

Aesthetics of diaspora: contemporary minstrels in Turkish Berlin

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Abstract *The process of identity formation of the Turkish hip-hop youth in Berlin is a constant negotiation between past and future, 'roots' and 'routes', local and global, home and diaspora. German-Turkish youth in general are socially conscious and critical of the increasing discrimination, segregation, exclusion and racism in society. These new syncretic forms of expressive minority youth cultures expose a social movement of urban youth that already has a distinct political ideology. Some of the Turkish rappers in Berlin take a significant position within these new social movements as the spokespeople (contemporary minstrels and/or storytellers) of their communities. These rap groups have eventually played a vital role in developing an anti-racist struggle by communicating information, organising the collective consciousness and testing out, deploying, or amplifying the forms of subjectivity within the Turkish diaspora. Accordingly, this article attempts to explore the forms of expressive culture which the Berlin-Turkish hip-hop youths have constructed as a reaction to the structural outsiderism and exclusion, and demonstrates their construction of a double diasporic cultural identity.*

KEYWORDS: DIASPORA; IDENTITY; TURKISH MIGRANTS; BERLIN; HIP-HOP CULTURE; RHIZOMATIC SPACE

Introduction

The modern individual has recently become subject to the simultaneous interplay of the global and the local. In the age of *glocalism*, individuals and groups tend to form new identities by going back to basics. In this process of cultural identity formation, 'authentic' culture, ethnicity and what is related to the homeland become an important source of identity politics, as I have shown for the Turks in Berlin's Kreuzberg district (Kaya 2000, 2001). However, the modern subject is also able to employ the instruments granted to him/her by the contemporary means of globalism such as transportation and communication. Hip-hop is a youth culture that enables ethnic minority youths to use both their own 'authentic' cultural capital and global transcultural capital in constructing and articulating their identities. It provides the diasporic youth with a ground where they can use their ethnicity as a strategising tool to articulate their identities in response to the majority nationalism and racism. It also serves as a mechanism to incorporate the ethnic minority youth into the global youth culture. The youngsters' use of 'authentic' culture as a strategising tool in the process of identity formation principally springs from their need to come to terms with the unpleasant present pervaded by racism, unemployment, exclusion, poverty and exclusionary regimes of representation. In this sense, the

celebration of 'authenticity' becomes a revolt against the hegemony of the prevailing nation-state. There are various ways in the global hip-hop culture through which ethnic minority youths can resist the dominant regimes of representation and incorporate themselves into the mainstream. The dominant regimes of representation are performed in a way that ethnic groups are stereotypically perceived and represented by the majority society. To illustrate these dominant regimes of representation, a brief examination of some of the media and 'scientific' works produced in Germany is quite revealing. *Der Spiegel* (14 April 1997), a prominent liberal weekly magazine, denounced the 'foreigners' in the country as 'dangerously alien' and as the cause of the failure of the 'multicultural society'. In the magazine, Turkish youths in Germany were presented as 'criminals', 'fundamentalists', 'nationalist' and 'traumatic'. A similar trend to the media coverage of the Turks in Germany has also recently been exhibited in academia. Wilhelm Heitmeyer (1997), who was referred to in the *Der Spiegel* article, has become a polemical name after the publication of his book on the German-Turkish youth, *Verlockender Fundamentalismus (Enticing Fundamentalism)*, in which he concluded that it is the Turks who are not tempted to integrate and incorporate themselves into the system. His main criterion in declaring the self-isolationist tendency of the Turkish-origin youths was their contentment to live with Islam and Turkishness. What was missing in both works was the underestimation of the structural constraints of Germany, which have remarkably shaped the survival strategies of migrants and their descendants. Such an approach, which does not consider the impact of the institutional structure of the receiving country on immigrant political mobilisation, is quite essentialist and exclusionist.

As Clifford (1988: 5) has rightly stated, the diasporic groups who are alienated by the system and swept up in a destiny dominated by the capitalist West, no longer invent local futures; what is different about them is that they remain tied to traditional pasts and ethnicities. Remaking, or recovering, the past serves at least a dual purpose for the diasporic communities. Firstly, it is a way of coping with the conditions of the present without being very critical about the *status quo*. Secondly, it also helps to recuperate a sense of self not dependent on criteria handed down by others – the past is what the diasporic subjects can claim as their own (Ganguly 1992: 40). However, Turkish youngsters, while having a sense of looking backward, also tend to transcend the exclusionist policies of the German nation-state by exhibiting a transnational articulation of culture. In fact, what makes these youngsters hip-hop youth are not those particularist cultural sources, but universalist constituents. Rap, graffiti, dance, and the 'cool' look are some examples. All these peculiar aspects of hip-hop culture attempt to localise power and to create a distance between the already-excluded diasporic youth group and the legitimate forms of institutions such as police, education and media. Getting involved in the hip-hop youth culture provides the diasporic youngsters with an opportunity to get away from the limited boundaries of the 'ethnic enclave' life. This is a chance to broaden the living boundaries in a way that leads to the incorporation of the youth into the mainstream global hip-hop culture. By doing graffiti, rap, or break-dance, they all want to be 'da King' ('da' is the vernacular of article 'the'). Roaming around the city, trying to discover the outskirts of the urban landscape, painting and tagging (signing) graffiti, attending break-dance competitions and parties, and fighting against rival youths, they try to produce their own social, cultural and political space.

As clearly stated by Tricia Rose, hip-hop culture has emerged as a source of alternative identity formation and social status for the diasporic youth living in an ethnic enclave whose older local support institutions have been demolished. Alternative social identities were formed in fashions and language, and in establishing neighbourhood crews or posses (Rose 1994: 34). The formation of alternative identities and social status does certainly apply to some of the Berlin-Turkish hip-hop youths who form various crews composed of hip-hop fans, artists, musicians and dancers. These are new kinds of families which provide insulation and support in a complex and unyielding environment and may, in fact, contribute to the community-building networks that serve as the basis for new social movements.

