

NO MATTER HOW BRIGHT THE LIGHT,
THE CROSSING OCCURS AT NIGHT

ANSELM FRANKE | JUDITH HOPF | NATASCHA SADR HAGHIGHIAN | INES SCHABER



Deface the Gaze | NANNA HEIDENREICH | NATASCHA SADR HAGHIGHIAN

Nanna Heidenreich and Natascha Sadr Haghighian take a look behind the veil and find all sorts of apparitions, such as representations of minorities, parallel societies and migration, that cast shadows in the spotlight of European integration politics.

NATASCHA SADR HAGHIGHIAN | In your text “Deutsche Un/Sichtbarkeiten”¹ (“German’ (In)visibilities”), you explain that the headscarf does not simply block or allow the gaze. In other words, the moment of unveiling does not necessarily give rise to visibility. Nevertheless, in western contexts this unveiling is very loaded. With what? Can you explain what’s meant when you say “there was nothing but the veil behind the veil”?

NANNA HEIDENREICH | The conceptual universe of the Enlightenment is what shines through the obsession with unveiling and divulging.² “Liberation,” “emancipation” or (political) “progression” are thought of as “making something visible.” The entire field of representative politics definitely sees itself as a project for enabling transmission into the field of the visible – and this is how women are supposed to proceed out from under the headscarf or veil into the light of truth, which is, among other kinds of truths, the truth of gender. A woman is not a woman until she is unveiled. Presently, the banal feminism of *Emma* and Alice Schwarzer is quite heavily in fashion: the liberation of women as a virtual neon sign advertising for integrationists, German language enforcers, anti-immigrationists and global military invaders. Simultaneously, of course, she should no longer be a woman, because she is supposedly relieved of the burden of difference. Here, the double meaning of the German *Scham* becomes very clear: *Scham* as in *sich schämen*, to “be ashamed,” “be shameful” – meaning veiled or with headscarf – but also *Scham* = female genitalia. I believe that this is the key to Necla Kelek’s mazy responses to women’s sexualization by the veil,³ a sexualization which she then contradicts, claiming that sexuality requires being without a headscarf. Enlightenment for dummies, so to speak: you have to be naked to have sex. Some more meandering thoughts: I don’t believe that the (racist) mainstream’s appropriation of feminist talk is linked to the making-visible of homosexuality for nothing. The invisibility of a lesbian or gay identity before an Islamic (or projected as Islamic) background joins itself to the image of the oppressed – because invisible – Muslima. Here, I avoid adding “transsexual” or “intersexual,” nor do I use the term “queer.” To me it’s more about a straight homosexuality which participates zealously in the project called “normalization.”

¹ Published in Eva Lezzi and Monika Ehlers, eds., *Fremdes Begehren. Transkulturelle Begegnungen in Literatur, Kunst und Medien* (Köln, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau, 2002).

² The investment in the visual by the project of the “Enlightenment” (German *Aufklärung*) is much more pronounced in the English and French: “Enlightenment,” *Lumières*. See (among others) Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

³ In an interview in *Spiegel Online* on July 5, 2006, in regard to Alice Schwarzer’s description of the headscarf as a kind of branding, similar to the yellow star, Kelek responded, “Ms. Schwarzer is completely right. The wearing of a headscarf reduces women to sexualized beings instead of human beings with equal rights.” Later in the same interview: “Cloaked women no longer take part in the accomplishments of humankind. They are not allowed to experience their bodies, or swim, do gymnastics or take part in biology classes. They are robbed of their sexuality.” Necla Kelek, author of *Die Fremde Frau* (“The Foreign Bride,” 2005) and other works, is one of the figures who has declared the “failure of multiculturalism” that has been so heavily discussed since the murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in the autumn of 2004. She is an advocate for, among other things, a strong (German) state that would finally begin to devote itself to fixing problematic relations in migrant communities, such as forced marriage, polygamy, violence against women, etc. For this state, the implementation of citizenship tests is just as convincing as other compulsory measures. At the moment, Kelek, as *Turkish woman*, is a sought-after “authentic voice” used to provide a smooth lining for a migration policy which, in the guise of “integration,” seeks to hinder any and all possible further immigration and naturalization. However, next to Kelek, other (bio-German) feminists, such as Alice Schwarzer, belong to the group of advocates of a critique of “oriental patriarchy,” advocates who are at present astoundingly prominent. I borrow the term “bio-German” from the Kanak TV video “White Ghetto” (2002) (http://www.kanak-attak.de/ka/media_video.shtml). I like it for its polemical directness in addressing the racialised quality of Germanness (and of the differentiation of “Germans” and “foreigners”).

