***Heimat*: Malady Without Remedy. "Deheimatizing" German Literature (Othmann, Taha, Ayata)**

Hevin Karakurt
Stanford University

It has become commonplace to consider Heimat *a loaded concept. The origins of the malady of* Heimat *have been very convincingly laid out by Bilgin Ayata in her argument for a "deheimatization" of German cultural politics. Ayata deems this necessary as she considers every effort to salvage the concept through reclaiming or pluralization* (Heimaten) *as futile. While suggestions have been made out of social and cultural studies aiming to remedy its exclusionary and dangerous shortcomings, this article engages with literature's potential for a "deheimatization" of German cultural spaces. In the study of three German novels by Kurdish authors, first access points are worked out: From rendering a German* Heimat *impossible through the destruction of the Kurdish homeland in Ronya Othmann's* The Summers *(2020), and the disenchantment of a Kurdish Heimat as place of longing in Karosh Taha's* In the Queen's *Belly (2020), to the "deheimatizing" of the German* Heimat *in getting to know the Kurdish homeland thus far ignored in Imran Ayata's* My Name Is Revolution *(2011). The present engagement with Kurdish-German literature provided some first access points towards a "deheimatization" of the German literary landscape and the canon, which could ultimately lead to new imaginaries of collectivity beyond the nation and thus beyond Heimat in its unsalvageable meaning. However, more theorizing is needed in order to render the concept of "deheimatizing" more fruitful for literary analyses.*

Hevin Karakurt is a PhD student in Comparative Literature at Stanford University. In her dissertation, she studies Kurdish Literature in its multilingual and stateless condition, asking questions about national literatures, world literature, and canon formation. Before coming to Stanford, Karakurt worked as a research assistant in the research project Half-Truths. Truth, Fiction, and Conspiracy in the 'Post-Factual Age' at the University of Basel, Switzerland (PI: Prof. Dr. Nicola Gess). In the context of the project, she studied the role of documentary devices for narratives of violence and (war) trauma. She co-developed a computational dictionary to study online data on the intersection of right-wing populism and conspiracy discourse. Karakurt holds an M.A. in Literary Studies and a B.A. in German and English Studies from the University of Basel, Switzerland. In her master's thesis, she analyzed literary performances of Kurdish identity in contemporary German literature.

1 Introduction

The German word *Heimat* has no exact English translation. It expresses an affective attachment to homeland. In the German context, it has been the subject of radically polarized debates in recent years. Conservative revivals of a German "Leitkultur" (most recently and publicly Friedrich Merz, see Kuzmany) and right-wing populists' calls to conserve German *Heimat* for Germans (c.f. the recent renaming of the right-wing extremist party NPD, now called Heimat, see "Rechtsextreme NPD heißt jetzt 'Die Heimat'") have been challenged by first, second, and third generation immigrants with claims to that same German *Heimat* (Aydemir and Yaghoobifarah). The debate was further fueled when Angela Merkel's administration renamed the Federal Ministry of the Interior to include the term "Heimat" (Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat, or colloquially "Heimatministerium") (Oesterhelt 4). One response was an edited volume titled *Your Heimat is our Nightmare* [*Eure Heimat ist unser Albtraum*] (Aydemir and Yaghoobifarah) that presented the stances of fourteen minority writers. Critical interventions even advocate to do away with *Heimat* altogether as they consider every effort to salvage the concept through reclaiming by marginalized groups or pluralization (*Heimaten*) to be futile and the notion's legacy—especially in the German context—too contaminated. Among the most critical interventions is sociologist Bilgin Ayata's call to "deheimatize it!" all, aiming at the entirety of the German public sphere and cultural politics.

While proclamations to abolish *Heimat(en)* are relatively recent in German public discourse, I posit that migrant writers writing in German have been carrying out the work of deheimatizing German literature for quite some time. They have contributed significantly to a defamiliarization of the German literary space, as I shall demonstrate in this essay. Literary criticism has exhibited great uncertainties towards migrant literary production in Germany dating back to the first reactions to the so-called guest workers' literature (e.g. Dörr). Scholars have considered the poetics of 'migrant writing' as distinct from the poetics of 'German' writing (Hausbacher 169), while migrant authors themselves critically reflected on the

"myths" attributed to their writing, concerning not only their use of German but also the issues they were supposed to address (Stanišić). Intercultural and transnational literature, literature of hybridity, and world literature are all labels used to describe the literary production of writers without a homogeneous German ancestry. Scholarship on literature and *Heimat* has furthermore explicitly connected migrant writing to the remodeling of *Heimat* semantics, mostly making the argument of pluralizing or reframing the concept (Hackert; Cagle et al.), or, recently, to globalize it by lifting *Heimat* into the transnational sphere (Römhild).

Kurdish-German literary production is an especially interesting field of study to account for the deheimatizing potential of literature for several reasons, the most significant of which is the Kurds' statelessness. What is at stake with Kurdish-German literature is not simply the encounter of multiple national contexts and traditions, but rather statelessness meeting the nation as such. In the following pages, in analyzing Ronya Othmann's *The Summers* (*Die Sommer,* 2020), Karosh Taha's *In the Queen's Belly* (*Im Bauch der Königin,* 2020), and Imran Ayata's *My Name is Revolution* (*Mein Name ist Revolution,* 2011), I explain first the relevance of the 'Kurdish condition' for issues of *Heimat* and *deheimatization* alike, before exploring how Kurdish-German fiction can contribute to a deheimatization of the German literary space at the level of formal and narrative devices as well as plot. I then show what role these literary texts can play in the imagination of new collectives beyond the nation state. To this end, I will first briefly outline the concept of *Heimat* and its relationship to literature in order to revisit the paradoxes inherent to *Heimat* and Ayata's call for "deheimatizing" German public sphere.

2 *Heimat* Discourse and Its Literary Connection

The assertion of the impossibility of a unified definition of *Heimat* constitutes one of the only points of agreement in scholarship on the concept (Gebhard et al. 9). The other is the observation of a boom of journalistic and scholarly contributions to the field (Costadura and Ries 8; Cagle et al. 7). For the purposes of this contribution, only a partial overview will be given, shining spotlights on the facets of *Heimat* discourse that are most relevant as a basis for the call to deheimatize.

In German history of thought, *Heimat* first acted as an "affective bond between the local and the national"[1] at the moment when structural changes within the young German nation exchanged the local frame of reference for a national one (B. Ayata 40; cf. Boa and Palfreyman 204). This moment transformed *Heimat* both from its religious denotation (of heaven as the ultimate *Heimat*, to which life on earth can never advance, see Oesterhelt 149) and from its juridical-political denotation (as the owned plot of land or one's house, or the land on which one is born, B. Ayata 40; Hackert 67) to "a memorial space [*Erinnerungsraum*] of the preindustrial past" (B. Ayata 40). Thus, *Heimat* was transposed into a relationship of tension with the nation against which it could now be measured (Oesterhelt 11; Gebhard et al. 13–14). It is at this point in the long 19th century that *Heimat* emerges as connected to feelings of belonging and "ontological safety in the increasing estrangement and individualization of the modern age" (B. Ayata 40; see also Hackert 68). Yet, as today, the conflation and reciprocal relationship of nation and *Heimat* has also been present early on, especially in literary texts (Oesterhelt 33–35).

This conservative, Christian, patriarchal trajectory of *Heimat* can be traced through two centuries from the "völkisch[e]" connotation already inherent in the use of the term during the German Empire and brought to its extreme by the Nazis, through to the right-wing extremism both in post-war divided Germany as well as in the time since the reunification (Oesterhelt 4). There are, however, instances of intellectuals and writers thinking about *Heimat* from an opposite point of view, especially in the context of exile and displacement (Streim). These could be termed early attempts at what—in today's theoretical terminology—is called reclaiming and reshaping—remedying—*Heimat* (see as a theoretical call not to abolish but to rethink *Heimat* Hüppauf 120–121, 138). Today, the Green parties not only of Germany, but also of Switzerland and Austria emphasize the *Heimat*-soil connection in order to advocate for environmental protection, for caring for said homeland as a natural space (Oesterhelt 6–7; Gebhard et al. 42–43). In other attempts to free *Heimat* of its inherent blood-and-soil danger, "a non-territorial Heimat of German language and culture" was propagated, most notably, again, by

exiled intellectuals (Eigler 2; see also Streim 220–221; Beil). Transferring *Heimat* to a “virtual” space (Eigler 2) draws attention to the significance of literature on more recent debates surrounding homeland belonging.

Considering that *Heimat* has always been subject to mediation, even in attempts to present it as “unmediated” (Beals 167), scholars have noted the role of literature in propagating, but also modulating *Heimat* especially during earlier stages (e.g. Gebhard et al.). Anja Osterhelt sees literature’s most influential period in the formation of modern semantics of *Heimat* primarily between 1770 and 1840 (25). Literature functioned as a storage device for cultural knowledge and as a medium of aesthetic reflection, both of which produced notions of *Heimat* which reverberated back to the extra-literary realm, as evidence and justification for religious, legal, or pedagogical proceedings (Osterhelt 26).[2] Osterhelt argues that, to this day, debates around *Heimat* draw most prominently on literature and poetry (28).