Hip-hop as a form of *aesthetics of diaspora* enables the descendants of migrants to construct a syncretic culture entwined with diasporic consciousness and transculturalism through the method of collage and by means of globalisation.¹ The Turkish rappers in Berlin present a suitable example to examine the production of cultural bricolage among a group of Turkish diasporic youth.² Accordingly, this article will map out the social identities and counter-hegemonic discourses of the Turkish rappers in Berlin, and the rise of the Turkish hip-hop community in Germany.³ There are many German-Turkish rap groups in Berlin, including *Cartel*, *Islamic Force*, *Ünal*, *Erci-E*, *Azize-A*. Interviews held with the rappers will be often quoted in order to expose the way they narrate their tales as contemporary storytellers of the diasporic youth in the urban landscape. By doing so, the rappers will have the ground to express themselves as in a virtuoso verbal performance through an imaginative excursion. Besides describing the discourses of those storytellers and/or contemporary minstrels, the interviews with the rappers are also essential to demonstrate the transcultural and transnational nature of Berlin-Turkish diasporic youth.⁴

Contemporary minstrels and/or 'storytellers'

The rappers I worked with during the course of my research in Berlin made me conscious of their own social identities. The more I analysed their lyrics and narratives, the more I realised that they are what Walter Benjamin (1973) called 'storytellers' of their own local communities. A storyteller 'is a man [sic] who has counsel for his readers ... The storyteller takes what he tells from experience – his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale' (Benjamin 1973: 86–7). Benjamin also states that 'the storyteller joins the ranks of the teachers and sages' (1973: 107). Hence, the rapper is an intellectual storyteller who has counsel for his/her audience and who wishes to mobilise his/her local community against the power of the hegemonic and/or coercive group. The rapper also reminds us of what we are already inclined to forget, namely, the 'communicability of experience' which is destined to decrease. In this sense, rap turns out to be a critique of the modern urban way of life, which disrupts the 'communicability of experience'. In other words, rap helps to communicate symbols and meanings, articulating intersubjectively the lived experience of social actors.

Besides mapping out the rappers with the term 'storytellers', I will also define some of the Turkish rappers as 'contemporary minstrels'. It is a preferable formulation in the context of the Turkish rappers because the notion of minstrel

also has its equivalent in the Anatolian cultural context. The medieval Turkish minstrels (*halk ozani*) were the travellers who enlightened the masses with their lyrics accompanied by the sound of a stringed musical instrument, *baglama*. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, some of these minstrels used to write and sing poems against the supremacy of the Ottoman dynasty over the peasantry. They were the spokespersons of the degraded and undervalued Turkish popular culture against the Ottoman high culture, which was a mix of Byzantine, Persian, Arabic and Turkish.⁵ Having been raised in a working-class and/or rural-based parental culture which was pervaded by the Anatolian minstrels' music and myths, most of the Turkish youngsters in Berlin might well feel themselves attracted by the educative nature of rap. Besides taking inspiration from the intellectual teaching of the Anatolian minstrels, the rappers also tend to borrow their lyric structure: it is quite common for the Turkish rappers in Germany to state their names in the last part of the lyrics as the mythical Turkish minstrels used to. Thus, having such a cultural tradition makes the Turkish rappers more capable of contextualising themselves locally within the global hip-hop youth culture on which they receive an up-to-date flow of information via MTV, VIVA TV (German local form of MTV), music magazines, and tapes, records and CDs.

Furthermore, the discursive similarity between Turkish rap and Turkish 'traditional' folk music in the diaspora context should also be recognised. As the ethno-musicologist Martin Greve (2000: 194–8) has recently stated, the rap songs and folk songs produced by the German-Turks resemble each other. Greve calls the Turkish folk musicians in the diaspora 'transnational minstrels'. Comparing both music cultures, he points out that the discourses of the lyrics in both some rap songs and folk music songs are quite similar (see also Greve 1997). For instance, the discourse analysis of the lyrics written by Islamic Force, a Berlin-based Turkish rap group, and Minstrel Shah Turna, a Berlin-based female traditional minstrel, demonstrates that the diasporic experience of the Turkish migrants and of their descendants are perfectly matching.

German-Turkish hip-hop youngsters, like other minority youth groups, also tend to express themselves by means of protest music, break-dance and graffiti, which fit into the consumerist popular culture. These kinds of expression facilitate the emergence of identities of resistance. The youngsters develop these resistant identities within the 'areas of conversation' (Bottomley 1992: 131) with others who have prejudices, and aim discriminatory acts, towards them. The racist attacks on the Turkish community members in Mölln and Solingen in 1992 and 1993 received an extensive reaction from within the Turkish diaspora throughout Europe. Turkish rap groups immediately reacted to the arson attacks in a very radical way. They have eventually played a vital role in developing the anti-racist struggle by communicating information, organising consciousness and testing out, deploying, or amplifying the forms of subjectivity within the Turkish diaspora. In what follows, various rap groups and their diasporic discourses will be introduced.

Cartel: cultural nationalist rap

It was the summer of 1995 in Turkey. A *gangsta* rap group called *Cartel* was introduced to the Turkish audience. Most of the public/private TV and radio channels and the print media drew lots of attention to this interesting group.

Their video-clip and CD suddenly topped the Turkish pop charts. These 'strange-looking' guys had come from Germany. In the video-clip, they were walking along German streets with a number of groupies behind. Their hit rap song, also called '*Cartel*', was sending messages to the Turkish youth in Germany to unite against the rising racist attacks and killings. The way they walked in the video-clip was not so different from its equivalent in American rap (jabbing towards the camera with their fingers). The anger and hatred in their faces against the murders of the Turks in Germany were easily readable. Furthermore, they were inviting everybody to join the 'movement' of *Cartel*. '*Gel gel Cartele gel/Carteldekiler kankardesler*' ('Come to *Cartel*/The ones with *Cartel* are blood brothers').

Cartel is a music project initiated by a Berlin producer called Ozan Sinan. The group is composed of three different rap groups originating in various regions of Germany: *Karakan* (based in Nuremberg), *Da Crime Posse* (based in Kiel), and a West Berliner MC, *Erci-E*. The group consists of seven members: five Turkish, one German and one Afro-Cuban. They all dress austerely in black, with Turkish motifs on the uniform T-shirts. The design of the CD/tape resembles the Turkish flag on the red ground, and the initial letter 'C' of '*Cartel*' which imitates the crescent on the Turkish flag. The name '*Cartel*' on the cover is also decorated with Turkish ornamental shapes. The timing of the release of the group and the goods (*Cartel* T-shirts, caps, hats and coats) was amazingly well-judged. It was a time in Turkey when popular nationalism was prevailing. Thus, the group immediately encountered a warm welcome from the Turkish audience. The group was also extensively promoted by the Turkish media to strengthen the hegemony of the state as a measure against centrifugal forces such as Kurdish nationalism.