Image opposite page “Gee in Mug cafe” from the interactive webproject “Coffee Shop Ladies” by Amirali Ghasemi. Altered documentary photos from Tehran’s most popular coffee shops are combined with audio interviews. www.amiralionly.com/interactive/CoffeeshopLadies.htm www.amiralionly.com/photos/cafe/index.html

My thesis, which is built in part on Christina von Braun’s works about Christianity’s specific version of secularization, states that the obsession with unveiling within the headscarf debate (at least in Germany) is less a question of

hermeneutics of Islam (meaning less likely to draw on them in order to “solve” or “decide” the question) and more a part of Christian-Occidental politics of the image and gaze: it is about “giving something to see,” and doing it in a particular way. This has to do, among other things, with Christianity’s focus on the image and with the “becoming-flesh” of the Word through Jesus Christ. I will not take this any further here. I think the decisive point is that attention is being turned to the sedimentations of the religious within this myth of a secular constitution (meaning Christianity’s influence upon the present-day composition of society), and that the instances of investment in unveiling and making visible (in this Christian-Occidental inheritance) are coming into focus. The fight for the headscarf, which landed in Germany’s supreme court in 2003, was displayed as a question of the “neutrality” of the state and its secular constitution. Not completely untrue, perhaps – but this secularity is in no way the separation of “throne and altar”; rather, it is the becoming-throne of the altar and, therefore, the becoming-world of religion (Christina von Braun’s argument), definitely not an overcoming of the two. For me, the headscarf debates and the obsessions with unveiling (at least in the German context) are an *update* of Christian image wars (*Bilderstreit*), and that, first and foremost, is what should be gazed upon.

With “there was nothing but the veil behind the veil” – by the way, a quote from Meyda Yeğenoğlu⁴ – I mean that the politics of unveiling do not simply make the woman (the Muslima, the Turkish woman...) visible. Instead, she is marked by the headscarf or the veil even when it is “dropped.” Numerous TV reports put headscarf-wearing women next to women wearing no headscarf for a reason, for the women without it couldn’t possibly be just *any* women. No, they are women marked by the absence of the headscarf and, therefore, still thought of as Muslimas – Germany’s Muslima of choice: the Turkish woman. That is one point; the other point is that when she is, indeed, unveiled, she could possibly become invisible (as Muslima, Turkish woman, and so on). There is a telling footnote related to this topic in Frantz Fanon’s classic text “Algeria Unveiled,” on the Algerian woman who immediately looks “western” upon unveiling and, therefore, is no longer distinguishable – the question connected to this idea is, how then can she be seen/shown as a paradigm of the unveiled? To drop the veil plainly means once again to see only the veil – or to see “nothing,” which in the text that you are referring to I described as an “empty center” that obscures the veil, making it a “supplement.”⁵

NATASCHA | You say that invisibility stands for oppression within Christian-Occidental politics of the gaze and image. Emancipation and liberation happen at the moment of the unveiling and “coming out,” and the claim to have found an identity is inextricably tied to the making-visible of that identity. That means that there is a strange closing of ranks between emancipatory movements and hegemonic logics of representation. Here, you are referring to the movements that are interested in a contractual leveling of the field, such as “straight” homosexuality or “banal feminism”: one makes oneself addressable within a certain discourse through naming and making visible, just as one surfaces in the discourse and hopes to gain a margin for action from it.

⁴ Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁵ Jacques Derrida introduces the “supplement” in *Writing and Difference* (tr. Alan Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). He writes: “Henceforth, it was necessary to begin thinking that there was no center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a present-being, that the center had no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of nonlocus.” I have argued that with this statement he has offered a possibility to comprehend “race,” that is to say, its visual production and presentation. “Race” is the idea of a “central presence” which, according to Derrida, “has never been itself, has always already been exiled from itself into its own substitute. The substitute does not substitute itself for anything which has somehow existed before.” For the substitute, or the visual marker of “race,” namely, the headscarf, Derrida, in *Of Grammatology* (tr. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), brings the term “supplement” into play, which determines “the representative image.... It adds only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself *in-the-place-of*; if it fills, it is as if one fills a void. If it represents and makes an image, it is by the anterior default of a presence. Somewhere, something can be filled up of itself, can accomplish itself, only by allowing itself to be filled through sign and proxy” (pp. 144–5). The headscarf is therefore both “over-present” and empty/meaningless when it functions as a sign of visibility within the frame of the foreigner discourse and its racializations.

⁶ In Angela Davis, *Abolition Democracy: Beyond Prisons, Torture, and Empire* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005).

⁷ Michael Taussig, *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1999).

Images following pages

¹ “Students Fulfill Class Project through Defacement of Property”: Students from a course titled “Political Activism in Film” wrote anti-SUV slogans on vehicles parked around the campus of Pomona College.

