seems to be a parallel between the professor's knowledge of his "Machtposition" and the influence he exercises as a German national. The power is wielded through structures of migrancy, the recognition of a minority and the position that diminishes the scholarly opportunities of the migrant character.

Besides wielding power, making racist ideological statements as a way of judging intelligence can be understood as creating racial divide. A German was the only successful candidate in an advanced "Prothetik II" course of which Chima and an Indonesian medical student partook. However, during the oral exam, Chima recalls hearing one of the examiners blatantly displaying disappointment with the German: "Sie sind Deutscher! Wieso können Sie nicht, was der kann?" While another yelled "Sie sollten sich schämen, dass ein Ausländer mehr weiß als Sie" ("Unter" 236). In relaying the examiners' exact words, Chima shares how Germans use language that reflects their ideas of superiority. As Kendi observes, any idea that implies that one racial group is inferior or superior in any way to another racial group is a racist notion (20). The examiners believe that the German student is supposed to be academically better than foreigners, an ideology that informs their perception of foreign students within the dental school. Their supposition invokes a sense of superiority through the inferiorization of migrant characters. Apart from the argument of the examiners, their statement expresses "a way of thinking that considers a group's physical characteristics as a direct casual way of intellectual characteristics" (Ashcroft et al. 199). Furthermore, their voices within the texts justify their thoughts about having superior intellectual traits as Germans in contrast with the foreigners' inferior intelligence. This idea impersonates their being, suggesting that allegedly superior intelligence is a feature particular to the German race. Sharing this experience, Oji makes sense of himself and the Indonesian student as individuals caught across the lines of racial divide as members of a minority group. Chima answers all the questions posed to him accurately but is shocked to see the result: "Als einziger von uns dreien hatte der Deutsche die Prüfung bestanden, die Indonesierin und ich waren durchgefallen" ("Unter" 237). The quote does not only relate expressed definitions of racist ideas but an institutional racism that reinforces the racial divide.

Max Weber's interest in power as a factor of domination and authoritarian concentrations gives more attention to how inferiority is tied to migrant students. He asserts that power puts people in a position where they can impose their will in a given situation (153). According to Weber, such activation of power depends on a person's will, even in opposition to someone else's. Chima and his colleague are bracketed within the space of being that is wrought from an interpretive point of inferiority and migrancy. Apart from their perception about foreign students, the activation of power depends on the professors' will to fail the foreign students. Since they are not Germans, who the examiners appraise to be more intelligent than Chima and the Indonesian, they are excluded from equitable academic grades and thus denied a pass in advanced "Prothetik II" despite their excellent performance. This denial does not only signal the racialization of migrant students but reveals their mistreatment based on race and nationality. While Chima experiences how power dynamics work within German higher education, being grouped with other Africans who are numerically in the minority in Germany forecloses another aspect of power relation with its processes.

Minoritized Populations

Chima is not only labeled as "Ausländer" and subjected to an oppressive exercise of power, but he is simultaneously forced to join another category of racial distinction. His character falls within the concept of minority. From this standpoint, the racialized treatment parallels the grouping of migrant characters that differ in race, nation of origin, and culture. As African migrants, they are mistreated and face prejudices that are enforced upon them because of their nationality and race, over which they have no control. In her book *A place to be Najavo*, Teresa

McCarthy analyzes how indigenous communities living within the Navajo Nation struggle for representation within the power structures of American Indians in Rough Rock School. McCarthy places emphasis on the word *minoritized* over minority since the adjective accurately conveys the power relations by which people are socially, economically, and politically marginalized within a society. In my analysis of the African population in *Unter die Deutschen gefallen*, I take a departure from McCarthy's interpretation of the word "minoritized" to analyze confrontations with racism and the prejudices that accompany the status of "foreigner" in Germany. "Minoritized" articulates the power dynamics between the subordinating dominant class and the differing racial groups that are discriminated against in a society. This minoritization illuminates a power mechanism, the systemic failure to give a fair treatment and hearing to minorities, pushing African migrants outside the margins of citizenship and nationality.

Chima's presence projects the divide that draws attention to the power differential between races. A particular experience makes this abundantly clear as he is a guest in a German home to celebrate his first Christmas in the Ruhrgebiet. He follows his host to a mass on Christmas Eve, where he is noticed because of his skin color: "Eine irritierende Unruhe zog sich durch die Bankreihen, Leute stießen sich gegenseitig an, flüsterten sich etwas zu und drehten ihre Köpfe nach mir, um mich – je nach Mut und Ausdauer – verstohlen zu beäugeln oder mich mit unverhohlener Neugierde anzustarren" ("Unter" 95). Although the autobiographer experiences a sense of awkwardness and social isolation from White peers in the church, he accentuates his experience as an outsider in a dominant white environment. The story places emphasis on the invisible racial divide that surges through the pews and surfaces as "irritierende Unruhe" and "[Anstoßen] der Leute." Despite the Germans' reaction to the unfamiliar presence, the account

portrays a perceived unwelcome feeling that speaks through reactions and gestures. The physical reaction captures the minoritized presence that leads to rejections and repudiation.

This unspoken racial divide places Chima within a racial categorization rather than giving him the full dignity of a person. As the parishioners gather to greet after the service, Chima's experience of being unwelcome returns. The narrator resists the attempts to deny the cover-ups of distanced friendly exchange of greetings between his host and the other church members. He writes: "[Der Gastgeber] rief Leuten, die uns aus einiger Entfernung ungeniert betrachteten, betont freundliche Grußworte zu; er steuerte auf mehrere vor der Kirche stehende Grüppchen zu und stellte mich ihnen demonstrative mit lauter Stimme vor" ("Unter" 95). This experience provides a view of Chima's perception as it relates to race relations, as a character who is silenced or minoritized. Although it could be argued that this event is reconstructed through the narrator's imagination and point of view, the depiction nevertheless details the social distance between the host, Chima, and the groups of people in front of the church. Furthermore, the narrator's choice of words "aber noch unwohler fühlte ich mich ("Unter" 95), an expressive emotion, reflects the complexities of objectivity in which the story projects the racial antagonism within and after the church service. Chima's experience among the churchgoers highlights discrimination and racial stratification due to his unique presence in the community.

