

CHAPTER 6

AESTHETICS OF DIASPORA: CONTEMPORARY MINSTRELS

In the day time the radio's scared of me,
Cause I'm mad, plus I'm the enemy,
They can't c'mon and play with me in primetime,
Cause I know the time, plus I am gettin' mine.

Chuck D. (Public Enemy)

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 globalism. The Turkish rappers in Berlin present an adequate example to expose the production of cultural bricolage among a group of Turkish diasporic youth. Accordingly, this chapter 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. There are many German-Turkish rap groups in Berlin, such as *Cartel*, *Islamic Force*, *Ünal*, *Erci-E*, *Azize-A*. The interviews held with the rappers will be often quoted in order to expose the way they narrate their stories 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 organic intellectuals, the interviews with the rappers are also essential to demonstrate the transcultural and transnational nature of some diasporic youth cultures.¹

Rappers as Contemporary Minstrels, ‘Organic Intellectuals’ and Storytellers

For someone who grew up listening to a very mixed variety of music ranging from western classical music to Turkish classical music, someone who idealised the sound of *Eric Clapton*, someone who felt attached to the Turkish protest music of the eighties such as *Zülfü Livaneli*, *Yeni Türkü* and *Ezginin Günlüğü*, and someone who always switched between the western and eastern forms of music, rap was not a natural transition for me. Although Turkey is a land of hybrid forms of music of any type, rap was a taste that was difficult to acquire at first. Recently, I have grown to greatly appreciate rap as an oppositional political practice. As it became an academic interest of mine, I began to be amazed by the narratives, stories and discourses of the rappers in particular.

The rappers I worked with during the course of my research in Berlin made me conscious about their own social identities. The more I analysed their lyrics and narratives, the more I realised that they are what Antonio Gramsci (1971)² called ‘organic intellectuals’ and/or what Walter Benjamin (1973) called ‘storytellers’ of their own local communities. These two terms are quite complementary in essence. Organic intellectual refers to the intellectual who originates in subaltern groups, as in the urban ghetto communities. Gramsci’s (1971: 12) definition of ‘organic intellectual’ presupposes the existence of a dominant class or group, exercising hegemony and domination on the subaltern classes or groups, through the State and juridical government. The ‘organic intellectual’ serves to raise the interests of his/her newly organised class or group, who aim to be incorporated into the system and to take their place in the process of distribution of resources. They attempt to disrupt the social, political and cultural hegemony of the dominant groups. The Turkish rappers in Berlin try to contribute to the formation of a sense of unified community as opposed to the exclusion, segregation, misrepresentation and racism prevailing in the country of adaptation.

A storyteller, on the other hand, “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: 86-87). Benjamin also states that “the storyteller joins the ranks of the

teachers and sages” (ibid.: 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, i.e., 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 disrupting 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 these two terms – ‘organic intellectuals’ and ‘storytellers,’ I will also define some of the 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 ozanı*) 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 rule 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.³ 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 lyrical 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, tapes, records and CDs.

Furthermore, the discursive similarity between the Turkish rap and Turkish ‘traditional’ folk music in the diaspora context should also be expressed. As the ethno-musicologist Martin Greve has recently stated the rap songs and folk songs produced by the German-Turks resemble

each other. Comparing both music cultures, Greve points out that the discourses of the lyrics in both some rap songs and folk music songs are quite identical.⁴ 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 hip-hop youth groups, tend to express themselves by means of protest music, break-dance and graffiti, which fit into the consumerist popular culture. This kind of expression facilitates the emergence of resisting identities. The youngsters develop these resisting identities within the 'areas of conversation' (Bottomley, 1992: 131) with those who have anti-Turkish 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 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, I shall portray the major rap groups/singers and delineate their counter-hegemonic discourses.

Cartel: Cultural Nationalist Rap

In summer 1995, 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 focused their attention on this group, and their video and CD suddenly became Number 1 in the Turkish pop charts. These 'strange-looking' guys had come from Germany. In the video, they were walking in German streets with a number of groupies behind them. 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 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; and they were calling everybody to join the 'movement' of *Cartel*: "*Gel gel*

Cartele gel / Carteldekiler kankardesler” (Come to *Cartel* / The ones with *Cartel* are bloodbrothers).

