The Curious Case of the Turkish Drag Queen:
Film and Social Justice Education in Advanced German
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In this essay, I will discuss my inclusion of Kutluğ Ataman's film, *Lola und Bilidikid*

(1999), in an advanced German conversation and composition or stylistics course on "Mysteries

and Crime Stories" at a large, public university. Part of this will be an assessment of the

pedagogical approaches used in class, the outside work related to this film, and the students'

reactions to this complicated cultural product. The topic of the course in which I featured this

film changes each semester but maintains a focus on refinement of the students' oral and written

expression in German. The narrative of Ataman's film treats the experience of Lola, a Turkish-

German drag performer, whose surprisingly limited appearances—and eventual death—in the

film's action nonetheless structure the other characters' behavior. *Lola und Bilidikid* offers a

chance for students of German Studies to examine such contemporary issues as immigration,

xenophobia, homophobia, prostitution, and the nation as well as categories of identity like

gender, sexuality, race, class, and health. In what follows, I will briefly examine some feminist

and queer pedagogical theories relevant to my course design and describe the course itself and

my use of cultural products in it. I will argue that language instruction offers a prime opportunity

to discuss otherness and identity, both in the target culture and in the students' own experiences,

and that Ataman's film is a useful tool for reaching this goal.

In this iteration of the course, I chose to structure it around German-language crime

stories in literature and film. I had three main thematic, linguistic, and pedagogical goals for this

course: first, to unify a variety of cultural products around a particular theme or genre, especially

one not often taught in German Studies and at our university; second, to supplement this "red

thread" with a concentration on ideas of Otherness or externality; and third, to address the course's generic objective of refining the students' speaking and writing while providing interesting and relevant topics around which the students would engage their language abilities in reading, listening, speaking, writing. Before proceeding with more information on the course, it is important to summarize the film's action so that the rest of the work below is clearer with respect to the material toward which I was moving in the course and also with which I wanted the students to contend.

Ataman's film is partly about the love story between two of the main gay male characters Lola (played by Gandi Mukli) and Bili, also known as Bilidikid (Erdal Yıldız), but some of the other characters feature even more prominently—especially more so than Lola. With Şehrazat (Celal Perk) and Kalıpso (Mesut Özdemir), Lola is a drag performer in a group called *Die Gastarbeiterinnen*. Bili and his brother, İskender (Murat Yılmaz), are hustlers. Lola has two brothers, whom we encounter in the film: an older brother, Osman (Hasan Alı Mete), and a younger brother, Murat (Baki Davrak). Lola has never met Murat, because she was kicked out of her home when she was younger because of her sexuality/gender identity. There are also three xenophobic, young, white German males—Rudy (Willi Herren), Hendryk (Mario Irrek), and Walter (Jan Andres)—who harass and intimidate Lola. İskender brings into the plot a thread of his budding relationship with an older, aristocratic, white German man, Friedrich von Seeckt (Michael Gerber), whom İskender met after a sexual encounter with him in a park and whose mother, Ute (Inge Keller), is very involved in his affairs. After Murat's brother, Osman, tries to force him to have sex with a female prostitute, Murat—whom we first see in a gay cruising spot at the beginning of the film—runs away from home. Murat then meets Bili, who introduces him

to the world of hustling in public men's rooms. After Lola ends up dead, floating in the Spree River, Murat finds out from Şehrazat and Kalıpso that Osman raped Lola when he found out that she was gay. In their belief that the three xenophobic, young men are responsible for Lola's death, Bili and Murat lure them into an abandoned factory. After Bili castrates Rudy, he kills Hendryk, but not before he is fatally wounded. Murat discovers from Walter, who has escaped alive, that none of them was responsible for Lola's death. Murat knows that it was Osman, who had killed Lola. Murat confronts Osman, thereby informing his mother (Nisa Yıldırım) of the circumstances surrounding Lola's death.