Migration is shaped by, and in turn shapes, racial oppression. Not only does Chima witness what I describe as a parasitic relationship between him and his neighbors, he also experiences the same while being a guest at a party hosted by a Nigerian couple. This celebration, like Chima's hall of residence, negotiates how racial identities are understood. The narrator remains part of the story but shifts to depict a police invasion of a house party from a third-person point of view. The narrative shows that the Nigerian doctors have already informed

their neighbors of their planned celebration in recognition of the wife's success in an exam. Apart from the information, the doctors ask for understanding in case their neighbors hear exceptionally loud noises, which unfortunately was not granted, as the couple hears the doorbell ring at midnight in the heat of the event: "Die Hausfrau öffnete und erschrak beim Anblick der grünen Uniformen zweier Polizeibeamter" ("Unter" 111). As Russell Bishop asserts, "to be minoritized, one does not need to be in the numerical minority but only to be treated as if one's position and perspective are of less worth" (74). Accordingly, the presence of the uninvited guests deserves attention since it mirrors minoritization within the German society. While there exist two distinct racialized bodies—that of German police officers and the Nigerian migrant doctors with their invited guests—African migrants become minoritized due to the unequal treatment at their house, the unjust denial to party in a manner they see fit because of their migrant status. Within this neighborhood, the narrator portrays a pictural representation of a side-by-side coexistence of migrants and Germans; but also, the recognition of difference within these two groups, racialized treatment from the dominant culture and the positioning of migrant doctors as people with dismembered identities. This dismemberment explains the uninvited presence of law officers and the intolerance from their neighbors which draws attention to processes of migrant subordination and the unequal power relationships that often pertain between Germans and migrants.

The German policemen take color as a sign of status, mirroring the German society's categorization of race and migrancy as inferior. Despite the police's unexpected appearance at the party, they exhibit a certain social relationship with the Nigerian couple that demonstrates a subordinate nature. At first, they ask the couples to reduce the volume of the music, refused to show their identity cards, and further demand that the Nigerian doctors "sich mit [ihren] Gästen

zusammenzusetzen und laut zu singen – das sei erlaubt" ("Unter" 112). In addition to the low volume of the music which the host and the guests find difficult to dance to, the presence of the policemen ruins the party atmosphere. Oji employs the mediating agent of the hostess to explain that "die deutschen Mieter der Siedlung [feierten] häufig Grillpartys auf dem Rasen" and would significantly disrupt his and his wife's sleep "durch lautes Singen" ("Unter" 112). Yielding the privilege of narration to the wife adds another voice to Chima's experience of race and migration while in Germany. For the Nigerian couple, the policemen, and their German neighbors, race reflects the organizing discursive practice around a system of exclusion and domination. Across Europe, Hall notes, migrants have been subjected to social exclusion and racialized disadvantage ("Essential" 105). Hall's claims make sense of migrant experience because of the significance of their status as non-citizens and Blacks. My focus here is an understanding of the society in which Chima lives as expressed through a considerateness toward noise and loud parties by Germans and resistance towards migrants. This unequal acceptance proffers a lens to grasp the societal dynamics and its consequences upon people on the move. These dynamics, as a marker of difference, shed light on dimensions of migration and racialized disadvantage to which the Nigerian couple are subjected because of their status as migrants and Blacks.

The Germans' response during a search for an apartment highlights issues of accent and foreignness. His unsuccessful search leads Chima to suspect that his foreign accent might be one of the reasons for failure to secure proper housing. His German friends call the same landlord who offers one of his properties for rent and succeed. Upon the arrival of Oji and his German friends to inspect the apartment the dentist landlord discovers that it was a Nigerian who needs the room. He then states that someone already took the apartment before their arrival ("Unter" 134). The dentist's action substantiates a systemic exclusion that he applies to migrants because

of their accent (over the phone) or skin color (when in visual proximity). This action unveils the hidden racial boundary that explains this unequal treatment. Even as Kendi maintains that colorism defines the racist policies that cause inequalities between people of different skin colors (110), the apartment search with the accompanying acceptance and denial fleshes out these racial lines in Oji's autobiography. Although this Nigerian character does not later take up the apartment, the dentist's willingness to give the apartment to Barbara and not the Nigerian further cements the minoritized position of foreigners in Germany. This cementation shows the systemic exclusion of migrants due to their skin color and race.

Racial discrimination continues to mark the landscape in powerful and visible ways for Oji. Witnessing the scene where his girlfriend poses as the person searching for the apartment and is given due consideration marks Chima's conscious recognition of racialized preferential treatment. His experience reflects the everyday language of race that he then imbricates in the narrative, establishing the underlying divide that exists in Germany. As Chima and his friends park somewhere far from the dentist's house, they discover reasons why he could not to rent the apartment initially, a discovery that exposes the existence of a repressive mechanism:

> Meine Freundin stieg aus, ging zur Tür und klingelte; der Zahnarzt öffnete und zeigte ihr freundlich das Zimmer. Sie könne das Zimmer sofort mieten, erklärte ihr der Mann, und sie gab sich interessiert. Die Sache hätte aber einen Haken, klärte sie ihn auf, sie suchte nämlich nicht für sich selbst, sondern für ihren Freund eine Unterkunft, der aus bestimmten Gründen heute nicht selber kommen könnte. Das wäre auch kein Beinbruch, meinte der Zahnarzt, ohne sich auch nur eine Sekunde lang zu besinnen. ("Unter" 135)

This passage conveys how difference speaks through color and nationality. Integrating Barbara's (Chima's girlfriend's) conversation with the landlord, Oji portrays the doctor's

willingness to rent the apartment to Barbara and his swift change of mind when told she is searching for an apartment on behalf of a friend. Having refused to give Chima the apartment, the landlord's statement that the girlfriend could rent the apartment no matter if it were for herself or her boyfriend suggests that he thinks that Barbara has a white boyfriend since she is White. Witnessing an act of segregation, Oji delineates his identity as he deciphers the surrounding world in a manner that lends affect to the narration. Arguing along the lines of race, Gilroy maintains that race is a mechanism that bonds Whites and Blacks and at the same separates them from each other ("Against race" 15). Even as migration brings people of diverse races together, it still alienates migrants from citizens. In other words, race bounds Barbara with the landlord in a way that she could get an apartment because she is White while Chima could not because he is Black