<http://www.tsl.pomona.edu>

^r Urinal sign defacement at Los Angeles Airport (LAX)

Angela Davis calls the military a problematic example of a leveling institution.⁶ According to Colin Powell, the military is the most democratic institution within American society and creates a frame in which people can escape from the limitations of race and gender. Angela Davis draws the conclusion from this statement that this equality is to be understood as the equal opportunity to kill, to torture and to engage in sexual coercion. Out of this conclusion emerges a problem for citizens’ rights movements that are in search of addressability. If we were to constantly give ourselves new names and faces, we would not be addressable, but, according to Michael Taussig,⁷ we would have a transgressive potential, due to our engaging in the fight against instrumentalization, against everything that is a “given,” and therefore against existing power relations. Knowing that endless renamings are possible, he names the act of renaming as a defacement of existing power relations.

By the way, did you know that *chador* translates not to “veil” but to “tent”? – Something that one lives in while traveling.

NANNA | I like your reference to the chador, and no, I didn’t know that! I like it, because you refer to another field which becomes veiled through unveiling: the intractable and resistant practices of veiling that cannot be comprehended within the equation headscarf/veil = invisibility and oppression. Hopefully it’s clear that I don’t want to romanticize things here. One can see some of these subversive strategies in Gillo Pontecorvo’s film *La Battaglia di Algeri* (*The Battle of Algiers*, 1966): in the course of the war for Algerian liberation, veilings became, most importantly, weapons. Underneath them could be smuggled weapons or *kassibers* (secret notes sent between captives or prisoners, or through enemy lines). “Gender,” however, could also be smuggled. Veiling as passage and passing – credit here goes to *Transit Migration*, and especially to Brigitta Kuster and her work on *Grenzpassage* (“border passage”) and on the potentialities of invisibility. Passing means “getting through/by/in as something,” for example, as man or woman; and/or passing for another “racialized” marking; or passing as inconspicuous, in the case of potential detention by immigration officials, for example, to evade checkpoints. In this way, passing refers to a process of transfer – the passage, the border passage, gender-wise, race-wise, geopolitically and so on.

NATASCHA | Passing quite often arises out of an emergency situation. In *Grave Endings: The Representation of Passing*, Monique Rooney describes how, through passing, a stigmatized or unwanted identity is often supposed to be made invisible in favor of a more normal image. A temporary identity is taken on, but it can be taken off again. It thwarts the established power of the gaze; hence, it causes invisibility and opens up a new provisional margin in which one can act. Perhaps this act is comparable to Taussig’s defacement. A crisis of representation emerges. An insecurity.



NANNA | Later in Pontecorvo's film, it works in the exact opposite way: the women get styled up like westerners and, as a result, become invisible, that is, visible yet unrecognizable. They can *pass through*, and with them, the bombs. The film *Kandahar* (Mohsen Makhmalbaf, 2001) tells a story of confinement (the subjective chador shots at the film's beginning and end indicate this), but it also shows that the invisibility of full-body veiling provides a possibility (albeit a dangerous one) to pass, *to go through as something (passing)*, as shown in the scene with the wedding party, in which all possible figures, including the protagonists, blend into the mass of people and become invisible within the fluttering crowd. Unveiling as a technique for making invisible is shown in reverse in *Osama* (Siddiq Barmak, 2003): the girl and central figure of the film passes as a boy as soon as she takes off the veil. However, the same film shows the threat of danger that lies within the suspicion of gender – and that quite a lot of knowledge of a context is necessary in order to pass successfully, a knowledge that the protagonist in *Osama*, who doesn't want to pass at all, lacks.

Being covered by a veil constitutes a possibility to create an “underneath” – and by the way, the self unburdened by control has already been an issue in Germany, historically. The Nurnberger raincoat, in fashion from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, was a topic of continual political and legal controversy. The raincoat (at times simply a kind of tablecloth; always at least a large piece of fabric which covered the entire body) was worn to church, creating a civilized appearance and placing a veil of good manners over a wide variety of invisible pleasures and obscenities which were suspected to have been lurking underneath or behind it.⁸ A further (more subversive) aspect of the veil is related to the position of the gaze. Within disputes over colonialism and Orientalism, visual practices of unveiling were analyzed as attempts to position the self once again as a gazing gaze.⁹ The veiled woman usurps the position of the camera: seeing without being seen. I just once again read a text of a filmmaker friend of mine – Liza Johnson – about the potentialities of “shame,” the embarrassed and averted gaze, refusing all other eye contact.¹⁰ She considers certain singularities as presenting the possibility to see “perverse” configurations of more than one gaze, gaze-configurations which are possessed by “abnormal” desire and unpleasant feelings, configurations which are productive in themselves. I mention this here, because I think that the conceptualization of subjectification within the field of the visible and of “being seen” needs to be complicated.

