Group C: Religion & ethnicity

How might we position David in relation to the range of social and ethnic groups he encounters, for example the group of male patients at the hospital?

To what extent is David aware of himself as a financially successful second-generation Turkish-German?

For quite some time, David seems to be resolutely secular, for example at his nephew’s *Beschneidungsfest* (pp. 118-126). What range of approaches to religion are represented among Turkish Germans in this scene?

When he arrives in Prague, David seems determined not to show any interest in his historical surroundings or the key role of religion in the history of the city. Review how this attitude changes both during his stay in Prague and his sojourn in Vienna. How do you think David must feel as a secular Muslim observer of these historically and religiously significant sites?

Tyra also undergoes a fundamental change in her attitude towards religion. What prompts this? How do you explain her increasingly extreme behaviour? How does it relate to her relationship with David?

* Themes of religion and Romanticism intersect in Liebesbrand- explores relationship between Romanticism and Sufism with religiously loaded sexual imagery, suggesting an ambivalent image of God as both destructive and loving and carrying the potential both for coercion and for a spiritual alternative to the philistine world of atheism, consumerism and globalization. – creates tales that entangle the aesthetics and thought of German and Islamic culture and demonstrates their interconnectedness.
* p120. Implication that his nephew is Jewish? Becoming a man, Bar Mitzvah
* 2 guys Heilbringeder Held und Weiser Mann
* Burying oft he chicken
* Borniert- narrominded, p124
* ‘Nur die Liebe besitzt den Talisman ewigen Frieden- 'Only love possesses the talisman of eternal peace
* Er durchlebte ein unendlich buntes Leben; starb und kam wieder, liebte bis zur höchsten Leidenschaft, und war dann wieder auf ewig von seiner Geliebten getrennt- He lived an infinitely colorful life; died and came again, loved to the highest passion, and was then separated again forever from his beloved.- encapsulates plot of Liebesbrand.
* Most salient example of Zaimoglu’s Romantic turn to date. Love, desire and sexuality play a central role in the novel, yet its erotic scene not only suggest Romantic love but also the imagery of Sufi divan poetry- highlighting shared religious dimension of love within these traditions.
* Passion provides access to a sense of the divine beyond monotheism, creating an alternative to the philistine world of atheism, perfunctory religious observance and consumerism whilst also foregrounding out interconnectedness.
* **There is a difference between one who is burned by His Majesty in the fire of love and one who is illuminated by His Beauty in the light of contemplation**
* Difference is played through Tyra the femme fatale and the loving Jamila respectively. These women embody contrasting views of cosmopolitanism.
* Liebesbrand can then be read as a continuation of Zaimoglu’s counter- Enlightenment critique of universalist cosmopolitanisms in favor of Romantic cosmopolitanism of love that suggests an ontological interrelatedness.
* Love and desire both constitute a ‘non-discursive yet meaningful experience which connect the individual to the social and exceed[s] the limit of subjectivity’- by viewing desire as separate to love in its unattainable aim of union with the beloved, may regard Tyra’s relationship w David as characterized by a false subjectivity and a violent appropriative movement.
* Touching tale between Romanticism and Sufism undermines the Islam/ West binary, establishing an ambiguous connection between Islamic and German culture. Rather than viewing love as a more radical destabilization of not only the East/West, but also of the heaven/earth and Self/other binaries.
* David has been described as having an ‘acute sensitivity to spirituality’- supported by his association with Novali’s comments, as David similarly wants nothing to do with the pomp of the cathedrals of Prague and Vienna (p.291/373) but rather begins a relationship with Tyra that allows her to be regarded as a Novalisian/ Sufi mediator for the divine- textual reference connects Tyra to Blutenstaub as she emerges from the forest in Vienna with pollen on her shoes. P325.
* Frauenanbeutung (female exploitation) – David comes into contact with various Turkish men who idolize the female doctors and nurses whilst recovering from the accident. Messer (patients named after their ailments or the weapon of their assault) harbors an especially intense desire for his doctor. Romantic terminology is obvious as he references the Lily in a typically Romantic nod to the Virgin Mary ‘‘Ich kenne nur eine Lilie der Reinheit, und das ist die herrlich schöne Frau Ärztin‘
* In stark contrast to the other patients, David is skeptical of love**: [I]ch kannte Feuerzeugfunken, aber keinen Liebesbrand im Herzen, ich war im Westen verdorben, ich war ein durch und durch degenerierter Mann des Abendlandes, und von der Tradition der orientalischen Frauenanbetung hatte ich keine Ahnung** (L, p. 31). I knew lighter sparks, but no love burn in my heart, I was corrupted in the West, I was a thoroughly degenerate man of the West, and I had no idea of the tradition of oriental women's worship.
* Given what Zaimoglu states about the origins of Frauenanbeutung, must take this comment as a form of self- irony, setting up an Oriental stereotype only to show how it is unfounded. Contrasted with a later scene: Wir gingen an einem Gotteshaus vorbei, das überirdisch schön erleuchtet war [...]. Plötzlich verspürte ich eine große Sehnsucht, ich sehnte mich nach etwas, das mich größer und glücklicher machen sollte – lass das sein, dacht ich, davon wird ein Mann nur krank. (L, pp. 43-4)