In addition to this particular experience that brings forth meaning peculiar to Oji, making him understand that the dentist rents his apartment on the basis of race and racial preference, he faces a similar situation within an official setting. The workplace functions as space for racial categorization. Working in a factory was an avenue of making money as a student which rendered him tired after the day's work. Oji tends to depict himself as intrusive in every place he works. Sharing his thoughts, Oji appears critical of his perceived work ethic since it was taken for granted that he could do even the heaviest physical work with ease. This notion becomes real as one of the bosses says to him: "Die Sache ist so: Die Neger haben hier (und er zeigte auf seinen Bizepsmuskel) die Note Eins, aber hier (und er zeigte auf seinen Kopf) haben sie die Note Fünf" ("Unter" 184). The boss's speech accentuates Chima's initial experience, supporting the claim that his attitude to work is taken for granted and seen from a racialized angle. The use of "Neger" allows for another categorization of Chima that adds credibility to his experience. Grada

Kilomba in her essay on *das N-Wort* attests that the "N-Wort" does not only signify skin color or blackness but "Animalität – Primitivität – Unwissenheit – Chaos – Faulheit – Schmutz" (1). Evidently, the migrant character's physical strength is praised by his superiors and his actual intellectual brilliance is ignored. Instead, he is associated with "Primitivität, Unwissenheit und Faulheit." Saha Kamta's focus on the analysis of Otherness and Strangeness rightly shows how the author depicts his own story. While Kamta discusses the depiction of "Fremdheit," he argues that Oji is not only considered as "fremdes Individuum" but "als Träger der afrikanischen Wildheit, als Träger einer ganzen Rasse, einer Kultur und der damit verbundenen Vorstellungen bzw. Klischees" (73). This racial categorization and comparison reverberate with Chima's earlier perceived notion that draws on the inference of a work ethics, and the substituting of his physical strength for "Neger"-traits.

Chima's visit to England with his German girlfriend for vacation shakes his identity as a Nigerian and a doctor. An unexpected arrest at Gatwick airport projects racial thinking as customs takes interest in his hand luggage. Despite the luggage search and what the narrator describes as "outright interrogation" wanting to know what Chima does in Germany and why he is visiting England, the officials are dissatisfied with his answers which leads to his arrest. They order Chima to take off his clothes so that "[die Zollbeamte] tasteten mich von Kopf bis Fuss ab," however, when he demands to know why he is being held and searched, the customs officials simply reply "Haschisch" ("Unter" 200). The arrest and subsequent search for drugs depicts discriminatory racial profiling. Although Chima flew into England with his German girlfriend, the singling out by customs establishes a minoritized connotation, as a potential target of drug trafficking. In contrast with his girlfriend, the frisking projects the possession of lesser power compared to the customs officer because of this racial categorization and nation of origin.

Chima becomes a victim of racism as the custom officials question his alleged medical practice in Germany, making a prejudicial distinction and blaming him for the problems of drug trafficking in and out of England.

As the interrogation continues, the customs officers contest Chima's competence as a medical doctor. After finding no hard drugs, the officials remember that Chima claims to be a doctor. Unable to see a medical doctor in him, one of the custom officials decides to pose medical questions: "Er kramte ein kleines gedrucktes Heftchen hervor und stellte mir daraus Fragen zur 'Ersten Hilfe'" ("Unter" 201). This interrogation suggests harmful connotations to Chima's personality that recapture the past in an evolving narrative. The customs question on "Erste Hilfe" draws on meanings in the personality of Chima as a black person and an African who could be described as a medical doctor. While the protagonist interprets the "Erste Hilfe" questions as degrading to his medical knowledge, the quizzing expands the language of exclusion by using rhetoric that bars black migrants as a group to ever hold the degree of a medical doctor. Furthermore, the customs official employs the language of race to characterize the protagonist, an articulation that threatens his identity as an African to which Chima pushes back with "einen ausführlichen Vortrag, in den er reichlich medizinisches Fachvokabular einfließen ließ" ("Unter" 201). Although the official later acknowledges Chima's extensive medical knowledge, Chima wastes no time expressing his feelings to the customs official: "In meinen kühnsten Träumen hätte ich niemals für möglich gehalten, dass eines Tages ein Zollbeamter einen fertig ausgebildeten Arzt auf dessen medizinische Kenntnisse hin prüfen würde!" ("Unter" 201). Apart from showing his anger, Chima's statement evokes the painful experience of being a member of a minority group. The protagonist's reaction shows that he is not only speaking to the official as "ein Zollbeamter," but also as an Englishman. Chima's

outspoken expression at the holding facility sketches the relationship between race, power, and migration. The vivacity of his experience is characterized by his powerlessness as a migrant, who has no choice other than to prove his medical knowledge to the border policeman. As an Englishman stationed at an airport in an official function, the customs officer occupies a place of power, exercising it to his advantage as a strategy to divide populations—Germans from Nigerians, Chima from his girlfriend—and subjugating Oji for more than four hours under his control.

Apart from being pushed by an imperative to share his story, Oji's motivation goes beyond life as a migrant, for he wishes to testify in the form of narrative, using autobiography to portray his family in the German society. Understanding Chima's family and the families of migrants with their German spouses raises new questions about the way migration and race relates to the definition of a "migrant." In this subjunctive relationship that expresses doubt and disapproval, this production stands as a communication of social consequences of migration while accounting for the groupings of Chima and his marriage with Barbara, his wife, in a transnational context.

Semi-migrants with their mixed-race children

In the heart of migration and integration, German citizens become semi-migrants by their marital relationship with migrants. The movement of people from one continent to another inevitably produces race mixture through romantic relationships and marriages. By approaching the subject of racial discrimination from the perspective of either scapegoats or victims, I embed another way of looking at the argument of race and migrancy. Chima's move from Nigeria to

Germany benefits from this social advantage of living in Germany, an advantage that leads to marriage and, ultimately, the birth to Enyi, his and Barbara's daughter.

Literary critics like Dirk Göttsche, Sonja Lehner, Saha Kamta, and Amadou Oury Ba have published on migrant-citizen relationships, racism and discrimination, and how the German society perceives Chima and this mixed family. Ba, for example, sees Chima and his German wife as an "Opfer vieler Diskriminierungen" (666), arguing that Oji portrays the idea of integration, that is, he integrates into the German society through his marriage with Barbara. Similarly, studying Oji's text as a diasporic narrative, Kamta claims that the autobiography positions the protagonist in a diasporic experience that produces culture, Otherness, and identity constructions within the German society where he finds himself. Like Göttsche, Kamta considers the love relationship between Oji and his wife as "die Knotenpunkte von Stereotyp, Sexualität und Fremdheit" (72). Combining a close reading of the text and an examination of "Fremdheit," Kamta's rather stark conclusion seems on its face challenging to resist. He further maintains that Oji's work is not a mere polarization of dichotomies around black and white but a complicated love story between people of different ethnicities and races in a global world. While focusing more on spouses of migrants who are German citizens and their children, my argument bears similarities to that of Ba, Kamta, and Göttsche. Still, it addresses Germany's shared past and Germany's occupation after World War II. The shared history of the US occupation of Germany is an outcome of a polarized Germany, constituting a reimagination of a homogenous nation that replays Germany's occupation by African American soldiers. This history further stretches on to how sexual relationships merge into shared experienced of racialization, rejection, and adoption of mixed-race children.

