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“The Future Market and the Current Reality”: Zaimoglu/Senkel’s *Black Virgins* and Interculturalism in the German Context¹

Lizzie Stewart

One in five people living in Germany today has “a background of migration” as it is termed there (Harper 2011, 21): that is to say, they themselves, or at least one of their parents, were not born with German citizenship (Statistische Bundesamt, quoted in Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2017).² This migration has taken place from a vast array of contexts: whether in the wake of labor migration agreements signed between the Federal Republic of Germany and countries such as Italy, Turkey, and Morocco in the 1950s and 60s; from countries such as Vietnam, which sent workers to the German Democratic Republic in “socialist brotherhood”; from the former Soviet Union following offers of ethnic German “resettlement” after 1989; in response to Germany’s relatively open post-war asylum laws, or as part of the contemporary movement of peoples between and beyond EU states.

While the German population today can be characterised by what Steven Vertovic terms “super-diversity” (2007), the reflection of this in the heavily state-subsidized German theatre has been slow to emerge (cf. Boran 2004; Stewart 2014). Indeed, it was only in May 2011 that the German Dramaturgical Society was compelled to ask itself “Who is We?” (“Wer ist Wir?”) and take “intercultural society” (“die interkulturelle Gesellschaft”) as the theme for its annual conference (Dramaturgische Gesellschaft 2011). This reflects a recent growing interest in, and explosion of, theatre by and with people with a background of migration in the German context. Such theatre can be considered an example of what Yun-Cheol Kim refers to as “intra-intercultural theatre, that is, intercultural-theatre-within-a-culture” (Kim 2011). As this somewhat doubled designation illustrates, super-diversity in the wake of large scale

migration creates a confusion of the categories of “self” and “other” on which intercultural theatrical work traditionally rests. Indeed, despite drawing on funding from “intercultural” pots such as the intercultural project funds of the Senate Chancellery for State Affairs (see Kömürçü Nobrega 2011), institutions such as the small but influential Ballhaus Naunynstraße theatre have explicitly rejected an intercultural positioning (Weiler 2014, 226). Instead they increasingly refer to their work as “postmigrant theatre” – theatre which creates space for theatre practitioners with a background of migration within the German scene and “encompasses, above all, the stories and perspectives of those who have not themselves migrated, yet carry this migration background with them as personal knowledge and collective memory” (Shermin Langhoff, in Langhoff/Kulaoğlu/Kastner 2011, 399-40; also quoted in Weiler 2014, 225).³

This tension over interculturalism as label raises the question of what happens to the relationship between theatre and interculturalism in a contemporary European country of immigration. Indeed, it is worth noting that the German Dramaturgical Society’s 2011 intention of exploring “theatre in an intercultural society” shifts the object which the descriptor “intercultural” attaches to: in this phrasing it is no longer theatre which is intercultural, but rather the society from which that theatre emerges and to which it speaks. How does making “intercultural theatre” differ from making theatre in an “intercultural society”? Rather than taking the postmigrant confusion of categories as aberration, this chapter views them as paradigmatic for new approaches to interculturalism and theatre.

A key example of this emergent theatre is Feridun Zaimoglu and Günter Senkel’s *Black Virgins*.⁴ In 2006, this controversial semi-documentary play about radical Muslim women became the first play by a Turkish German playwright to be featured on the front cover of Germany’s influential theatre magazine *Theater heute (Theatre Today)*. Following the successful premiere, the play has appeared in ten further professional productions in Germany,

signalling a desire for “postmigrant” perspectives previously absent from the theatrical sphere there. Although the subject matter of radical Muslim women means that part of the play’s popularity is manifestly to do with a post-9/11 fascination with Islam, in this article I suggest its unprecedented popularity across Germany also indexes and has contributed to a broader shift towards interculturalism in cultural policies within Germany and in theatres there from the 2000s onwards. Nurkan Erpulat, a Turkish director now based in Berlin, suggests that:

The reason that more theatres, including the larger stages, are concerning themselves with migration, and that actors with a background are starting to be engaged, is that the political sphere has decided to supported intercultural themes financially. (Hoffmans 2010; quoted in Sharifi 2011, 244)

While the majority of studies of *Black Virgins* in performance thus far have focused almost exclusively on the influential premiere (Sieg 2010; El Hissy 2012; Stewart 2014), in this chapter I therefore extend the focus to explore the proliferation of subsequent productions across Germany since 2006 and their relationship to this financial support.

As the example of a play by Zaimoglu in particular reveals, the fact that this shift occurs under the name of “interculturalism” is particularly curious. In studies of Zaimoglu’s literary work, this term has long been disputed and, as will be outlined in more detail shortly, is often rejected as a reductive or restrictive label (see Adelson 2005, 23–26). Just as the tide was turning away from the intercultural approach to texts by authors with a background of migration in German literary studies then, “interculturalism” appears to have re-emerged as a key term in theatre funding and artistic direction to haunt artists such as Zaimoglu attempting to move into the theatre. I therefore move away from an analysis of theatre which positions its own practice as intercultural, and from the intercultural encounter as a framework for reading the aesthetics of the play. Instead I am interested in tracing the way in which intercultural policies have both enabled and demanded the production of new forms of engagement with

postmigrant theatre, taking the example of the multiple productions of *Black Virgins* as a case study.

Interculturalism In and Out of the German Theatre

Politically engaged artists and activists with a background of migration have long been making theatre in Germany (see studies by Brauneck et al. 1983; Sappelt 2000; Boran 2004). However, the source of the sea-change which is charted by the success and spread of *Black Virgins* appears to be closely related not only to those grassroots efforts, but also to a top-down change in cultural policy. Katrin Sieg, for example, suggests that the introduction of European Union funding for projects with specific remits intended to promote diversity on the stage has “forced open the demographic structure of the institution” in Germany and “achieves what a century of feminist complaints and several decades of immigrant activism have not been able to accomplish” (Sieg 2008, 319).