It is the semantic malleability of *Heimat* as well as the highly variable and subjective emotional connection and the claim of *Heimat* to exist as an apolitical term that enable different, at times contradictory employments by political and cultural actors (Oesterhelt 8). Considering the history of the 20st century alone, what can be concluded is that *Heimat* should never be mistaken for a “harmless word” (Hüppauf 109). Yet, Oesterhelt draws attention towards the fact that our contemporary, decidedly subjective perception of *Heimat*, which serves as the condition for all the varying interpretations, has historical precursors and thus cannot be detached from history (9; see also Gebhard et al. 12–13).

Moving beyond these internal dimensions, *Heimat* historically also acted as an affective bond between Germany and its colonies. Foreign territory was claimed as German while colonization dehumanized the colonized peoples as others (B. Ayata 41). According to Ayata, it is this external dimension of *Heimat* which is too often neglected in public and academic discourse yet holds significant implications for contemporary discussions (41). Today, the external dimension of *Heimat* must be addressed on the basis of the migration politics of ‘protecting the EU external border’. As Len Cagle et al. write with regard to cinematic treatments of *Heimat* in

the 21st century, "*Heimat* is presented as something that must be preserved and protected against real or perceived external threats" (2). "Protection", nowadays, has been increasingly "externalized" beyond EU territory (B. Ayata 42), as though *Heimat* needed protection from authoritarian regimes such as Turkey or Libya, or in the Mediterranean Sea where international law is systematically suspended as a 'protective measure,' sea rescue is withheld and criminalized, and the seabed has become a graveyard.

Ulrich Beck's notion of the "national gaze" helps to understand the workings of this external dimension of *Heimat*. Any effort to pluralize or hybridize *Heimat* to render it a more inclusive conceptual home must still position itself within and against the nation state or supranational economic unions such as the EU. Thus, the malady of *Heimat* is interconnected with the difference in how inequalities are perceived within or between nation states: "Inequalities within national societies are highly amplified in their perception, while inequalities between national societies are disregarded. […] The national gaze 'liberates' from having to look at the misery of the world. It operates through a double exclusion: it excludes the excluded" (Beck 13). If the central point of "Heimatdenken" is indeed the "Re-establishment of *human agency*" (Gebhard et al. 45, emphasis original), deheimatizing aims to re-establish agency of those whose agency is undermined by that same "Heimatdenken": the stateless, the disenfranchised, the ones being kept out or ignored under any form of "Heimatdenken" along the lines of the national.

While the relationship of nation and *Heimat* is complicated, the call to deheimatize not only the German political, but also the cultural sphere is hypothesized here to potentially counteract the national gaze inherent in practices of inclusion and exclusion operating on the level of German-language literary production of migrant writers or writers with multinational backgrounds. While inclusive and progressive notions of *Heimat* aim to define it as "the commitment of citizens to the process of making a livable social space", which can translate to a multiplication of the concept (Boa and Palfreyman 195), this "livable social space" nevertheless will not extend beyond the borders of the nation. The best such an

attempt can achieve is a "post-Heimat" (Boa and Palfreyman 205), which has to remain aware of its ambivalent and partly dangerous heritage at all times. This is what I call the malady of *Heimat*: in attempts to hold on to the concept, it remains without remedy. Deheimatizing sets in at this juncture, precisely. However, it does not yet constitute a method for analysis, and it has not been adapted to cultural studies in general or literary texts in particular. Thus, the question to be answered in the analyses of the literary texts below stands: How can literature contribute to a deheimatization of the German cultural space? And what is the potential of Kurdish-German within this endeavor?

3 The Innovative Potential of the 'Kurdish Condition'

The Kurdish case is not special in that a people facing oppression has formed a substantial European diaspora. Two factors, however, make it a highly relevant field for literary examination: First, its statelessness; thinking with Ayata's concept of "deheimatization", the 'Kurdish condition' not only requires taking into account the internal and external dimensions of *Heimat* within the German context, but a double-take of the entire concept in terms of how it relates to a Kurdish 'homeland,' which exists only as a national utopia in the literal sense, a non-place.[3]

Secondly, we must consider the essential cultural work of the Kurdish diaspora. Following the diaspora scholar Avtar Brah, the diasporic condition offers "a critique of discourses of fixed origins while taking account of a homing desire, as distinct from a desire for a 'homeland.'" (16) This distinction is especially relevant to the Kurdish context. Due to continued political and cultural oppression in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, many Kurds have been forced to emigrate. A substantial diaspora community has emerged in Scandinavian (especially Sweden) and German-speaking countries, with the largest number of Kurds living in Germany (Bengio and Maddy-Weitzman 69). While it is difficult to ascertain exact figures, as Kurds are often not listed as such, but as citizens of the nation states Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, the Kurdish diaspora in Europe is estimated at approximately 850,000 people, 650,000 of whom live in Germany (Bengio and Maddy-Weitzman 69). The Kurdish diaspora is considered "the most politically

vocal group of all non-native European communities" (Bengio and Maddy-Weitzman 69), playing a major role in generating international attention for the concerns of the Kurds in their homelands (Alinia et al. 53) and contributing substantially to processes of nation-building (Hassanpour and Mojab 220–222). Acknowledging these conditions, Martin van Bruinessen pointedly termed the Kurdish diaspora the "fifth 'part' of Kurdistan" (van Bruinessen 126), while Bilgin Ayata calls it "Euro-Kurdistan". Apart from being appealing and innovative labels, these terms also point to the potential of the 'Kurdish condition' in exploring new and different ways of collective identity formation *outside* the nation state. Thus, the Kurdish condition offers unique points of access to investigate both a possible "deheimatization" of the German literary space and a radical rethinking of 'homeland' discourses of diaspora communities.[4]

4 *Heimat* Lost in Ronya Othmann's *Die Sommer* (2020)[5]

Ronya Othmann's 2020 debut novel *The Summers* [*Die Sommer*] deals with the reality of the ISIS genocide against the Yazidi Kurds in the Sinjar Mountains. A heterodiegetic third person narrator reminisces with the protagonist Leyla from an unspecified point in time in the present about the summers she spent in her father's Kurdish-Yazidi village in Syria, until one day she can no longer go there, due to the war in the country, the rise of the Islamic State, and the genocide of the Yazidis. Leyla grows up in the Bavarian province where, from the teachers to the schoolyard tormentors, she constantly has to deal with identity ascriptions that have little to do with her person. The teacher assumes that she is Arab and thus certainly knows all about Islam, exposing that she neither knows about Kurds nor Yazidis. Turkish classmates confront her with racist stereotypes of the stinking Kurds, German classmates with their dislike of women with more body hair or their envy of the fact that she tans so quickly in the summer. In the summers in the village, however, despite all her efforts, she is and always remains the "cousin from Germany" (*The Summers* 17), whose status as Yazidi is not considered certain either, since, according to the strict rules of the religion, only two Yazidi parents can bear Yazidi children, yet Leyla has a German mother.

Leyla herself never calls her being Yazidi-Kurdish into question. Rather, Leyla is conflicted because of the powerlessness she feels in watching events unfold from Germany. Yet everything happening is also part of her story. She withdraws more and more into herself, neither the lives of her fellow students nor the lectures and seminars get through to her anymore, everything becomes irrelevant in the face of the extermination of people she sees every day and every night in the news, about whom she reads articles and whose most inhumane mutilations are shown in YouTube videos. As a reaction, she does everything she can to refresh her memory of her Yazidi-Kurdish home and family. Even though the memory-work takes us out of Germany, the narration focalizes on a protagonist who grew up and spent most of her time in Germany, has a German mother, friends, and lovers, and is—coinciding with the narrated time—coming of age in Germany.

Literary representation of Yazidi-Kurdish identity in *The Summers* therefore often works through memory. It is the memory of feelings during the summer visits to the village that arrange different aspects and phases of Leyla's negotiation of her identity. For these negotiations, dynamics of belonging and exclusion in Germany and Kurdistan play a vital role.[6] The summers in Tel Khatoun, the village where Leyla's father grew up, show Leyla what will always distinguish her from those who were born and raised there. Despite the feeling that the village belongs to her, and she belongs to the village,

> Leyla was the only child in the village who owned books. […] Books were not the only thing that separated Leyla from the other children. There was also the way she stumbled when she was out in the village with Zozan [i.e., her younger cousin]. She didn't know where the ditches were and where you had to jump while running and playing catch. The other children knew every ditch […]. And there were also the missing words when she spoke and her pronunciation, the fact that she couldn't roll her *r*'s the way everyone else did. (*The Summers* 17)[7]

This passage brings up two essential parts of the above mentioned "ontological safety" usually exuding familiar places, and, ideally, *Heimat* (B. Ayata 40): The

literal movement in space in the form of walking/running on the one hand and the figurative movement in space in the form of speaking a language on the other. In Leyla's childhood, both interferences lead not only to exclusion, but also to her falling silent. She is ashamed of falling into the mire while the other children nimbly jump over the ditches (*The Summers* 17). She is also ashamed of her inferior Kurdish, a source of mockery for Zozan, and therefore hardly speaks: "At some point she quit speaking unless somebody spoke to her first." (*The Summers* 18).[8]

At the same time, her shame is accompanied by an arrogance fed by a feeling of 'Western superiority': Leyla "had looked down on everyone because her English was better" (*The Summers* 18); she "had always smirked at her [i.e., Zozan] for constantly envisioning her wedding" (*The Summers* 18).[9] From a Western perspective, Leyla saw the life of the women of the village as backward while it showed the village's girls their future: "I, Leyla said one summer to Zozan, have other goals in my life besides finding a husband, having seven children, and baking bread. How holier-than-thou she had been back then" (*The Summers* 18).[10] In retrospect, Leyla realizes that her thinking was arrogant. Her view of the world and her everyday life in Germany fundamentally differ from those of her cousin. While Leyla herself creates a distance towards the people of the village, she remains *the one* outsider opposite the *many* villagers whose normality she does not match.