Let's bring it back to the here and now. In 2003, while Germany's supreme court was busy with the case of the headscarf-wearing teacher, Fereshta Ludin, the number of recalcitrant headscarf-wearing teenagers increased: the urban in-your-face headscarf style that had both aggressiveness and expressiveness was still made subordinate to the (enforced) image of the “suppressed” woman, astonishingly enough. In 2004 I was invited to one of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation's meetings and asked to talk about headscarf questions. Ja-Él Jank, a black German artist and social worker, was also invited. She talked about a girls' group in Hamburg where some of the non-Muslim girls started wearing headscarves. It was totally clear to them that it wasn't the state's neutrality which was being debated; rather, it was the racist consensus that

⁸ See Meral Akkent and Gaby Franger, eds., *Das Kopftuch / Basörtü* (Frankfurt/Main: Dayyeli, 1987).

⁹ Compare with Malek Alloula's work on the gaze in the harem within colonial postcards, in *The Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). In his study, Alloula shows that colonial postcards depicting “Algerian women” who offer themselves to the gaze of the photographer reveal sexual/visual fantasies of conquest. The women here who drop their veils are not simply *les algériennes*; they are the visualization of the phantasm of the Algerian female, the “leitmotiv of action” (Frantz Fanon) of French colonialism, placed into a tableau in a photo studio using paid models.

¹⁰ Liza Johnson, “Perverse Angle: Feminist Film, Queer Film, Shame,” in *Signs*, vol. 30, no. 1 (Autumn 2004), pp. 1361–1384; on the connection between gender and seeing, on shamefulness. For more related information, see also Christina von Braun's “Scham und Schamlosigkeit” (“Shame and Shamelessness”) in Tobias G. Natter and Max Hollein, eds., *Die nackte Wahrheit. Klimt, Schiele, Kokoschka und andere Skandale* (Munich: Prestel, 2005).

Image opposite page Hilary Swank performing as best actress receiving an Oscar for her performance in *Boys Don't Cry* at the 72nd Academy Awards and Hilary Swank performing as Brandon Teena in *Boys Don't Cry* (1999)



was continuing its negotiations. These non-Muslims marked the fact that in any case, all of those “ethnically/racially” marked girls weren’t asked to join the round table discussions with their own kind of distinction: a proof of the hollowness of the formula of “dialog culture” and of the paternalism with which migratory movements (and their different “materialities”) are to be made into controllable and manageable units.

NATASCHA | Azin Feizabadi took a photo of his mother from the time of the Iranian Revolution, and turned it into a spray paint stencil, which he sprayed onto building façades in the area of Berlin called Kreuzberg. Back then, his mother, who today is an artist, was a member of the Tudeh Party,¹¹ a communist grouping that articulated its ideas primarily with the help of spray stencils. Azin’s sprayed picture went through some transformations which I would like to elaborate on briefly in the following passage. It landed on t-shirts, one of which landed onto you. Then, it graced – in multiplied form – the publication *Wo Multikultis das Land Regieren* (“Where Multiculties Rule the Land”). Some of the articles had been previously published in *Bahamas*, and a *Bahamas* ad in that issue almost confirms that the publication originates from the *antideutsch* milieu.¹² The authors write in an editorial: “The thing that has for quite some time been a threat, and more and more often even a deadly threat for some, is at first only an annoyance for us, a mere annoyance, but annoying enough to make our friends leave their cheap apartments in Neukölln, because Sonnenallee isn’t really the street where you want to hit the pavement on a daily basis. However, the personal annoyance corresponds to a much more all-encompassing annoyance. The practice of Islam is, indeed, the image of a new boundless barbarity which, if it is to emerge victorious, will lock away everything, absolutely everything that makes life worth living.” The brochure expresses solidarity with women who suffer at the hands of their culture’s headscarf mandate and gays and lesbians who have to live under Islamic conditions: the “victims” of a “boundless barbarity.” Following this, the picture of Azin Feizabadi’s mother appeared on the cover of *FOCUS*, a German news glossy. The headline, “The Multiculturalism Lie,” is splayed clear across her face like a deportation stamp. Underneath it reads “How Integration in Germany is Failing.” The article itself also refers to the source of the cover image: “The face of that anonymous Muslima that can be seen graffitied on Kreuzberg façades, now the *FOCUS* title image, was selected for other reasons by a sprayer of Iranian origins as his motif. But still, in this neighborhood, the nameless eyes tell of the anger, the desperation and the peculiar pride of a lost generation of immigrants.” A picture gets conjured up: a group that retreats into parallel societies, ricocheting off of attempts at integration, isolating itself in its ghettos

¹¹ The Tudeh Party was a key operative in the Iranian Revolution. However, it was pushed out of the picture with extreme violence by the Islamic government and the Basijis (paramilitary police). Through employment prohibition and imprisonment, as well as the execution of its members and the destruction of its organizational structure in 1983 and once again in 1988, it was smashed to its foundation. For more information, see Tirdad Zolghadr’s film *Tropical Modernism*, (Iran, 2006) and Tamineh Milani’s *Nimehye Penhan* (“The Hidden Half,” Iran, 2001).