The routes through which this funding and EU elements of cultural policy feed into and alongside the German system are complex, however, and may be overstated in Sieg’s formulation. In the Federal Republic public funding for theatre, as well as cultural policy, is highly devolved: the majority of funding for theatre comes from the budgets of the *Länder* (regional states), the local authorities, or municipalities, with a relatively small amount under the control of national funding schemes (Weiler 2014). According to the Reports on Cultural Funding produced by Germany’s Federal Office for Statistics, in 2011, for example, the Federal State funding for theatre and music (the categories are grouped together in these statistics) was 30.7 million Euros, compared to 1,486.1 million Euros from the *Länder* collectively, and 1,738 million Euros from the municipalities and special purpose associations (Statistisches Bundesamt 2015, 55). The numbers for 2013 are, respectively: 27.3 million Euros (Federal),

1,572.1 million Euros (Länder), 1,862.6 million Euros (municipalities and special purpose associations) (Statistisches Bundesamt 2016, 47).⁵ The amount which enters the theatrical sphere through EU funding appears to be slim in comparison: in 2011 approximately 4.3 million Euros of EU cultural funding was made available to projects run by German organizations across the cultural sphere, i.e. not limited to theatre and music (Statistisches Bundesamt 2015, 81).⁶ As Banu Karaca explains with regard to the example of Berlin, for this reason “EU-related culture and arts support frequently plays a more supplementary role” for both organizations and individual artists, but “have nonetheless contributed to the reconfiguration of the way in which national funding is framed, and thus has impacted how arts institutions represent their work” (2010, 122). When exploring the German funding context, it is also therefore important to highlight the ways in which alterations to immigration and integration policies on a national level have affected the cultural sphere and its funding. The alteration of German Citizenship Law in 2000, the Immigration Law (*Zuwanderungsgesetz*) of 2005 in which “measures for the integration of immigrants with legal long-term residence in Germany was anchored in law for the first time” (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2017), and the introduction of a National Integration Plan by the Federal Government of Germany have all had their effect, it seems, on the subsequent adoptions of “intercultural action plans” (“Interkulturelle Handlungskonzepte”) by the cultural senates of areas such as North Rhine-Westphalia and Berlin.

Furthermore, in her monograph on postmigrant theatre in Cologne, Azadeh Sharifi explains that the concept of “culture for all” has been an important concept in cultural policy in Germany for some time now;⁷ a model in which “public funding of culture is only justifiable if, in addition to the funding of art, a pro-active effort to involve the population in artistic and cultural life is also present” (2011, 241). Following the expansion of citizenship law in 2000 to include those born in Germany rather than just those of German ethnicity, Sharifi highlights

that “the ‘citizen’s right to culture’ should now be applied not only to [ethnically] German citizens but also to citizens with a background of migration” (2011, 242) As a result, Sharifi’s own recommendations for future directions in cultural policy are that “[i]nterculturalism should [...] be the basis and point of departure of all activities” (242). This is also referred to in debates as “intercultural mainstreaming”, i.e. as an active move to normalize diversity. Onur Suzan Kömürcü Nobrega explains that this term, and the thinking behind it, “follows the debates about gender mainstreaming [the systematic inclusion of women] and addresses the issue of discrimination and racialised labour divisions in public institutions” (Kömürcü Nobrega 2011, 92 n. 2).

Both a recognition of the changing face of the “all” referred to in “culture for all”, and the development of a national integration strategy, have been reflected in practice in policy documents such as the “Twelve Essentials of Integration Policy in Berlin” from 2005 which “simultaneously places demands on the receiving society to open its institutions and processes interculturality” (Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin 2005, 9–11), and in integration plans put together on a more local level such as Hannover’s “Local Integration Plan” (Landeshauptstadt Hannover 2008). Six years later we see its effects again on a national scale in the “consensus” reached at the 2011 German Dramaturgical Society’s annual conference that “intercultural opening belongs to the core tasks of the theatre” (Dramaturgische Gesellschaft 2011, 1). Of particular interest here is, to paraphrase Charlotte McIvor (2011), what this shift toward interculturalism both enables and demands in terms of the aesthetics of postmigrant theatre and those involved in its production, particularly given the tension between empowerment and governance suggested by the partial roots of this shift in immigration and integration policy.

For those aware that the discourse of “interculturalism” also has a long history outside of the theatre in the German context, it is perhaps not surprising that interculturalism emerges as a conflicted term here: in its earlier usages it was most commonly found in the fields of

social work, a background which affects its extension to the arts. In terms of demands, then, it is important to start by tracing the usage of the term “intercultural” in historical engagements with cultural production that emerged from Germany’s migrant and post-migrant populations from the 1960s on.⁸ The main body of scholarship on Turkish German cultural production focuses on literary production and film: here interculturalism is frequently associated with a sociological approach to this cultural production which characterizes cultures as homogeneous, closed constructs and cultural producers as mediators between the two: a cultural model with roots in the thinking of philosophers such as Herder (cf. Kömürcü Nobrega 2011, 101–02). Literary work by Turkish German authors, including the author of *Black Virgins*, Zaimoglu, has long been taught and researched under the umbrella of “intercultural literature” rather than “German literature” in German universities, for example. Thus “intercultural Germanistik recognises the foreign as something outside, not within, German society – more specifically, as something separate from, not an integral part of, German identity” (Teraoka 1997, 72), and, taking a hermeneutic focus, “stresses dialogic communication as a process in which readers and characters engage as representatives of discrete worlds” (Adelson 2005, 26).

Historian Rita Chin has traced the development of this approach from the 1970s on in her book *The Guest Worker Question in Germany* (2007, 106–10; 124–40), noting that institutions such as the Munich Institute for German as a Foreign Language chose to focus their literary analysis on “subjects remarkably similar to the rhetoric and ideology produced by social scientists and SPD [Socialist Democratic Party] politicians from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s,” that is to say, the “idea of marginalized immigrants caught inbetween cultures” (135). Following this, *Interkulturelle Literaturwissenschaft* (intercultural literary studies) has often focused on the social or pedagogical function of the writing and reading of literature by authors with a background of migration. Thus Michael Hofmann, who continues in this tradition, writes “intercultural literary studies should be understood as an opportunity for

society to reflect on the problems of, and chances offered by, intercultural constellations, and to grasp the diversity of cultures as profit” (2006, 238). Readings of texts which emerge from this approach “do not necessarily preclude historical concerns or analytical complexity” (Adelson 2005, 23). However, they can function to reduce literature from being of artistic to social merit (cf. Lornsen 2007, 12). Within the literary sphere a focus on interculturalism has thus often contributed to what Leslie A. Adelson and others have critiqued as a narrative which positions Turkish Germans in particular as being negatively suspended “between two worlds” rather than agents who move across, have attachments to, and shape multiple contexts (Adelson 2005, 1–4; 2006, 38–39).

Similarly, in a theatrical context interculturalism has, until very recently, generally been used to explore either the coming together of two distinct traditions, or how the semiotics of a piece translates across boundaries (cf. McIvor 2011, 314; Knowles 2010, 4). Julie Holledge and Joanne Tompkins define it as “the meeting in a moment of performance of two or more cultural traditions” (2000, 7; quoted in Knowles 2010, 4), while the use of “interculturalism” by Erika Fischer-Lichte and Patrice Pavis occurs in analyses which focus on the transfer of a play written in one cultural context to another radically different one, rather than plays produced within one locality (see Regus 2009; Fischer-Lichte 1989; Pavis 1989). Indeed, I would argue that a focus on a model of intercultural theatre adapted from the Anglophone context has often resulted in a preference for analyzing theatre companies invited to Germany from other countries over the products of resident Turkish German theatre artists (as in Fischer-Lichte 2008; see also the approach suggested in Holthaus 2011, 150).⁹ More recently, Fischer-Lichte’s research platform “Interweaving Performance Cultures” (established in 2008 at the Freie Universität Berlin) has offered a significantly more nuanced approach that emphasises complexity, entanglement, and a rich fabric of interaction (Fischer-Lichte 2014, 11–13). This is reflected in the fact that the platform has also hosted scholars working on postmigrant theatre

in Germany such as Azadeh Sharifi and Hasibe Kalkan Kocabay.¹⁰ In doing so, however, the platform has explicitly moved away from the “intercultural” nominer (ibid); a move which highlights the ideological baggage this term often brings with it.