Before the group went to Turkey to give concerts, the media promotion was already done. Thus, *Cartel* had already had an impact on the national pride of a remarkable part of the Turkish audience. They were greeted by a rapturous crowd of youths from the right-wing nationalist movement (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, *MHP*, which is active in both Turkey and Germany, and advocates Turkish and pan-Turkish nationalism). This kind of support was present in all the concerts of *Cartel*, held in many major cities of Turkey, even in the south-eastern Anatolian cities. The fact that *Cartel's* rap salute was remarkably similar to the 'grey-wolf' salute of the *MHP*, turned the group into a new totem for the nationalist crowds. As Robins and Morley (1996: 252) pointed out, 'what the ultra-nationalist youths were seeing and identifying with was the tough and angry mood of rap culture. These were young people who were insecure, often in a paranoid way and consequently aggressive, in the expression of their Turkish identity. These were the ones who were prepared to come to *Cartel*, drawn by its talk of bonding and belonging.' *Cartel* suddenly became one of the main pillars of popular Turkish nationalism. *Cartel's* hip-hop nationalism was straightforwardly translated by these right-wing youths from the German to the Turkish context. Such a translation encouraged crowds to do something about the 'enemies of the Turkish nation and race'. MC *Erci-E*, to whom I shall return shortly, expressed his surprise and shock at this enthusiastic reception by the extreme-right youths, and complained about the misunderstanding of the Turkish audience. Yet, whatever way they were interpreted in Turkey, the manager and the producer company *Polygram* were satisfied with the result: in 1995 they sold more than 300,000 copies of the album in Turkey, displacing Michael

Jackson from his top position in the album charts, and more than 20,000 copies in Germany.

The rap group *Cartel* is a form of 'playful cultural-nationalist rap'.⁶ *Cartel* infuses rap with Turkish percussion, a blend of Turkish-German, English and Spanish lyrics, Turkish folk music sound, and cries against racists. *Cartel* rappers assert and construct a distant *pan-Turkish diasporic cultural identity* while acknowledging the African connections of rap art. Like many other Turkish rap groups, *Cartel* also acknowledges its 'authentic' Turkish folk music connection in the form of a lyric structure which was used by the mythical Turkish minstrels (*halk ozani*). By doing so, the rappers also contextualise themselves both in their 'own authentic' culture and in the global youth culture. By means of hip-hop culture, the youngsters ironically both convince themselves of their involvement in the mainstream global culture, and feel attached to their own 'authentic' cultural and ethnic identities. It is a syncretic mode of demonstrating incorporation into the mainstream and attachment to the roots. As the elements of a surviving strategy, they are in need of incorporating into the mainstream culture, because the 'myth of return' is over; they are also in need of going back to their roots, because the past is one of the rare things they can claim as 'their own'. Rap is a resistance movement in itself, offering a shared code of communication as well as a sense of collectivism. Above all, rap culture, which is dominated by *Cartel*, tends to bridge the gap between the displaced Turkish diaspora community and the 'imaginary homeland'. In other words, it is an imaginative journey back home.

As the intellectual storytellers of their group, the members of the hip-hop nation form an 'imagined community' that is based less on its realisation through state formation than on a collective challenge to the consensus logic of Germany and to the majority German nationalism (Decker 1992: 54). Hip-hop nationalism as a variant of minority nationalism should be explored in relation to the majority nationalism. The use of ethnic symbols resembling the Turkish flag should not immediately be labelled as regressive, racist or exclusionist. Such a straightforward judgement would lead us to misinterpret the nationalist discourse of *Cartel*, and to underestimate the presence of German nationalism. Hennayake's interesting notion of 'interactive nationalism' is certainly relevant in order to understand the major impetus behind minority nationalisms (Hennayake 1992). Interactive nationalism simply refers to a kind of minority ethnic nationalism which is formed in opposition to the simultaneous practice of hegemonic politics and exclusionary nationalist stances of the majority nation and/or the dominant ideology. Paraphrasing John Berger (1972: 11), it is the fear of the present which makes the Turkish youth celebrate their 'past' and 'authenticity'. In this sense, the cultural nationalist discourse of *Cartel* provides a ground for Turkish youth to acquire a positive and optimistic politics of identity.

Music is said not only to express differences but also to articulate them creatively, affecting social and cultural realities while at the same time being shaped by them (Grenier 1989: 137). Music-making and other forms of popular culture serve as a specific site for the creation of collective identity as well as shaping and reflecting dominant and subordinate social and cultural relations. In some cases, music might become a social force attempting to transform the existing social system. Rap is very instructive in this sense. *Cartel*, while being sustained by Turkish cultural capital, attempts to construct a 'pan-Turkish' diasporic cultural identity. The rappers strongly adhere to a notion of com-

munity, and by and large do not assume that this community is pre-given and exists naturally; rather, they consider that it must be constructed and created against all odds, in the face of the threat of decimation (Swedenburg 1992: 58). Accordingly, *Cartel* has a political message to announce both to the Turkish minority and the German majority, besides being the symbol of cultural pride. The rappers in Berlin aim to mobilise the masses against arson attacks, racism, xenophobia, exclusion, the drugs trade, drug abuse, materialism, capitalism, and antagonism between Kurds and Turks. They are also intent on praising the family institution, on celebrating the brotherhood of Turkish and Kurdish people, on presenting Germany as the new homeland, and on criticising the perception of the diasporic youth as 'Almanci' (German-like) in Turkey and 'Ausländer' (foreigner) in Germany. They try to inform the audience about their own experiences and those of the others. The expression of the black French rapper, MC Solaar, gives the rationale behind rapping: 'If you rebel, you isolate yourself. If you explain, people learn' (*Newsweek*, 26 February 1996). Thus, the rationale behind the hip-hop nation is the quest for communication and dialogue with the hegemonic social classes/groups.

Bloodbrothers

Oh my God, not again?
 Bloodbrother is everything
 It is to die for your brother
 It is to sacrifice
 Always tell me what you want
 We said, 'piss off skinhead!'
 When we said we were Turks,
 We were labelled as fascist.
 I am always with you boy.
 Screaming at you means screaming at me
 Don't dare to fool me,
 You will be the loser.
 If we get together, no one can beat us
 C'mon guys!
Karakan is coming.
 C'mon guys,
 Nothing can scare us.

Blood blood bloodbrothers
 They can't beat us
 Blood blood bloodbrothers
 This is *Cartel*

Five letters 'blood', seven more letters 'brother'
 What is this, a little word
 But with a strong meaning
 We walked through many troubles
 Sometimes lost, sometimes won
 We never left alone our bloodbrother
 Forever together
 Your friends come by and leave
 They love you
 They hang around with you to death
 This is *Cartel*, if you don't know someone can tell you
 Go and find out, our business is rap
 Cos pop is no use for us
 It isn't for us
 Words can kill like a bullet

Refrain

My name is Kerim
 I am known as nightmare
 Next to me Alper with black bones
 He hates sexy '*kanake*'
 Not only him, all of us
 One for all, all for one
 Turk, Kurd, Laz and Circassian
 We will lose if we disunite
 Lots of traitors behind
 Don't dream
 What you think of is not friendship
 It is something further, stronger
 All together we will break up the chains
 In a way that suits the bloodbrothers
 If you're ready, it's your turn now.