Cartel is a music project initiated by a Berliner producer called Ozan Sinan. The group is composed of three different rap groups originating in various regions of Germany: *Karakan* (based in Nürnberg), *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 austere in black, with Turkish motives on the uniform T-shirts. The design of the CD/tape resembles the Turkish flag, with a red background and the initial letter ‘C’ of ‘*Cartel*’ which imitates the crescent on the flag. The name ‘*Cartel*’ on the cover is also decorated with Turkish ornamental shapes. The release of the group and the goods (*Cartel* T-shirts, caps, hats and coats) was extremely well timed. It was a time in Turkey when popular nationalism was prevailing. Thus, such a 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 had already been done. Thus, *Cartel* had already had an impact on the national pride of a remarkable part of the Turkish audience. They were greeted by an ardent 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 very 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.

Being translated from the German to the Turkish context, *Cartel* sud-

denly became one of the main pillars of popular Turkish nationalism. Such a translation encouraged these crowds to do something about the ‘enemies of the Turkish nation and race’ at a time when the dream of Turkish *Turan* (Volk, greater Turkic world) was revisited. MC *Erci-E*, to whom I shall return shortly, expressed his surprise and shock at this enthusiastic reception by the extreme-right wing youths, and complained about the misunderstanding of the Turkish audience. Yet, whatever way they were interpreted in Turkey, the manager and the production 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 number one in the album-charts, and more than 20,000 copies in Germany.

The rap group *Cartel* is a form of ‘playful cultural-nationalist rap.’⁵ *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 lyrical 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 consensual 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 notion of 'interactive nationalism' is unquestionably of good use 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 politics of the majority nation and/or of the dominant ideology. Paraphrasing John Berger (1972: 11), it is the fear of the present, which make the Turkish youth celebrate their 'past' and 'authenticity.' In this sense, the cultural nationalist discourse of *Cartel* provides Turkish youth with a ground 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 the Turkish cultural capital, attempts to construct a 'pan-Turkish' diasporic cultural identity. The rappers strongly adhere to a notion of community, and principally 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). In this way cultural-nationalist rappers can be considered the 'organic intellectuals' of their communities.

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, drug trade, drug abuse, materialism, capitalism, and antagonism between Kurds and Turks. They are also intent on praising the family institution, on cele-

brating the brotherhood of Turkish and Kurdish, 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*, February 26, 1996). Thus, the rationale behind the hip-hop nation is the quest for communication and dialogue with the hegemonic social classes/groups.

Kankardesler

Allahim yine mi?
Kankardes cankardes demek
Gerekirse kardes için ölmek
Canini kanini vermek
Gözünü kirpmadan her zaman iste
Defol dazlak dedik
Biz Türküz deyince fasist bilindik
Yanındayım koçum sonuna kadar
senin
Sana edilen laf ayni anda bize
Oynamaya bakma damarima basma

Söylüyorum sana kaybedersin sonunda
Meseleyi fazla uzatmaya gelmez
Hepberaber olursak bizi kimse yenemez

Hadi gülüm yandan yandan
Karakan geliyor çekilin yoldan
Hadi gülüm yandan yandan
Biz korkmayız ondan bundan
Kan kan kankardesler
Hepberaber bizi yenemezler
Kan kan kankardesler
Hepberaber iste sana *Cartel*
Üç tane harf kan, alti tane harf daha
kardes

Bloodbrothers

Oh my God, again?⁶
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’