While some praise and others despise her for her otherness, everyone agrees on its root: "Everyone was in agreement about just one thing: Leyla behaved so oddly because she was from Almanya" (*The Summers* 48).[11] And on both sides, her position on the 'Kurdish-German' scale is cause for curiosity:

> *Are* you more German or Kurdish? her school friend's mother asked her. German, Leyla said, and the friend's mother nodded in satisfaction.
> Do you *feel* more German or Kurdish? Aunt Felek asked her. Kurdish, Leyla said, and Aunt Felek clapped her hands with joy." (*The Summers* 108, emphasis added)[12]

Leyla herself does not express that she *is* more German but *feels* more Kurdish. Instead, she is asked two different questions, both of which she answers without

hesitation. Perhaps, the mother of the school friend would be irritated by her answer to Aunt Felek's question—and vice versa. For Leyla, however, there is no contradiction in a difference between *being* and *feeling*. The diasporic disposition is characterized by the inner turmoil accompanying her longing for this piece of *Heimat*. When she is in Germany, she longs for the summers in the village. Yet, the longer the summers in the village last, "the more she longed to be alone again" (*The Summers* 33), something Leyla associates with Germany. After each return, being alone turns into a feeling of loneliness and she starts missing being surrounded by family (*The Summers* 54).

In a prolepsis, all her contradictory feelings are formulated as follows: "Later, Leyla asked herself if she would feel less alone if she had never been to the village, if she wouldn't be able to *feel* alone if she didn't *know* that she was alone" (*The Summers* 54, emphasis original).[13] Unlike her father, Leyla was not born and raised there; for her, an alternative life story is conceivable in which she has a different connection—or no connection at all—to her Yazidi-Kurdish family and homeland.

What, then, does it mean for Leyla to be a Yazidi Kurd in Germany? Her father's stories and the summers in his village are the reason why Leyla thought about her grandparents' garden as "*our garden*," about the yard as "*our yard*," and about the kittens in it as "*our kittens*" (*The Summers* 55, emphasis original).[14] For "[a]ll that, thought Leyla, was also hers, every year for as long as the summer lasted" (*The Summers* 55).[15] There is a balance in this, even though it feels ruptured to Leyla, like two separate lives she continues to live with interruptions (the German life, interrupted for a few weeks in the summer, the Kurdish life, interrupted for a year until the next summer). But this balance is toppled when suddenly one of her lives can no longer continue.

In addition, the novel makes frequent use of strategic essentialism as a way to affirm the threatened existence of Yazidi-Kurdish identity (Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* 6). In the Kurdish context, the terminology used to refer to the homeland is always political. Leyla's father enlightens her early on:

> Every summer they flew to the country [*Land*] where her father had grown up. The country had two names. One of them could be found on maps, globes, and official documents.
> The family used the other one.
> Both names could be assigned their respective territory. If you laid these territories on top of one another, they overlapped.
> One of the countries was Syria, the Syrian Arab Republic. The other one was Kurdistan, their country. Kurdistan was located inside the Syrian Arab Republic, but extended beyond its borders. (*The Summers* 9)[16]

Besides a mere definition, the use of the word is significant especially in the historical context of the comparatively young nation-states of the area, as it challenges their legitimacy and claims of unity. Strategic essentialism in this case functions through language use, as it is the father's storytelling that inscribes Leyla within a Yazidi-Kurdish identity and points her towards the precarious status of this identity: "Her father told her over and over about the history of Kurdistan." (*The Summers* 93); "My father is from Kurdistan, said Leyla, and people would answer: Kurdistan does not exist." (*The Summers* 107); "Her father watched it [i.e. a video from the village] and said that when he died, he wanted to be buried in Kurdistan" (*The Summers* 193).[17] At first glance, Kurdistan appears here as a place of longing. But for Leyla it poses a problem, as she is constantly met with incomprehension and ignorance. Her father's wish, too, reveals that 'his' Kurdistan, the one he grew up in, does not exist for him as a realistic place of longing (anymore), because he imagines a permanent return only as a dead man.

Leyla's problem is not that she *belongs* to Kurdistan in an essentialist sense and therefore suffers in Germany. There is neither *one* subject position 'Kurdish' or 'German,' nor *one* 'Kurdistan' as place of longing for all Kurds, nor *one* problem of *Heimat* in diasporic existence. The place Leyla can no longer bear signifies future and survival for those with whom Leyla empathizes and because of whom she feels powerless. While the supposedly 'more Kurdish Kurds' leave their homeland, the end of the novel implies that Leyla leaves her 'hybrid position' to fight for a *Heimat* whose destruction forces the others to join her in Germany. A

simple *third space* marking a new subject position of the in-between does not exist for Leyla (Bhabha 218–219). Instead, her specific subject formation, her being both Kurdish and German *at once*, have led to her going into battle while her family has to flee from Syria to Germany in order to survive. Life in the German diaspora is the condition for the conscious decision to *go*.

Not only the plot but also the narratological structure of *The Summers* contributes to negotiations of identity, belonging, and the impossibility of *Heimat*. The stories that run throughout the novel, once told by Leyla's father but recalled in the novel by Leyla, are not linguistically marked as stories presented from another narrator or character. There are no quotation marks and no traditional dialogues. On the one hand, this reinforces the polyphonous effect of the narrative, on the other hand, it reinforces the effect of the text as a stream of consciousness. Finally, the latter, in an amalgamation of form and content, reinforces Leyla's sense of being alone. Even the present tense interpolations ended by the *inquit* formula “father said” do not appear as actual conversations to which we readers listen, but as conversations in Leyla’s memory. They are presented in the present tense because she has heard the stories so many times that they have become historiography. The narrative thus links history both long past and presently unfolding, for the father’s stories are simultaneously family history and Kurdish history.

The seamless transition from individual to collective historiography is exemplified by Leyla’s search for the village in which her grandmother was born, located in today’s Turkey (*The Summers* 90–91). With the beginning of the massacres of Armenians, life in Yazidi villages became dangerous, too. Leyla’s grandmother’s father is murdered because he refuses to convert to Islam (*The Summers* 89). When the village is surrounded one day, part of the family flees to the Sinjar Mountains (modern-day Iraq) and, through marriage, Leyla’s grandmother ends up in the area of modern-day Syria where Leyla’s father was born (*The Summers* 90). The intertwining of Yazidi-Kurdish history with the history of multiple nation states becomes evident a century later, when Leyla cannot find

her grandmother's village on Google Maps because its Kurdish name does not officially exist:

> Leyla tried to find the other village where her grandmother had grown up on Google Maps, but she only knew its Kurdish name and not the Turkish one. They had started renaming the villages sometime during Ottoman period, but it was carried out systematically in the newly founded Turkish Republic after the Dersim Massacre of 1938. […] Then, in 1945 the use of the Kurdish language in public was prohibited by law […]. It is important for you to know that, her father said. You must not forget it. Leyla, you must never forget that you are Kurdish.
>
> A few years later there was again a linguistic prohibition: this time it was the letter *x*, which exists in the Kurdish but not the Turkish alphabet, as well as Kurdish music, Kurdish literature, and Kurdish newspapers.
>
> There were no more Kurds. (*The Summers* 90–91)[18]

The assimilation policies of the Turkish nation state are also inscribed in Leyla's family history. The narrative moves very quickly from the individual village to the history of these name changes, in fast motion from the Ottoman Empire to the present and other instruments of oppression. Letters and colors are banned because they are symbolic representations of Kurdish identity. Added to this is the attempt to eradicate the Kurdish language through linguicidal practices (Hassanpour et al.) and designations such as "Mountain Turks" or "Eastern Turks." Thus, in a new and systematic way, the Turkish state has been attempting eradication through denial of representation.

However, the potential for resistance is inherent to these policies: If identity is aesthetically dependent on representation in the sense of *Darstellung* (cf. Spivak "Can the Subaltern Speak?"; Assmann 390) and can be erased by discontinued representation, the simplest and most effective resistance is remembering and performing a Kurdish identity.[19] In other words, to resist is to perform Kurdish identity. The ceaseless representation-as-performance thus not only allows Leyla's existence as a Kurd in Germany, but also her father's existence as a Kurd in Syria, since his political representation as a Kurd has been erased, his birth

certificate reading: "nationality *ajnabi*, foreigner [*Ausländer*]" (*The Summers* 67, emphasis original). This policy of the original 'homeland' country also affects life as a Kurd in the diaspora. Germany, where the largest Kurdish diaspora community lives, does not officially list Kurds as such, but as Turks, Syrians, Iraqis, or Iranians. Thus, not only is being 'Kurdish' officially impossible, but so is 'Kurdistan' as an unambiguous center of diasporic longing for homeland. Leyla's father tries to deal with his lack of means of representation upon arriving in Germany: "When I came to Germany, her father said to Leyla, thirty years ago, I revealed everything. I said from the beginning that I was not Firat Ekinci as I was called in my fake ID but that I was *I* [*dass ich ich war*], a stateless Yazidi Kurd from Syria" (*The Summers* 79, emphasis original).[20] For Leyla's father, the bureaucratic dilemma, triggered by statelessness—the lack of a *Heimat* synonymous with a nation,—ultimately results in the tautology "that I was *I*," since the identity attributes that can be attached to his I are not registered in Germany. The shortest possible description is "a stateless Yazidi Kurd from Syria," which represents a subject position that does not officially exist.