¹² *Antideutsche* (anti-Germans) are one of the varying currents emerging from the radical anti-fascist left, which has named itself so in order to turn against a German nationalism. The radical proponents of the *antideutsch* program form a group around the periodical *Bahamas*. In a manner analogous to that of bourgeois and right-wing parties, they claim that the ideal of the multicultural creates open spaces for violent and criminal Islamics, spaces in which demands for the tolerance of minorities, in any case, no longer have validity.

Image opposite page “Repetitions Revolutions Rituals” (stencil, spraypaint), work in progress by Azin Feizabadi





13 In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud tells the story of a man who borrows a kettle from his neighbor. When the neighbor accuses him of returning it in a damaged condition, he answers, first of all, that he has given it back unscathed; secondly, that the kettle already had holes in it; and thirdly, that he actually never even borrowed the kettle. Not only is this defense strategy one of retort and renunciation, it is also a plea in triplicate which isn't at all viewed as contradictory, but as triple insistence. Slavoj Žižek observes this sort of argumentation in his book *Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle* (New York: Verso, 2005) in terms of the U.S.'s mazy logic employed to justify the invasion of Iraq. First it was weapons of mass destruction. Then, since there was no proof of that, it was Saddam Hussein's participation in the attack on the World Trade Center. Now that no proof of this can be provided, it is that Iraq is dangerous and poses a threat for its neighbors. In terms of racism in Germany, the retort is similarly structured: "because that which is unacceptable simply cannot be." After the attack on Ermyas M., a black German, in Potsdam on Easter Sunday, 2006 (shortly before the World Cup), an attempt was made to "explain away" the thematization of racism in Germany, using a similar paradoxical logic. When, among others, Yonas Endrias (former Red-Green party coalition speaker, now vice-president of the International League of Human Rights and a member of Germany's African Council and the Berlin Integration Advisory Council) brought the no-go areas into play, describing them as areas which "ethnically" marked or black people (whether German or not) avoid because they feel their life is put into danger, it was also declared that such no-go areas are unacceptable. Unacceptable, either because there is no racism at all, or because racism should not be allowed, or because racism should not be yielded to (by applying knowledge of safe/unsafe places — by creating know-go areas). The fact that many people in Germany are subjected to racist attacks was turned into those people's own problem, that is, into a problem of naming (the problem is constituted by the discussion about the no-go areas, instead of by the racism itself), a Freudian kettle.

14 See Colette Guillaumin's meditations on this subject.

Image opposite page Nanna Heidenreich's t-shirt

Images following pages

1 Cover of the publication "Wo Multikultis das Land regieren," April 2005, most likely published from within German "antideutsch" circles.

2 Cover of the new magazine *FOCUS*: "Die Multikulti-Lüge," *FOCUS* 15 (April 10, 2006).

and upholding archaic religious ideals. In the article, underneath a photo which includes a Muslima wearing a headscarf and an overcoat on a street in Kreuzberg and the aforementioned spray stencil, the caption reads "Keep covered — in German cities the headscarf is part of daily life." Within the discourse on foreigners, you say, visibility acts as the very terminological schematic that decides what can be seen at all. How are concepts of making visible, unveiling and integrating all related? How does invisibility come into existence within this context?

How do you perceive the transformations of the "nameless Muslima," as *FOCUS* called her? What happened to her identity as a revolutionary?

NANNA | Maybe first I'll make a short comment about the German term *Ausländerdiskurs* (discourse on foreigners). I started using it when I wrote my MA thesis at the end of the 90s. At that time the word "racism" was more or less delegitimized inside and outside the academies. Today this has changed quite a bit, but the discussion about "no-go areas" shortly before the World Cup in Germany showed that racism, seen through the logic of the Freudian kettle,¹³ has meanwhile had a permanent place in the public vocabulary, and yet, together with the word "race," it remains disavowed. Instead, validity was and still is given to the terminology of "foreigners." Supposedly this should refer to citizenship, but it carries with it the semantic inheritance of "race," sort of like a replacement vocabulary.¹⁴ Also, the German/foreigner binary perpetuates *a priori* the legacy of "race," due to German citizenship laws, which really still are based on the *ius sanguinis*, the law of the blood. I wanted to capture this particular kind of speech/silence — the speakable and the unspeakable — using the Foucauldian notion of discourse, which also refers to the entire assortment of institutionalizations and practices connected to these regulations of language.