Bu ne demek acaba, küçük bir sözcük	What is this, a little word
Ama anlamı büyük	But with a strong meaning
Ne ateslere biz körükle yürüdük	We walked through many troubles
Bazen kaybettik bazen kazandık	Sometimes lost, sometimes won
Kankardesimizi yalnız bırakmadık	We never left alone our bloodbrother
Anca beraber kanca beraber	Forever together
Arkadasın çok olur gelirler giderler	Your friends come by and leave
Kankardesim seni hayatınca severler	They love you
En kötü gününde bile yanında	They hang around with you to death
gezerler	
Karsında <i>Cartel</i> , bilmiyorsan eger	This is <i>Cartel</i> , if you don't know
sana söylerler	someone can tell you
Çocuk öğrende gel, ugrasımız rap	Go and find out, our business is rap
Çünkü pop bize yaramaz	Cos pop is no use for us
Sarmaz bize yakışmaz bizi açmaz	It isn't for us
Kursun gibi sözler deler geçer	Words can kill like a bullet
Refrain	Refrain
Soracaksın kim diye, ben Kerim	My name is Kerim
Kâbus ilk adım bunu böyle bilin	I am known as nightmare
Kara kemiklerle bizim Alper	Next to me Alper with black bones
Seksi kanakeden nefret eder	He hates sexy ' <i>kanake</i> '
Sadece o değil bizim hepimiz	Not only him, all of us
Birimiz hepimiz, hepimiz birimiz	One for all, all for one
Türk, Kürt, Laz ve Çerkez	Turk, Kurd, Laz and Circassian ⁷
Ayrımcılık yaparsak kaybedeceğiz	We will lose if we disunite
Uyanmak çok kapisında kahpeler	Lots of traitors behind
Toz pembe bakmasın geleceğe	Don't dream
Zannettigin arkadaşlık bu değil	What you think of is not friendship
Daha da öte daha da ileri	It is something further, stronger
Hep beraber olup kiracagiz zincirleri	All together we will break up the chains
Kankardeslere yakışır bir şekilde	In a way that suits the bloodbrothers
Eger hazırsanız şimdi sıra sizde	If you're ready, it's your turn now.
Refrain	Refrain
<i>Karakan (Cartel)</i>	<i>Karakan (Cartel)</i>

This particular rap song by *Cartel* demonstrates the need to unite across the diaspora of the German-Turks that consist of various ethnic groups such as Kurd, Laz and Circassian. By this song, MC *Kerim* (*Cartel*) invites his Turkish ‘bloodbrothers’ to fight racist arson attacks. This song also displays that the flow of the lyrical structure 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 the German-Turks is an indication of the cultural nationalism that 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 the 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 social status, in particular, to counteract the negative representations of immigrant workers, and those with minimal power in their ‘host’ societies” (Bottomley, 1992: 57). The minority hip-hop youth culture is an attempt to constitute a form of counterculture. What the ethnic minority youth constructs is no more a kind of passive ‘sub-culture.’ Ethnic minority youngsters have become aware of the contradiction between the prevailing ideologies of equal opportunity and the reality of discrimination and racism 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 and Spanish father), and *Nelie* (female, German mother

and Albanian father). What they make is conceived as *oriental rap* and anti-racist rap in Berlin. *Boe-B* writes 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 have changed their name to *Kan-Ak*. The reason for this change is the concern surrounding the probability that the Turkish audience in Turkey might well misinterpret the name Islamic Force. The previous misinterpretation of *Cartel*'s discourse by the Turkish audience in Turkey has also made them conscious about probable unjust critiques in Turkey.⁸

By changing their name to *Kan-Ak*, the rappers believe to 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 the right wing Germans to identify the Polynesians (*Kanake*). There is a parallelism between the use of *nigga* instead of the racist word 'nigger' by the blacks in the USA and the use of *Kan-Ak*, or *Kanak*, instead of the offensive word *Kanake* by the Turks. 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. Similarly, Peter McLaren offers an illuminating explanation for the revision of the term *nigger* by the 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 is a term that has very

specific bounds of acceptable usage – it could only be used by the working-class Turkish youth.⁹