Collective remembering constitutes a substantial part of the performed storytelling as survival, as it serves to anchor common origin stories in collective memory (Scheffel). But for Leyla, "remembering [*das Erinnern*]" (*The Summers* 48) sets in only in 2011, as an involuntary and physical reaction to the destruction of the Kurdish homeland compared to "a wound, Leyla thought, with blood seeping out of it" (*The Summers* 49). The experience of memories as a bodily phenomenon is only part metaphor because the physicality of the memories is very real. They overshadow whatever Leyla is doing. The constantly repeating loops of remembering and storytelling take up more and more space until nothing else penetrates Leyla's consciousness. Thus, remembering for the sake of existing actually leads to a hermetic sealing-off from the present. Leyla's personal life fades in light of the crimes against the Yazidis. And just as a wound suddenly appears where there was none before, and from that point on will never again not have been there, so it is with the onset of destruction and war on her Kurdish homeland. The break divides the perception of time and space into a "before and after," where

"[e]verything, both before and after, seemed so unreal to her" (*The Summers* 51). What were souvenirs "before" become proof "after," whether Aleppo soap or some stones Leyla had collected by the river: "Everything would be proof, even ten or twenty years from now, that all that had really existed: the village, the towns, the people, the summers" (*The Summers* 51).[21]

The Summers is an impressive meta-narrative in the sense that storytelling itself—and in its context, remembering—is central to its make-up. Subject and identity narratives are an important part of this in so far as storytelling as aesthetic representation performs and affirms identity. These identity negotiations essentially deal with the complexities of (Kurdish) homeland lost while life in the diasporic *Heimat* cannot continue. In *The Summers*, therefore, "deheimatizing" unfolds on two levels: On the one hand, the text depicts the impossibility of a German *Heimat* in the sense of a safe space one belongs to while the Kurdish homeland is being destroyed, a people murdered, and family lost forever; on the other hand, the text does not present this as solely Leyla's problem. Germany itself has contributed to these difficulties as it does not offer Kurds institutional representation, pointing to a core dilemma that individual and collective identity as well as *Heimat* face today: their dependence on nation-states as implicit and explicit frames of reference for recognized existence. It is at this node that the conditions for diasporic "heimatizing" are questioned and "deheimatization" appears not necessarily as a subversive strategy against ethno-nationalist *Heimat* conceptions, but as a consequence of a ruptured diasporic existence.

5 "Deheimatizing" the Narrative in Karosh Taha's *Im Bauch der Königin* (2020)

Karosh Taha's second novel, *In the Queen's Belly* [*Im Bauch der Königin*, 2020] tells the story of a neighborhood inhabited mainly by migrants, somewhere in Germany. It functions as a reversable book: Read from one side, the tomboyish Amal narrates a story, while read from the other side and flipped upside down, Raffiq narrates another story. Both sides are coequal and complete in their own right; there is no physical or paratextual indication which one of the two stories

should be read first. Both employ the same characters and places, yet it is not just the perspective on one and the same story that changes, but the story itself. Or rather, the stories.

The fathers of both narrators were architects in Kurdistan and endure an unsatisfactory existence as unskilled laborers in Germany. Neither has a good enough command of German to reclaim their academic degree or to participate in public discourse. But while Raffiq's father decides to go back to Kurdistan to work as an architect just before his son graduates from high school, Amal's father left her and her pregnant mother already eight years earlier. At the time, Amal does not understand why her father does not come back. She only knows that her already strained relationship with her mother gets worse. She felt closer to her father. He did not resent her playing soccer and having short hair (Taha.A 25),[22] while her mother finds these things burdensome. He also wanted to teach her how to drive. But "[h]e went and forgot to teach me how to drive" (Taha.A 26).[23]

With this reflection, the recurring motif of searching for traces sets in:

> I've started collecting father's traces. Father left behind absences, father left behind missing, father left behind shame, father left behind uncertainty. Father left behind fragmentation, father left behind dissolution.
>
> And father left behind incompleteness. (Taha.A 26)[24]

When Amal is about to graduate from high school, she calls her father for the first time in many years. When he picks up, she says nothing at first, but the father suspects his daughter is on the other end of the line:

> keca mn. E?, he asks. My daughter, and? He doesn't say: cye?, what is it? He says: e, the and you use in the middle of a conversation, or as: and then? As if we were interrupted in the middle of a conversation for eight years.
>
> E ce ne, I say, and nothing. […] And father left behind dissolution. (Taha.A 92)[25]

The father is not only 'not there', but is missed in his absence, bringing about a fragmentation that ultimately dissolves the family. Because her father left, Amal has only her mother to blame. She could have gone with him and thus kept the family together. In an argument with her mother, Kurdistan appears to Amal as a

twofold place of longing. On the one hand, as a romanticized *locus* where the "skin—gray in Germany—[...] is brought to life by the sun", and "the air [...] carries sand from Basra into our hair" (Taha.A 86–87).[26] On the other hand, it is a *locus* of the imaginary, a blank page on which Amal could perform a whole new identity: "No one knows me here, here I can be anything. […] I can be who I am, even if I don't know what I'm like yet, the thought of the possibility fascinates me" (Taha.A 97).[27] Amal knows that identity largely depends on the story one tells oneself and others (Klein 84). If others know this story, it cannot be changed so easily. But if no one knows it, representational potential for new identities emerges. In other words, the longing for a place where one could—in the sense of a sovereign and coherent subject position— 'be who one truly is' can be reformulated as the longing for a *Heimat* apparently not conceivable in Amal's German reality.

But this mythic space is disenchanted as soon as Amal boards the plane to visit after her high school graduation, after talking to her father on the phone for the first time in years. She arrives in Erbil where her father does not pick her up as agreed. Instead, he sends a cousin, a stranger to Amal, who informs her of an "important appointment" keeping her father busy at work (Taha.A 95). On the drive, the cousin tells her, "Girls shouldn't smoke. [...] It looks indecent [*unanständig*]" (Taha.A 97). At their first dinner together, her stepsisters call Amal a boy because of her short hair. Amal realizes that she is an "intruder [*Eindringling*]" in this world (Taha.A 102):

> What are you doing here, Amal, what do you want from me?
>
> I wanted to know what you are doing here, why you aren't there. Now I've seen you. Now I can go. (Taha.A 127)[28]

She understands that when she fled Germany, she left behind not only her mother, but also her missing father. For she does not find him here, this man is not her father, time has deformed or reshaped both of them: "my father does not live here" (Taha.A 100).[29]

In *In the Queen's Belly*, Germany does indeed appear as a 'land of opportunity,' though not for the fathers of Amal and Raffiq. The men could no longer stand it in Germany, while the women found something in the diaspora,

namely new opportunities for their children, especially their daughters. To understand her mother's intentions and feelings, Amal first has to fly to her father in Kurdistan. For all the sympathy she feels for him as his dream of becoming an architect in Germany falls through, she now understands that it was his free decision to leave her. He wanted a better life for himself. Her mother's quiet decision to stay is an act of sacrifice that Amal's father is unable to match:

> And Mother decides every day anew to stay, not to follow her husband; when she wakes up and sees the empty side of the bed next to her she still stays on her side, because it is her side. And with every step in the neighborhood, she decides not to go but to stay, and with her presence she confirms to everyone in the neighborhood that she will stay, and every day, every time she is asked when her husband comes, and actually they want to ask, when are you finally going, she answers that he will come soon, because she will stay, every day she has to decide, and every day she decides to stay (Taha.A 130).[30]

Nevertheless, this does not open a dichotomy between Germany and Kurdistan – homeland and *Heimat*. Germany might appear as a 'land of opportunity' here, but never as *Heimat* in its affective dimensions. For Amal understands her father's frustration with and in Germany. Germany and Kurdistan are thought of here in their perpetual ambivalence regarding diaspora conceptions: There is an opposition between the obstacles too high for Amal's father to pursue his profession in Germany, leading him to work as a fruit warehouseman, and his prestige as an architect in Kurdistan. Even though Amal thinks, "As if a place could make a person more important than another place" (Taha.A 98), she immediately realizes the truth of this statement for her own family. However, a place *should* not make a person more or less important, which is why Amal ultimately concludes: "We live in a wrong place", to which there is no 'right' counterpart (Taha.A 98).[31]

On another level of narration, this negative dialectic is inscribed in the physical set-up of the novel. Writing a reversable book allows telling a story from two perspectives in the physical form of the text. However, the two sides of this reversable book not only relate different perspectives on the same events and

characters, but they give two entirely different accounts. The change of perspective alone cannot merge the two fictional universes. The two narrated worlds are entangled, but even these entanglements do not clarify their exact relationship. They render it more complex instead. We encounter the most intriguing interweaving in the fable of the bird, which appears in Raffiq's narrative. As a child, Raffiq's father used to tell him the story of a businessman who owned a talking "exotic bird" (Taha.R 116). When the businessman one day travels to the bird's homeland [*Heimatland*], the bird asks him to "inquire about the well-being of its conspecifics" (Taha.R 117).[32] But when the businessman finds them and asks

> if there was anything they wanted him to communicate to his bird at home, the clearing fell completely silent. Suddenly, one bird fell off his branch, hit the ground and lay there, stiff. Before the man could rush to the bird, the second one dropped dead, and the third, and one by one more fell, until no bird was left in the branches and the ground was littered with bird carcasses. Full of sorrow, the man related what he witnessed. Upon listening, the bird's little body stiffened, and he dropped dead in his cage. The man […] carried his dead animal into the garden, where he wanted to bury him. When he laid the bird down into the dug hole, it suddenly flew into a tree, thanked the business man for delivering the message, and flew away. (Taha.R 117)[33]

Raffiq always wonders how the story ends, whether the bird makes it to its conspecifics, whether it finds them alive, whether they had just played dead so that the man would release his bird. But the end always remains uncertain. Raffiq sometimes imagines something happening to the bird on its long journey, and so it would never know at all whether the birds were alive or dead.