In *Scapegoat*, the French historian and literary critic Rene Girard presents a relevant understanding of victimization and collective persecution. Girard uses the biblical and ancient religious ritual of scapegoating where communal sins were metaphorically imposed upon a he-goat as a way of seeking a ceremonial cleansing of the land and regeneration of communal peace and restoration of relationships. Girard maintains that within the third stereotype of persecution, "the persecutors choose their victims because they belong to a class that is particularly susceptible to persecution rather than because of the crimes they have committed" (17). In other words, they are persecuted because of their categorization as minority or due to their association with groups determined as minorities. By scapegoating, a community transfers collective resentment to a single victim, "whose offenses have not been really proven to be criminal," intending to relieve the society of a crisis and to return unity and order (13). Within my analysis of migration, what the scapegoating mechanism does is expose the gap between migrants and what I call semi-migrants, an understanding of resentment that accounts for the persecution of Barbara and Enyi perceived in their association with Chima as wife and daughter of a migrant from Africa. Drawing on Girard's argument, I confront some of the complexities and tensions surrounding the subjection of Chima's family to cruelty and resentment within the context of migration.

Identities are constructed by association with migrants. While I agree with Ba that marriage is one of the ways Chima integrates into Germany and finds a firmer balance, I take a different approach in analyzing the protagonist's family and spouses of African migrants as semi-migrants. As Kamta argues, the complicated love story is a by-product of migration, which places Barbara under a different categorization. In addition to this differentiation, German women, like Barbara, become semi-migrants by their association with African men and not in the

sense of having crossed international borders. By semi-migrant, I describe citizens who incarnate the experience of a migrant. While 'semi' stretches the frameworks within which we ordinarily think about something partial, half, or incomplete, with migration, the desire for definitional clarity might unleash more problems than it contains by my usage of the word 'semi'. By definition, semi-migrants embody migrant experiences, the summation of ostracization from their immediate family, share in the burdens of their country's immigration laws and are tools for regulating their spouse's immigration status. Although Barbara is a German, and their daughter Afro-German, my interpretation positions both family members of Chima within the inevitable race mixtures that arise from romantic relationships and migration, understanding the family from the problems of association that come from the mingling of different races in Germany. Like I have argued elsewhere, Chima has spent more years studying in Germany than doing anything else; however, he is perceived to be more of a foreigner than a student. Again, the perception of foreignness is extended to his family. Not only do his spouse and child share in his discrimination experience, but German society also invades the Ojis' personal space. As I show, this invasion represents a feeling of familiarity but frames the subtle transfer of persecution because of Barbara's attachment to a migrant.

A society in which differences are accepted despite association remains elusive. While the question of how to create such a society has no definitive answer, Oji's narrative provides some direction. At first, Barbara's parents were unwilling to accept Chima into the family. Apart from the strange thought of their daughter dating an African, Barbara becomes a subject of discussion as Oji shares reflections of life experiences through which he makes sense of stereotypical generational thoughts. "Ich wolle Barbara nur sexuell ausbeuten und sie hernach sitzen lassen, womöglich mit einem Kind, . . . nachdem Barbara mit einem Neger geschlafen

hätte, kein anständiger deutscher Mann mehr etwas mit ihr zu tun haben wolle, weil sie sich unabänderlich in den Ruf einer 'Negerhure' gebracht hätte" ("Unter" 150). Reading this passage through Chima's voice, readers become acquainted with black migrants' perception, stripped of their humanity while in Germany. Bhabha, concentrating on the modes of representation of Otherness, holds that "stereotyping is not the setting up of a false image which becomes the scapegoat of discriminatory practices. It is a much more ambivalent text of projection and introjection . . . the masking and splitting of official and phantasmatic knowledges to construct the positionalities and oppositionalities of racist discourse" (117). In this context of Chima and his relationship with Barbara, stereotyping is the shadow of the Other and a strategy for marginalization. Furthermore, the quote embodies a close encounter with Chima's experience, shifting from migrant to citizens. For the Germans, Chima is a source of a disorder among German girls. This thought makes Barbara less of a woman before German men. Girard writes that individuals think of themselves differently from others and engage in discrimination when they judge people or groups of people based on a preconceived notion (21). This discrimination based on preconceived thinking, as Girard points out, voices the discharge of anger and the making of a victim of migration out of Barbara through her association with Chima.

Besides the preconceived discriminatory outburst, migrants are cast down and made abject. As can be learned from the text, the reaction of the parents of a young girl upon hearing their daughter wants to marry an African: "Ein weißer Müllmann wäre uns lieber als dieser schwarze Arzt" ("Unter" 315). In her book *Revolting Subjects: Social abjection and resistance in neoliberal Britain*, Imogen Tyler develops an account of social abjection "as a theory of power, subjugation, and resistance" (4). Drawing upon Julia Kristeva's seminal psychoanalytic concept of abjection, Tyler considers "what it means to be (made) abject," to be one who repeatedly finds

oneself in conditions of exclusion and "the object of the other's violent objectifying disgust" (4). Showing preference for a White garbage collector over an African doctor captures what Tyler means to be socially abject. Contrasting "Müllmann" as a job with "Arzt," emphasizes that one does not need special education to become a garbage truck worker; hence, the career is often associated with persons with no skills, low income, and no social status as opposed to a doctor with years of educational training in addition to rigorous apprenticeship. The African doctor becomes socially cast off, refused, and taken hostage, making him abject by his skin color and rendering him unworthy of entering a marital relationship with a white German woman. Being in a relationship with an African, the German woman becomes the object of disgust, thereby pushing her to society's margins. Like migrants whose personality and occupation become socially abject, semi-migrants are drawn into the same position of repugnance and antagonism as the Other by their association with African migrants.