The term *Kanak* also permits a form of class-consciousness among the working-class Turkish youth in the sense that it distinguishes Turkish urban working-class youth from those middle-class Turkish youths that 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. In doing so, the youngsters tend to romanticise the ethnic enclave 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 Kreuzberg who had no ‘achievement.’ Thus, the working-class Turkish youngsters 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*¹⁰ and pop music.¹¹ By mixing some traditional Turkish musical instruments such as *zurna*, *baglama* and *ud* with the Afro-American drum-computer rhythm, they transculture 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: 300–301). 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 world-wide penetration of music mass-media (Wallis and Malm, 1990/1984). In *oriental rap*, the global rhythm and beat of rap infuse into local Turkish folk music, pop music and *arabesk* music. *Oriental rap* becomes the music of the state of bricolage, or hybridity, 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" (quoted in Elfleim, 1996). Transculturation, in the form of mixing *arabesk* and hip-hop in one, is, at the same time, the expression of a 'double diasporic consciousness.'¹² This consciousness stems from the double migration experience that the migrants experienced 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 the *Chip* youth centre – has said is very illustrative to understand the impact of *arabesk* on the diasporic youth: "When I listen to Ferdi Tayfur I feel that I am back home, especially that song, you know which one I mean: '*Hadi gel köyümüze geri dönelim*' ('Come on, let's go back to our village')." ¹³ On the other hand, they have experienced the problems of being an ethnic minority in Germany away from their homeland. In diaspora they have taken hip-hop as an expression of their alienation and resistance to the capitalist system. *Arabesk* also provides these working-class youngsters with a symbol of solidarity, but not in more than a weak and implicit sense of solidarity against anybody else. *Arabesk* is not threatening, and so the Turkish diasporic youth can keep its mystique meaning to themselves.¹⁴

Thus, *arabesk* and hip-hop are the two musical styles which some of the youngsters prefer listening 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 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,' between 'tradition' and 'translation,' between 'there' and 'here,' between the local and the global.

Selaminalayküm

Köyden İstanbul'a vardılar

Alman gümrüğünde kontrol altında
kaldılar

Sanki satın alındılar

Bunları kullanıp kovarız sandılar

Ama aldandılar

Bizimkiler onların hesaplarını
bozdular

Köylü dedikleri kafaları kullandılar

Çalışıp edip kosturdular

Her köseye bir fırın ya da imbiss
kurdular

Ama bu kadar iyi haberin acisi da var

Kaybediyoruz can kaybediyoruz kan

Evler yanıyor bazen deliriyor insan

Ben bunları anlatmak için seçildim

Hepsi bagiriyor “*Boe-B* söyle”

Ben de hip-hop şeklinde sunuyorum

Kadiköy’de

Selaminalayküm aleyküm selam

Selaminalayküm aleyküm selam

Müzigimize devam

Burda olanları size anlatıyoruz

Haberlerimizi size evet sunuyorum

Bizim semtten Kadiköy’e bir bağlantı
kuruyoruz

Harbi hip-hop duyuruyoruz

Burdan size yolluyoruz

Turlarsın artık sesle mahallelerde

Altında bir Benz ya da bir BMW, ya

da Golf, ya da Audi, ya da herhangi

Nebileyim, ne bileceksin, polis ar-
kanda

Selaminalayküm

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 an *imbiss* 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 Kadiköy¹⁵

Selaminalayküm aleyküm selam

Selaminalayküm aleyküm selam

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

Takip ediyorlar seni
Ama sen farkına varmadın daha
Bakmadın daha
Sinyal vermeden dönüyorsun
Aniden her yerde polis görüyorsun

In diyor, indiriyor
Araban çalıntı diyor
Bir kagidin eksik diye karakola
götürüyor
Hiç acimiyor
Adam isini biliyor
Sayıyor, alıyor ve kontrol ediyor
Senin de insan olduğunu görmüyor
Hafiften haksızlık oluyor
Ve bunu *Boe-B* size Kadiköy'e kadar
duyuruyor.

Refrain

Boe-B (Islamic Force)

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

Boe-B (Islamic Force)

Islamic Force attempts to bridge the gap between the diaspora and the homeland. Their rap song '*Selaminalayküm*,' following the traditional Turkish minstrel genre with the name of the poet in the last part of the song, for instance, undertakes to inform the Turkish youth in Turkey about their own experiences in the diaspora away from 'home.' MC *Boe-B* narrates in this rap 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. 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 of two crucial points: firstly, it exposes how "a diaspora can be created

through the mind, through cultural artefacts and through a shared imagination in the age of cyberspace” to use Cohen’s words (1996: 516); and secondly, how the diasporic youth use an emerging global cultural form (hip-hop) and a granted local cultural form (*arabesk*) for their own expressive purposes. This syncretic ‘double diasporic consciousness’ simultaneously points at Turkey and Berlin, past and present as well as local and global.