* **We walked past a place of worship that was beautifully illuminated above ground [...]. Suddenly I felt a great longing, I longed for something that would make me bigger and happier - leave it alone, I thought, a man would only get sick.** (L, pp. 43-4)
* Connection with a Romantic longing apparent here, as is the latent danger Zaimoglu associates with it. Otherworldly, appearance of the mosque suggests a link between David’s Romantic awakening and religion, or more specifically Islam, and later on he describes his encounter with Tyra as feeling like God shaking him by the shoulder (p79). Furthermore, shortly after having seen the illuminated mosque, he hears ‘die Klange eines Klagegesangs’ p.44 in a scene that echoes Heinrichs encounter with Zulima, underpinning connections between David’s love, Heinrich’s Romantic longing and Islam.
* Tyra’s name is the feminine equivalent of Thor, the Norse God of thunder (L, p. 94), which also serves to emphasise the religious connotations of their relationship. The ‘donnernden Hammerschläge’ (L, p. 6) heard by David during his rescue and the thunderstorms which happen at various points in the novel whilst he is thinking of her (L, p. 358) acquire new significance in this light, suggesting a supernatural power on her part.
* Thus, David unwittingly embarks on a Sufi/Romantic quest of sorts, and this also involves a renunciation of capitalism. the flames of the bus accident become the flames of purgatory for David (L, p. 5), a fire that also consumes his possessions. In contrast to his former life as a stockbroker, David is not upset by this loss: Mann hatte mir so viele Geschichten über das Himmelreich erzählt, daß ich den Glauben daran fast verloren hatte, aber auch nur fast – ich freute mich in diesem Fall über den Verlust meines bisschen Besitzes (L, p. 52).
* Whereas before the accident he had planned a holiday to ponder new ways of generating more capital (L, p. 23), suggesting he was part of the economically obsessed philistine world, David’s new rejection of capitalism can be coupled with his new religiosity and Romantic sensibility, marking his escape from the philistine world in search of alternative sources of power in Love and spirituality.
* This criticism corresponds with ‘Romantic anticapitalism’, a term used by Robert Sayre and Michael Löwy to designate the Romantics’ criticism of the emerging bourgeoisie through the evocation of a medieval pre-capitalist past.531 As discussed above, although the Romantics did not advocate a return to medieval society, they did Romanticize the Middle Ages to serve as an allegory for a possible future. For instance, Novalis evokes an idealized image of the medieval philanthropic merchant, presenting medieval economics as more socially responsible:
* . Der edle Kaufmannsgeist, der ächte Großhandel, hat nur im Mittelalter und besonders zur Zeit der deutschen Hanse geblüht. Die Medicis, die Fugger waren Kaufleute, wie sie seyn sollten. Unsere Kaufleute im Ganzen, die größten nicht ausgenommen, sind nichts als Krämer
* Through David’s Romantic awakening, spirituality is presented as an alternative to capitalist society, and alongside the association with Romantic medievalism, this critique of capitalism also ties in with the Islamic views on profiteering. There is, then, arguably some theological weight behind the spiritual alternative to superficial consumerism and free-market capitalism found in Zaimoglu’s Romantic rebellion
* Together with his rejection of instiutionalised religion, anti-capitalism equally forms part of Zaimoglu’s Nancian rejection of hegemonic systems of mass identification, as globalized capitalism is often blamed for the establishment of a homogeneous ‘McWorld’ in which not only our high streets become saturated with the same businesses and our cinemas with the same Hollywood blockbusters, but equally we become increasingly unable to imagine alternatives to the Western neoliberal system that dominates the globe. Moreover, Nancy further regards the capitalist system as detrimental to the inoperative community, since capital places ‘the identity and the generality of production and products’ above community.533 Zaimoglu’s religiosity, therefore, not only highlights the interconnectedness of people through love, but equally through its anti-capitalism, which allows David to be viewed as a singular being, rather than atomized and interchangeable parts of the capitalist system’s workforce.
* For Zaimoglu, the philistine world appears to represent all systems of unthinking mass conformity and all claims of universal truth that obstruct our access to the inoperative community, be it Nathan’s religious revolution or the ‘dominant, left-liberal cosmopolitanism’538 represented by David’s cousin that seeks to rationalise all attachments and eliminate all mystery from the world. Indeed, unlike the affective religiosity discussed in relation to Tyra, his cousin domesticates religion, turning it into mere tradition that is too mechanical to access any religious intensity. Novalis states that the philistine counts a wedding or parish fair as a religious experience, and David’s cousin’s religious experiences similarly reach their height at his son’s circumcision party (L, p. 118). Thus, the cousin arguably performs these religious rituals out of allegiance to an ethnic identity, rather than belief, and this can be contrasted with David’s affective spirituality that resists identity formation.