Before proceeding, it should be noted that the "German cultural" aspect of Ataman's film, a primary reason for including it in a German Studies curriculum, is not without caveat. The placement of the film's plot and the production of the film in Berlin/Germany has been seen as more incidental than by original design. Kutluğ Ataman is Turkish, not Turkish-German; was trained in film primarily in the United States; has never lived in Germany; and secured the majority of the film's funding from German and American sources (Clark 560). Moreover, a significant portion (still a minority) of the film's dialogue is in Turkish. Randall Halle writes that Ataman set the film in Berlin "because of the real existing, organized and culturally active queer Turkish scene there" (46). Barbara Mennel notes that Ataman had already conceived of the film while he was at film school at UCLA (143). Karin Hamm-Ehsani contends that Ataman's film "can be considered a 'German' film because it was produced in Germany, with Turkish-German actors who speak mostly in the German language, and because it dramatizes the lives of Turkish-Germans living in Berlin after the fall of the Wall" (367). None of these items should be particularly responsible for the inclusion or exclusion of the film under the rubric of "German

film," but the assemblage gestures toward what Gerd Gemünden has described as "the difficulty of articulating what German national cinema has come to mean in the new millennium" (181).

Even from the summary, one can see the challenges and opportunities that using this film could offer. Two of the most important issues referenced by this film are homophobia and racism, both in a general sense as well as in Germany in particular. The decision to include any material related to minorities entails subscription to a philosophy of education that endorses broadening students' perspectives on the "diversity of human experience" (Fletcher and Russell 34). If one's pedagogical goals include fostering respect for others, and I would argue that most educators would strive toward this, progress must begin with an exposure of students to types of otherness: philosophies and modes of being that differ from their own (cf. Landorf, et al. 41-42).

One of the benefits of including such a film in a course is the fodder it gives for communicating about and discussing contemporary "German culture." Most language teachers will declare that they attempt to include "culture" in their language classrooms, sometimes without thinking about how that idea could be problematic or, at least, complicated. With the desire to create a background or to give a foundation on which students can situate their knowledge, language teachers will often point to some kind of cultural and societal scaffolding that students can take as a baseline. Adapting E.D. Hirsch's 1987 definitions of (American) culture, Stephen Brockmann writes that "Quite simply defined, German culture is the culture of literate citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany. [This] definition presumes that there is some common cultural core largely known to the vast majority of literate German citizens. This definition is intended to be descriptive, not prescriptive: It asks: What *do* literate German citizens know? not: What *should* they know?" (n.p.). In participating in this discussion of definitions,

Brockmann, who references, for example, Benedict Anderson and Homo Bhabha, connects understandings of culture to ideas of the nation and considers how they help to define each other. There is a mainstreaming effect, or a making-generic, here that sidelines developments in subcultures. Brockmann argues that to posit the existence of "German culture is not to deny the existence within Germany of subcultures of any sort"; instead, Brockmann writes, "we are looking for what connects most literate Germans together in a nation" and what differentiates them from the members of other nations (n.p.). This excision of the extraordinary—usually borne of necessity, in that no one educator can do justice to all elements of culture and society—is an ancillary impetus for my inclusion of Ataman's film, as we will see below.

One reason that "culture" can be a guiding factor in curriculum is that either students claim to want more of it or instructors believe that students do. Monika Chavez poses the question of whether language teachers even understand what students want or need from their language courses, including when it comes to culture (130). According to Chavez, "topics commonly associated with the study of German, such as science [...], classical music [...], business applications [...], and even literature [...], did not appear of great importance to the learners" (131). Other categories of student interest among Chavez's study respondents included language alone (i.e., grammar, regional dialects) and "culture" in the form of events the students experienced in high school language classes—the latter calling attention to what Chavez calls "cultural fossilization," in which students' ideas of culture remain focused on holidays, food, and dress (135). Potential problems of integrating various cultural elements into language courses include diverting time from explicit *language* instruction, teachers' fears that they are not

qualified to teach cultural topics, and having to reckon with students' personal attitudes toward a topic (Hadley 346-47).[1] All of these could similarly be obstacles to use of a film like Ataman's.