Considerations of unworthiness are more complex in other cases. Unable to withstand the shock of the news of their daughter's marriage to an African, the text shows that a pharmacist couple from the Ruhrgebiet committed suicide ("Unter" 315). Although Oji leaves readers in the dark the specific reasons why both pharmacists took their lives, this short story epitomizes Chima's experience—what his emotions were—and expands on his feelings as an African. As scholars have stressed, studying suicides requires examining the individual's reasons behind their actions (Jack Douglas "The Social Meanings"; Herbert Brown and Jacobs Douglas "Suicide"; Gregory Zilboorg "Suicide among"; and Emile Durkheim). Durkheim's seminal work, *Suicide,* offers a lengthy sociological approach to the topic. According to Durkheim, "egoistic suicide results from man's no longer finding the basis for existence in life" (258). In this sense, I interpret both Pharmacists' suicide as having lost ties with their daughter and can no longer

exercise control over her life and relationship choice. In his research on "Suicide among Civilized and Primitive Race," Zilboorg argues that suicidal persons are weakened by the inability to overcome their personal difficulties (1352). Contextualizing the reason behind this act demonstrates the parents' silent assault of the daughter's union with an African, a rather egoistic action that vividly exemplifies the rejection of an African son-in-law, a member of a minority group, and a displeasing partnership to behold. Apart from the feelings of having lost their daughter, the parents' choice to end their lives suggests not only embarrassment due to being associated with an African son-in-law and hopelessness over their daughter, but also rejection of the idea of an African-German couple. Their suicide accepts that irreparable damage is done and cannot be erased by their daughter as soon as she opts for a marital union with an African. This supposed marriage embodies unworthiness, one that parallels personal difficulty in accepting people of other races.

Oji gives us more insight into being socially rejected using his friends' biography. The German-Nigerian couple wants to declare their marriage before the marriage registrar subtly remarks: "So einfach ist das ja nun auch nicht, schließlich gibt es in der Umgebung doch genügend amerikanische Kasernen" ("Unter" 315). Citing American barracks means the presence of Americans in Germany who, according to the Registrar, are preferred to Africans when choosing a life partner. Girard writes that individuals, the Registrar for example, think of themselves as different from others and engage in discrimination based on a preconceived notion (21). In another story, Chima narrates how Germans test the intentions of Africans when they marry German women: "Denn es ist ja so, dass ein ausländischer Ehepartner nach der Heirat mit einer Deutschen zunächst eine Aufenthaltsgenehmigung für ein Jahr bekommt, und nur, wenn die Ehe dann noch besteht, wird das Papier um drei Jahre verlängert. Erst danach besteht ein

Anspruch auf eine unbefristete Aufenthaltserlaubnis" ("Unter" 316). As I have shown earlier, Chima shows that his relationship with Barbara is at first perceived as a form of sexual exploitation; it appears that similar preconceived notions taint the German-Nigerian intention to marriage. The director of the "Münsteraner Ausländerbehörde" confirms "so ein Ausländer ist doch bereit, jede deutsche Frau zu heiraten, ganz gleich, wie sie aussieht – und wenn sie den Arsch mitten im Gesicht hat –, Hauptsache, er kann hierbleiben" ("Unter" 316). The director's statement and victimization of German-Nigerian marriages with residence papers are what Girard calls a "collective resonance of persecutions," by which he means "acts of violence, such as witch-hunts, that are legal in form but stimulated by the extremes of public opinion" (12). Here, limiting residency for a German-Nigerian couple stays within the legal operation of the Ausländerbehörde. Still, the prejudice implies that marriages between foreigners and Germans involve the fraudulent application of German immigration laws and women.

The German immigration office uses the spouses' immigration status as a tool of control. Marriage with African men then makes German women victims by association. Understanding migration through the lens of victimhood allows for a nuanced perception of the mechanism through which Germans perceive semi-migrants. Migrants by marriage describes Germans who enter marital relationships with Africans. This union brings them into the same category as their spouses, making them vulnerable to false, but all too conventional understandings of migration. In her perspective of victims, the philosopher Trudy Govier posits that "victims are members of marginalized groups, persons harmed by an act of external element that is not deserved through no fault of their own" (39). Govier explains that there are, however, many perspectives from which "fault" may be assigned. To reason this way, German society determines how and when to declare spouses of African migrants victims of association

Indeed, Barbara even becomes the spotlight of discrimination due to her marriage with Chima. During her training as an English teacher, Barbara felt she performed excellently in the teaching practice exams but was upset when she received the average grade of "Drei" which is lower than expected score of "Eins-Komma-Acht" ("Unter" 337). Barbara learns from her friend, another trainee teacher, about the grade she received from "Herr B":

> Deine Stunde sei fachlich und didaktisch einwandfrei vorbereitet gewesen, gegen deinen Unterricht habe es ebenfalls keinerlei Einwände gegeben. Alles sei wirklich sehr gut gelaufen – bis auf eine kleine Panne kurz vor Ende der Stunde. Da hast du einem Schüler auf eine falsche Antwort hin gesagt: dass du es nicht besser wusstest, Dirk, konnte ich mir denken. Herr B. ergänzte dann, man wisse ja, dass du mit einem Schwarzen verheiratet seiest, und da könne man sich leicht vorstellen, was für Probleme du hättest. Und so eine Frau könne sich eine solches Verhalten einem Schüler gegenüber nun einmal nicht erlauben. Deshalb also die Drei für deine Lehrprobe. ("Unter" 338-339)

As the meta-narrator, Barbara's friend reconstructs her conversation with Herr B and, thus, exposing connections between the grade rationale and marital life. As I have argued earlier, Chima was identified more as a migrant than a student, ranking him behind his German colleagues. Similarly, resentments extend to Barbara. Connecting the unintentional error with her marital relationship with a migrant denigrates her and puts her semi-migrancy before her educational training, thereby overshadowing her professional expertise.

In discussing the history of mixed race in Germany, the ways that children's skin color becomes a way of deploying their identity can be seen in narratives of adoption. These narratives of adoption of children by mixed-race couples have been discussed by historians and literary scholars like Yara-Colette Lemke Muniz de Faria, Rita Chin, Joachim Schroeder, Rosemarie Peña, Heide Fehrenbach, Tina Campt and Pascal Grosse. Campt and Grosse (48) argue that the "concepts of race and difference are used as the defining criterion" of these children born to

German mothers and African American fathers during the US occupation of Germany after World War II. Similarly, Schroeder maintains that these "uneheliche deutsche farbige Mischlingskinder," or black German children—as Fehrenbach notes—embody the problematic definition of "fremd, farbig, fürsorgebedürftig" (178). As these authors themselves put it, the German American children desire care, support and "in need of rescue and thus become objects of humanitarian aid, social assistance, and pity," hence the reasons for their adoption (Kim Park Nelson 289). The distinction of these babies is important because hundreds of them were later adopted by White Americans and African Americans, since they are minorities, sick, unwanted by families and neighbors, and their German mothers had strong convictions "dass ihrem Kind in Amerika in einer afroamerikanischen Familie ein besseres Leben beschieden sein werden" (Lemke Muniz de Faria "Zwischen" 107).