WEEK 9- Seminar

* **Pre-9/11**- straightforward in Diasporic writing, became absorbed and mainstream- no separate literary category, taken just as seriously as others considered ‘native’ writers.
* Simple mingling of mainstream G literature and Diasporic literature. May produce enlivened form of G literature.
* Diasporic writers offer a way forward. Generally positive.
* 2 main issues- would there be mainstreaming? To what extent writers were willing to accept ‘burden of representation’- idea that because you are from ethnic minority that somehow you voluntarily accept, or it’s loaded on to you a responsibility to represent your community. Can’t get away from burden- media will impose it on you.
* Not all Diasporic writers accepted burden: 4 main reactions-
* (Axialism) willing to accept with enthusiasm, writers run along certain axes in life/ work, steep drops on either side- kind of adaptation of ‘2 worlds’, one being an artistic community and the other your ‘host’ community. Eg Rafik Schami, he stands up for diasporic writers thus migrants as well, relating his culture to German society.
* (Refusal)- refused burden of representation eg. Akif Parinschki- achieved 1st real mega publishing success. He saw himself as just a writer in German.
* (Parodic ethnicization)- taking own background and instead of accepting idea of Axialism eg. Explaining your background, you exaggerate themes and ideas eg. Play up threat of Turkish on society etc. or in a ‘light-hearted satirical way’.
* (Glocalization)- reflecting global events/developments in the mirror of small domestic descriptions. Only done by a few.
* **Post- 9/11:** step backwards politically. Personal freedoms differed, loss of privacy, human rights. In fear/ resentment caused by 9/11, turning back of political clock.
* General mixing of influences of communities, breakdown of multiculturalism, moving towards ‘melting point’ halted. ‘us’ vs ‘them’. Divide between began to re-emerge.
* Muslims became a ‘potential’ terrorist- stop and search incidences multiplied, occurred back in the 70s.
* Effect of complete reappraisal of what ‘integration’ means. Instead of integration there was assimilation- process of people adapting to their surrounding community/culture. V volatile.
* People shocked by fact that phenomenon exists in their own society- want to understand what is happening in these communities, news producers/reporters try to find ‘representatives’ from those communities who’s well known and to question them publicly in a studio. Writers sometimes become representatives.
* Writers are normally not in the same sphere as ‘terrorists’ so wouldn’t necessarily make sense for them to be representatives. Writers dragged out of studies and projected in front of media. Expectation was for them to explain the reality in their community.
* Took the opportunity to explain the war on terror, how it felt to be part of minority and be seen as the ‘enemy’. Try to diffuse general publics anxiety. Writers faced with issue, be right as a fiction eg. Provocative/ ambiguous in their works whilst at the same time go try and be unambiguous and factual when you are called on to explain what’s going on in fundamentalist terrorism.
* Lost of events in which writers became involved.
* Mosques shown as ‘dominant’, over-towering in communities. Seen as a threat.
* Violence among young foreign teens, wanted to send them ‘home’ but they were German citizenships.
* Re-draws old political lines that were familiar.
* Consequences of 9/11 in social attitudes started to redraw and confuse pol map eg. Wearing of veil.
* Communities that were on path to integration/ point where integration meant not just you trying to integrate but other society also adopting an accepting.
* Writers explored this re-alienisation eg. Liebesbrand.

Group A- Narration

* Near death experience- results in disjointed? Not linear narrative? Perhaps caused by crash due to its traumatization.
* Going through book in a ‘haze’- not easy to follow. **PTSD**
* Inability for him to orientate himself accurately in his environment.
* Headaches- not simply due to bus crash, he’s been having them for a while. Perhaps due to his work as a former financial broker. Mental breakdown.
* Previous life- he was a financial broker, not anymore.
* He’s a non- drinker, refuses in Vienna, former alcoholic?
* Family history- not close to anyone, limited contact with them. Aunt who has a stepson and father died.
* Came to Turkey to solve argument about money and the apartment that the father left behind. Couldn’t make any arrangements.
* Expectation for wife to live out in marital home. Not expected to sell the home but that’s why he’s there.
* A Turkish man behaving in a way not traditionally ‘Turkish’. Just uses his money to solve the problem and pay his cousin.
* P.22 – contacting bank. In wake of being a financial broker, behaves differently.
* P.13- he thinks he’s being treated with suspicion. He’s a ‘Deutschling’- German Turk coming back to Turkey. He thinks people looking at him as not a proper Turk. He hasn’t got a clear idea of himself- tries to read what are other people thinking when they look at him and thus potentially draws incorrect conclusions from them.
* Victim to physical attack- in Kiel by a German. Twice in Prague- in his eyes he doesn’t understand he’s been a victim of racist attack. Ends up nearly attacked in ally, he is protected by the African sellers because he’s ‘one of them’.
* Puts on his hoody, has scars, he’s dark skinned goes into jeweler shop and begins to ask odd questions. Can’t follow the fact that she’s reaching for the phone/ alarm. CLASSIC UNRELIABLE NARRATOR.
* Scars- other people may think he’s disaffected. Possibly someone with a violent past.
* Unintentional unwitting narrator- can’t make sense of what is going on around him.