The example of Azin's work with his mother's picture is tied to what I said about headscarves worn in resistance: they are invisible, as invisible as all other headscarves that are not somehow marked by "Islam." (This is clearly a matter of opinion for Germans — farmers' headscarves, or ones which actually identify the age of the wearer, immediately seem to be made out of the same stuff that militant female Islamists are trying to defend in the fight against the ban on headscarves in Turkish universities.) Of course, this also has to do with what is apprehended as "the political," and, therefore, whether or not daily practices are recognized as struggles. *FOCUS* was just as incapable of bringing the super-sexy aggro headscarf girls into view (into *focus*...) as it was the history of feminist/communist resistance in Iran. Naturally, this brings up questions: which practices are useful in regard to their readability/legibility? It's not particularly astounding now, though, that *FOCUS* is incapable of seeing history as a history of struggles. Despite all of this, I'm afraid that we do have to waste some amount of analytic effort on the closing of ranks between *Bahamas*, *FOCUS*, *Emma*, the Red-Green party coalition and Red-Black party coalition. (Maybe it's really simple: they're all just protestant-adaptive missionaries for "progress," Christian-secular (worldly) truth-brandishing know-it-alls.)

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April 2005, Berlin

Wo Multikultis das Land regieren



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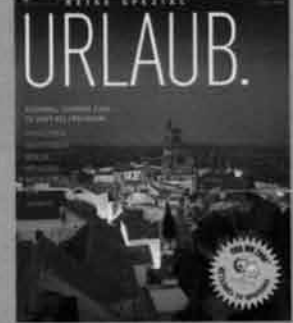


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Die Multikulti-Lüge

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PLUS BOOKLET: GÜNTER GRASS – *Die Blechtrommel*
getAbstract – Weltliteratur in Kurzfassung

NATASCHA | In your text "Battle of the Subcultures – Homophobia vs. Racism?" you question German integration politics, calling them a layout for a space in which no so-called parallel societies should exist that could escape from (gaze) control by virtue of their impenetrability. On the one hand, identity and identifiability become stacked on top of one another in the demand for a normalized space where there are no unknown factors, and on the other hand, the required visibility escapes the normalizing gaze in the same way that the Muslima without headscarf is at some point no longer recognizable as Muslima, and is therefore once again dangerous.

NANNA | The headscarf-wearing woman, as seen in the German *Ausländerdiskurs*, is part of that discourse's system of evidence: she stands for the entirety of "pre-modern Islam," for a lack of progress and for the victim. Thereby, she also signals the opposite: the phantasm of progress and its embodiment in the entire nation-wide society of Germany. This discourse also functions as a system for (mis-)recognition. It constitutes a system of knowledge, and with it a system of seeing. However, I believe that this system, as Homi Bhabha described for the colonial discourse, is infested by ambivalences. Of course, these ambivalences are deported into every other outside realm. (I'm getting into puns here – although it is astonishing how much historical continuity belongs to deportation in the most varying of political systems in Germany. It has been and continues to be a preferred reaction to migratory movements.) This sort of integration is really only the withholding of rights, and apart from that, also a phantasm of (in)visibility in the form of a "kettle": assimilation is required, but, like the unveiled woman, it must always be marked with difference, and therefore not exist at all. It's like Klose and Podolski, the "Poles" of the German football team. Again and again they had to pledge to be German, and while they were doing it they were "called" Poles. Perhaps only Bartleby could have answered to the impossibility of this question: I would prefer not to (be).¹⁵

With this I would like to return to what you described with Taussig as the transgressive potential of non-addressability. You sent me a picture of a man who tried to cross the border between Mexico and the United States, camouflaged as a car seat. He built an unbelievable work of art. At first, I thought you were showing me a picture of a "ghostly apparition," a double-exposure or something, because the man's face seems to shine onto/in front of/into the seat's head piece, perhaps due to his exhaustion from the heat, the long wait and the incomprehensibility of his being caught, despite the ingeniousness of his idea. (Or perhaps all the fuss is merely in service of the taking into custody of border-crossing strategies and their ingeniousness; after all, the "illegal immigrants," the "undocumented people" are absolutely sought after in the USA, like in other countries, as a specific and mobile workforce within post-Fordism.) But this feeling of apparition, this shimmering in the picture also reminded me of something that Roger Caillois described as *psychasthénie légendaire*,¹⁶ the phenomenon of the (dis)solution of the subject in space. He described this on the basis of insects which escape from visibility in an act of mimicry, becoming, for example, a rose twig. That which was always seen as camouflage is often the opposite: most of the time, the danger of being eaten

¹⁵ See the *Kanak Attak* gig at HAU, March, 2006: *AnteSIS* oder: *Migration ist wenn du sagst: I would prefer not to be*, at www.kanak-attak.de.