On the other side of the narrative, Amal travels to Kurdistan and waits for her father at the Erbil airport, where she sees a dead "bird with colorful feathers" on the road and wonders "whether all the birds here have such colorful feathers or if this is an exotic bird that flew here from far away, had a stopover here and was run over. Who would have thought a stopover could be fatal" (Taha.A 95).[34] Both narratives use the adjective "exotic" to describe the bird, which allows the consideration that the two are somehow related. The difference in the two

storylines manifests itself in the difference of the bird's story: Raffiq stays in Germany and does not even want to 'check' if Kurdistan could be home for him, maybe even more of a home than Germany. Therefore, he can imagine all possible endings to this fable. Amal, by contrast, goes to Kurdistan and the first thing she sees after her arrival is the dead bird. If it is indeed the same bird, it symbolizes that Amal's search for identity and belonging in Kurdistan is doomed to fail. While Raffiq always wonders if the bird will reach its destination, Amal knows that it has perished before finding out if its conspecifics in its homeland are still alive and had only played dead so that it could find its way back home to them from captivity in foreign lands. The dead bird appears as a sign of the futility of her search of a place 'for herself' in Kurdistan, a 'true homeland' in contrast to the diasporic existence in Germany. Even Raffiq realizes that the birds "could only live on in his [father's] story" (Taha.R 118).[35] Amal's negotiations of identity bid farewell to the idea of a country of origin fraught with longing in the sense of *Heimat.* Her identity, hybrid as it may be, can only be renegotiated in one of the two places that may previously have appeared as equivalent poles. For Amal, Kurdistan is only a stopover, which she — unlike the bird — fortunately escapes. Germany still does not emerge as *Heimat* with its affective attachment. It emerges only as the reaffirmed place where the characters decide to continue their (re)negotiations of identity.

The entanglement of the two sides of the reversable book shows how the two fictional worlds portrayed are connected in a multi-layered way resembling a magical realist turned modernist structure. For the fabled bird of the embedded story in one narrative suddenly appears in the main plot of the other's fictive universe. Every promise of *Heimat* contained in Raffiq's fable is literally and figuratively crushed in the run-over bird's carcass on the asphalt of Amal's narrative. *In the Queen's Belly* thus doubly deheimatizes territorial belonging: Kurdistan does not appear as the ideal homeland where Amal or Raffiq would belong; but Germany can never advance to something like *Heimat* either due to the built-in obstacles and impossibilities for her family and her neighborhood.

6 *Heimat* as Contingency in Imran Ayata's *Mein Name ist Revolution* (2011)

Imran Ayata's 2011 debut novel, *My Name Is Revolution* [*Mein Name ist Revolution*] follows protagonist Devrim Bulut from his 35th to his 36th birthday. When Devrim was a baby, his parents won a million-dollar lottery jackpot as '*Gastarbeiter*' in Germany and died in a car accident five months later. Devrim grows up with his Marxist uncle Ahmet and his aunt Gül. But according to Devrim, he is above all a Berliner. And he knows: "If you want to make it in Berlin, you need a story to tell." (I. Ayata 8).[36] He is the host of the program *Nachtradio* on Radio Tolerance, likes to take all kinds of drugs, and spends his nights in bars and clubs.

When he catches his girlfriend Mascha cheating with a mutual friend at his 35th birthday party, Devrim's friends advise him to find a "Kanacklady" (I. Ayata 43). They would better understand each other, share the same background, the same migrant experiences. Devrim, however, finds the concept of "ethno-love [*Ethnoliebe*]" (I. Ayata 45) absurd, until he meets Rüya, whose family is also from Dersim, but who—unlike Devrim—strongly identifies with this homeland, Zazakî language, and a larger Zaza-Kurdish collective. It seems strange to Devrim that this young woman from Hamburg identifies so naturally with villages in Dersim while at the same time being an active part of Hamburg's nightlife. The unambiguity with which Rüya positions herself in the diaspora as well as in both homeland contexts irritates Devrim. His growing up without the narrative of belonging passed down by his parents makes him question the seemingly natural migrant and diasporic identity formations all the more critically. With him as the narrator of the novel, readers become privy to this critical perspective on belongings.

Rüya connects her self-narration to an inscription in the collective memory she assumes to share with Devrim. But Devrim—in his capacity as narrator—repeatedly rebuffs Rüya's attempts to build some cultural common ground:

> 'My father is pretty unwell. He suffers from the typical guest workers' illnesses [*Gastarbeiterkrankheiten*]. I often fear that something might happen to him. What will my mother do then? Our people, they don't know retirement homes and such.'

> What did I know about the illnesses of Rüya's father, or why her mother wouldn't get along alone, or what comforting thing I could say? I put my arm around her, hugged her quickly, and let go again. (I. Ayata 239)[37]

As a narrative device, his irritation has two effects. First, it questions the self-evidence Rüya assumes with regard to shared collective knowledge; second, it highlights the contrasts to his own self-narration, which opts to do without collective identities. On the contrary, he is always concerned with measuring his distances to them (Jullien 7; I. Ayata 240). This concerns a possible 'Kurdish' identity as well as one as 'Zaza' or '*Dersimli'*; it concerns his communist uncle and the political activists he often found in his uncle's house as a child; it concerns the German "milk faces" [*Milchgesichter*] (I. Ayata 240) and the "vexing German party custom" [*deutsche Partyunsitte*] (I. Ayata 8) of leaving one's wardrobe on the host's bed. The only collective he does not distance himself from is the Berlin night life scene.

Asked why he has never actually been to Dersim, Devrim responds: "Wanderlust is so royally unfamiliar to me. Always has been" (I. Ayata 129).[38] While both his uncle and Rüya actively negotiate the possible identities that a Dersim origin could imply, Devrim hardly feels affected by these discourses:

> Uncle Ahmet couldn't decide if he was one [i.e., a Kurd]. Sometimes he was a Kurd; then he insisted on being *Dersimli*. For me, however, this was not relevant, because I did not associate the place with much more than that it was my parents' much too soon taken up resting place and the home of uncle Haydar and aunt Sultan. (I. Ayata 69–70)[39]

Meeting Rüya, however, triggers Devrim's desire to go to Dersim once after all, to visit his aunt and uncle and his parents' grave for the first time. But the moment of suddenly feeling magically at home does not arrive. After his trip to Dersim, he declares Berlin his *Heimat*-substitute *par excellence*: "I didn't need a home [*Zuhause*] or a homeland [*Heimat*], but it was a nice luxury to live here. Berlin belongs to me, the city is my lifeblood. That has never been as clear to me as it is now" (I. Ayata 232).[40] In a turn of phrase, the narrator positions himself at the structural place of *Heimat*, to which a place can belong, rather than the other way around, thus deheimatizing the ground at the core of Heimat-conceptions. Yet,

even this deheimatized feeling of belonging is clouded, when, on his way home from a night out in Berlin, Devrim has a panic attack:

> I walked faster and faster, soon I was so fast that I began panting. When I started to sweat, I was grappled by inner unrest. I had no idea whatsoever what was happening to me. No drugs, no worries, yet something was not right. […] At home at last, I lay down, but sleep did not find me. I stared at the ceiling and thought I was seeing the starry sky over Kalan [i.e. his parents' Dersim village]. […] I tossed and turned, suddenly I felt a yearning for absolute silence as it prevailed at my parents' graves. (I. Ayata 249)[41]

The intense feelings that were absent when he visited his parents' village and their graves now overtake him in the midst of Berlin's night life. The second time he has a panic attack, he immediately tries to "remember the silence in the cemetery in Kalan," even though he thinks the trip is triggering the attacks in the first place (I. Ayata 263). Again, the third time, "I saved myself outside the door, gasping for air and searching in vain for the starry sky" (I. Ayata 267).[42] Thus, the trip to Dersim triggers in Devrim a bodily negotiation of *Heimat* and affiliations that he had previously experienced as not material at all. He negotiates the distances to all other potential collectives through his self-narration. The negotiation of distance to the only place he has considered his own now becomes a physical impasse in his panic attacks. The light of the starry sky and the silence at his parents' graves provide two extreme sensory contrasts to the nightlife of the big city, forcing him to re-examine his feelings of belonging. *My Name is Revolution* follows less a search for a Kurdish identity than a dissolution of identity ascriptions, both migrant and German. Negotiations and longings for an unambiguous *Heimat* here or a sense of belonging to a familial homeland there accompany these narrative processes of dissolution.