Marital ties cut the buffer zone of personal space, protecting against perceived threats to children of mixed-race couples' identification. Chima starts chapter fourteen by giving his account of an incident where his Austrian friend and her son were victims of public condemnation while relaxing at a Badesee im Salzburger Land. The sight of the son attracts an older man, who draws closer to greet the mother: "Was für ein niedliches Adoptivkind Sie da haben" ("Unter" 314). Besides, the nameless older man's statement raises the notion of forethought on black babies and adoption, verbalizing the institution as a hegemony of 'saving' children from nations that are emerging or economically ravaged (Virgiel), a view that also explains why he felt the baby was adopted. Again, his predefined perception of the baby condenses the notion of superiority into the baby's life, an idea that is built on giving babies from emerging nations a better life. Although the mother was quick to react stressing that "[sie] habe ihn nicht adoptiert" ("Unter" 314), the man drops his attempt to exoticize the mixed-race child

based on his racial worldview and immediately switches to a racial attack by publicly shaming the mother: "Schaut her, Leute, was dabei heraus kommt, wenn ein Weib sich mit einem Neger einläßt" ("Unter" 314). Here, his statement contributes to the projection of exclusion, an image that represents mixed babies as victims of association between outsiders and indigenous Germans, a representation that blames the baby as being an offspring of a relationship between blacks and Germans. On seeing a White German woman with a mixed-race child, the older man tests her by vocalizing a false rationale for a mixed-race baby based on a savior complex, only to condemn her publicly when he finds out about the truth—a trap without any chance for the woman to escape racial stereotypes.

The savior complex predates the history of Brown babies in Germany and their adoption by White Americans and African Americans. By adopting such babies, they were offered "salvation," care, and a safe home. Shifting the blame cuts the mother's personal space about how much a perceived stranger should come close to her and her baby. This blame game makes the mother victim of her childbearing and sexual relations with an African. Besides that, 'perceived adopted babies' become object of fantasy to be touched and exoticized, an objectification that draws unwanted attention from Germans who see them as a body to behold and comment on, thereby severing the boundary between "the far phase of personal distance and the close phase of social distance" (Edward Hall 121). The identification of a mixed-raced child with adoption and the N-word constructs an association-based identity, i.e., a semi-migrant identity. Placing these children within the ideology of semi-migrancy, I refer to their genealogical history and the parental lineage, recalling Germany's post-war past.

This invasion of personal space cements mixed-raced children with derogatory words and racial stereotypes. *Unter die Deutschen gefallen* portrays the fusion of the Ojis' private and

public life since it depicts how their life suddenly becomes of general interest with the birth of Enyi. While Barbara is referred to as "[die] Mutter eines Negerkindes, die Objekte von Vorurteil und Diskriminierung" ("Unter" 318), Chima points to a broader notion of bearing witness to his wife's semi-migrancy. In this passage, the German society's thinking and actions are motivated by stigma, a force that launches an assault on skin color and reifies racial inequality. To some degree, Barbara's objectification, and estrangement represented already in her continuing reference to her semi-migrancy demonstrate and extend the pejorative foreign identifiers of Enyi. Thinking along these lines of foreignness, "the homogeneous German cultural identity reflects a racialized identity, a conflation of 'German' with 'white'" (Campt "Afro-German" 113). As an Afro-German or a German-born individual of African and German descent, the recognition as "ein Negerkind" comes in direct opposition to "German" as "blackness" imposed by the German society. Bhabha, drawing on the work of Frantz Fanon, pushes for an understanding of racist discourse in relation to the question of "race" and "skin." He argues that "skin as the key signifier of cultural and racial difference in the stereotype, is the most visible of fetishes, . . . plays a public part in the racial drama that is enacted every day in colonial societies" (78). Although Germany would not count as a colonial nation-state, the experiences of Enyi and other mixed-raced children exemplify Bhabha's assertion about skin with its cultural and racial significance. While *Unter die Deutschen gefallen* generates an "Ausländer" identity that could be traced to intermarriage, the autobiography shows that Enyi and other similar children have no place within the German society since they are a combination of racial bloodline and skin color.

Raising Enyi in Germany shows a slow and gradual path that culminates in Othering. When these acts of Otherness occur, the narrator prefers to detail these events with a summary of how he perceives the German society displaying affection:

> Manche Leute starrten einfach nur das Kind bzw. dessen Mutter an, rümpften vielleicht die Nase oder schüttelten den Kopf, bevor sie weitergingen. Andere beugen sich einfach über das Kind, um es zu berühren – es zu streicheln, die weichen schwarzen Löckchen zu betatschen oder ihm gar Süßigkeiten in die Hand zu drücken. Sie taten dies, ohne zuvor die Mutter des Kindes anzusprechen oder auch nur Blickkontakt zu ihr aufzunehmen. In der deutschen Gesellschaft sind Zärtlichkeiten unter Fremden nun einmal nicht das Übliche! Andere – weiße – Kinder wurden ja auch nicht angefasst . . . Es war immer wieder nur unser Kind, das in wildfremden Menschen den Drang zu derart distanzlosen Sympathiebezeugungen weckte. ("Unter" 320)

As the passage illustrates, there is a distinction between how Germans react on seeing a black or a white baby. Chima's portrayal shows a power relation marked by the complexity of spaces populated by groups of unequal power and a silent write-off of children born to mixed-race couples. In his notes on *Stigma*, Erving Goffman asserts that a society can establish a means of categorizing individuals by using language that can be profoundly discrediting and discriminatory (2-3). Using their perception of the Enyi, Germans construct a stigma-ideology, a concept that explains their impression of mixed-race children and accounts for their inferiority. This rationalization is expressed through touches, the unwarranted contact with the child without the parents' permission, the unspoken eye contact with Enyi that represents alienation and victimization. As Hall puts it, racism is a badge, a token, and a signifier; race acts as a language; it is a signifier that refers to the concepts of classification and categorization ("Race" 7-8). Chima portrays his family with the complementing intrusion into their life, an objectification of Enyi that sheds light on Germany's past and the traumatic history of adopted babies in post-war Germany. These uninvited gestures and comments enact the language of race that advances categorization, dehumanizes Enyi and further builds an image of how the German society perceives the baby. This perception reinforces a stereotype of mixed-race babies as unwanted, not loved by family but who could be adopted and given a better life.