MC Boe-B’s narrative in the given song resembles that of the Turkish minstrels. In fact, the rapper as a ‘storyteller’ and/or an ‘organic intellectual’ has its equivalent in Anatolian culture. Though having completely different musical tastes, rhyming and storytelling are the common denominators of both artistic forms. Thus, the working-class Berlin-Turkish youth, who have been raised with the sound of Turkish folk music, could easily relate to the rap form of art. The key concept in what follows will be the transcultural form of *Islamic Force*. I have reproduced the personal narratives of the group members to be able to demonstrate their individual discourses and politics of identity.

DJ Derezon (26):

He was born in Kreuzberg. He is the son of a German mother and a Spanish father. He feels alienated in Germany, and akin to the Turkish minority. He is partly assimilated to the minority Turkish youth culture; he actually defines himself as Turkish. For him Turkishness is a state of mind and an equivalent of feeling in minority: “We are all foreigners. We are Turkish.” While saying this, he immediately adds, “Brooklyn is similar to Kreuzberg.” After receiving his *Abitur* from high school, he became involved in hip-hop culture, tagging on the walls all over Berlin. Then he started DJ-ing. He went to Brooklyn and did some DJ-ing with Black Americans in 1992. He picked up a Black American accent there. After returning to Berlin he became one of the most important figures in the Berlin hip-hop scene. He got in touch with the Turkish rapper *Boe-B* (Bülent) and the manager Yüksel in 1993 and later with *Killa Hakan* and *Nelie*. After listening to some Turkish samples, he decided to mix the Turkish melodies with beat and rhythm. He also convinced *Boe-B* that he should rap on Turkish samples: “I said: it is your roots, *Boe-B*, you should do that. Everybody is doing that.” He always refers to the Black American origin of hip-hop. His presence in *Islamic Force* and his transnational links with

the East Coast hip-hop community confirm the transcultural character of hip-hop culture.

DJ *Derezon* also defines the role of the rapper as a medium establishing communication between various segments of the community:

Rappers are the speakers of the streets [...] They are the politicians of the community [...] We live here in Kreuzberg and have many friends. We always talk to our friends and have a continuous exchange of ideas. At the end of the day, we construct our own vision, and then express it to society [...] We are doing culture rap and political rap [...] Rap is a chance for the subordinated minorities to appear on the stage of art.

Boe-B (24):

He came to Germany when he was 8 and finished *Hauptschule* in Kreuzberg. His friends called him Bobby (*Boe-B*) in the primary school due to his resemblance to Bobby in the American TV series *Dallas*. Then he recovered this name for the stage, changing it to *Boe-B* (B is the initial of his forename, Bülent). Having been involved in gangsta groups in the past, he is afraid that some day Kreuzberg might turn into another New York in terms of the crime rate:

We are the voice of the streets. The media do not present life in the streets. What we do is to bring the street life onto the stage [...] We express ourselves through rap.

As the songwriter of the group, *Boe-B* composes lyrics against racism, drug abuse, materialism, police terror, exclusion, youth bands and rap theft. He favours East-Coast rap, which gives priority to lyrics and political messages. His favourite rap group is *Wu Tang Clan* (WTC) because he sees a resemblance between WTC and themselves. WTC is an East-Coast rap group who displays a bohemian way of life and a gangsta profile like *Islamic Force*. Since *Boe-B*'s group has begun to be involved in the commercial rap business, he is shifting towards West-Coast rap laying the emphasis on beat and rhythm rather than lyrics.

Boe-B's rap is a clear exponent of the fact that the beauty of the rap experience does not only spring from the mix and the beat, but also from the quality of the rhyme and of the voice. The point is not to show that one can rhyme but that one can rhyme differently. While

stating the peculiarities of good rapping, he underlines the competition between *Islamic Force* and *Cartel*. One of his main concerns is rap theft. It is said that *Cartel* and *TCA Microphone Mafia* have stolen some of their Turkish samples.