A positioning of theatre such as *Black Virgins* under the rubric of a traditional understanding of “intercultural theatre” thus runs the risk of suggesting that the Turkish German playwright is as culturally “foreign” to Germany as nineteenth-century Russian author Chekhov may be to a modern Japanese audience (the exemplar of intercultural theatre practice in Fischer-Lichte 1989). Alternatively – as discourses developed in Anglophone performance studies meet the German tradition of interculturalism – the use of the label “intercultural” may also come to suggest that the relevance of such theatre is limited to the “sociocultural” rather than to do with “high culture” (Sharifi 2011, 242). The “Communal Action Plan” of the town of Castrop-Rauxel from 2006, for example, which includes references to theatre, highlights the social worth of intercultural work in its very title “Interculture – Dialogue of the Cultures” (Stadt Castrop-Rauxel, 2006).

At the same time, interculturalism itself is in the process of being redefined. Its appearance in central documents of German arts policy shifts it from a practitioner-led approach to performance, or analytical lens for viewing performances, to a productive term, in the literal sense of one which produces new acts – whether positive or negative. As Mariam Soufi Siavash highlights, these new acts can include the positions that artists with a background of migration may be encouraged to adopt when “aims such as the promotion of integration raise the chance of financial support” (2011, 86). They can also include established theatres and artists attempting to reorient themselves towards those with a background of migration, whether as subject matter, audience, or collaborators.

As shown by the work of Greek German migration researcher and journalist Mark Terkessidis, the term itself can also be further acted upon within such a context. Terkessidis

has provided a Deleuzian redefinition of interculturalism which seeks to reroute the re-emergence of this term in Germany's cultural sphere in recent years and positions interculturalism as a means of understanding culture in general as "culture-in-between", as a structure in the process of transformation, as something which is not whole, or not yet" (Terkessidis 2010a, 131). In contrast to the understanding of culture as something tied to the ethnicized or racialized identities of authors "with a background of migration" which is frequently adopted in the literary studies which use the "intercultural" framework, Terkessidis emphasizes "culture" as a product of organizations and institutions, rather than bound to people via ethnicity (2010a, 179–81). Furthermore, this conception of *Interkultur* creates a situation in which rather than the migrant being the exception to the rule – a category to be dealt with specially and separately – the migrant becomes the paradigm for the contemporary subject (2010a, 108).

This positions *Interkultur* as a potential alternative both to the programme of multiculturalism and the rhetoric of assimilation, in theory at least.¹¹ As Stephan Lenz reports in his analysis of interculturalism in German policy and practice more broadly, however, "ethno-cultural" and "critical-political" understandings of interculturalism are currently "in competition for dominance" (2009, 114). In his studies, the latter often appear in policy documents and high-level discussions, and the former predominate among officials further down the chain (116-18). In the following, I suggest that focusing on examples from the production history of *Black Virgins* allows us some insight into how these new frameworks for interculturalism play out in practice in the theatrical sphere.

Islam and Intercultural Performance: The example of *Black Virgins*

The dramatic text of *Black Virgins* is a radical collection of ten semi-fictionalized monologues, each corresponding to a different “Neo-Muslima”¹² or radical Muslim woman. These are apparently the result of conversations conducted by Zaimoglu with Muslim women living in contemporary Germany, from which he and his collaborator Günter Senkel selected those they found most interesting to rework for the theatre in their own inimitable style. Said style is often characterised by “rapid-fire, rap-like bursts of transgressive linguistic material, much of it involving scatology, criminality, and sexuality” (Adelson 2005, 96–97), and full of “neologisms, archaisms, vocabulary from all of Germany’s regional dialects, [. . .] Yiddish, anglicisms from transnational media culture, and his own coinages” (Cheesman 2010, 212).

The resultant texts are often extreme in several senses: politically, linguistically, and also in explicit content concerning the women’s sexuality. Accounts of everyday experiences combine with those of family life, inter- and intra-religious conflicts, or are interspersed with declarations of belief and extreme or extremist political statements. In monologue six, for example, the speaker exclaims:

I don’t bandage myself up like a mummy, I am not ... how do you say? ... abstinent.
God forgive me, I have to say it: I still fuck because I know it doesn’t damage my faith.
I pray five times a day. I fast in Ramadan and I am a committed Muslim.
(Zaimoglu/Senkel 2006, 31; ellipses in original)¹³

Here we see the combination of sexual freedom, violent language, emphatic self-assertion, and religious devotion which the play’s title encapsulates. Meanwhile, in monologue 5, Osama bin Laden is praised and the attack on the Twin Towers of 9/11 is presented as a “heroic act” (23). The “black virgins” are thus no saints but rather figures who complicate received ideas of religious, cultural, and sexual purity and whose narratives point to the intersections between these discourses. While scatology and political radicalism are elements far from unusual on the German stage, as Katrin Sieg highlights, the emphasis in *Black Virgins* on Islam as a means of

female emancipation and path to self-expression gives a particularly explosive energy to the play. This positions *Black Virgins* in opposition to a discourse already prevalent in 2006 which presents Islam as inherently antithetical to supposedly “European” values such as women’s and gay rights (Sieg 2010, 173–85; 2011, 166). The play also interrupts a related narrative which, following the Danish cartoon controversy of late 2005 and early 2006, sets freedom of (artistic) expression against what *Newsweek* dubbed “Muslim rage” (Hotz 2012; for an outline of this debate in the theatrical context see Balme 2010). However, as Frauke Matthes argues, the initial prevailing reception of the play was as an artistic product offering “authentic” insights into the hearts and minds of female Muslims in Germany; an interpretation which Matthes suggests appears to be part of its attraction for audiences (2010).

In fact, for the now well-known premiere production, first time theatrical director Neco Çelik and his dramaturgical team created a playful montage of seven of the original monologues, occasionally merging characters together, and, as Katrin Sieg has highlighted, cutting the texts to highlight aspects of the monologues which addressed sexuality (Sieg 2010, 153–54). As Sieg stresses, this means that there were at least two levels of mediation present in the premiere *Black Virgins*: that of Zaimoglu/Senkel’s authorial mediation of the original interviews, and that of the director’s subsequent mediation of the resultant monologues for their production (2010, 154). This is something which, as I have argued elsewhere, the framing of the world premiere attempted to highlight to audiences (Stewart 2014). This reworked text was presented in an abstract *mise-en-scène*, where actresses in flesh-colored body suits and bald caps appeared in blue-lit boxes to deliver their sections of the monologues. The distance between the women on whose voices the play was supposedly based and the bearers of those voices on stage was thus highlighted through the abstract *mise-en-scène*, suggesting an anti-representational approach at work here – although this has been largely ignored in the play’s popular reception (see Stewart 2014).