Increasingly, especially in recurring ages of dwindling support, teachers and professors in the humanities have the exacting task not only of being almost all things to almost all people (e.g., teaching German society and history in addition to language and cultural products) but rather also providing one of the few spaces in which the unusual can be investigated and celebrated. Mary Aswell Doll writes about her acceptance of that responsibility: "Once a student whispered to me about Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, 'Dr. Doll, this book is nasty.' With a shock of recognition I realized that, as an English teacher, I have a special duty. I must work against the dulling tendency to make nice. I must teach the nonnormal, be the nonnormal" (288). If one thinks of the classroom as a nexus of the personal and political, one must accept this it is also a locale for confirming and/or challenging the status quo. The acknowledgment, if not advocacy, of the existence of the extraordinary and of difference is transgressive per se. Inclusion of such topics and materials in the classroom, especially if one considers multiculturalism to be an awareness of difference, has also come under the purview of foreign language instructors.

bell hooks calls this kind of transgression educating as the practice of freedom. It is also a form of social justice education. In an amazing sourcebook on social justice methods developed in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Lee Anne Bell introduces the contributors' approach to education as consisting of "both a process and a goal" (3): "The goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and

psychologically safe and secure. We envision a society in which individuals are both self-determining [...], and interdependent [...]. The process for attaining the goal of social justice we believe should also be democratic and participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency and human capacities for working collaboratively to create change" (Bell 3-4). I cite this at length, because I believe it is a reminder of the goals many of us have in our professional and personal lives and one of the many reasons we work with students of language and culture. This panoply of theories and approaches exists in large part due to the work of feminist, anti-racist, anti-classist thinkers and activists who built and increased awareness of myriad perspectives based on constellations of race, gender, sexual orientation, class, ability, religion, and age, to name a few.

Not a new idea, feminist critiques of the canon can tell us that the act of structuring a course and planning its materials is itself imbued with power that can affect the inclusion of students and teachers alike. Indeed, the creation of a canonical list testifies to a certain statement of values: *This is important enough for you to read it*. On a smaller scale than the creation of a canon of German literature per se, the selection of course texts will similarly indicate essential or excellent qualities.[2] The appearance of volumes and essays that thematize and problematize canon formation also attest to the concept's complicated nature.[3] In my selection of texts for this course as in others, I aimed for introducing the students to a variety of texts: some canonical, some not, some "normal," some not.

Feminist theory has also greatly and explicitly informed pedagogical methods at least since the 1970s. Writing in the 1990s, Julie Brown noted that feminist pedagogy was "still defining itself," but, in some ways, overlapped with work being done by other educational

reformers, namely "to critique existing educational structures, to create a corrective mechanism by providing an alternative viewpoint and data to substantiate it, and to lay the groundwork for a transformation of education and society" (52). The nature of feminist pedagogy would tend to eliminate the possibility of standardized practice; indeed, Brown found in her survey of teachers that there was little uniformity in how feminists teach (58). Nonetheless, a common strategy tends to be to encourage an appreciation of heterogeneity (55).[4]

Fundamental and of tremendous value for social justice education, and for the goals of my lessons around Ataman's film, are ideas comprising critical pedagogy. Arising from the work of Paulo Freire, critical pedagogy aims to educate by also encouraging an awareness of diversity and the subversion of oppressive social paradigms. Informing this work is an idea that those individuals who face institutionalized oppression and discrimination can effect change through liberating their marginalized experiences (Adams 38). While a goal of social justice education can be to "challenge and contradict all stereotypic beliefs or attitudes" (Adams 40), Hardiman and Jackson advise instructors to accept that each student may be at a different stage of understanding their own and others' identities ("Racial Identity Development" 34). Critical thinking joins a kind of consciousness-raising and fosters an environment in which everyone in the classroom has the potential to learn from each other and begin to see the world from others' perspectives (Adams 40).[5]