Killa Hakan (23):

He was born in Kreuzberg. He dropped out of the *Oberschule*. He is a fan of hardcore rap and *arabesk* (especially Müslüm Gürses).¹⁶ He used to be a *gangsta* before joining *Islamic Force*. He defines the rapper as a ‘storyteller,’ or a narrator, who utters various stories. He attributes a broad meaning to hip-hop:

Real hip-hop does not exist in Turkey. We are trying to take it there. The rappers are gonna change the Turkish youth in Turkey. After the introduction of hip-hop, Turkey will improve itself much further.

He often complains about racism in Germany, and he seems quite keen on returning to Turkey for good:

When the Germans see a black-haired Turkish youth driving a brand-new car, they stare at him with questioning eyes. They don’t like the Turks with leather jackets at all.

Hakan’s discourse on racism reminds us that biological racism is still quite significant for the diasporic Turkish youth. By aligning himself with ‘hardcore’ rap, Hakan attempts to renegotiate his own ethnicity through proclaiming a specific musical taste. By positioning himself in the marginal space of hardcore rap, he also aims to disavow the dominant regimes of representation and to incorporate himself into the global youth culture. In the meantime, he seems to complain that having an advantageous economic position is not enough to get rid of racial harassment.

Nelie (26):

She was born in Kreuzberg, too. Her mother is German and her father Kosovo-Albanian. She is a Muslim. Having been raised with the Turks in her childhood, she attended the Koran courses in a Turkish mosque and learned to speak fluent Turkish from her Turkish friends. Now, she is making soul music in Turkish.

Erci-E: Party Rap

Erci-E (23) is one of the rappers of *Cartel*. He was born in Berlin outside Kreuzberg. Erci first encountered rap when he was 13 years old. His first acquaintance with rap 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 have loved that coolness since the age of 13. 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 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-E* gives reference to the American differentiation of rap sound as East-Coast and West-Coast. *Erci-E* 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. It 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.

He is planning to have his solo long-play 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 by national boundaries. The existing network of global capitalism and communication technology takes the message of the diasporic form of organic intellectuals beyond the national territories (Decker, 1992). He also attempts, on the other hand, to break up the ‘rhythmic obedience’ of the pop and *arabesk* music by providing an alternative to the Turkish audience.¹⁷ By saying so, he also underlines the fact that rap has reversed the established pattern of pop music by dictating a strong and progressive lyrical content beyond the much more common passivist romanticism.

For *Erci-E*, 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 into 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 popstars of the seventies, 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 musicians have had an essential meaning in the diasporic Turkish youngsters’ imagination. Those popstars 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 that 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 seen their parents as important as they are, and they take them 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 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 German tourists going to 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 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 be able to give a positive sense of identity to the diasporic Turkish subjects by means of informal networks of communication such as rap.

Ünal: Gangsta Rap

Ünal (27) was born in Kreuzberg. 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 fifteen. Then he obtained his university degree from the School of Audio Engineering at the Berlin Technical University. Now, he is living in Steglitz, a district of Berlin with a very small Turkish population. He is both a rapper and a 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 network of electronic mail, fax and telephone.

He has made a video for Can Kat as well. In the video, Ünal is rapping in a tenor voice wearing an Italian-American gangster suit of the twenties. The video was a big success in Turkey. In contrast to the other Turkish rappers, he is more attracted by the Italian-American rap style. Besides the music production for the Turkish market, he is making music for the Turkish youngsters living in Germany as well. *Azize-A*, for instance, is a Turkish woman rapper working with Ünal to break into the German music market.

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.'¹⁸ His politics of rap is identical to that of Ice-T: Ice-T declares in the song that his 'lethal weapon' is his mind.¹⁹

Ünal depicts the major differences between the youth cultures since the sixties. 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 own 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 springs 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 that 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 transcending 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.²⁰ We must create a *Turkish Community* in rap like the East-Coast or West-Coast. In a 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'²¹ 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 still keeps its critical nature.

His claim on popular-critical rap, in fact, undercuts the perspectives of 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, 1990/1941) is challenged by *Ünal's* interpretation of popular rap which may well lead to a form of collective resistance.