Refrain

Karakan (Cartel)

This particular rap song by *Cartel* opens with the cry of a woman in the background – 'Oh my God, not again?' ('*Allahim yine mi?*') – which echoes the image of the 'caring mother'; her cry is for the Turkish families killed in the arson attacks in Mölln and Solingen. The song demonstrates the need to unite across the diaspora of the German-Turks that consist of various ethnic groups such as Turk, Kurd, Laz and Circassian.⁷ By this song, MC *Kerim (Cartel)* invites his Turkish 'bloodbrothers' to fight racist arson attacks. This song also displays a flow of the lyrical structure which resembles that of the Turkish minstrel tradition. In the last part of the song, MC *Kerim* first introduces himself, and sharply gives his message: 'One for all, all for one'.

The rise of the local rap sound amongst German-Turks is an indication of diasporic cultural nationalism, which is sustained by the processes of racialisation, assimilation and acculturation. The sources of Turkishness which have appeared as components of rising cultural nationalism have offered German-Turkish youngsters a positive sense of identity in the face of negative pressures towards assimilation and racism. Here, 'ethnicity is used as a source in the struggle for symbolic capital, in particular, to counteract the negative representations of immigrant workers, and those with minimal power in their "host" societies' (Bottomley 1992: 57). The youths' expressive culture is an attempt to constitute a form of counterculture. What the ethnic minority youth constructs is no more a kind of passive 'subculture'. Ethnic minority youngsters have become aware of the contradictions between the ideology of equal opportunity and the reality of discrimination and racism prevailing in their daily lives. This, as Castles and Miller have stated, can lead to the emergence of countercultures and political radicalisation (Castles and Miller 1993: 33). What are the main constitutive parts of the minority youth counterculture and political radicalisation? There is not a straightforward answer to this question. It seems that ethnicity is the primary instrument for the German-Turkish youth to construct a counterculture and a fruitful sense of identity. *Cartel* as a form of gangsta rap presents a form of diasporic cultural politics; and it also positions itself against cultural displacement, racism and capitalist exploitation.

Islamic Force: universalist political rap

Islamic Force was founded in 1986 by the self-initiatives of *Boe-B* (male, Turkish) and the manager Yüksel. Besides *Boe-B*, there are three more members: *Killa Hakan* (male, Turkish), DJ *Derezon* (male, German mother, Spanish father), and *Nelie* (female, German mother, Albanian father). What they make is conceived as *Oriental rap* and anti-racist rap in Berlin. *Boe-B* is the brain of the group in writing the lyrics; DJ *Derezon* is the technical expert in mixing melody, beat and rhythm. The name *Islamic Force* was chosen to provoke the Germans who have a stereotypical image of Islam; otherwise the group has nothing to do with radical Islam. Recently, in order to release their works in Turkey, they changed their name to *Kan-Ak* – this was to avoid the name *Islamic Force* being misinterpreted by the Turkish audience in the homeland. The previous misinterpretation of *Cartel's* discourse by the Turkish audience has also made them conscious about the probable unjust critiques in Turkey.

Changing their name to *Kan-Ak*, the rappers believe they have a more gangsta-type of name for the Turkish market: *Kan-Ak* literally means 'running blood' in Turkish. On the other hand, the reason for choosing the new name *Kan-Ak* is also the acceptance of an offensive word used by right-wing Germans to identify 'the blacks' (*Kanake*). There is a parallelism between the use of *nigga* instead of the racist word 'nigger' by the blacks in the USA and the Turks' use of *Kan-Ak*, or *Kanak*, instead of the offensive word *Kanake*. The choice of such a name, in a way, springs from their feeling of being 'white-niggers'. Tommy L. Lott's analysis of the term *nigga* is instructive in this context (Lott 1994: 246). He rightly claims that gangsta rap has creatively reworked and recoded the social meaning of the term in a socially transgressive and politically retaliatory manner. Thus American rappers successfully demystified a taboo term used by white newscasters (Lott 1994). Similarly, Peter McLaren offers an illuminating explanation for the revision of the term *nigger* by blacks in New York or Los Angeles:

When gangsta rappers revise the spelling of the racist version of the word *nigger* to the vernacular *nigga* they are using it as a defiant idiom of a resistive mode of African American cultural expression which distinguishes it from the way that, for instance, white racists in Alabama might employ the term (McLaren 1995: 37).

The term *Kan-Ak* is the Turkish vernacular of the original racist version of *Kanake*. 'If you take negative racist identifications like *Kanake*, and make them positive for your own use', says MC *Soft-G*, 'then the racist groups have to produce new concepts to insult you. And it is always difficult to produce new concepts.' It was a term that granted very specific bounds of acceptable usage – it could only be used by the enclave youth.⁸ The term *Kanak* also permits a form of class-consciousness among the Turkish enclave youth in the sense that it distinguishes Turkish urban working-class youth from those middle-class Turkish youths who feel denigrated whenever the term is used.

Besides the fact that Turkish rap has evolved in the binary-coded struggle against the hegemony of the German nation-state and rising racial attacks, it has also developed as a relatively independent expression of Turkish male artistic rebellion against the newly emerging Turkish bourgeoisie and the Turkish media. These working-class youngsters romanticise the 'ghetto' as the fruitful root of cultural identity and authenticity. MC *Boe-B* pointed out that the Turkish media have always represented the 'successful' and 'well-integrated' middle-

class Turkish youngsters rather than the working-class youth in Berlin who had no 'achievement'. Thus, they are to imagine themselves in opposition to the 'white' German society, and also to the other 'blacks' who aspire to integrate themselves into the dominant German culture (Robins and Morley 1996: 249).

Islamic Force is the first Turkish rap group to combine a drum-computer rhythm of Afro-American tradition with melodic samples of Turkish *arabesk* and pop music.⁹ By mixing traditional Turkish musical instruments like the *zurna*, *baglama* and *ud* with the Afro-American drum-computer rhythm, they trans-culturate rap music. Transculturation is a two-way process whereby elements of international pop, rock, and rhythm-and-blues are incorporated into local and national musical cultures, and indigenous influences contribute to the new transnational styles (Wallis and Malm 1984: 300–1). What happens in practice is that individual music cultures pick up elements from transcultural music, but an increasing number of national and local music cultures also contribute to transcultural music. Through the transculturation process, music from the international music industry can interact with virtually all other music cultures and subcultures in the world due to the worldwide penetration of music mass media (Wallis and Malm 1990). In *Oriental rap*, global rhythm and beat of rap infuse into local Turkish folk, pop and *arabesk* music.