It must be noted that any interaction between concepts of queerness and foreign language pedagogical praxis is undertheorized. This is possibly because foreign language instruction stands at a paradoxical nexus of the humanities' aim to address the infinitude of human experience and a desire to foster rather finite—or definable—accuracy in grammatical and

cultural context. As Anthony J. Liddicoat notes, however, this dearth of focused scholarship on sexuality (or sexual orientation) and foreign language instruction does not mean the former is absent in the latter, "but rather that some sexual identities (that is heterosexual identities) are established as an uncontested and unreflective norm that guides all discussion of sexuality. Heterosexuality is always potentially present in language classrooms through images of heterosexually based societies: through marriage, romance, and the life stories of both fictional and real subjects" (191).[6]

While many textbooks and instructional materials for German language and culture have embraced the multiculturalist trend of the 1990s onward, sexual orientation remains a taboo in published textbooks. While conditions have improved in some respects, especially for the depiction of racial and ethnic diversity in German textbooks, other categories remain underrepresented or ignored (cf. Ilett). James W. Jones observes that "What was on the margin three decades ago has barely edged closer to the center in the textbooks and course materials available to use" (n.p.). To my knowledge, there is no German textbook used in the United States that thematizes sexual orientation, same-sex relationships, or the relationships legally recognized in Germany (since 2001), Austria (since 2010), and Switzerland (since 2005), namely *eingetragene Lebenspartnerschaften* or *eingetragene Partnerschaften*. Nonetheless, these categories are included on the German census, for example, which in 2010 recorded 23,000 *eingetragene Lebenspartnerschaften* and 63,000 same-sex household pairs. This number can be seen as minimal, given the voluntary nature of the question and reporting. Moreover, these figures address only those in coupled, cohabiting relationships. Other disciplines (including other approaches to language instruction) have not been quite so timid, as Cynthia D. Nelson (44) and

Liddicoat (191) demonstrate. When such topics are included in classes, they can reflect one or both of two main pedagogical perspectives. The first is an inclusionary one whose aims, as Nelson describes them, are "to make learning environments more 'gay-friendly'" (44). The second is an interrogatory one, which problematizes sexual identity in order to make it less self-explanatory. Disciplinarily, these two approaches have their genealogy in lesbian and gay studies and queer theory, respectively. One's decisions about which approach(es) to utilize will naturally depend on course goals, students (and, in a language course, their proficiency), among other concerns.

The foreign language classroom can be an excellent space in which to explore ideas of queer pedagogy as well as to interrogate social difference (Kumashiro 81). At a large university, language classes (especially those with lower capacity) are often places in which students feel less anonymous. In a way that is different from their other courses, language classes call on students to discuss elements of their personal identities, from the less intrusive (*Was ist Ihre Lieblingsfarbe?*) to the somewhat more personal (*Beschreiben Sie Ihre Familie!*). A strategy that engages students' ability to conceptualize other kinds of identities while permitting them to deflect uncomfortable or embarrassing questions is to offer the option or to require that students create alternate identities in the classroom or for specific activities. Language teachers can and do choose discrete objectives for a lesson, unit or course. The process of informing one's pedagogy with queer theory, however, employs the broader goal of "deconstruct[ing] binaries central to Western modes of meaning making, learning, teaching, and doing politics" (Luhmann 150-51). Luhmann argues that inherent in any efforts toward queerly pedagogical methods is an interest in provoking questions about identities and selves as well as how these constructions are

perceived (153). Allowing such a theoretical background to inform one's teaching can make one more amenable to appreciating a diversity of identities and worldviews in the classroom.

"Advanced Conversation and Composition," or "Stylistics" is taught every spring semester at this university. Given its specific audience, the course normally draws 8-10 undergraduate students, almost all of whom are German majors. My experience with the course was slightly unusual, in that in the spring 2009 semester, there were 16 students in the course, which included four graduate students and undergraduates (mostly juniors and seniors) with majors or programs of study in German, Japanese, Comparative Literature, Linguistics, and Psychology. Classes generally meet 150 minutes per week (two 75-minute sessions or three 50-minute sessions).