The novel does exhibit some form of development regarding Devrim's feelings of homeland belonging and his self-positioning towards these feelings and places. However, no awakening as a Kurd or as a *Dersimli* occurs; all his efforts lead to the tautology "I am who I am. This is the result of my journey" (I. Ayata 242),[43] to the wish for an "in-between [*dazwischen*]," a "*Mittagsland*" (I. Ayata 141,

emphasis original) aware of the possibilities of belonging, but not able or willing to unambiguously choose one. Yet this is not entirely satisfying for Devrim. When he is asked to come up with a concept for his new radio show, he decides: "For the second edition of *Night Radio* [*Nachtradio*], I wanted to abandon the anonymous host. Maybe the new format could start completely differently: *My name is Revolution. I used to have a different name every night*" (I. Ayata 259, emphasis original).[44] Devrim's name was inscribed with a relationship to his parents' homeland, as Devrim means revolution. It may not be apparent from the text at first glance that this name has great identity-establishing significance for Devrim. But since it lends the novel its title and Devrim's new show its name, a closer examination seems called for in the context of homeland discourses.

The statement "My name is revolution" gives cause for an interesting consideration, as identity itself is turned into a process. Although theoretically there exists a post-revolutionary state, the revolution itself denotes a process, a constant *becoming*. This is the simultaneous disavowal of a possible 'end state' of formulating a (de)finite filiation or affiliation of any kind. Stepping out of the anonymity preserved in his previous radio program and going public with his own name figures as an act of naming, speaking, and therefore positioning oneself within the German cultural landscape. He may not be pursuing the revolution his parents had in mind, but he is pursuing a *Heimat* revolution of sorts. In adopting his own name—in translation—for the new radio program, one possibility within this new identity performance is hinted at: In this language game, he references his familial identity narrative and reinterprets it at the same time.

Literary writing thus becomes an active part of the negotiation and performance of identity and belonging in *My Name is Revolution*. Unlike in the previous novels, however, it is not memory that anchors this narrative. Devrim has no memories of a Kurdish homeland or of parents who tell him stories to inject their memories into his self-narrative. As a result, Devrim is involved in a new negotiation of Kurdish identities in Germany, one that does not even require identification as Kurdish in order to be part of the Kurdish experience and diaspora in Germany. What at first seems paradoxical becomes a productive contradiction.

No longer *feeling* Kurdish as if it were natural for somebody who has not grown up there is also part of diasporic negotiations of belonging. Ayata's *My Name is Revolution* exhibits the most conventional narrative procedures among the three novels examined in this article. Regarding issues of identity and belonging in Germany, however, it perhaps asks the most radical questions. In Spivak's terms, Devrim represents an "unlearning" of certainties ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 295) that determine the dilemma of many Kurds. He refuses identitarianism but is still in search of identity and belonging. He does not have to feel at home in the village in Dersim, does not have to self-evidently conceive of himself either as a Kurd or as a *Dersimli* to nevertheless be part of the Kurdish diaspora, nor does he need to be German to negotiate the various dimensions of *Heimat* in Germany. The same is true for his German-ness: He does no longer feel unambiguously at home in Berlin, but this unambiguity removed only posits a problem for a restrictive conception of *Heimat*. Berlin is still very much his *Wahlheimat*, his (chosen) home, yet Devrim's trip to Dersim (de)heimatizes his German experience.

7 Conclusion and Prospect of a "Deheimatized" Literary Space

In the form of literary representations, all three novels discussed above deal with Kurdish identity and belonging in Germany. They cannot be reduced to one common denominator regarding the Kurdish-ness of their representations, since their Kurdish experiences are always intertwined with German identity and life in Germany. In moving beyond a discussion of identity-narratives on plot level and the fallacy of taking 'migrant' writers as representatives and their works as representations of entire communities of conceived subalterns, I have attempted to analyze how formal and narratological elements contribute to a (re)negotiation of *Heimat* and, possibly, a deheimatization of the literary space. The findings of these limited analyses are preliminary and do not necessarily complement one another, at times they even lead to contradicting propositions with regard to what deheimatizing in literature may look like. I believe them to be valuable insights nonetheless, as they support the innovative thrust of Ayata's concept. She calls for deheimatizing as a new premise after acknowledging the unsalvageable

malady of *Heimat*. The freedoms offered by this as yet undefined theoretical and practical concept were taken up in this essay and tested on three very rich novels out of the Kurdish-German diaspora.

If the literary canon—as argued by Kirchmeier—indeed holds the social function of societal self-thematization and self-reflection, then these novels bear the potential to deheimatize the canon. The analyses of the 'deheimatizing potential' of these novels respond to how they are received and placed within the German literary landscape. These novels are often and so easily read as identity narratives, *mostly* relevant for the minority community they are assumed to 'represent.' But these authors write for a German-reading audience and are not done justice if they are not considered as contributing to what it means to be German today as much as to what it means to be Kurdish *in Germany*.

The present engagement with Kurdish-German literature provided some preliminary findings about the deheimatization of German literature taking place as we speak, which could ultimately lead to new imaginaries of collectivity beyond the nation and beyond *Heimat*. Indeed, the radical transformation of European societies requires new imaginaries to understand the new collectivities that are still in the making. Literature, especially prose fiction, constitutes a prime space for playful yet relentless renegotiating of new cultural imaginaries of (collective) identity on formal, narratological and plot levels, as the present study of three novels by Kurdish-German authors has shown.

---

[1] Translations into English are my own unless otherwise stated. Where relevant, the German original is given in-text in parentheses. Of the literary texts, only Othmann's *Die Sommer* has been translated into English (*The Summers*, 2023). The German original of all literary texts is provided in notes following the quotations.

[2] For a more detailed historical overview on the intertwined history of literature and *Heimat*, see Osterhelt 25–38.

[3] There is no sovereign territory called "Kurdistan." The Autonomous Kurdistan Region of Northern Iraq constitutes a partial exception to this. With its own parliament, military, and universities, it comes closest to fulfilling the criteria of sovereignty, at least for part of what is otherwise geographically referred to as "Kurdistan."

[4] Related concepts to that of deheimatization might be found in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of the Rhizomatic or approaches that seek out the potential of *Heimatlosigkeit*;

see Hackert (82–92) for a broader discussion of the 21st century as *heimatlos*. Hackert emphasizes the role of 'migrant writers' in influencing the scholarly debate on literature as it relates to ideas of monolithic origins (87–90; see also Henderson); Len Cagle et al.'s edited volume also adresses the similar interests of "discourses of *Heimat* and discourses of migration" in "negotiat[ing] questions of identity, belonging, and integration" (3). See Eigler for a study of literature in the context of loss of *Heimat*. See also Römhild's recent proposition of "Global *Heimat*" as attainable by turning *Heimat* into a process of *Beheimatung* (27–29), which the author nonetheless attributes to the cultural work of (post)migrants.

[5] Nursan Celik rightly pointed out, *The Summers* makes no mention of the word "Heimat". However, I use the term as conceptually framed in the introduction, not because the literary texts themselves make use of the term. In employing the term critically and with an experimental intention, its dimensions for the narrated worlds shall be better analyzed and specified. This seems to me a prerequisite for thinking about a possible "deheimatization" of these literary spaces.

[6] A note on the terminology used in this and the following literary analyses: As the usage of the term "Kurdistan" is highly symbolic and political, the terminology used in the discussion of the texts follows the terminology employed by the individual literary texts themselves.

[7] "Leyla war das einzige Kind im Dorf, das Bücher besaß. […] Die Bücher waren nicht das Einzige, das Leyla von den anderen Kindern trennte. Es war auch ihr Stolpern, wenn sie mit Zozan [ihrer jüngeren Cousine] im Dorf unterwegs war. Sie wusste nicht, wo die Gräben verliefen und man springen musste beim Rennen, beim Fangenspielen. Die anderen Kinder kannten alle Gräben […]. Und es waren auch die Wörter, die Leyla beim Sprechen fehlten, und ihre Aussprache, dass sie das R nicht so rollen konnte wie alle anderen" (*Die Sommer* 25–26).

[8] "Irgendwann sprach sie nur noch, wenn sie angesprochen wurde" (*Die Sommer* 27).

[9] "Sie hatte auf alle herabgesehen, weil ihr Englisch besser war"; sie "hatte Zozan auch dafür belächelt, wie sie sich immerzu ihre Hochzeit ausmalte" (*Die Sommer* 27).

[10] "Ich, hatte Leyla in einem der Sommer zu Zozan gesagt, habe andere Ziele im Leben, als einen Mann zu finden, sieben Kinder zu gebären und Brot zu backen. Wie überheblich sie damals gewesen war" (*Die Sommer* 27).

[11] "Einig waren sich alle nur darüber, dass sich Leyla nur so merkwürdig verhielt, weil sie aus Almanya kam" (*Die Sommer* 70).

[12] "Bist du mehr deutsch oder kurdisch, fragte die Mutter der Schulfreundin. Deutsch, sagte Leyla, und die Mutter der Schulfreundin wirkte zufrieden. Fühlst du dich mehr deutsch oder kurdisch, fragte Tante Felek. Kurdisch, sagte Leyla, und Tante Felek klatschte vor Freude in die Hände" (Othmann 158).