Indeed, this “interference” with the source material has also been problematized in much of the scholarship so far (cf. Sieg 2010, 171–72; Matthes 2010, 201–02; İ. A.Çelik 2012, 124–26; El Hissy 2012, 119). A key point of concern and detailed analysis in the academic reception of *Black Virgins* has been the extent to which the play might in fact ventriloquize the Muslim woman it claims to offer a voice to, by overwriting her voice with that of a male playwright, and often a male director (ibid). As İpek A. Çelik further argues, such ventriloquism also runs the risk of “selling out” the Muslim woman to a German audience desirous of authentic insights into an exoticized figure. Indeed, while the playwright Zaimoglu’s earlier literary works had a subversive and challenging effect on the mainstream, with *Black Virgins*, the play’s subjects could be seen to emerge rather as “marketable commodities” with which “a minority author creates a niche for himself in the neoliberal market” (2012, 129).

In fact, the very length of Zaimoglu/Senkel’s complete collection of monologues suggests a need to cut the texts prior to performance: taken in their complete form they are simply unwieldy. Only Christian Scholze has produced all ten monologues almost in full – in this case two separate productions were necessary, each of which used a different conceit to link the monologues together. As several directors highlighted when I interviewed them, the complete lack of stage direction in the dramatic text almost forces the director to create an overarching framework to link, and so frame and mediate, the monologues on stage (Scholze, interview with author May 13, 2011; Walburg, interview with author June 7, 2012). As will be seen below, a shift in focus from the premiere production to those that followed it reveals that the play has in fact been performed, and thus encountered by audiences across Germany, in a wide variety of modes. These range from the earnest and naturalistic to the playful and postdramatic. In each case a different value is laid on the claim that the texts originate in or document interviews with real Muslim women, a value which I will also suggest relates to the

different funding contexts in which these productions emerged. In particular, I will focus in on examples from three very different theatres: the production by Christian Scholze at the Westfälisches Landestheater in 2006, a touring theatre intended to serve a broad audience base in North Rhein Westfalia which produced the first new staging of the play to follow the influential Berlin premiere; the 2009 production by Anja Wedig at Theater Junges Bremen, a young independent theatre company with previous links to Zaimoglu; and finally Lars-Ole Walburg's production, which in 2007 was the Austrian premiere of *Black Virgins* and which moved with Walburg to Schauspiel Hannover in 2010.¹⁴ I begin with a brief introduction to the aesthetic choices made in each of these productions.

In Christian Scholze's *Schwarze Jungfrauen I*, five of the monologues were performed *en bloc*, with only minor cuts, suggesting an earnest desire to let the women supposedly at the source of the play have their say. The use of "naturalistic" costume together with the delivery of the two actresses, who took turns at "becoming" each woman on stage, aimed convincingly at psychological realism: immersing the audience in these women's narratives, and only occasionally breaking the spell through character changes which highlighted the actresses' artistry. Further framing was provided by quotations taken from "below the line" comments on online articles about Islam being read aloud as a form of context against which the more extreme comments by the women of the monologues can be considered to emerge. The realist aesthetic and psychologizing approach is mirrored in the emotion-laden close-ups and stark staging emphasized in the publicity photographs and program which accompanied the staging.¹⁵ In my interview with him, Scholze explained that he was certain of the documentary basis of the dramatic texts of *Black Virgins* as he had once experienced how Zaimoglu went about an interview following a book reading. The importance of this experience in determining the degree of mediation the director allowed himself is arguably reflected in his very earnest staging of *Black Virgins*.

Scholze's relationship to the text and genre of *Schwarze Jungfrauen* contrasts strongly with that of Anja Wedig at the Theater Junges Bremen. In an interview I conducted with her, Wedig explained that her own conviction that the monologues were based in real experiences was part of the impetus for her to produce the play. However, the ambiguity surrounding the degree of Zaimoglu's intervention in their portrayal was an element she wanted to retain in the *mise-en-scène* (interview with author July 3, 2012). This took the form of a carnivalesque fairground, where monologues took place at different stations, each under a different sub-director, thus creating a further proliferation of authorship. Elaborate fantastical costumes were created in which the actors' faces, like the words "originally" spoken by the women interviewed by Zaimoglu, were partially obscured by fantastic creations such as bird cages, balloon bunches, and even a knitted vagina mask).¹⁶

The *mise-en-scène* created for Lars-Ole Walburg's production forms a further point of contrast here. For his production, Walburg's team created a fully functional bourgeois kitchen counter at which a real Moroccan meal was prepared throughout the performance by four female actors and one male, all in evening dresses and marigold gloves.¹⁷ The actors would break from the general preparations to deliver blocks of monologue, either individually or, with the more extreme statements, in a choir. Between and behind certain monologues ghostly green projections of images of Islamic practice and daily life were projected onto a permeable curtain which literally veiled the kitchen area. The "real" food and smell of cooking mentioned by many reviewers arguably point to the presence of "the real" on stage, suggesting perhaps the authenticity of the production's other main ingredients: the women's words. At the same time this sense of unmediated contact to another, exotically-couched world, was undermined to a degree by the role switching which made the actor's mediation explicit and, like the onstage veil and mediated images projected onto it, becomes an active distancing device (see also Lang 2011, 181–82). While the cast, drawn from the theatre's regular ensemble, were in any case

unlikely to be confused by the audience for the Turkish and Bosnian characters of the play, this drew a further clear line between the theatre makers and the potentially problematic sentiments they were presenting to the audience.

Criticisms such as İ A. Çelik's concerns about the ethics of making Muslim women comprehensible to a non-Muslim audience by overwriting their original statements are important interventions in a perhaps otherwise overly celebratory narrative of the play's impact. However, as the productions outlined very briefly above show, the theatrical form always involves mediation – there is no direct truth to be presented on stage, and interestingly here it is the less “faithful” direction, such as Wedig's and Walburg's, which highlights this most effectively. İ. A. Çelik's intervention also overlooks the significant role which Zaimoglu and Senkel's play occupies in making it onto state-subsidised German stages at all. As recently as 2004, Erol Boran was able to characterise the German theatrical landscape as a “closed shop” or “private party” as far as Turkish German practitioners were concerned (12). Returning to the performances of the play I suggest that İpek A. Çelik's concerns about the marketization of the Muslim voice might in fact be more productively addressed via an examination of the structural changes which have contributed to this sudden proliferation of productions of *Black Virgins*.¹⁸

“Intercultural” Spectacle or Theatrical Landscape in Transformation? Three Productions of *Black Virgins*