Cultural products in the course included mysteries and crime stories from the eighteenth century to the present in both literature and film. Before watching Ataman's film, *Lola und Bilidikid* (1999), the students read and watched texts and films like Brecht's "Über die Popularität des Kriminalromans" (1938/39), Schiller's "Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre" (1786), Kleist's "Der zerbrochne Krug" (1811), Droste-Hülshoff's *Die Judenbuche* (1842), *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (1920), *M* (1931), DEFA film *Affaire Blum* (1948), DEFA's film adaptation of Theodor Fontane's novella *Unterm Birnbaum* (1973), and short stories by Milena Moser ("Mein 4. Mord" and "Mein 6. Mord," 1993), Sabine Deitmer ("Die Männer von nebenan," 1988), Kathrin Heinrichs ("Lippstädter Liebeshäppchen," 2004), and Ruth Moehlen-Studzinski ("Mord(s)treffen," 2003). Background information on mysteries was excerpted from Haycraft and Symons. I selected these texts to show students a range of possibilities within the mystery and crime genre. The students were able to read non-fiction, short fiction, moral

philosophy, and a novella as well as watch milestone German films and examples from East German cinema. Additionally, several of the texts were written by women, and many of the texts/films showcase gender or allow for a discussion of gender(ed) behavior (and expectations of behavior), e.g., vis-à-vis pride, fear, justice.

Each week, the students produced written work of increasing length, which they revised with my corrections and feedback. The genre, topic, and style of the students' written work varied with each cultural product, so that the students produced a *Zusammenfassung*, an *Ortsbeschreibung*, a *Personenbeschreibung*, an *Erzählung*, an *Appell*, and a *Bewerbungsbrief*. The students' written assignments were thus connected to the text/film they were encountering at that time. For example, the students produced *Erzählungen* while they were reading Schiller's "Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre." Brief oral presentations for the class and daily discussion in large and small groups gave the students practice in oral production. I gave short mini-lectures before the class discussed each text or film in order to provide historical context and background information.

As is the case in many classrooms informed by feminist and critical pedagogies, I develop my courses and operate on a daily basis in an attempt to lessen any negative impact of my position as an authority figure and to foster diversity and collaboration in our work together. I implement this philosophy in the classroom layout, daily coursework and operation of the course, grading, and my selection of materials. Although some of these strategies may be familiar to instructors who have worked with feminist pedagogy, I believe it is useful to list them to provide a more complete picture of the way in which my course operated.

As many teachers know, even the layout of a classroom can have positive and negative effects on various aspects of instruction, including student attention, teachers' ability to interact with students, and students' abilities to interact with each other. For each class, my students arrange their desks into a horseshoe shape. When not writing on the chalkboard, I usually sit with the students at one of the student desks. When the students are having discussions or doing work in small groups, I circulate in the class and sit briefly with each group. This promotes my goal of acting as a facilitator, rather than an arbiter, of student discussion.

As a general rule in all of my courses, I usually start the session by talking to my students about how they are doing and feeling. Especially with language courses but also with others, I find that this eases the students into that day's work and also allows me to be aware of and connect to my students' interests. At a large public university, this is important as our students report that their courses in our department are often the only ones in which their professors or instructors know more about who they are or even their names.

The daily coursework here was designed to allow for a good deal of student-student interaction. Collaborative activities and small group work foster student-based dialogue in which I can participate when needed for vocabulary or to prompt further discussion. Examples of activities include paraphrasing excerpts from the more philosophical portion of Schiller's "Der Verbrecher aus verlorener Ehre"; comparing characters from texts or films the students had already encountered; or textual analysis in which students discussed the effects of certain stylistic choices (e.g., choppy sentences vs. long sentences with relative clauses). The students' final project was also collaborative in nature, requiring the students to work in groups of three or four to create their own audio mystery-drama (or *Hörspiel*) using GarageBand. The groups wrote

scripts (which were then edited and rewritten) and chose sound effects that helped move their story along.