Complicating this picture further are uninvited touches and racialization of Chima's child. On seeing Enyi, Chima's child, passers-by spontaneously react or question the mother: "Oh, wie niedlich, Ach, wie Süß, Schau mal, das Negerkind dort, ist das nicht süss. Haben Sie denn auch einen Papa dafür? Was ist das für ein niedliches Kind! Haben Sie es adoptiert, es sieht genauso aus, wie das Adoptivkind meiner Schwester" ("Unter" 321-323). These comments mimic the transfer of resentment from a migrant to a mixed-race baby, an instrument to expand stigmatization and microaggression that accounts for the power dynamics between saviors and the saved. In my previous chapter, I show that microaggressions are attitudes, judgments, prejudice, and racism that are communicated in subtle, overt, and sometimes project the persistent sense of Otherness onto minority groups (Tatum "Why" 51-53). Here again, connecting Enyi's skin color to German history not only categorizes her as unworthy of being called "German," but accentuates a rejection that challenges notions of nation based on German bloodline and miscegenation. Furthermore, as a daughter of a German woman and an African father, she is haunted by the post-war memories of Germany that respond to race as an instrument for determining who should be regarded as a German or Mischlinge, a designation that dates to "Germany's definition of race in the first decade after the war" (Fehrenbach 8). This denotation pictures the making of children born to mixed couples victims of their parents' relationship, one that should not have happened if not for foreign soldiers' presence in Germany. This stigmatization works by discrediting their linkage to the German bloodline, using the language of racial categorization to connect the children to a particular historical past that is divorced from the word citizenship and attached to migrancy. Through microaggressions, mixed-race children are constantly reminded of their parents' denigrated relationship which makes them victims of their relationship.

Conclusion

This chapter contributed to prior knowledge of Germany's history of adoption, mixed-race children, racism, and migration by focusing on how Oji's autobiography unveils different issues of (semi-)migration, living among Whiteness, Otherness, and race relations. The autobiography depicts his life in a subjective mode, which offers simultaneously subjective and disturbing insights into the social and racial forces in Germany during the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. By employing personal stories of friends and his family, *Unter die Deutschen gefallen* establishes its authenticity as an autobiographical eyewitness account of perpetual discrimination. Besides these writing techniques, which are ingrained in the genre of the migration narrative, Oji's story serves as a mirror of his own life as well as of the lives of other migrants, pointing to an attempt at speaking up against racial injustice in Germany.

In this chapter, I show that the concept of legitimate power functions as a tool of influence and is wielded by groups of people through acts of domination or coercion to exclude or to socially or professionally deprived migrant characters. Part of this concept is the attempt to gain recognition. In this sense, being a migrant in Germany outweighs the status of being a student and later a medical doctor—a constant struggle for Oji who seeks acceptance as a professional and does not want to be seen through a racial lens based on his skin color. He experiences that race and blackness are twin figures that play multiple roles. Accordingly, *Unter die Deutschen gefallen* dwells on what it means to be black: to be the Other. The migrant autobiography resonates with the echoes of racialized voices, delving into issues surrounding Germany's ever-expanding multicultural fabric. Consequently, the cosmopolitan-minded

migration narrative clashes with a narrow, racialized reality in a country that has yet to overcome its Nazi past and post-war adoption of "race" during the narrated time in Oji's autobiography. Here, the mechanisms of power and race are uncovered through the perspective of a marginalized African. The narrative includes careful depiction of racial and social boundaries that divulge the inequality that exists within academia, occupation, and family life. Suitably, the text represents Oji's recounting of the many experiences as a migrant—personal, social, and professional.

My analysis shows that race and the perception of racism impact the character's writing in several ways. As a student, writing tends to bring about healing and empowerment. The society depicted in this text is racially charged and restrictive, and so the migrant characters have to find ways to express themselves and work through their minoritization. This allows Chima to examine his family and mixed-race couples in Germany and convey how distinction speaks through color and nationality. Oji also uses marriage to show that oppression brings German spouses in the circle of migrancy by the association. Adding to a growing body of literature on the notion of "migrant," the migrant-citizen relationship reveals a shifting and expanding definition of the concept. Consequently, German spouses can be seen as semi-migrants since they experience forms of Othering, ostracization from their immediate family, and suffer the burdens of their country's immigration laws. For example, they become tools in the hands of German immigration officers for regulating their spouses' immigration status. An understanding of the concept of "semi-migrant" contributes to my understanding of racism and victimhood and provides a perspective for determining how and when to declare spouses of African migrants victims of association. From the Germans' point of view, race works as a mechanism that separates them from Africans and semi-migrants. My definition of "semi-migrant" is my attempt

to construct an association-based identity, including children with mixed-race genealogical history and parental lineage, and recalls Germany's post-war past in the light of Oji's migration narrative.

Chapter Six

Final Conclusion

In the introduction of this dissertation, I stated that the migration literature from African and German authors could be studied with two aspects in mind; first, works by authors of African descent should be considered as *German* (minority or intercultural) literature; such works depict Africans' experiences of migration and living with white Germans. Second, migrant authors writing in a second language such as Degla and Oji offer a perspective different from German authors without migration background, but writing about migration, here: Erpenbeck, who is included in the project as representative of this sub-group. Although the German language is not an official language of any African nation, I have argued that writing in the German language for Degla and Oji does not suggest an abandonment of their indigenous African languages, but the use of the language as a means of communication and of literary and cultural production. In other words, these authors write as Africans who depict the struggles of migration from an African perspective. However, all the novels and authors included in this study—Erpenbeck's *Gehen, Ging, Gegangen*, Abdi's *Tränen im Sand*, Degla's *Das Afrikanische Auge*, and Oji's *Unter die Deutschen Gefallen*—challenge and redefine, either as fiction or drawing on real events, narrow interpretations of the African migrant experience in Germany.

