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Leslie A. Adelson. *The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature: Toward a New Critical Grammar of Migration.* Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 274 pp. $69.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-4039-6913-2.

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Discovering Turkish Inflections in German History

Leslie A. Adelson, whom Andreas Huyssen has accurately called "the leading scholar in the field of 'Turkish-German literature,' " seeks in her latest book to redefine those often arbitrarily applied terms "Turkish" and "German." Adelson adamantly advocates for understanding "Turkish" and "German" less as historically loaded labels and more as the names of two living cultures that exist essentially inside one another. Although her title includes the phrase "A New Critical Grammar of Migration," much of the secondary material, analysis, and primary texts are not so new at all. Instead, Adelson has based this book on at least three previous journal articles and one conference paper.[1] Readers familiar with Adelson's previous articles will find themselves re-reading key passages from those publications transplanted verbatim into the book manuscript. In addition, they will find that the chief aims of the articles have much in common with the book's goals as well. Knowing this research history, one central question emerged for me as a reviewer: what would motivate readers to devote time to a book that at first glance simply seems to repeat previously-published material? As I read further, however, more and more valid reasons became clear.

One general answer might be that, although Adelson obviously incorporates previous research, *The Turkish Turn* just as clearly indicates steady development and productive expansion of theoretical ideas that address viewing Turkish literature as an inextricable part of German culture. One more specific answer is that Adelson's new twist more intently considers "the literature of Turkish migration [as] part of an evolving national tradition of Holocaust memory in Germany" (p. 84). By reorganizing and supplementing old material, the author, in her own words, attempts to broach the "relative novum in German literature" of the "sustained combination of story lines about Turkish migration and twentieth-century German history" (p. 21).

In most of her works on Turkish-German literature, Adelson contends in one formulation or another that German and Turkish experiences since World War II and again since reunification share more similarities than differences (p. 1). In her 2000 article as well as the present book, she identifies her central frustration with current German Studies: "Despite the fact that ensuing migrations and births have made Turks the largest minority

in unified Germany, they are rarely seen as intervening meaningfully in the narrative of postwar German history" (p. 84). As far back as her 1994 publication "Opposing Oppositions: Turkish-German Questions in Contemporary German Studies," and as recently as a paper presented in 2004, "Hello Germany! Toward a New Critical Grammar of Migration," Adelson has been proposing innovative methods for confronting non-constructive labels that have encased Turks and Germans in the language of stereotype.

In her latest study, she reiterates her scholarly interest in overturning ways that other scholars have defined the relationship between Turkish-German citizens and German society as the dominant culture. To name one example, Adelson demands her readers to reject boldly the prevalent idea that Turkish literature is "situated in [a] predictable sense 'between two worlds' " (p. 5). According to the author, taking this first step and subsequently performing the suggested style of reading would allow scholars to produce a more complete picture of the Turkish experience as a fundamental part of German history. In addition, this enlightened reading highlights ways that Turkish literature "touches" German history as incontestably as German literature meets German history. As in previous texts, the author again aims to expand the analytical paradigms scholars have used to study German-Turkish relationships in this century. Expanding current methods of analysis involves, for Adelson, devising methodological alternatives in order to produce new readings of narratives from authentic Turkish voices, including Aras Ãren, Emine Sevgi Ãzdamar, Zafir SenoÃ§ak, and Feridun Zaimoglu.

In order to study anew previously analyzed works such as *Der Hof im Spiegel* (2001), *GefÃ¤hrliche Verwandtschaft* (1998), and *Kanak Sprak* (1995), Adelson broadly splits the study into three thematically-divided chapters with subdivisions featuring theoretical and literary analysis. In its own way, each of the divisions skillfully encourages and sustains her far-reaching intention of "undoing accepted ideas and methods of analysis and dichotomies after the Third Reich" (p. 161), as well as imparting an undeniable "Turkish inflection of German memory" (p. 169). In the first chapter, "Dialogue and Storytelling," she focuses on the medium of dialog and its corresponding opposite, silence, in various texts to intimate specific ways that Turks have begun to join the conversation about the German past. By embracing or remaining just outside dialogs with Germans, Turkish characters in the texts leave ambiguous impressions. On one hand, they have begun finding their own words for the Nazi past, while on the other, they simultaneously desire and yet do not desire to join these conversations (p. 37). Focusing on this key issue, Adelson emphasizes the common ground that Germans and Turks share. In contexts like these, according to Adelson, Germans and Turks produce "touching tales," and thereby reveal their overwhelming similarities.

Chapter 2 carries the ambiguous title "Genocide and Taboo," which once again causes Turkish history and German history to touch. In this chapter, Adelson contemplates the "crisis of historical consciousness" in the twentieth century, but especially since the 1990s, when the "culture of memory [underwent] a radical shift" (p. 80). Focusing on the novel, *Perilous Kinship* (2001), Adelson describes how the intertwined worlds at work in the story represent the "entangled tale of German taboos" (p. 28). In the spirit of shattering old stereotypes, the second part of the chapter elucidates how, for example, mention of the Holocaust in *Kanak Sprak* essentially "defies myths of the lovable oppressed Turk" and rejects images of the silenced, victimized "defiant young Turks" (pp. 96-97). Adelson deftly uses these examples to support her claims that the new triangulated formation between Germans, Jews, and Turks "releases conventional victim/perpetrator labels" (p. 121). Not limiting the discussion of genocide to the Holocaust, Adelson also presents and analyzes texts that consider the Turks' double memory work of dealing with the Armenian genocide as well as the Holocaust in Germany.

Chapter 3, "Capital and Labor," illuminates the role that economics and labor have played in forming the conventional picture of the Turk in Germany. Adelson cites theories that make migrant laborers into emblematic subjects of a global economy only to ask readers to challenge such outdated tropes (p. 123). In a discussion that spans popular perception of the Turkish *Gastarbeiter* (p. 127) to popular perception of headscarves as "related to a gendered critique of violence" (p. 129), Adelson leaves no stone unturned in her profound consideration of the formation and sustainability of Turkish stereotypes in Germany in this century. The chapter's combination of extensive theory and close readings encourages viewing literature and literary theory at the "crossroads of German national history and Turkish migration" (p. 158). Adelson's three all-embracing chapters strongly imply that this intersection marks the point of a major, yet ignored or underestimated, national German transformation.

Although Adelson constructs the present study out of a substantial amount of research published in other

forums, this work attests to her continued desire to expand previous readings in pioneering ways. Moreover, she continues to mold her theories into distinctive contributions to this relatively new field of study. I must admit that at times I struggled through opaque sentences and page-long paragraphs dense with theory, but this painstakingly researched and scrupulously footnoted book represents a targeted reworking and a conscious reorganization of previously-posed "literary riddles" surrounding twentieth-century German and Turkish questions.

If we look into the future of genuinely multicultural German Studies, this text certainly can serve as a new, sorely needed theoretical framework for Turkish-German literature of the 2000s and beyond. We all appeal for more multicultural German Studies programs, but Adelson shows us concrete methods to ensure that this multicultural spirit extends to methods of literary analysis as well.

Note

[1]. Leslie A. Adelson, "Opposing Oppositions: Turkish-German Questions in Contemporary German Studies," *German Studies Review* 17 (1994): 305-330; "Touching Tales of Turks, Germans, and Jews: Cultural Alterity, Historical Narrative, and Literary Riddles for the 1990s," *New German Critique* 80 (2000): 93-124; and "The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature and Memory Work," *Germanic Review* 77 (2002): 326-338.

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