Azize-A: Woman Rap

Azize-A (26) is a woman rapper from Berlin. She is living in Steglitz with her parents. She completed the *Realschule*. Although she does not want to be considered a feminist rapper, she does feminist rap. Besides rapping, she appears in a children's programme, *Dr. Mag*, made for ZDF TV. Her taste of 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 the 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*, *Ud* and *Saz* with the western ones. She also uses some Turkish samples for her rap:

I used a song of Ibrahim Tatlisles as a sample.²² 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. In 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 "are we Turkish or German?," and announce that we are multi-kulti and cosmopolitan. I want to show that we are no more sitting between the two chairs, we have got a 'third chair' between those two chairs [...].

The whole process, which is embodied by *Azize-A* and other German-Turkish rappers, illustrates the formation of cultural bricolage by modern diasporic subjects. Cultural bricolage which is grounded on the lines of local-global, 'tradition'-'translation,' and past-present ne-

gates many of the ill-defined concepts about the state of ethnic minority youths such as 'in-betweenness,' 'lost generation' and 'degenerated.' Negating the so-called state of 'in-betweenness,' Azize-A draws a new picture of the diasporic youth. Her insistence on multiculturalism seems to be the main pillar of her politics of identity. She does not invest in the cultural boundaries imprisoning culture as a distinct, self-contained and essentialist form. By stating that she wants to erase the question: "are we Turkish or German?," she denies the classical understanding of culture and reconfirms what Rosaldo (1989: 26) said: "Cultures are learned, not genetically encoded."

* * *

To reiterate, rap has become the urban popular art of a remarkable number of Turkish youths in Berlin. The Turkish rappers in Berlin are substantial constituents of the diasporic cultural form developed by a considerable amount of working-class Turkish youths. Using the traditional Turkish musical genre as the source of their samples and having been guided by the traditional Turkish minstrels in terms of lyrical 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, Turkish rappers do not merely constitute a form of protest like hippies and punks, but also initiate a 'class politics' along the lines of Gramsci's notion of 'organic intellectuals.'

As organic cultural intellectuals, the rappers transform 'common-sense' knowledge of oppression into a new critical awareness that is attentive not only to ethnic but also to class contradictions. These organic intellectuals attempt to build a 'historical bloc' – a coalition of oppositional groups united around counter-hegemonic ideas – against the 'traditional elite' who try to 'manage consent' by making domination appear natural, voluntary, and inevitable. The efforts by Turkish rappers in Berlin to enter the mainstream by forming a 'Turkish community' reflect their struggle to assemble a '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 youth to gain a better under-

standing 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 the ‘third chair’ illustrates how the diasporic subject crosses over the cultural borders and constructs a syncretic cultural identity. 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.²³

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, which I presented, affirm what Hall (1994) pointed out that contemporary diasporic identities are developed on two paramount dimensions: universalism and particularism. The universalist axis refers us to the model of interculturalism in the form of ‘third space’ – or ‘process of heterogenesis,’ or ‘third culture’ – (Guattari, 1989; Bhabha, 1990; Featherstone, 1990). On the other hand, the particularist axis presents the model of cultural essentialism. Cultural identity of the diasporic subject is simultaneously grounded both on an ‘archaeological’ form that entails the rediscovery of an essential and historical culture, and a ‘retelling of the past’ that claims the production of a positional, situational and contextual cultural identity. In other words, the whole question of diasporic cultural identity is a tense interaction between essence and politics and between ‘Tradition’ and ‘Translation.’

This chapter has also displayed that the music of the diaspora constitutes a philosophical discourse because they reject “the modern, occidental separation of ethics and aesthetics, culture and politics” (Gilroy, 1993: 38). The musical genre of the diaspora is, at the same time, the indication of the emergence of a global culture transcending national boundaries. This new notion of global culture contradicts the conventional notion of culture that is thought to be territorial, and be-

longing to nations, regions and localities (Smith, 1990, 1995). The nature of the existing culture is syncretic. This 'cultural syncreticism' is facilitated by global capitalism, which disrupts the national boundaries. The emergence of modern diasporic cultures and identities is consistent with current scholarship in cultural studies, which suggest that the concept of culture must be looked at in new ways "that are capable of somehow operating against its own inner character, which was defined long ago by the notions of rootedness, stasis, and fixity that are intrinsic to its original meanings in the fields of crop management and animal husbandry" (Gilroy, 1995: 18).