What the Turkish rappers in Germany call *Oriental rap* becomes the music of the state of bricolage as in *Islamic Force*. MC *Boe-B* defines their rap style with an illustrative example: 'The boy comes home and listens to hip-hop, then his father comes along and says "Come on boy, we're going shopping". They get into the car and the boy listens to Turkish music on the cassette player. Later, he gets our record and listens to both styles in one' (Elfleim 1998). Transculturation in the form of mixing *arabesk* and hip-hop in one is, at the same time, the expression of a 'double diasporic consciousness'.¹⁰ This consciousness stems from the double migration experience, which the migrants had both in Turkey and in Germany. Before migrating to Germany, most of the migrant parents had already lived a diasporic experience (*gurbet*) by leaving their villages to work in the big industrial cities of Turkey. *Arabesk* has been the expression of their parental culture. They have been raised in such a cultural climate at home. The pessimism of *arabesk* music has dominated their musical taste. What Ferdi – a 16-year-old boy in Berlin – has said is very illustrative to understand the impact of *arabesk* on the diasporic youth: 'When I listen to Ferdi Tayfur (a popular Turkish *arabesk* singer) I feel that I am back home. You know that special song, you know what I mean: "*Hadi gel köyümüze geri dönelim*" (Come on, let's go back to our village).'¹¹

On the other hand, these youngsters have experienced the problems of being an ethnic minority in Germany away from their homeland. In the diaspora they have taken hip-hop as a way of expressing their alienation and resistance to the capitalist system. Thus, *arabesk* and hip-hop are the two musical styles which some of the youngsters prefer to listen to as an expressive form of their 'double diasporic identity'. They employ *arabesk* as a musical and cultural form to express their imaginary nostalgia towards 'home', 'being there', or the 'already discovered country of past'; and, on the other hand, they consider hip-hop as a musical and cultural form to express their attachment to the 'undiscovered country of the future'. To put it differently, both *arabesk* and hip-hop represent the symbolic expression of the dialogue which the diasporic youth have between 'past' and 'future', and between 'there' and 'here'.

Selaminaleyküm

They arrived in Istanbul from their villages
 And got searched in the German customs
 It is as if they got purchased
 Germans thought they'd use and kick them off
 But they failed to
 Our people ruined their plans
 Those peasants turned out to be clever
 They worked hard
 Opened a bakery or a doner kebab on each corner
 But they paid a lot for this success
 We are losing life, losing blood
 Homes are on fire, we get mad
 I was chosen to explain these things
 Everybody screams 'Tell us *Boe-B*'
 And I am telling our story as hip-hop in Kadiköy

Selaminaleyküm aleykümselam
 Selaminaleyküm aleykümselam
 Let's go on rapping

We tell you our experiences
 We present you the news
 We connect our neighbourhood and Kadiköy
 We are doing real hip-hop
 And we tell it to you
 You drive with high-decibels in the streets in either Benz, or BMW, or Golf, or Audi, or whatsoever.
 The police is behind you
 They are following you
 You haven't yet realised
 You haven't yet looked behind
 You are turning without signalling
 Suddenly everywhere gets full of police
 He says 'get out'
 He says 'you stole this car'
 He is taking you to the police station just because of the lack of a document
 He doesn't have any mercy at all
 He knows his business
 He is counting, taking and controlling
 He doesn't know, you are also human
 This is unjust
 And I am telling this story in a far land, Kadiköy.
 Refrain

As seen in this song, *Islamic Force* attempts to bridge the gap between diasporic land and homeland. MC *Boe-B* narrates in this rap song, '*Selaminaleyküm*', that they have been raised in families who have been twice migrants. This song is the expression of double diasporic identity as well as that of the quest for homeland. By referring to *Kadiköy* in the song, he holds on to his roots.¹² He defines himself as a 'messenger' chosen by his community in Berlin to express their state of being to their Turkish compatriots in the homeland. He tells a 'true' story to his 'imaginary' Turkish compatriots about the life-worlds of the German-Turks who are subject to institutional racism, harassment, arson attacks and discrimination. This song is quite illustrative in demonstrating how the diasporic youth use an emerging global cultural form (hip-hop) and a granted local cultural form (*arabesk*) for their own counter-hegemonic expressive purposes. This syncretic

'double consciousness' simultaneously points at Turkey and Berlin, past and present, as well as local and global.

Boe-B's narrative in the song quoted above resembles that of the Turkish minstrels. In fact, the rapper as a 'storyteller' has its equivalent in Anatolian source culture. Though having completely different musical tastes, rhyming and storytelling are the common denominators of both artistic forms. Thus, the working-class Berlin-Turkish youngsters, having been raised with the sound of Turkish folk music, could easily relate themselves to the rap form of art.

Erci-E: party rap

Erci-E (23), born in Berlin, is one of the rappers of *Cartel*. Erci first encountered rap when he was 13 years old. This was a crucial moment for him. Rap meant, for him as well as for many other rappers, transcending the pessimism of pop music at first sight:

Rap is my favourite music. I love that coolness since the age of thirteen. The other music styles have become boring for me. For instance, pop music was very stable without any change. What fascinates me in rap is its dynamism and power.

After giving up university just for music, he began making *Oriental* or *alternative* rap. Like many other Turkish rappers, he relates better to East Coast rappers. He is well aware of the changes in rap music all around the world, especially in the United States. Like all the Turkish rappers, *Erci* gives reference to the American differentiation of rap sound as East Coast and West Coast. *Erci* underlines the creative and progressive character of the rap music for the Turkish diaspora as well as for the other minority youth all around the world. He sees hip-hop as a ticket out of the 'ghetto':

In rap, rhythm and melody are as important as lyrics. *Cartel* gave something to the Turkish youngsters living in Europe. Now I want to give something else to them. Rap should be progressive. I don't want to talk about the problems any more, I want them to enjoy themselves by listening to optimistic rap and having positive feelings. The message of my new solo long-play, which I will give to the Turkish youngsters in minority all around Europe, is to struggle against violence and to seek solidarity ... Wherever there is a minority, hip-hop is there. That is a rebellion culture. It is not necessarily a revolt against the political government. American-Blacks have grown up in the ghetto. Hip-hop has become a way for them to get out of the ghetto. By means of hip-hop they have the chance to do more creative things in their leisure time.

Recently, he released his solo long-play (*Sohbet*) produced all over Europe and even in the United States of America:

Turks in Europe have been forgotten, they should communicate with each other. Turkish youngsters in France should know that they are living the same things as the Turkish youngsters in Germany ... I want to explain something new to them in their own 'broken' Turkish accent ... Turkish pop is not for us. It is just talking about love, that is it. There is, for instance, sea in those pop songs, but there is no sea in Germany. I repeat it, Turkish pop is not for us.