[13] "Später fragte sich Leyla manchmal, ob sie sich weniger allein fühlen würde, wenn sie nie im Dorf gewesen wäre. Ob sie, wenn sie nicht wüsste, dass sie allein war, sich einfach nicht allein fühlen könnte" (*Die Sommer* 80).

[14] "Von hier aus konnte sie den Garten sehen, wenn sie an ihn dachte, nannte sie ihn *unseren Garten*, mit seinen Rosensträuchern und den Olivenbäumen, die der Vater gepflanzt hatte, wenige Monate bevor er gegangen war. Von hier oben aus konnte sie das Tor vor dem Hof sehen, vor *unserem Hof*, und im Hof waren jetzt gerade *unsere Babykatzen*" (*Die Sommer* 82, emphasis original).

[15] "Das alles, dachte Leyla, war jedes Jahr für die Dauer des Sommers auch ihres" (*Die Sommer* 82).

[16] "Jeden Sommer flogen sie in das Land, in dem der Vater aufgewachsen war. Das Land hatte zwei Namen. Der eine stand auf Landkarten, Globen und offiziellen Papieren. Den anderen Namen benutzten sie in der Familie. Beiden Namen konnte man jeweils eine Fläche zuordnen. Legte man die Flächen der beiden Länder übereinander, gab es Überschneidungen. Das eine

Land war Syrien, die Syrische Arabische Republik. Das andere war Kurdistan, ihr Land. Kurdistan lag in der Syrischen Arabischen Republik, reichte aber darüber hinaus" (*Die Sommer* 13).

[17] "Die Geschichte Kurdistans erzählte der Vater ihr immer wieder." (*Die Sommer* 137); "Mein Vater kommt aus Kurdistan, sagte Leyla, und die Leute antworteten darauf: Kurdistan gibt es nicht" (Othmann 158); "Der Vater schaute es an [„ein neues Video" aus dem Dorf] und sagte danach, wenn er sterbe, wolle er in Kurdistan begraben werden" (*Die Sommer* 282).

[18] "Leyla versuchte, das andere Dorf, in dem die Großmutter aufgewachsen war, auf Google Maps zu finden. Doch sie kannte nur seinen kurdischen und nicht den türkischen Namen. Begonnen hatte man mit den Namensgebungen irgendwann im Osmanischen Reich, planmäßig dann in der neugegründeten türkischen Republik, nach dem Dersim-Massaker, 1938. […] 1945, sagte der Vater, wurde dann das Benutzen der kurdischen Sprache in der Öffentlichkeit gesetzlich verboten. […] Es ist wichtig, dass du das weißt, sagte der Vater. Du darfst es nicht vergessen. Leyla, du darfst nie vergessen, dass du Kurdin bist. Einige Jahre später, sagte er, wurde wieder Sprache verboten, diesmal der Buchstabe X, der im kurdischen Alphabet, aber nicht im türkischen vorkommt, kurdische Musik, kurdische Literatur, kurdische Zeitungen. Es gab keine Kurden mehr" (*Die Sommer* 133f.).

[19] Cf. the Kurdish political slogan "Berxwedan jiyan e", English translation: "resistance is life".

[20] "Als ich nach Deutschland kam, sagte der Vater zu Leyla, vor dreißig Jahren, legte ich alles offen. Ich sagte von Anfang an, dass ich nicht der Firat Ekinci war, nach dem ich in meinem gefälschten Ausweis hieß. Sondern dass ich *ich* war, ein staatenloser êzîdischer Kurde aus Syrien" (*Die Sommer* 116).

[21] "Alles, beides, vorher und nachher, kam ihr so unwirklich vor."; "Alles Beweise, dachte Leyla, auch in zehn Jahren noch, in zwanzig, dass es das alles wirklich gegeben hatte: das Dorf, die Städte, die Menschen, die Sommer" (*Die Sommer* 75).

[22] Page numbers are given as Taha.A for Amal's side of the story and Taha.R for Raffiq's.

[23] "Er ging und hatte vergessen, mir das Autofahren beizubringen" (Taha.A 26).

[24] "Ich habe angefangen, Vaters Spuren zu sammeln. Vater hinterließ Abwesenheiten, Vater hinterließ Fehlen, Vater hinterließ Scham, Vater hinterließ Ungewissheit. Vater hinterließ Zersplitterung, Vater hinterließ Auflösung. Und Vater hinterließ Unvollständigkeit" (Taha.A 26).

[25] "keca mn. E?, frag er. Meine Tochter, und? Er sagt nicht: cye?, was ist? Er sagt: e, das und, das man mitten in einer Unterhaltung benutzt oder als ein: und dann? Als wären wir acht Jahre lang mitten in der Unterhaltung unterbrochen worden. E ce ne, sag ich, und nichts. Das sind die ersten Worte seit langer Zeit, die ich an meinen Vater richte: und nichts. Und Vater hinterließ Auflösung" (TahaA. 92).

[26] "Haut – in Deutschland grau – wird von der Sonne zum Leben erweckt, seine Haut wird braun, und die Luft trägt Sand aus Basra in unser Haar" (Taha.A 86–87).

[27] "Niemand kennt mich hier, hier kann ich alles sein. Ohne Younes und Shahira und meine Mutter und Baran kann ich sein, wer ich bin, auch wenn ich noch nicht weiß, wie ich bin, fasziniert mich der Gedanke an die Möglichkeit" (Taha.A 97).

[28] "Was willst du hier, Amal, was willst du von mir? Ich wollte wissen, was du hier machst, warum du nicht dort bist. Jetzt habe ich dich gesehen. Jetzt kann ich gehen" (Taha.A 127).

[29] "mein Vater lebt nicht hier" (Taha.A 100).

[30] "Und Mutter entscheidet jeden Tag aufs Neue zu bleiben, nicht dem Mann zu folgen; wenn sie aufsteht und die Bettseite neben sich leer vorfindet, bleibt sie weiterhin auf ihrer Seite, weil es ihre Seite ist. Und mit jedem Schritt im Viertel entscheidet sie sich gegen das Gehen und für das Bleiben und bestätigt allen im Viertel mit ihrer Präsenz, dass sie bleiben wird, und jeden Tag, jedes Mal, wenn sie gefragt wird, wann ihr Mann kommt, und eigentlich wollen sie fragen, wann gehst du endlich, dann antwortet sie, er werde bald kommen, denn sie wird bleiben, jeden Tag muss sie sich entscheiden, und jeden Tag entscheidet sie sich zu bleiben" (Taha.A 130).

[31] "Als könnte ein Ort einen Menschen wichtiger machen als ein anderer Ort. Wir leben an einem falschen Ort. Diese Unterhaltung hat nie stattgefunden" (Taha.A 98).

[32] "er solle nach dem Wohlbefinden seiner Artgenossen fragen" (Taha.R 117).

[33] "Der Mann rief sie zusammen und erzählte ihnen von seinem Vogel, und die Vögel hörten ihm zu, und als der Mann sie fragte, ob sie etwas hätten, was sie dem Vogel zu Hause mitteilen wollten, wurde es ganz still auf der Lichtung. Plötzlich fiel ein Vogel vom Ast, knallte auf den Boden und blieb steif dort liegen. Noch bevor der Mann zu dem Vogel eilen konnte, fiel der zweite tot um und der dritte und nach und nach immer weitere, bis kein Vogel mehr auf den Baumästen saß, der Boden war übersät mit bunten Vogelleichen. Voller Trauer erzählte der Mann, was er beobachtet hatte. Als der Vogel das hörte, versteifte sich sein kleiner Körper, und er kippte in seinem Käfig tot um. Der Mann [...] trug sein totes Tier in den Garten, wo er ihn begraben wollte. Als er den Vogel in das gebuddelte Loch legte, flog der Vogel plötzlich auf einen Baum, bedankte sich beim Geschäftsmann für die Überbringung der Nachricht und flog davon" (Taha.R 117).

[34] "ob alle Vögel hier so ein buntes Federkleid haben oder ob das ein exotischer Vogel ist, der von weit hergeflogen ist, hier eine Zwischenstation eingelegt hat und platt gefahren wurde. Wer hätte gedacht, dass eine Zwischenstation tödlich sein kann" (Taha.A 95).

[35] „nur in seiner Erzählung konnten sie weiterleben" (Taha.R. 118).

[36] "Wer es in Berlin zu etwas bringen will, braucht eine Geschichte, die man sich weitererzählt" (I. Ayata 8).

[37] "'Meinem Vater geht es ziemlich mies. Er leidet an typischen Gastarbeiterkrankheiten. Oft fürchte ich, dass ihm etwas zustoßen könnte. Und was macht dann meine Mutter? Unsere Leute, die kennen das nicht, Altersheim und so.' Was wusste ich, unter welchen Krankheiten Rüyas Vater litt, warum ihre Mutter nicht allein zurechtkommen sollte und was ich Tröstendes sagen könnte? Ich legte meinen Arm um sie, drückte sie kurz an mich und ließ sie dann wieder los" (I. Ayata 239).

[38] "Fernweh ist mir so was von fremd. Schon immer gewesen" (I. Ayata 129).

[39] "Onkel Ahmet konnte sich nicht entscheiden, ob er einer [ein Kurde] war. Mal war er Kurde; dann bestand er darauf, ein *Dersimli* zu sein. Für mich war das aber nicht von Belang, weil ich mit diesem Ort nicht viel mehr verband, als dass meine Eltern dort viel zu früh ihre letzte Ruhe gefunden hatten und Onkel Haydar und Tante Sultan dort lebten" (I. Ayata 69–70).