Another way of making the course more collaborative and interactive is to include the students in parts of the decisions on how they will be evaluated. Since this course was my first attempt at this, I started on a small scale, inviting the students to help me determine the percentage breakdown for how their final grade was to be calculated. For example, the students could decide on the point distribution among homework, in-class presentation, and their final project, while I had already set the value for their weekly written assignments and classroom attendance and participation.

The course texts gave the students the opportunity to discuss power relations in addition to the other open-ended topics and grammar issues we examined. I wanted the students to see a range of relationships, behaviors, attitudes, and characters in these texts and films. One of the guiding questions throughout the semester was whether one could distinguish "outsiders" in what we were reading or watching. Some of the questions we pondered in class included whether the characters behaved in a way the students had originally predicted, whether that changed their perception of the characters, from whose perspective the story was told and what that meant for one's interpretation, etc. Students connected characters and stories to their own lives by comparing and contrasting examples from their own experience or people they knew. At the end of the course, I had the students give feedback about all of the texts/films used in class, including whether they recommended that I use each particular text again in a similar course.

For the class session prior to the students' viewing of *Lola und Bilidikid* (i.e., on Tuesday when the students watched the film for Thursday), the class read "Mord(s)treffen," which does

not leave everything resolved at the end of the story. In class that day, we talked about whether

the students were surprised by the story's plot, the characters' behavior, what kinds of roles

women and men played in the story, etc. As I did with each text, I asked the students to explain

why I may have chosen the text and whether it fit in with the rest of the course material. I want to

encourage as much interpretation as possible, provided the students can defend their reasoning

with evidence. This was especially important as we approached *Lola und Bilidikid*, the final text/

film. I wanted students to be able to question and form an opinion about why it may be relevant

for their lives and their study of things German. The students were to watch the film outside of

class, before which I talked to them about the film's plot and the nature of what they would see

(e.g., violence, brief nudity). If students had questions or concerns about the film after hearing

my "warning" and listening to me talk briefly about the plot and its context, I encouraged them

to speak with me outside of class.

 In order to promote easier and less-hampered discussion, all of the assignments and

activities for the unit on *Lola und Bilidikid* were "low(er)-stakes" assessments.[7] While the

objectives of this course included improving the students' proficiencies in the four skills, an

adjunct goal was to increase the students' cultural knowledge and facilitate interaction among

those in the class. Assignments the students had completed throughout the semester varied on a

spectrum between high and low stakes. The higher-stakes assignments comprised primarily the

biweekly essays that the students were still able to revise and resubmit, but also an in-class

presentation. Among the low(er)-stakes assignments and activities were those such as in-class

discussions and short "quick writes" on both pre-determined and undefined topics.

After the students had seen the film, I began the class session by making regular announcements and engaging with the students as I described above. I transitioned to a discussion of the film by having the students brainstorm lists of keywords that were relevant for the film itself. Comparing their own lists with those of their colleagues, the students did this alone and then in groups of three. After a couple of minutes, I asked the students to move on to each of the film's characters as I projected images on the screen. The last student to make an in-class presentation then gave background information on Kutluğ Ataman, the director, referencing his position among other Turkish(-German) directors in Germany. At this point, two of the graduate students in the class made an interactive presentation about race and specifically the history of the *Gastarbeiter* in Germany.

After these presentations, I brought the students' minds back to the specifics of the film, asking them to describe their expectations upon hearing the film's title and their reactions to what they saw. I handed out topic suggestions that could guide the students' discussions, before asking them to create their own questions that they would like to hear their fellow students answer. Questions dealt with, for example, whether the film had a definite conclusion; whether the students thought the film fit into the framework of the course; and how the film might have connections to earlier texts/films from the semester.