Notes

- 1 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.
- 2 Gramsci (1971) makes a differentiation between the 'professional intellectuals' and 'organic intellectuals.' Professional intellectuals are attached to the state, whereas organic intellectuals aim to improve socio-economic, political and cultural interests of their communities. Professional intellectuals are the deputies of the State, and they have a 'mandarin consciousness.' Organic intellectual, on the other hand, must be an organiser of the centrifugal forces. It should also be pointed out that the term 'organic intellectual' was first used by Gilroy (1987: 196) to define the black London rapper Smiley Culture. For further information, see also Decker (1992).
- 3 Some of the mythical Turkish minstrels in the seventeenth century were Karacaoglan, Köroğlu and Pir Sultan Abdal. Arif Sağ, Musa Eroğlu, Mahsunî Serif, Yavuz Top and Mazlum 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 to 'preach.'
- 4 Martin Greve calls the Turkish folk music minstrels in diaspora as the 'transnational minstrels.' For a detailed explanation on this issue see, Martin Greve (2000).
- 5 Swedenburg (1992) classifies the 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) gangsta rap of, say, *Ice-T*; and d) women's rap of, say, *Queen Latifah*.
- 6 'Allahim yine mi?' (Oh my God, again?) is the cry of a woman in the background, which echoes the image of the 'caring mother.' Her cry is for the Turkish families who were killed in the arson attacks in Mölln and Solingen.
 - 7 Laz and Circassian are just two of the major ethnic groups in Turkey. For a detailed map of ethnic composition of Turkey, see Andrews (1989).
 - 8 Islamic Force, or Kan-Ak, could not achieve going to Turkey. The group disintegrated after the sudden death of Boe-B in 1999. Now, Killa Hakan is doing solo rap; and Derezon is Djing for some other groups.
 - 9 Mapping out the creation of black-British youth identities, Claire E. Alexander (1996: 56-58) raises similar issues concerning the use of the term 'nigga' by the working-class black youth.
 - 10 The history of *arabesk* music in Turkey starts with the internal migration from rural spaces to urban spaces since 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 of the traditional Turkish folk music. The presence of the *arabesk* music on TV was banned by the state until the early eighties. The conservative-populist government of Turgut Özal set it free in the mid-eighties. The main characteristic of *arabesk* music is 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 extensively changed. Instead of expressing pessimism in the urban space, 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 the *arabesk* music in Turkey (Özbek, 1994; Stokes, 1994; Güngör, 1993).

- 11 The group is using the old popular Turkish melodies from Baris Manço, Zülfü Livaneli and Sezen Aksu as their samples.
- 12 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).
- 13 This song is a critique of urbanisation and industrialisation, and narrates the longing and nostalgia of the '*gurbetçi*' for the pastoral way of life.
- 14 Similarly, Ulf Hannerz (1968) has defined the concept of 'soul' as a solidarity symbol among the Black 'ghetto' youth which is not threatening to anybody.
- 15 Kadıköy is a district of Istanbul in the Anatolian side. MC *Boe-B* states the name of Kadıköy because he was born there.
- 16 Müslüm Gürses is one of the main figures, or schools, of the *arabesque* music in Turkey. A remarkable number of his 'groupies,' on ecstasy, tend to harm themselves with razor blades during the concerts. A similar trend has also been noticed in Berlin amongst a group of Turkish youth living in the ethnic enclave.
- 17 Theodor Adorno (1990/1941) used the notion of 'rhythmic obedience' to refer to the 'pseudo individualisation' aspect of popular music.
- 18 Can Kat (1995). *Çek Git*, Berlin: E.M.Y. Records.
- 19 Ice-T (1989). "Lethal Weapon." *The Iceberg/Freedom of Speech ... Just Watch What You Say*. Sire Records.
- 20 Günay is the Turkish solo in a multi-cultural music group composed of an American, a Cameron, a German and three Turkish musicians. They try to improvise the Turkish folk music by mixing the instruments and sounds.
- 21 I borrowed 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).
- 22 Ibrahim Tatlıses is a very popular *arabesk* singer in Turkey and in the Middle East.
- 23 Quoted in Suhr (1989: 102).