Erci-E tends to see hip-hop in a much broader context which leads him to the conclusion that rap may well create what we might call a 'diasporic interchange' and 'diasporic intimacy' among Turkish peoples in the diaspora struggling against racism and capitalist exploitation in their countries of settlement. The progressive and resisting role of music is not only limited within the national

boundaries. The existing network of global capitalism and communication technology takes the message of the diasporic rappers beyond the national territories (Decker 1992). He also attempts, on the other hand, to break up the 'rhythmic obedience' (cf. Adorno 1990) of the pop and *arabesk* music by providing an alternative to the Turkish audience. By saying so, he also underlines the fact that rap has reversed the established pattern of pop music by dictating a strong and progressive lyric content beyond the passivist romance.

For *Erci*, back to basics is one of the main aspects of hip-hop culture in terms of ethnic symbols, music taste and images. Accordingly, he attempts to add Turkishness to rap. He is aware of the fact that, while making rap music, it is vital to have a sample melody. For instance, in the USA, almost all the songs of James Brown have been made samples for the rap songs. *Erci* does not like to take James Brown's songs as samples because:

He is not Turkish, he is black. I thought samples should be from our own music. Baris Manço is the James Brown of Turkish rap. There is also Erkin Koray and Mogollar. They were making soul-funk in the seventies. We used to listen to their songs during the journeys to Turkey by car when I was nine or ten years old; and we were proud of their bass sound.

Those were the 'Turkish rockers' of the 1970s, who were, in a way, providing a contact with the West in a musical sense for the Turkish audience in Turkey. It is quite amazing to be witness to the fact that these rockers have had an essential meaning in the diasporic Turkish youngsters' imagination. Those rockers have given them a safe bridge, or a reference point, to combine two different cultures without any contradiction.

Erci, as an intellectual of his own community, is trying to find some correlation between the radical, or rebellious, character of the Turkish youth and their representation in the media:

I have grown up in Berlin. I haven't seen any other place apart from Germany. I speak German. Germans don't like me, and I don't like them. There is poverty in Turkey; Germany seems reasonably better than Turkey. We have always been misrepresented here in the German media. For instance, Turkey represents poverty and Islamic fundamentalism for the German televisions. Turkish children grow up with these images and with a kind of reactionary feeling, which explodes in adolescence. What we can do is to protect ourselves against them and not to bother them. We are capable and able to do this. Since most of the Turkish children are in the *Hauptschule*, what else can the Germans think about the Turks? The parents didn't look after their children. The result is that the children haven't considered their parents as important as they are, and they take it for granted. Then, they conclude that we have poverty, because we are Turks. No, we are here and we are gonna stay here. We have to change the things. We are paying taxes, so we have the right to get something in return. This is the reason why the Kreuzberg people are so miserable ... We must change the image of Turkey. *Cartel* was a good example. We have joined the European football championship finals in England this year, and there are many Germans visiting Turkey. On top of all these things, we want to make a contribution to the new image of Turkey.

By doing so, *Erci-E* wages a war against the formal representation of Turkey and Turks in the German media, which he considers as the main source of tension between Germans and Turks. Furthermore, *Erci's* narrative makes one point very clear: the welfare of the diasporic youth is directly related to the image of the homeland in the country of settlement. What he aims to achieve is to give a positive sense of identity to the diasporic Turkish youth by using informal networks of communication such as rap.

Ünal: gangsta rap

Ünal (27) was born in Kreuzberg, Berlin. He was sent to Turkey by his parents to have a 'better' education when he was seven years old. He stayed in Turkey until the age of 15. Then he obtained his university degree from the School of Audio Engineering at the Berlin Technical University. He is both a rapper and producer. He is called *Soft-G* on the stage. He first founded *Ypsilon Music* with Yüksel, the manager of *Islamic Force*. After the *Ypsilon Music* project ended, he started to run the *Orient Express Music Company* producing basically for the Turkish market. The pop-music singers Can Kat, Ahmet and Bay-X are his productions for Turkey. He is recently running another project for the Turkish market in collaboration with a Turkish female soul singer living in New York and a songwriter from Istanbul. He is the producer in the middle, using the global networks of electronic mail, fax and telephone.

Ünal often draws attention to the politics of rapping. He points out that the rapper is an intellectual, and at the same time the microphone is the rappers' 'lethal weapon'. On that account, in the hip-hop scene he is called *Soft-G*, where the letter G refers to 'gangsta'. Ünal's picture on Can Kat's CD, which contains some of his rap pieces, is very illustrative in this sense. He holds a big microphone in his hands as if he is gripping a 'lethal weapon'.¹³ His politics of rap is identical to that of Ice-T: Ice-T declares in the song that his 'lethal weapon' is his mind.¹⁴

Ünal depicts the major differences between the youth cultures since the 1960s. The main difference of hip-hop culture from the others, to him, is its local character:

The difference of hip-hop from the previous youth cultures is that hippie and punk were global, whereas hip-hop is very local. Every epoch has its particular problem. Hippies were concerned with some global problems such as sexual freedom, peace and nature. Punk culture was a bit closer to hip-hop due to its concern with some local concerns such as revolt against the dominant social values. Hip-hop originates from the minorities unlike the hippie and punk cultures. Hip-hop youngsters living all around the world have various problems and concerns. For instance, an American rapper doesn't necessarily have to get on well with the Turkish rapper in Berlin. Hippies were different, they had a global communication through the common idols whom they used to listen to such as The Beatles.

Ünal also points out the 'Turkification of rap' through the mixing of instruments and melodies. By saying so, he acknowledges the 'bricolage' character of rap, which transcends the cultural boundaries in music:

In a sense, we Turkify the rap. We are, for instance, trying to mix *Zurna* and rock in our own melodies. Günay is an example of this.¹⁵ We must create a *Turkish Community* in rap like the East Coast or West Coast. In the very near future, I will produce a tape including two rap songs from each Turkish rap group in Berlin.

Like many other Turkish rap groups such as *Cartel*, *Islamic Force* and *Erci-E* he also underlines his objection to pop music which is repetitive and leading to 'narcotic passiveness'¹⁶ and/or 'rhythmic obedience':

Rap is rebellious music, whereas pop is commercial music. This is the difference between rap and pop. Rap is usually a social critique. When a rebellious rap becomes too popular, it shouldn't be conceived as pop music, because it keeps its critical nature.

His claim on popular-critical rap, in fact, undercuts the perspective of Theodor Adorno by arguing that repetition in rap is not always connected to the

commodity system of late capitalism in the same way as other popular musical forms are. Adorno's interpretation of popular music as an ideological instrument leading to 'rhythmic obedience' (Adorno 1990) is challenged by Ünal's interpretation of popular rap which, he thinks, may well lead to a form of collective resistance.