¹⁶ Roger Caillois, "Mimetisme et psychasthénie légendaire," in *Minotaure* 7 (1935). See also Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

Image opposite page Clipping from the *FOCUS* article: "Die Multikulti-Lüge", *FOCUS* 15 (April 10, 2006)



BEDECKT HALTEN In deutschen Städten gehört das Kopftuch zum Alltag. In Berlin-Kreuzberg setzt sich ein iranischstämmiger Straßenkünstler mit dem Thema auseinander

Griechenland und eben auch aus muslimischen Ländern. Ja, in Deutschland arbeiten Tausende und Abertausende erfolgreiche, gebildete und ehrgeizige Migranten, die als Unternehmer, Wissenschaftler und Angestellte erfolgreiche Integration vorleben.

Und dennoch: Muslimische Einwanderer, besonders jene aus der Türkei, sind als Gruppe noch immer nicht in Deutschland angekommen. Aus der viel zitierten dritten Immigrantengeneration rekrutiert sich inzwischen eine, wie der Berliner Historiker Paul Nolte schreibt, „ethnische Unterschicht“. Ohne Bildung, ohne Job, ohne Geld, ohne Hoffnung, ohne Ehrgeiz, ohne Kenntnis der elementaren gesellschaftlichen Spielregeln. Massive Integrationsprobleme sind auch bei „christlichen“ Einwanderergruppen zu erkennen. Doch es sind muslimische Migranten, die sich vielerorts in Parallelgesellschaften abschotten. Sie leben in Ghettos, isoliert in archaischen religiösen Vorstellungen.

Das Gesicht jener anonymen Muslima, das als Graffiti auf vielen Kreuzberger Hauswänden und nun auch auf dem FOCUS-Titel zu sehen ist, wurde von einem iranischstämmigen Sprayer wohl aus anderen Gründen als Mo-

tiv gewählt. Doch im Kiez erzählen die Augen der Namenlosen von der Wut, der Verzweiflung und dem seltsamen Stolz einer verlorenen Einwanderergeneration.

Versagt haben viele: Die Sozialdemokraten unter Willy Brandt, die zwar 1973 einen Anwerbestopp erließen, sich aber um verpflichtende Deutschkurse oder staatspolitischen Unterricht herumogelten. Die Union unter Helmut Kohl, die es in 16 Jahren Regierungszeit versäumte, ein neues, zukunftstaugliches Staatsbürgerschaftsrecht zu bauen. Die Grünen, die einen fröhlichen Kulturen-Mischmasch zwar zum Parteiprogramm erhoben und vom „einzigenden Band“ der Menschenrechte schwadronierten, denen aber zum Thema Unterdrückung muslimischer Frauen nichts einfiel.

Versagt haben die Hardliner, die wie SPD-Kanzler Helmut Schmidt 1982 („Mir kommt kein Türke mehr über die Grenze“) nur markige Sprüche losließen, ebenso wie Weichspüler vom Schlage der Verfassungsrichterin Jutta Limbach, die es als ein Gebot der Toleranz betrachtete, die Einwanderer doch bitte nicht mit einer deutschen Leitkultur zu belasten.

Zu den Versagern zählen aber auch jene, die eben nicht nur Verlierer und Ausgeschlossene sind. Mit deren ▶

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increases (because the predators orient themselves mostly by their sense of smell and not their sense of sight). The man who transformed himself into the seat of a car was caught. This doesn't shed any light upon the question if he had succeeded on that or any other occasion to cross the border. I view the process of becoming invisible through the delocalization of the self in space – that is, in order to delocalize oneself in space – as a potentiality which lets, for example, another way of thinking about subjectivity “shine through.”