With regard to the Westfälisches Landestheater, it is important to note that the director Christian Scholze was familiar with Zaimoglu's work from having previously directed *Almanya*,¹⁹ a dramatized version of Zaimoglu's prose text *Koppstoff* (*Headstuff*, 1999), which Scholze produced together with actress Günfer Cölgecen in 2002.²⁰ *Almanya* originated in Cölgecen's dissatisfaction with the direction of her role in a 2001 adaptation of *Koppstoff* for the Maxim Gorki Theater's studio theatre,²¹ and not only began a working relationship between

Zaimoglu and Scholze, but was also very timely: from 2002 onwards the state of North Rhein-Westphalia had adopted an emphasis on “intercultural work,” which in 2004 became the highly influential “Handlungskonzept Interkultur” (“intercultural action plan”; Scholze 2011). This change in cultural policy provided funding specifically for developing intercultural competencies and work within institutions in North Rhein-Westphalia. As a touring theatre, the Westfälisches Landestheater already had close links with schools in the area and so, following the success of *Almanya*, was in a good position to bid for funding for further projects under the umbrella of “intercultural cultural work” (ibid). When I interviewed him in 2011, Scholze emphasised the advantage of having this extra money available in terms of making theatre relevant to contemporary debates. Generally the theatre had to set its program a year and a half in advance, resulting in a relatively apolitical set of productions. However, as a result of this extra funding, when *Black Virgins* was published and premiered to great success in Berlin, Scholze was able to mobilize these resources to run his own production and address a current theme – in this case the play was supported by the Minister-President of NRW’s “Cultural Integration” unit. The success of *Black Virgins* in turn helped the Westfälisches Landestheater consolidate its new role as intercultural facilitator, and, following such localized trials, North Rhein-Westphalia as a whole has begun to increasingly sell itself this way. This was a key element in, for example, the successful application by Essen and the Ruhr area for the title of European Capital of Culture in 2010.²²

This pedagogical emphasis helps further explain the serious, naturalistic aesthetic adopted. It is continued in Scholze’s reports of the “very strong need for a conversation” which audiences expressed following performances of *Black Virgins* by his theatre in the Ruhr area. He met this by ensuring “that the follow-up discussion is a part of the production” (Scholze 2011). The importance of these discussions for the overall experience is reflected in their inclusion in the majority of reviews. In, for example, the review which appeared in the regional

newspaper, *Der Westen* when the production was revived in 2009, the centrality of the post-show discussion is reflected in the replacement of a photograph of the production with one of the discussion. What is more, *Gazelle, Das multikulturelle Frauenmagazine* (*Gazelle, The Multicultural Women's Magazine*) encourages its readers to attend the play precisely because of the opportunity for literal dialogue that it offered:

More Muslims should see the play, which after all is about them. They shouldn't feel attacked or dragged through the mud. This is certainly not the intention after all. And as a Muslim one knows only too well oneself that these figures exist in real life. The discussion round which follows the performance offers the chance to come into contact with Muslims and non-Muslims – which is a wonderful opportunity today, when everyone avoids one another. (2007)

This “staging” of the audience might suggest productions of the play as a space “for an audience reaffirming their own middle-class, majority German identities” (Breger 2012, 238), an accusation which has been leveled at the premiere production during its initial run at the HAU theatre.²³ The Westfälisches Landestheater has strong links with local schools, however, and a remit for touring in an area with a higher than average postmigrant, and working-class, population. According to Scholze, this ensured that the audiences for this production were far from being exclusively made-up of Germans without a background of migration. The performances thus became events which literally offered a space for dialogue between individuals of Muslim and non-Muslim faith as well as an opportunity for Muslims to reflect on their own identities. Interestingly, it also forced the theatre to engage more carefully with its Muslim audience – one complaint letter about the play, for example, saw it as inappropriate for performance during Ramadan. So we see here that while a genuine interest in Zaimoglu's work as a playwright may become co-opted by the intercultural framework, the additional

funds provided by that framework also result in a series of unlooked-for outcomes and new considerations for the theatre itself.

While *Black Virgins* helped set a new direction for the Westfälisches Landestheater, the production of the play for the off-scene theatre group Junges Theater Bremen in 2009 functioned more to continue an established interest in postmigrant theatre. This interest dated back to the commission of Zaimoglu/Senkel's *Ja. Tu es. Jetzt* (*Yes. Do it. Now*) by the Junges Theater as the opening production for their permanent home the Schwankhalle, Bremen (2003) and to their 1998 theatrical adaptation of Zaimoglu's first break-through literary work *Kanak Sprak: 24 Mißtöne vom Rande der Gesellschaft*.²⁴ According to director Anja Wedig, the continued interest in Zaimoglu's work stemmed from two impulses: firstly, from the young theatre group's interest in contemporary themes and language, as well as the related theme of "how the 'I' [or self] deals with its environment", and secondly from the fact that members of the group themselves often had backgrounds of migration. Notably, no intercultural funding is mentioned in the materials advertising the play. In a chapter on postmigrant theatre in Berlin, Nina Peters describes "the off-scene as pioneers" in terms of addressing postmigrant reality (2011, 170). Wedig's attitude to her production suggests that this may be equally true beyond the Berlin context – while in the mid to late 2000s a play addressing Muslim women was considered a striking novelty in the more heavily subsidised city and regional theatres,²⁵ an engagement with postmigrant perspectives was already in process in some smaller independent productions on the off-scene. In this case, that engagement took place independently of intercultural funding, although such funding did provide support for the commission of the original playtext back in 2006 and so is always present in the background. Notably it is also here that we have the most playful interaction with the dramatic text, suggesting a combination of attention to the ethics of the production and the confidence, experience, and freedom to deal with those.

A more cautious approach seems to have been taken by Lars-Ole Walburg, the director of the 2007 Austrian premiere, which then later moved with him into the repertoire of the Schauspielhaus Hamburg. Walburg explained his own ambivalent feelings about the play in our interview in 2012. Referring to the potential of *Black Virgins* to explore post-9/11 fears of Islam within the German population as a reason for its popularity, Walburg said:

I'm not too sure really, whether that is good or not, whether you should do that or not in the theatre. [...] I had to justify myself so often for that [...]. At the beginning to the actresses in Vienna, for one [...]. And I've always thought, in the somewhat vague formulation, that everything which promotes new considerations in others, everything which leads to a second step in communication, can only be good (pers. comm.).

Although some hesitancy is clearly at work here, what I find of interest in this statement in terms of interculturalism is that the discourse of justification and legitimation which has long surrounded Zaimoglu's work shifts in its encounter with the theatre practitioner. While earlier engagements with Zaimoglu's literary work and the initial academic reception of *Black Virgins* focused on the legitimating function which the ethnicized authenticity of voice played in the texts (see Abel 2006, 304-05; Matthes 2010), Walburg's reference to justification and so legitimization here does not highlight the authenticity of the texts, their speakers, or their representation in his production. Rather his focus is on the authenticity of the audience encounters provoked by the production as event. In a time of mass media and technological advance, theatre, and particularly well-funded theatre, is frequently in the position of having to justify its own existence or necessity. In doing so, the "live" nature of performance and the "real" presence and community-building potential of the theatrical audience is often highlighted (Auslander 1999). The emphasis on post-show discussions, that is, on theatre as a place of "real interaction" between people of a particular locality or particular population

groups, which we see here, is significant in allowing theatres such as Walburg's – and, as we saw, Scholze's – to position themselves as offering a more “authentic” form of encounter than other media. A broad view of the multiple productions of *Black Virgins* therefore reveals the increasing role of the question of which audiences state-funded theatres in particular should be aiming to attract.