Azize-A: woman rap

Azize-A (26) is a woman rapper from Berlin. She completed the *Realschule*. Although she does not want to be considered a feminist rapper, she makes a kind of feminist rap. Her taste in music is dominated by American black music such as jazz, funk and soul. She is very critical of Turkish *arabesk* music due to its pessimism. She is trying to break the traditional image of the Turkish woman in Europe, and wants to show that the second- and third-generation Turkish youngsters have become very 'multi-kulti' and cosmopolitan. She attempts to play with her multicultural capital in order to be accepted by the majority society.

She calls her rap *Oriental rap* because she mixes some Turkish and Arabic musical instruments such as *Ney* (wind instrument), *Ud* (string instrument) and *baglama* with western ones. She also uses some Turkish samples for her rap, such as Ibrahim Tatlis, a very popular *arabesk* singer in Turkey and in the Middle East.

I used a song of Ibrahim Tatlis as a sample. Turkish people have forgotten their roots because of imitating the West too much. We want to reverse this flow. We are trying to use our own treasures. We turn towards Turkey, and they (the Turks) turn towards the West. At the end, we meet in the middle.

The letter 'A' in *Azize-A* refers to the initial of the Turkish word *Abla*, which means elder sister. *Azize-A* is like her equivalents Sister Souljah (a member of *Public Enemy* between 1990 and 1992) and Schwester-S (a German woman rapper). *Azize-A* adds a crucial meaning to rap:

Rap sends subliminal messages to the people. I want to explain to the people (German and Turkish) that the Turkish woman has many other values and talents. I want to demonstrate that we are not sitting at home and doing housework all day. I also attempt to erase the question of 'whether we are Turkish or German' and announce that we are *multi-kulti* and cosmopolitan. I want to show that we are no more sitting between two chairs; we have got a 'third chair' between those two.

Her insistence on multiculturalism seems to be the main pillar of her politics of identity. She does not invest in the cultural boundaries which imprison culture as a distinct, self-contained and essentialist form (Kaya 1998). By stating that she wants to erase the question of 'whether we are Turkish or German' she denies the classical understanding of culture and reconfirms what Renato Rosaldo (1989: 26) said: 'cultures are learned, not genetically encoded'.

Third culture: a rhizomatic space

Turkish rappers in Berlin constitute a unique experience in the sense that they expose a cultural identity formation process which is a critique of the Cartesian binary oppositions. They construct and reconstruct their cultural identity in a

process whereby the conjunctions of 'either' (Turkish) and 'or' (German) have been consciously rejected. Instead, they employ the conjunction 'and ... and ... and ...' in the process of identity formation as in 'German and Turkish and global and ...' As quoted above, Azize-A phrases this state of mind as follows: 'I want to show that we are no more sitting between two chairs; we have got a "third chair" between those two.'

Thus, these youngsters display a unique subjectivity, a third position, where one can abstain oneself from dichotomies. This subjectivity is generally phrased as a 'third culture' or 'third space' by scholars such as Homi Bhabha (1990), Stuart Hall (1994), Paul Gilroy (1987), Mike Featherstone (1994), Felix Guattari (1989) and Gilles Deleuze (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) who are inclined to break up the Cartesian duality. The *third culture* is a bricolage in which elements from different cultural traditions, sources and discourses are constantly intermingled and juxtaposed with each other. The third space is what Homi Bhabha (1990) calls a 'differential communality', and what Felix Guattari (1989) refers to as the 'process of heterogenesis'. By '*processes of heterogenesis*' Guattari negates the Marxist dialectic, the aim of which is the 'resolution' of opposites. He argues that 'our objective should rather be to nurture individual cultures, while at the same time inventing new contracts of citizenship: to create an order of the state in which singularity, exceptions, and rarity coexist under the least oppressive conditions' (Guattari 1989: 141). He describes this formation 'as a logic of the "included middle", in which black and white are indistinct, in which the beautiful coexists with the ugly, the inside with the outside, the "good" object with the bad', and the self with the other. The process of heterogenesis, or the process of cultural bricolage, is expected to lead to the emergence of strong subjectivities. The term *rhizome*, for instance, phrased by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), corresponds to this phenomenon, which is exposed by many modern diasporic subjects in general, and the German-Turkish youngsters in particular: *rhizome* is a root-like underground stem that produces roots below and sends up shoots from the upper surface. In exposing what rhizome means, Deleuze and Guattari provide us with a convincing standpoint:

A *rhizome* has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb 'to be,' but the fabric of the rhizome is conjunction, 'and ... and ... and ...' This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb 'to be'. Where are you going? Where are you coming from? What are you heading for? These are totally useless questions. Making a clean slate, starting and beginning again from ground zero, seeking a beginning or a foundation – all imply a false conception of voyage and movement ... American literature, and already English literature, manifest this rhizomatic direction to an even greater extent; they know how to move between things, establish a logic of the AND, overthrow ontology, do away with foundations, nullify endings and beginnings. They know how to practice pragmatics. The middle is by no means an average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 25).

The 'middle' does not refer to 'caught betwixt and between'; it rather connotes a separate space in itself where, for instance, diasporic subjects, *bricoleurs*, cosmopolitans and hybrids dwell. Thus, knowing that such new cosmopolitan forms spring from the third space, we might open ourselves up to a relationship that transcends us, that exists beyond and apart from us, instead of fully explaining and assimilating the other, thereby reducing her/him to our world.

Conclusion

Rap has become the urban popular art of a remarkable number of Turkish youth in Berlin. The Turkish rappers in Berlin are substantial constituents of the diasporic cultural form developed by a considerable number of Turkish enclave youth. Using the traditional Turkish musical genre as the source of their samples and having been guided by the traditional Turkish minstrels in terms of lyric structure, these contemporary minstrels, or storytellers, tend to be the spokespersons of the Turkish diaspora. What Ünal's 'Turkish community' attempts to provide is an informal network of communications which will shape popular knowledge in a manner that contests German nationalism and hegemony from within the Turkish diaspora. In this sense, the efforts by Turkish rappers in Berlin to enter the mainstream by forming a 'Turkish community' reflect their struggle to assemble an 'historical bloc' capable of challenging the ideological hegemony of German cultural domination. Furthermore rap music, as a popular cultural form, becomes a powerful vehicle which allows today's Turkish young people to gain a better understanding of their 'heritage' and their present identities when official channels of remembering and identity formation continually fail to meet their needs. What Azize-A calls 'third chair' illustrates how the diasporic subject crosses over the cultural borders and constructs a syncretic cultural identity, or a rhizomatic space. In his poem 'Doppelmann', Zafer Senocak writes of his Germany as:

I carry two worlds within me
 but neither one whole
 they're constantly bleeding
 the border runs
 right through my tongue.¹⁷

The diasporic subject who is defined in this poem is someone experiencing a constant tension between homelessness/rootlessness and diasporic home. 'The split', as Senocak states, 'can give rise to a double identity. This identity lives on the tension. One's feet learn to walk on both banks of the river at the same time' (Suhr 1989: 102). The discourses of the Turkish rappers in Berlin remind us of the fact that the contemporary diaspora identities are developed on two paramount dimensions: universalism and particularism. The universalist axis refers to the model of interculturalism in the form of 'third space', or 'process of heterogenesis', or 'third culture' (Bhabha 1990; Featherstone 1994; Guattari 1989). On the other hand, the particularist axis presents the model of cultural 'essentialism'. The cultural identity of the diasporic subject is simultaneously grounded both on an 'archaeological' form which entails the rediscovery of an essential and historical culture, and a 'retelling of the past' which claims the production of a positional, situational and contextual cultural identity.