translated by WILLIAM WHEELER

Deface My Ass

I'm standing in front of the entrance to the University of Tehran on Khiaban Enghelab (Street of the Revolution), waiting for Solmaz. We're headed for the workshop in the art department. Students are flowing past me; the women are wearing the *maghnae*, a black garment that tightly encloses the face. It's a university requirement. Solmaz is coming. "Shit! I still have fingernail polish on!" She looks at her bright red fingernails. I have to grimace, for she seems not to notice the transparent piece of black gauze that covers approximately one third of her head. "Let's go!" We march toward the entrance and are promptly halted by the security officers that have been posted there. "Stop. Where to?" "The art department." "Okay." We can go further. The art department has been exempted from the university's dress code, because art students don't follow regulations anyway. A blind eye is turned in order to try to make the failure of authority invisible. We are simply not seen, so to speak, and as a result, our infringement of the law does not exist. Funny, since in Iran the *heyab*, or the headscarf and overcoat combined, have the express purpose of concealing the woman in her specific physicality in public. This is officially justified as follows: the man's sexual drive is uncontrollable, and any direct contact between the desiring gaze and the object of desire is, firstly, unproductive for public life and, secondly, dangerous for the woman. Daily life in Tehran consists, among other things, of making oneself invisible within one logic or the other. Here also, the headscarf is a beloved venue for fights over power and control. Every day there are new negotiations about what applies to whom and when and how. A differentiated language emerges which is expressed through the form, color and way of wearing the headscarf, a language that tells entire chapters about the power relations between the viewer, the viewed and the filters in between. *The headscarf does not exist.* That much is clear. And it is clear here, just as much as there, that the projection surface called woman is the main venue for the Gaze Regime's World Cup, and that the rules of the game are renegotiated every day.



Image opposite page "Mexican man disguises himself as car seat in failed attempt to cross into US"
Original caption: "Enrique Aquilar Canchola, a 42-year-old Mexican national, hides in the seat of a vehicle as part of an attempt to illegally emigrate to the United States at the San Ysidro border crossing in San Ysidro, California, June 7, 2001. According to U.S. Immigration and Naturalization officials, the incident is part of growing trend of illegal immigrants cramming themselves into intricate and potentially deadly compartments." Image: REUTERS/Immigration and Naturalization handout

















"Subcomandante Marcos, 1995"
Source: chiapas.indymedia.org



Image as displayed for sale on the website of Corbis (www.corbis.com), 2006:
"Illegal Immigrants Await Medical Care From the Spanish," Mellila/Spain, 2005
Image: Alberto Estévez/epa/corbis
Original caption: "A sub-Saharan immigrant stands next to a Red Cross tent at the Spanish North African enclave of Mellila. Around 700 people crowd the Shelter."

"Maaresque de Blida en costume de ville," 1940,
Postcard from Malek Alloula's book *The Colonial Harem*
(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986)



Screenshot from German TV news story about debt. Indebted people are interviewed behind a screen in order to hide their identity.

Image as displayed for sale on the website of Corbis (www.corbis.com), 2006:
"Woman in Limousine Avoiding Photograph," 2006
Image: Rainer Holz/zefa/Corbis



Filmstills from *État de Siège*, 1972
Director: Costa-Gavras
An official of the US Agency for International Development (a group used as a front for training foreign police in counterinsurgency methods) is kidnapped by Tupamaro guerrillas. Using his interrogation as a backdrop, the film explores the often brutal consequences of the influence of the American Government and the United Fruit Company on South America's governments and their policies.

Image as displayed for sale on the website of Corbis (www.corbis.com), 2006:
"A young man who is spraying the wall, subway," 2006
Image: Mika/zefa/Corbis



"Spain -- Illegal Immigration," Tarifa/Spain, 2005
Photo: Anton Meres/Reuters
Original caption: "Would-be immigrants keep warm after being intercepted off Spain's southern town of Tarifa October 18, 2005. Some 54 would-be immigrants from Africa were intercepted aboard a makeshift boat on their way to reach European soil crossing the Strait of Gibraltar."

"Vermummung_gross.jpeg," tourist photo
anonymous



"gang.jpeg," image of a group of young men
anonymous

"The Undocumented," Sampson County/NC/USA, 2005
Photo: Andrew Lichtenstein
Original caption: "At dawn, workers from a migrant camp board a bus that will take them to a farmer's crop. They will probably not return to the camp before dark. Undocumented migrant farm workers, mostly from Mexico and Latin America harvest over eighty percent of crops in the United States. This, as the debate over illegal immigration and what to do about it continues. They live in impoverished camps, and travel from crop to crop, working ten or twelve-hour days in the fields of America's agricultural heartland. Very often they are paying off large debts to smugglers who got them into the country. On days when there is no work, lacking transportation, they have little to do but sleep and lounge around, waiting for another day's work."



Image of the french pop duo Daft Punk

"Sidomania," fans of the german rapper Sido
Source: blog.peter-noster.de



"Waiting to Cross Border into United States," Tijuana/Mexico, 1984
Photo: Danny Lehman
Original caption: "A group of Mexican men and boys wait for a chance to illegally cross the border into the United States at Tijuana, Mexico."



"Wir sind Ade": As part of the german anti-racism campaign *Gesicht zeigen* (showing your face), the football team FC Sachsen showed their support for teammate Adebowale Ogungbure, who became a target of racist attacks, by painting their faces black.
<http://www.wir-sind-ade.de>