This arguably serves the agenda of the theatre industry more than that of the women who the play originally claimed to give voice to. In the case of Walburg's theatre, both Schauspiel Hannover and the Vienna Burgtheater are well-established houses with an audience mainly drawn from the educated middle classes of the respective cities. The staging of *Black Virgins* in these venues may seem to bring us back to a dynamic of a production aimed at explaining the Muslim woman to a mainstream population in disciplinary fashion. Alternatively, however, we can also read Walburg's decision to stage the play in these bastions of high culture as a political move in itself. Certainly, Thomas Lang highlights Walburg's approach as “emphatically serious, (more) politically engaged” than the approach previously present at Schauspiel Hannover (2011, 179). Although not specifically tied to funding reserved for intercultural work, Schauspiel Hannover is a theatre supported by funds from the state of Niedersachsen (Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur 2010, 23). A comparison of the state's “Report on Culture” from 2010 and from 2013/14, shows a shift in the position of interculturalism in the area during this period. While in the 2010 report one brief and somewhat vague page towards the back of the report was dedicated to “Interkultur,” by the 2013/14 publication interculturalism had moved up to occupy a space front and center, as an element of the state's cultural policy which was “of central importance” (Niedersächsisches Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur 2014, 16). The definition of interculturalism had also become more specific: “[c]oncretely it is about developing an intercultural cultural politics for the state – supplemented by the cultural politics of the local authorities – as a form of diversity

management which is orientated toward integration” (ibid). This, the 2013/14 report claims, is reflected in objectives agreed with the three state theatres (38), while “the development of new audiences is a stated aim of many theatres” (39).

A determined direction towards what has begun to be called “intercultural mainstreaming,” or efforts to normalize inclusive theatre practice, can certainly be seen at Schauspiel Hannover under Walburg’s leadership. Since 2009 he has been instrumental not just in staging plays about migration, but also in engaging postmigrant directors and dramaturges such as Nuran David Calis (see also Lang 2011). In our conversation, Walburg highlighted that if one wants to democratize theatre, it is important to respond to the needs of the changing population of Germany. This is a point of view which seems to have gained traction since the premiere of *Black Virgins*. Mark Terkessedis, for example, writes of the need for public institutions, including the theatres, to shift to serve the diverse population of Germany today (2010a, 108; 196–203; see also Siavash 2011, 86). Similarly, Neco Çelik, the director of the premiere production, comments that the postmigrant population also pay taxes and so should have equal access to state resources for the stage (quoted in Temiz 2013). At the same time, as Terkessedis has also suggested, the recognition of postmigrants as not just citizens but above all as consumers needed by a model in decline is somewhat problematic, following as it does a neoliberal, market logic (2010b, 6).

Interculturalism – Serving the Market or the (Post)Migrant Presence in Theatre?

The three homes of the premiere production to date – the HAU, the Ballhaus Naunynstraße, and the Gorki Theatre – have each benefitted from the increased presence of interculturalism in German cultural policies. Without funding for intercultural project work *Black Virgins* may not have been commissioned, and since the 2006 premiere of that play these

three institutions, and the cultural practitioners and artistic directors who have moved between them, have had a significant effect on the postmigrant presence in German theatre. Work there has challenged other theatres to raise their game in this regard (see also Weiler 2014, 227), whether through programmatic statements by these theatre's artistic directors in the German media or via the artistic statements made by the commission and performance of controversial new plays such as *Black Virgins*.

As the examples in the previous section show, however, beyond these theatre houses *Black Virgins* itself has also frequently been staged at points which signal a shift in the direction of other theatres or the start of their active engagement with migrant and postmigrant concerns. Whether initially successful or not, the inclusion of *Black Virgins* in a theatre's repertoire often seems to have either triggered or been the first step in an active policy of engagement with migrant and postmigrant Germany which had previously been largely absent.²⁶ As a result both of its potential to create new points of community interaction, and of the resultant audience it could win for German theatres, in the wake of *Black Virgins* postmigrant theatre began to contribute to a broader drive to legitimate theatre as a place of "authentic" encounter in an intercultural society that is only slowly getting to know itself as such.

This both creates an opportunity in which "precisely the ubiquitous question of migration could be connected with a renewal of the theatre industry" (Terkessidis 2010b, 6), as well as an issue in terms of the extent to which superficial engagements with migration result in a situation in which the migrant or postmigrant life serve as "raw material for the reanimation of the theatre" (2010a, 199; see also Siavash 2011, 84). In a case of life mirroring art, in the dramatic text of *Black Virgins*, the speaker of monologue five identifies herself and her "sisters" as "[t]he future market and the current reality" (Zaimoglu and Senkel 2006, 27). Although scholars such as İ. A. Çelik have questioned the ethical and political legitimacy of *Black Virgins*, positioning it as a play in which a male playwright creates or lays bare a

“confessing” Muslim woman for the desiring gaze of a mainly German German audience to their own advantage, this knowing nod to the market from within the play is worth highlighting. Theatre maker Tamer Yiğit comments on the negative effect of a marketized view on theatre practitioners with a background of migration, stating that “the whole theatre business is a zoo and we are the exotic animals [...] And at the same time the furthest I have ‘migrated’ is from Kreuzberg to Tempelhof [two adjacent districts in Berlin]” (2011, 15; quoted in Peters 2011, 172). His choice of language here emphasizes his feeling of being received as spectacle and object of the gaze, rather than producer of performance (see also Siavash 2011, 84); it uses a metaphor which is common among artists in the German context who feel the burden of representation to express an uneven power relationship at work (see Chin 2007, 117-18; Cheesman 2007, 88–89).