As shown in each of the chapters presented in this dissertation, migration literature has gained scholarly attention in various fields. Unlike scholars such as Leslie Adelson, Sandra Vlasta, or Venkat Mani who focus on Turkish-German and comparative literatures of migration, this dissertation examines autobiographical and fictional works from authors of German and African descent. As I have shown, immigrant autobiography brings a different dimension to the

experiences of migrants, who use the genre as part of a strategy to narrate their life stories. While autobiography may inspire resistance against gruesome Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in countries like Somalia, the autobiographical narrative largely offers a means of engagement with the experience of being an outsider in Germany: a source for depicting the shared identity of being a foreigner living among white Germans. Despite the diversity in the genre of works examined, my analysis has shown that the existence of the German "imagined community," as Benedict Anderson puts it, justifies the continued movement of Africans to Germany

Through their portrayal of experiences, most of the characters who look up to Germany as one of the European "*nations* upon on a hill" (Rifkin 258 *my emphasis*) and as a Heimat from where they could care for their families who are still living in Africa, Erpenbeck, Abdi, Degla, and Oji not only bring fresh perspectives of the contemporary African immigrant experience but also reveal Africans' reasons for migrating to Germany. Apart from the characters who were either forced to leave Nigeria, and Libya, or those Africans who came to study in Germany, this dissertation has demonstrated that some of their reasons for migrating to Germany have an occidental undertone. "Occidentalism," as a complementary notion to Said's criticism of Orientalism, lies in the image of the West as economically and socially more advantageous than the migrant's country of birth. It is the belief in the superiority of the West by those outside of its borders. This belief fuels the decision to migrate and is a response to global systems of inequality that shape Africans' thoughts about Germany.

The texts' fictional and autobiographical depictions underscore the role of literature in modern society as a tool to negotiate highly topical matters. Accordingly, this dissertation does not only offer insights into the depiction of migration through the markers of "Heimat," and "belonging," but also addresses the migration patterns of African migrants. In it, the characters

of each of the text's analysis exemplify the symbolic relationship between Germany and Africans who perceive the former as a space of refuge, safety, economic stability. As discussed in the first two chapters, Erpenbeck and Abdi use literature to show that Heimat and belonging are important to migrants who are either fleeing violence, seeking to start a new life, or attempting to find a home that resembles their countries of origin. Although the concept of Heimat has been contested in German Studies and Migration discourse, I argue that home for migrant characters means job security, community, and an individually constructed notion that reflects their search for belonging.

These findings have significant implications for the understanding of borders in African-German literature. Taken together, these results suggest the ways in which the denying of a residence permit, a driver's license or even a visa disallow migrant characters to normalize their stay in Germany. The analysis undertaken here extends our knowledge of the delineation between migrants and citizens that enforces exclusion and Otherness. I also discussed the issue of race as a point of differentiation between African migrants and white Germans. While analyzing the relationship between borders and Othering, my investigation reveals that skin color not only accentuates migrants' foreignness but puts them in the category of people to be minoritized, discriminated against and stereotyped. The characters' identities, either as foreigners, strangers, Africans, Schwarze, wives of migrants, or children born of mixed-race couples, play an essential role in this context because they limit the migrants' acceptance. My analysis shows that they are racialized, excluded, and Othered in Germany not only because of their status as migrants or students, but also due to crossing the unwritten boundaries between White Germans and Black Africans.

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this dissertation is an additional meaning of the word "migrant." This project does not deny the traditional definition of who is a migrant as someone who moves from one place to another, especially to find work or better living conditions, but it particularly emphasizes the experience of being a migrant in *Germany*. "Semi-migrant," as I conceptualize the term, expresses the characteristics of experiencing Othering, i.e., being treated as strangers in a country where one possesses the same citizenship status and a shared race and ancestry as the antagonizer. In this sense, my definition captures the category of "migrant" due to their association with a black African migrant. My study has further revealed another categorization of children born to Germans and African migrants that highlights Germany's history of adoption. These children draw the attention of the German society who uses subtle words to address them because they belong to a minority group in Germany. In addition to their marginalization, they represent Germany's history of race and racial boundaries. Their volatile status indicates a deeper struggle with the problem of who does and does not fit into a pre-conceived notion of German citizenship by the native population. This new understanding should help to improve future research that examines the relationship between migrants in Germany, their spouses, and children.

The present analysis lays the groundwork for future research into African-German literary studies. The category of "African-German" within the field of German studies is not a matter of course and not yet accepted by a majority of researchers who prefer focused "Afro-German" or "black German studies" (see Opitz et al. "Showing Our Colors;" Lennox "Remapping Black Germany;" Florvil "Mobilizing Black Germany"). "Afro-German" delineates authors, who are of a German and African descent. This grouping differs from "African-German" since the latter are authors with African ancestry—without any German lineage—who

write in German. It should come as a surprise since a number of African-German writers are already well established. The late 1980s saw the emergence of poets and Afro-German activists like Helga Emde, Katharina Oguntoye, Ika Hügel-Marshall, and May Ayim. Their literature voices a new understanding of blackness from the recognition of Afro-German identity to the rise of an Afro-German memory. Although black German authors are in the minority, writers of African descent such as Constant Kpao Saré, Sharon Dodua Otoo, and Melanie Raabe are receiving attention as the new voices of the German literary community. Raabe's first novel *Die Falle* (2015) for which the author has already sold the film rights, has been translated into many languages, and Otoo won the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize in 2016 with her short story *Herr Gröttrup setzt sich hin* (2016). These (diasporic) African writers are taking a prominent place in the new discourses explored in German literature. Saré's *Tschinku im Gastland. Meine Heimat* (2020) and Otoo's recent novel *Adas Raum* (2021) continue to investigate migration from a literary perspective and question new areas and avenues that shape the realities of migrants who end up in Germany with the hopes of finding a better future.

Degla, Abdi and Oji form the African diaspora, as a group of migrants who share a common bond to the homeland they left behind. While the term "migration" might exclude Otoo from the conceptualization of African diaspora, being an African born to two Ghanaian parents in London unites her as an author who share emotional and racial bond with other African-German authors. Apart from the initial wave of deportation of Africans to Europe and the Americas that began during the Transatlantic Slave Trade (circa 16th-19th century), migration either in search of safety, financial security or for academic reasons still paves the way for the continuous growth of the African diasporic population. This voluntary and involuntary movement led the historization of the African diaspora, as people with shared intertwined

history. The depicted migrants, as my analysis have shown, are members of the diaspora since they sought ways to connect to each other through cultural identity, creating a form of homeland outside the continent of Africa.

In sum, the issue of identity comes into play as Africans who migrate to Germany would be seen as Africans unlike Afro-Germans who could always claim to belong to the German race by blood line. This future research could be a study for understanding minoritization since border structures oppose Africans who seek belonging and home in a country where they share no national affiliation. In this sense, identities could be contested through migration experience, citizenship, and race.

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