Notes

- 1 Globalism indicates, as Roland Robertson (1992: 8) has posited, 'the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole' by means of communications and transportation. For a very brief summary of the various theories of globalisation, see Leslie Sklair (1993: 7–10) where he classifies the theories of globalism in three types: (a) world-system model of Immanuel Wallerstein; (b) globalisation of culture model by the *Theory, Culture and Society* group (TCS); and (c) global system model proposed by himself.
- 2 The etymology of the term 'bricolage' points to the construction or creation from whatever is

immediately available for use, as exemplified in *The Savage Mind* by Levi-Strauss (1966: 17): 'The *bricoleur* is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with "whatever is at hand", that is to say with a set of tools and materials, which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or deconstructions.' The idea of cultural bricolage also contravenes those problematic essentialist terms such as 'deculturated', 'in-between' and 'degenerated', often attributed to the German-Turkish youth.

- 3 I conducted fieldwork in Berlin between 1996 and 1998, focusing on the hip-hop youth culture which has become popular amongst Turkish youngsters since the late 1980s. More specifically, my research examines the life-worlds of the Turkish hip-hop youths who congregate in one of the neighbourhoods of Berlin, Kreuzberg 36. The number 36 refers to one of the pre-reunification postal area codes of the Kreuzberg district, which is densely populated by Turkish migrants. Kreuzberg 36 comprises the three *U-Bahn* (Metro) stations Kottbusser Tor, Görlitzer Bahnhof and Schlesisches Tor. Kreuzberg 36 can be defined as a Turkish ethnic 'enclave', not a 'ghetto'. Peter Marcuse (1996) describes enclaves as 'those areas in which immigrants have congregated and which are seen as having positive value, as opposed to the word 'ghetto', which has a clearly pejorative connotation'. In this sense, enclaves refer to symbolic walls of protection, cohesion and solidarity for immigrants and ethnic minorities. Kreuzberg as an ethnic enclave is rather different from those black and Hispanic ghetto examples in the United States, where the poor, the unemployed, the excluded and the homeless are most frequently concentrated.
- 4 The rap group *Cartel* is represented in a slightly different way from the others, as most members of the group originate outside Berlin. The only member of the group from Berlin is *Erci-E*, whom I interviewed separately.
- 5 Some of the mythical Turkish minstrels in the seventeenth century were Karacaoglan, Köroglu and Pir Sultan Abdal. Musa Eroglu, Mahsuni Serif, Yavuz Top and Maslum Çimen are some of the contemporary minstrels in Turkey. These minstrels are often invited to European cities by Turkish communities to perform their art and teaching.
- 6 Swedenburg (1992) classifies rap groups into four sub-categories in the Anglo-American context: (a) hard or serious nationalist rap of, say, *Public Enemy*; (b) playful cultural-nationalist rap of, say, *Jungle Brothers*; (c) gangster rap of, say, *Ice-T*; and (d) women's rap of, say, *Queen Latifah*. Such a classification is also applicable to the Turkish rappers in Germany.
- 7 For a detailed map of the ethnic composition of Turkey, see Andrews (1989).
- 8 Mapping out the creation of black-British youth identities, Claire E. Alexander (1996: 56–8) raises similar issues concerning the use of the term 'nigga' by the working-class black youth.
- 9 The history of *arabesk* music in Turkey starts with the internal migration from rural to urban areas since the early 1960s. It is an epiphenomenon of urbanisation. *Arabesk* is primarily associated with music, but also with film, novels and *foto-roman* (photo dramas in newspapers with speech bubbles). *Arabesk* music is a style which is composed of Western and Oriental instruments with an Arabic rhythm. This syncretic form of music has always borrowed some instruments and beat from traditional Turkish folk music. The presence of *arabesk* music on TV was banned by the state until the early 1980s. The conservative-populist government of Turgut Özal set it free in the mid-1980s. The main characteristics of *arabesk* music are the fatalism, sadness and pessimism of the lyrics and rhythm. Hitherto, the lyrics were composed of an irrational and pessimist reaction of people with a rural background to the capitalist urban life. Recently, the composition of the lyrics has changed extensively. Instead of expressing pessimism in the cities, lyrics tend to celebrate the beauty of the pastoral life which has been left behind. In other words, it has become a call to the people to go back to basics. It should be pointed out that there is an extensive literature on the sociological dimensions of *arabesk* music in Turkey (Güngör 1993; Özbek 1994; Stokes 1994). In addition, *Islamic Force* has also used the old popular Turkish melodies from Baris Manço, Zülfü Livaneli and Sezen Aksu as its samples.
- 10 The term 'double diasporic consciousness' derives from Gilroy's notion of 'double consciousness' – a term which he reinterpreted from W.E.B. Du Bois (Gilroy 1987).
- 11 This song is a critique of urbanisation and industrialisation, and narrates the longing and nostalgia of the '*gurbetçi*' for the pastoral way of life.
- 12 Kadiköy is the central district of Istanbul on the Anatolian side. MC *Boe-B* states the name of Kadiköy because he was born there. Kadiköy also means the urban centre of the Asian side of

- Istanbul, whereby the youngsters living in the surrounding suburbs and shanty towns (*gecekondu mahallesi*) attempt to incorporate themselves into the social and cultural mainstream.
- 13 Can Kat (1995). *Çet Git*, Berlin: EMY Records.
- 14 Ice-T (1989). 'Lethal Weapon', *The Iceberg/Freedom of Speech ... Just Watch What You Say*. Sire Records.
- 15 Günay is the Turkish soloist in a multicultural music group composed of an American, a Cameroonian, a German and three Turkish musicians. They try to improvise Turkish folk music by mixing instruments and sounds.
- 16 I borrow the term 'narcotic passiveness' from Umberto Eco. In fact, he uses the term in the context of media: 'Liberated from the contents of communication, the addressee of the messages of the mass media receives only a global ideological lesson, the call to *narcotic passiveness*. When the mass media triumph, the human being dies' (Eco 1986: 137, italics mine).
- 17 Quoted in Suhr (1989: 102).

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