The self-reflexive language of *Black Virgins* arguably acknowledges and names this issue, but also highlights the role which this gaze, however problematic, has to play in a pragmatic politics of recognition for postmigrant artists who want their work to be seen. The uneasy positioning of the success of plays such as *Black Virgins* between market demands and a more rights-based approach to inclusion and recognition in contemporary Germany is thus not something that the playwrights and directors involved are unaware of. Indeed, such tongue-in-cheek signals within the theatrical work produced draw attention to the complex frameworks which both enable and constrain (McIvor 2011) engagements with Europe’s newer citizens in the theatre. While Sieg reads the play in its premiere production as a means for working through entanglements of feminism and Eurocentricism today, here I suggest that the play’s subsequent journey across the German theatrical landscape can also help us identify and unpack a further entanglement: one in which the very interculturalism that had previously marginalized postmigrant writers as being outside the German literary canon reemerges and has the potential to be redeployed, situating migration and postmigrant experience as central, rather than

marginal to the German theatrical landscape. The current moment provides an important one for this form of stocktaking, as Germany opens itself to a new chapter in its migration history and to some of those displaced in the current refugee crisis. At the same time, such tensions necessarily accrue differently around projects which emerge from the postmigrant demand for recognition as artist practitioners and shapers of the national imaginary, than they do around projects which use theatre as rapid response to the refugee crisis and often involve work with people in a very vulnerable situation with recent experiences of trauma.²⁷

The proliferation of productions of *Black Virgins* certainly suggests a new interest in work presenting postmigrant perspectives, but also highlights the new financial incentives attached to the production of this work in the form of audience development as well as funding.²⁸ While the potential exists to reframe and repurpose this new intercultural bent in the theatrical funding landscape in the ways suggested by Terkessidis, as recently as 2011 Christina Holthaus was able to conclude that only “in very few cases, is interculturalism, however, already the basis for the total artistic concept” and itself fully integrated into the theatre’s programming (149-50). She highlights that “if the aim is, however, to create an unwavering intercultural orientation then interculturalism should no longer represent a separately financed ‘special area’, but rather must become a self-evident point of consideration that stands at the centre of the theatrical work” (157).

Indeed, arguably to date the prevalence of interculturalism has partly shifted the division, which previously existed between funding from social and artistic pots, to a division within artistic pots. The funding for the Ballhaus Naunynstraße, for example, the second home of the *Black Virgins* premiere, has been at times accused of building that institution at the expense of other intercultural or postmigrant projects in Berlin (the funding which the theatre received from the Senate Chancellery for Cultural Affairs in 2008, for example, had previously been allotted to Berlin’s Tiyatrom theatre) (Kömürcü Nobrega 2011, 96). The shift to an

inclusion of interculturalism in cultural policy more broadly has also threatened the maintenance of smaller funds such as the intercultural fund of the aforementioned Chancellery which has proved vital to upcoming artists whose background of migration seems to have counted against them in other applications (ibid, 106). Equally, as plays such as *Schwarze Jungfrauen* become more broadly popular, it is important to continue to differentiate between the performance of pieces with subject matter which appears “intercultural” and intercultural change within theatres on a structural level.

The relationship between the long-overdue intercultural opening of the theatres as institutions and the integration management which appears to be a source of that opening also creates an unexpected alliance: between the interests of artists with a background of migration, who have long sought artistic space in the German context and the governance practices of a state which such artists often critique. As European neoliberalism gives with one hand, it takes with another, creating a new set of dynamics, or dialectic, for postmigrant artists and their allies to navigate. This tension is arguably reflected in the very different functions which the productions outlined in this chapter fulfill – from educational dialogue to exploratory provocation, to cautious yet consistent redirection of resources.

At the same time, the multiple productions of *Black Virgins* show that the cultural capital associated with postmigrant theatre has increased significantly in recent years (cf. Kulaoğlu 2010); a change which carries with it the potential for that capital to then deploy intercultural funding structures and policy demands differently. Rather than reading the aesthetics of plays such as *Black Virgins* interculturally then, I suggest that far more is revealed both about the theatrical productions in question and the contexts in which they emerge by exploring the dialectical play of interculturalism, institution, and policy behind the scenes. Part expedience, part engagement, as interculturalism moves from practice to policy and state-sponsored interculturalism encounters postmigrant theatre in the EU, unexpected alliances are

revealed: the relationship between theatre and interculturalism becomes politicized in new and unexpected ways.

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¹ All translations from German-language sources are my own. Note on spelling of Turkish names: in Germany, Turkish names have been rendered both with and without Turkish characters (e.g. Zaimoglu vs Zaimoğlu, Çelik vs Celik). As different positions are sometimes expressed through this, here I try to maintain the spelling convention which the artist in question seems to use – thus some names appear in the Germanised variant.

² The definition used by the Office for Statistics altered in 2016. The new definition replaces that used in the 2011 census which encompassed all foreign residents of Germany, as well as those who themselves migrated, or who have at least one parent who migrated, *after* 1955 to the geographical area currently occupied by the Federal Republic of Germany (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2017). The one in five statistic remains true of both definitions.

³ Apart from the first three words, the quotation here appears in the translation provided by Capelle in Weiler (2014).

⁴ Zaimoglu (born in Bolu, Turkey, 1964) is well known within Germany for his prose work, newspaper columns, and role in the German Islam Conference. He was among the first writers of Turkish origin to gain mainstream prominence within the German literary scene for his work as *enfant terrible*. Senkel (born in Neumünster, Germany, 1958), on the other hand, was an unknown bookseller prior to his collaboration with Zaimoglu and so has been the subject of less critical attention. It is certainly Zaimoglu's reputation which has shaped the reception of their co-authored plays, with some studies not even referring to Senkel as coauthor.

⁵ For an English-language summary of the latest of these reports see the interview with Birgit Mandel: <https://www.goethe.de/en/kul/ges/eu2/rhr/20940616.html>. Accessed on July 1 2017.

⁶ This sum rose slightly to 4.9 million Euros in 2013 (Statistisches Bundesamt 2016, 78). European Funds for Regional Development and European Social Funds also offer structural funding for culture in Germany, however, a differentiated overview of these funds in Germany is not available via the Cultural Reports due to their complex and transnational nature (Statistisches Bundesamt 2016, 79).

⁷ See for example the page dedicated to this concept on the website of Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media:

https://www.bundesregierung.de/Webs/Breg/DE/Bundesregierung/BeauftragtefuerKulturundMedien/kultur/kulturelleBildung/kulturfueralle/_node.html. Accessed on April 3 2017.

⁸ For a genealogy of the shift of the specific discourse of “intercultural opening” from a recommendation for the social services to its role as a task for society more generally in Germany, see Curvello 2009.

⁹ In the 1990s some theatre groups did actively situate themselves as working within the framework of “intercultural theatre”; these included a group named “Türkisch-Deutsches Theater – Interkulturelles Theater” (Turkish-German Theatre – Intercultural Theatre) or TDT for short, however they appear to have arisen in an educational context, namely in relation to the programme in “Kulturpädagogik” or “Cultural Pedagogy/Cultural Education” at the University of Hildesheim (Siavash 2011, 83–84).

¹⁰ I would argue that the shift in the placement of “culture” in this new terminology also has the potential to be highly productive; no longer part of an adjective that describes and so defines a type of performance, “culture” reappears here as a noun acted on by a verb, as a linguistic object that brings forth performance but can also be altered through performance. It more accurately allows for the existence of multiple theatrical cultures within, and in differently distanced relationships to, a national framework.