[40] "Ich brauchte kein Zuhause und keine Heimat, aber es war ein schöner Luxus, hier zu leben. Berlin gehört zu mir, die Stadt ist mein Lebenselixier. Das war mir noch nie so klar wie jetzt" (I. Ayata 232).

[41] "Ich ging immer schneller, bald so schnell, dass ich zu schnaufen begann. Als ich zu schwitzen anfing, packte mich eine innere Unruhe. Ich hatte überhaupt keine Ahnung, was mit mir los war. Keine Drogen, keine Sorgen, und doch stimmte etwas nicht. [...] Endlich zu Hause angekommen, legte ich mich hin, fand aber keinen Schlaf. Ich starrte an die Decke und glaubte, den Sternenhimmel aus Kalan zu sehen. [...] Ich wälzte mich hin und her, fühlte plötzlich Sehnsucht nach unbedingter Stille, wie sie an den Gräbern meiner Eltern geherrscht hatte" (I. Ayata 249–250).

[42] sich "an die Stille auf dem Friedhof in Kalan zu erinnern" (I. Ayata 263); "Ich rettete mich vor die Tür, schnappte nach Luft und suchte vergeblich den Sternenhimmel" (I. Ayata 267).

[43] "Ich bin, der ich bin. Das ist das Ergebnis meiner Reise" (I. Ayata 242).

[44] "Für die zweite Auflage von *Nachtradio* wollte ich den anonymen Moderator abschaffen. Vielleicht konnte das neue Format ganz anders beginnen: *Mein Name ist Revolution. Früher hieß ich jede Nacht anders*. Weiter war ich nicht" (I. Ayata 259).

Works Cited

Alinia, Minoo, et al. "The Kurdish Diaspora: Transnational Ties, Home, and Politics of Belonging." *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2, 2014, pp. 53–56. *content.sciendo.com*, https://doi.org/10.2478/njmr-2014-0007.

Assmann, Jan. *Exodus: Die Revolution Der Alten Welt*. München: C.H. Beck, 2015.

Ayata, Bilgin. "'Deheimatize It!'" *Jahrbuch Für Kulturpolitik 2019/20*, edited by Norbert Sievers et al., Bielefeld: transcript, 2020, pp. 39–43. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783839444917-005.

Ayata, Imran. *Mein Name ist Revolution*. Berlin: Blumenbar, 2011.

Aydemir, Fatma, and Hengameh Yaghoobifarah, editors. *Eure Heimat Ist Unser Albtraum*. Berlin: Ullstein fünf, 2019.

Beals, Kurt. "High-Tech 'Heimat': Mountains and Mediation in Literature, Film, and Digital Art." *The German Quarterly*, vol. 92, no. 2, 2019, pp. 166–86.

Beck, Ulrich. *Die Neuvermessung der Ungleichheit unter den Menschen: Soziologische Aufklärung Im 21. Jahrhundert; Eröffnungsvortrag zum Soziologentag "Unsichere Zeiten" am 6. Oktober 2008 in Jena*. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2008.

Beil, Claudia. *Sprache als Heimat: Jüdische Tradition und Exilerfahrung in der Lyrik von Nelly Sachs und Rose Ausländer*. München: tuduv, 1991.

Bengio, Ofra, and Bruce Maddy-Weitzman. "Mobilised Diasporas: Kurdish and Berber Movements in Comparative Perspective." *Kurdish Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1, 2013, pp. 65–90.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1994.

Boa, Elizabeth, and Rachel Palfreyman. *Heimat – A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890–1990.* Oxford: Oxford University Press 2000.

Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2005.

Cagle, Len, et al., editors. *Heimat and Migration: Reimagining the Regional and the Global in the Twenty-First Century*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023.

Celik, Nursan. "*Von Beet Zu Beet, von Baum Zu Baum*: Towards Exile, Diaspora, and Transnationality in Ronya Othmann's *Die Sommer*." *Heimat and Migration. Reimagining the Regional and the Global in the 21st Century*, edited by Len Cagle et al., Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023, pp. 141–62.

Costadura, Edoardo, and Klaus Ries. “Heimat – ein Problemaufriss”: *Heimat gestern und heute: Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven*, edited by Edoardo Costaura and Klaus Ries, Bielefeld: transcript, 2016, pp. 7–23.

Dörr, Volker C. “Deutschsprachige Migrantenliteratur: Von Gastarbeitern zu Kanakstas, von der Interkulturalität zur Hybridität.” *Literatur der Migration - Migration der Literatur*, edited by Karin Hoff, Lausanne: Peter Lang, 2008, pp. 17–33.

Eigler, Friederike. *Heimat, Space, Narrative: Toward a Transnational Approach to Flight and Expulsion*. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2014.

Gebhard, Gunther, et al. “Heimatdenken: Konjunkturen und Konturen: Statt einer Einleitung.” *Heimat: Konturen und Konjunkturen eines umstrittenen Konzepts*, edited by Gunther Gebhard et al., Bielefeld: transcript, 2007, pp. 9–56.

Hackert, Halina. *Sich Heimat erschreiben: Zur Konstruktion von Heimat und Fremde in Einar Schleefs “Gertrud”*. Berlin: Kadmos, 2012.

Hassanpour, Amir, et al. “Introduction: Kurdish: Linguicide, Resistance and Hope.” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, vol. 2012, no. 217, Jan. 2012, pp. 1–18. *DOI.org (Crossref)*, https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl-2012-0047.

Hassanpour, Amir, and Shahrzad Mojab. “Kurdish Diaspora.” *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World*, edited by Melvin Ember et al., Berlin: Springer, 2005, pp. 214–24.

Hausbacher, Eva. *Schreiben MigrantInnen anders? Überlegungen zu einer Poetik der Migration*. Edited by Eva Binder and Birgit Mertz-Baumgartner, Innsbruck: Innsbruck University Press, 2012, pp. 169–84.

Henderson, Heike. “Re-Thinking and Re-Writing Heimat: Turkish Women Writers in Germany.” *Women in German Yearbook*, vol. 13, 1997, pp. 225–43.

Hüppauf, Bernd. “Heimat – Die Wiederkehr eines verpönten Wortes: Ein Populärmythos im Zeitalter der Globalisierung.” *Heimat. Konturen und Konjunkturen eines umstrittenen Konzepts*, edited by Gunther Gebhard et al., Bielefeld: transcript, 2007, pp. 109–40.

Jullien, François. *Es gibt keine kulturelle Identität. Wir verteidigen die Ressourcen einer Kultur*. Translated by Erwin Landrichter, Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2017.

Kirchmeier, Christian. “Typische Texte: Überlegungen zu einem kulturwissenschaftlichen Kanonbegriff.” *Kanon und Literaturgeschichte: Facetten einer Diskussion*, edited by Ina Karg and Barbara Jessen, Lausanne: Peter Lang, 2014, pp. 33–51.

Klein, Christian. “Erzählen und personale Identität.” *Handbuch Erzählliteratur: Theorie, Analyse, Geschichte*, edited by Matías Martínez, Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2011, pp. 83–89.

Kuzmany, Stefan. "Friedrich Merz präzisiert seine Vorstellung einer deutschen Leitkultur: Nordmanntanne." *Der Spiegel*, 22 Dec. 2023. *www.spiegel.de*, https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/friedrich-merz-praezisiert-seine-vorstellung-einer-deutschen-leitkultur-nordmanntanne-a-199d850f-7341-416a-93bb-f865a1acef72.

Oesterhelt, Anja. *Geschichte der Heimat: Zur Genese ihrer Semantik in Literatur, Religion, Recht und Wissenschaft*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2021.

Othmann, Ronya. *Die Sommer*. München: Carl Hanser, 2020.

Othmann, Ronya. *The Summers*. Transl. by Gary Schmidt. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2023.

"Rechtsextreme NPD heißt jetzt 'Die Heimat'." *Der Spiegel*, 4 June 2023. *www.spiegel.de*, https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/npd-benennt-sich-in-die-heimat-um-a-803d45e1-d362-4294-b485-2fffaac355d4.

Römhild, Regina. "Global *Heimat*: (Post)Migrant Productions of Transnational Space." *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2018, pp. 27–39.

Scheffel, Michael. "Erzählen als Produkt der kulturellen Evolution." *Handbuch Erzählliteratur: Theorie, Analyse, Geschichte*, edited by Matías Martínez, Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2011, pp. 74–79.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, London: Macmillan Education, 1988, pp. 271–313.

---. *Outside in the Teaching Machine*. London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2015.

Stanišić, Saša. "How You See Us: On Three Myths About Migrant Writing." *International Writing Program Archive of Residents' Work*, vol. 728, 2007, pp. 1–4.

Streim, Gregor. "Konzeptionen von Heimat und Heimatlosigkeit in der deutschsprachigen Exilliteratur nach 1933." *Heimat gestern und heute: Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven*, edited by Edoardo Costaura and Klaus Ries, Bielefeld: transcript, 2016, pp. 219–241.

Taha, Karosh. *Im Bauch der Königin*. Köln: DuMont, 2020.

van Bruinessen, Martin. "Editorial." *Kurdish Studies, Special Issue: Kurdish Diaspora*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2, 2015, pp. 125–27.