On the second day of *Lola*-related discussion, the students discussed answers to the questions they had created in and after the previous session. The students' questions focused mostly on included or imagined plot elements (e.g., "How do you think Lola and Bili met?", not included in the film) or reactions (e.g., "Which scene do you remember most?"). There were other questions, however, that required the students to address deeper issues (e.g., "Is Bili gay?",

"What does 'gay' mean for Bili?" and "Will İskender and Friedrich have a happy relationship?").

With a more specific assignment, I am sure the students would form different kinds of questions.

Since this was the last text/film of the course, I handed out a worksheet that prompted the

students to find similarities and differences among characters from all of the course texts. The

class discussed these possibilities then in small groups and then all together. The final activity

required the students to examine the world of the film, that is, what the film constitutes as

"normal." Throughout the semester, the students and I had examined presentations of outsiders;

this necessitated thinking about who the *insiders* were. If homosexual, homoerotic, or same-sex

behaviors gain their deviant status through binaries, are there alternatives offered in the film?

Students observed the film's majority presentation of minority identities and remarked on the

presence of characters whose sexual identities were not a primary aspect of their roles (e.g., Ute

von Seeckt, Lola's mother Yasemin, and Hella, the *Imbiss* proprietor).

Inclusion of a text/film like *Lola und Bilidikid* requires a great deal of consideration and

preparation. Not only must one decide whether the material would fit into a course or at an

institution and be received effectively (if not "well") by the students, historical and cultural

context is necessary to add to the students' viewing and interpretation of the film.[8] Teaching

about and discussing such material, however, is a vital responsibility of instructors of "foreign"

languages and cultures, who are in a unique position of introducing students to examples of

human experience different from their own. Often this means that one talks to students about the

hours when German stores are open or *du* vs. *Sie*. One misses a significant opportunity if one

chooses to take only a "tour guide" or "fair" approach (see above). One can avoid objectifying

the newly included cultural elements (e.g., experiences of Turkish Germans, gay Germans) by

refusing to wall off the cultural products for observation only; that is, by connecting the texts to the students' own lives and their reflection or engagement with their own experiences and to consider, however briefly, what kinds of individual and group identities they possess (Kumashiro 83-84; Bell 9).

As with any development in one's teaching practice, an approach such as this need not be incorporated at one moment. Indeed, depending on one's own training, knowledge, and comfort, one could progress toward a goal of a more integrative curriculum over the course of a semester, throughout a language sequence (e.g., introducing appropriate German terminology for discussions of dating, families, etc.) or during the completion of a student's major (cf. Fletcher and Russell 38). If nothing else, it may foster an understanding that American mainstream culture is not a "world standard" (Brockmann 3).

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[1] Omaggio Hadley also cites Galloway's characterization of four common methods for cultural instruction: "the Frankenstein Approach," "the 4-F Approach," "the Tour Guide Approach," and "the 'By-the-Way' Approach" (348-49).

[2] Cf. Anderson on ideas of excellence and the idea of approaching canonical texts from new perspectives.

[3] See, for example, Frederiksen, Herminghouse, Heydebrand, and the volume edited by Bledsoe, et al.

[4] For other, including more recent, engagements with feminist pedagogies, see for example Cox, Crabtree, et al., Lewis, Pierce, and Sule.

[5] Adams, Griffin, Hardiman and Jackson (1997), and Bell and Griffin offer thoughts on addressing issues that can sometimes be emotionally charged.

[6] See Jones for some observations of the standardization and the effects (sometimes unfortunate) of also trying to be inclusive.

[7] For more on high/low-stakes assignments, see Christenson, et al., Elbow, Kohn, and Poehner and Lantolf.

[8] See Martindale for a discussion of teaching queer/LGBT studies in more conservative environments. Eyre's essay similarly treats challenging heterosexism in a more conservative locale. See also de Castell and Bryson as well as Rabinowitz on external perceptions of teaching "queerly." Other examples of reflections on teaching queerly and with queer film include Morris and Steinberg.