¹¹ While Terkessidis' intervention follows the re-emergence of interculturalism as a funding category, he has been invited to speak at numerous conferences and events run by those involved in shaping, implementing, or responding to this development – his work is mentioned throughout the documentation of the 2011 German Dramaturgical Society's conference, at which he also spoke (see, for example, Dramaturgische Gesellschaft 2011, 6, 15-18, 36). This suggests that a singular definition of interculturalism in this context has yet to be settled on. See also Christina Holthaus (2011), who talks of “a great lack of clarity over what making intercultural theatre, or finding a sustainable way to open up an institution interculturally, actually means” (147).

¹² This is a term popularised by Zaimoglu in his discussions of the play, but which was already in use in sociological studies of postmigrant women's relationship to Islam in Germany (see, for example, Nökel 2002, 31-65).

¹³ Copyright © 2013 by Rowohlt Verlag GmbH, Reinbek bei Hamburg. Aufführungsrechte [Production rights]: Rowohlt Theater Verlag, Reinbek bei Hamburg, Hamburger Straße 17, 21465 Reinbek. The full set of monologues is now also available as an e-book from Rowohlt. This line is also partially quoted in slightly different translations by Katrin Sieg (2010, 159), Claudia Breger (2012, 233), and İpek A. Çelik (2012, 122). İ. A. Çelik notes that these lines are those perhaps most frequently quoted in reviews. See also Stewart 2014, 3 n. 4.

¹⁴ The production at off-scene Theater Willy Praml, Frankfurt (2009), where the play was performed together with a production of Hebbel's *Gyges and his Ring* under the title *Die 1002. Nacht* is also a particularly interesting example – unlike the other productions discussed in this article, here the play was performed by non-professional actors, Muslim women from the local area who responded to an advert looking for volunteers. The self-development and confidence of the women involved was as important as the final aesthetic product. This production was supported by concept funding from the Fund for Performing Arts, i.e. from national rather than regional or local funds. This production is not discussed in more detail here partly for reasons of space, partly as a film is available (Theater Willy Praml 2010) which documents the rehearsal processes, includes interviews with participants and audience members, and extracts from a recording of the play in performance.

¹⁵ Descriptions of performances are based on the recordings of each production provided by the relevant directors. Images of this production can be seen at: http://www.guenfer.de/SchauspielTheaterprojekte/Schwarze_Jungfrauen/SchwarzeJungfrauenSchauspielTheaterProjekte.html. Accessed on March 24 2018.

¹⁶ Images of this production can be seen at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/schwankhalle/albums/72157618132201556/with/3637603143>. Accessed on March 24 2018.

¹⁷ Images of this production can be seen at: <http://www.sebastiendupouey.net/swarze-jungfrauen.html> [last accessed 24.03.2018]; http://www.ninawetzel.net/ninawetzel.net/Schwarze_Jungfrauen.html [last accessed 24.03.2018]; <http://www.langeleine.de/?p=6889>. Accessed on March 24 2018.

¹⁸ This is further suggested by the accompanying surge in other semi-documentary and documentary theatre productions which focus on migration and postmigration in Germany. Examples of this genre include, to name only a few: Zaimoglu/Senkel's own *Schattenstimmen (Shadow Voices)*; Ballhaus Naunynstraße, 2008), a second documentary piece in the same vein, this time focused on illegal immigrants to Germany; *Moschee.de (Mosque.de)*; Schauspiel Hannover, 2010) based on Robert Thalheim and Kolja Mensing's research into reactions in a Berlin community to the building of a new Mosque; and *Jenseits: Bist du schwul oder bist du Türke? (On the other side: Are you gay or are you Turkish?)*; Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin, 2008), Nurkan Erpulat's documentary play exploring the intersection of supposed antithetical identities in contemporary Germany. More recently, in the wake of the current refugee crisis, this dramatic (or postdramatic) form has also had a key role to play in attempts to bring the narratives of this newer form of migration to the stage. Productions such as Marita Ragonese's *Heimat (n)irgendwo ([No]Where to call Home?)*; Theater Bonn, 2011), and Nuran David Calis' *Brennpunkt X (Flashpoint X)*, which premiered in June 2015 at the Saarländisches Staatstheater, both use interview-based monologues as a rapid and emotive means of engaging their established audiences with the challenges faced by those caught up in the current refugee crisis. While much has been, and continues to be said, about the ethics of representation and power relations which this form involves, it is the structural element of this proliferation which brings me to interculturalism, a term I am going to use not

to analyze the aesthetics of the productions at hand, but rather to explore the effect of policies promoting interculturalism on the institutional frameworks in which these productions emerge. For more on documentary responses to the refugee crisis in German theatre and beyond see the articles gathered in Sharifi and Wilmer's 2016 special topic section of *Critical Stages*, particularly Sieg (2016).

¹⁹ *Almanya* is the Turkish word for Germany. I therefore leave the title untranslated here.

²⁰ Images from that production and a selection of reviews are available at www.bofinder.de, a website dedicated to the production. Accessed on 11 March 2013.

²¹ This production took place prior to the arrival of Shermin Langhoff as artistic director. Film director Fatih Akin also cites dissatisfaction with the roles available to him as an actor as one of the factors which led him to begin directing films himself (Akin, quoted in Burns 2006, 142). A similar level of dissatisfaction within the theatrical sphere also led Turkish German actor and doctor Tuğsal Moğul to found theatre company "Theater Operation." More information on the company can be found here: <http://theater-operation.de/?page=Profil>. Accessed on March 11 2013.

²² For a critical engagement with interculturalism and the divergence between its rhetorical and actual place in the activities of Ruhr2010 see the essays collected in Ernst and Heimböckel (2012).

²³ Breger raises this issue with respect to the world premiere; however, she also concludes that the visual aesthetics and mode of encounter there force a renegotiation rather than reassertion of identity on the part of the spectator.

²⁴ This was a prose collection of artistically reworked interviews with young Turkish men from the "margins" of German society, mainly second or third generation "immigrants." The Theater Junges Bremen production is featured in the infamous encounter between Feridun Zaimoglu and Heide Simonis on the *3 nach 9* chat show, the transcript of which was reproduced in English as the prelude to Tom Cheesman's monograph on Turkish German Literature (2007, 1–11). A recording of this can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wrV7adgbcMc>. Accessed on 30 November 2016. A large number of articles address *Kanak Sprak*, but Cheesman's monograph also offers a good introduction to the text and a useful bibliography for further reading.

²⁵ For a very useful and detailed overview of the complex German subsidy system for theatre see Weiler (2014).

²⁶ Even where this was not the case, change often appears to have occurred on a more personal level: one director of a further production also explained that it had been a learning experience for her – in wanting to understand the monologues, she had learnt a lot about what she describes as another culture.

²⁷ Further projects span these two categories, such as the Maxim Gorki Theatre's Exile Ensemble, which provides a working space for refugees who worked in theatres prior to having to leave their home countries.

²⁸ In the case of *Black Virgins* I would stress these perspectives should be considered as much those of the playwrights and original commissioners, as the women at the source of the monologues.