Academy in Exile
Knowledge at Risk

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Theodor W. Adorno's *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* offers a series of short, self-critical aphorisms that reflect on the predicaments of being a German-Jewish émigré in the 1930s and '40s. In his 13th aphorism, 'Protection, help and counsel', for example, Adorno points to the irrevocable breach caused by emigration. He acknowledges that in exile, 'All emphases are wrong, perspectives disrupted' (2005, p. 33). Not only is the émigré's language expropriated, but 'the historical dimension that nourishe[s] his knowledge [is] sapped' (Adorno, 2005, p. 33). Cleft from the historical context upon which knowledge-making is predicated, the émigré's own past is annihilated, Adorno avers (2005, pp. 46-47). The philosopher himself may have been one of the most successful wartime émigrés to preserve, revalidate, and convey the cultural-historical dimensions of his knowledge, yet he stresses the general invalidation of all that the émigré knows: 'it is intellectual experience that is declared non-transferable and un-naturalizable' (2005, pp. 46-47). Notwithstanding its title, Adorno's aphorism 'Protection, help and counsel' does not offer any practical answers to the question of how émigrés are best assisted. Rather, he criticizes the exiled intellectuals' propensity for isolation and highlights one of their coping strategies: the formation of closed political groups that remain suspicious of their own members and hostile towards outsiders.

Other émigrés, among them notably Hannah Arendt, have also reflected on the survival strategies of Jewish refugees. In 'We Refugees' (1943), a rather cynical analysis of the challenges and despair that stateless Jewish refugees faced, Arendt identifies an additional trait of the refugee: 'If we are saved we feel humiliated, and if we are helped we feel degraded' (1994, p. 114). While today's conditions of exile differ from those that characterized the 1930s and '40s, the accounts provided by Adorno and Arendt resonate with the daily struggles of scholars facing exile today – statelessness, homelessness, a loss of resources, uncertain academic status, and a sense of intellectual and social isolation. What, these thinkers seem to ask, is the condition of exile? What might be done to help alleviate exiles' suffering? And, most pressingly, how can their knowledge be preserved for future generations?

Against the backdrop of a global surge in the number of social sciences and humanities scholars seeking refuge from authoritarian governments today, this essay takes Arendt's and Adorno's testimony as a point of departure. To be sure, neither Arendt nor Adorno commented on the specific strategies that facilitated the emigration and employment of German intellectuals abroad. Such initiatives, while essential to discrete individuals, paled against the wholesale devastation of the Holocaust. Yet today's so-called scholar rescue initiatives either have direct roots in or take inspiration from the initiatives that emerged in the 1930s. This essay thus reviews the historical beginnings of some of these initiatives in order to reflect on the challenges facing us today in the field of scholar rescue. It enquires into the ways in which knowledge may be preserved and transferred in exile. It asks what the implications of past experiences are for present-day scholar rescue initiatives in higher education. Which, if any, historical foil is used to justify today's efforts to preserve knowledge from the great forgetting wrought by totalitarian and fascist governments? Finally, this essay enquires into the rationale behind scholar rescue and its justification on humanitarian and utilitarian grounds.

Exile and the Dissemination of Knowledge

Although the present is often referred to as the age of migration or of refuge, neither the exodus of entire communities nor the exile of individuals is new. The practice of exiling individual dissenters who were construed as threats to prevailing social, religious, or state structures can be identified in examples throughout history. Some exceptional individuals have created literature, art, and scholarship that transcends the disruption caused by the experience of exile. The notion that exile may be a fertile ground for the creation of something unique is commonly associated, for example, with the *Divina Commedia*, by the early modern Italian poet Dante; *Les Misérables*, by the French novelist Victor Hugo; *Speak, Memory*, by the Russian expatriate Vladimir Nabokov; *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, by Hannah Arendt; the poetry by the Turkish dissident Nazım Hikmet; *Orientalism*, by the Palestinian scholar Edward Said; and artworks by the Chinese dissident Ai Weiwei.

While these literary, artistic, and scholarly works exemplify the compelling, productive value of individual exile, it is necessary to examine broader historical processes and, specifically, the history of mass expulsion so as to contextualize the experience of individual intellectuals. The collective exile, imprisonment, or killing of dissident intellectuals has been used as a tool by authoritarian and fascist regimes since the early twentieth century. Targeting intellectuals is often one of the first steps towards suppressing criticism and compelling citizens to comply with government policy: disabling the critical elite may prepare the way for perpetrating atrocities. The arrest of Armenian intellectuals in Istanbul in April 1915, for example,

enabled the mass deportation of Anatolian Armenians to Ottoman Syria and laid the groundwork for the genocidal killing that ensued. Silencing the Armenian elite facilitated governmental control over once influential minority communities and helped to consolidate Ottoman control of the country.

Similar strategies were employed by the National Socialists in Germany some two decades later. Prominent scholars like Arendt and Adorno were not targeted on an individual basis. Rather, they were affected by the widespread and systematic banishment of certain groups of scholars from German universities and, consequently, the country when the Nazi government passed a law in 1933 concerning the *Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums*, the so-called 'civil service law'. With this law, the National Socialists established legal grounds for forcing into retirement those professors who were either opponents of Nazism or of 'non-Aryan blood'. As a result, hundreds of Jewish and dissident scholars, deprived of their livelihoods and subject to increasing attack, were forced, where they could, to leave the country without delay.

Many scholars affected by the collective banishment from universities emigrated with the help of organizations that facilitated their being hired at educational institutions and universities abroad.[1] A number of these were founded in response to the flight of scholars from fascism in 1933. For example, the pathologist Philipp Schwartz founded the *Notgemeinschaft deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland* (Aid Organization for German Academics Abroad) and coordinated rescue efforts from Switzerland. In the United States, the Institute of International Education initiated the *Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars* that is the precursor of today's IIE-Scholar Rescue Fund. In Britain, the Academic Assistance Council (AAC) was founded, and it continues to operate today as CARA (Council for At-Risk Academics). These organizations were set up to act as advocates for threatened scholars and to assist them in finding host universities in countries that would protect both their personal liberty and their right to conduct their research without interference. Various other organizations, such as the American Guild for German Cultural Freedom or the German PEN-Club in Exile, were able to support writers and intellectuals by arranging visas and disbursing stipends.

Today's initiatives also represent strategies of resistance in the face of the rise of authoritarian regimes globally and the ever-growing number of exiled scholars. These rescue initiatives reflect the commitment to create aid networks in higher

1 Engagement on behalf of refugees in higher education did not, as is often assumed, begin with the flight from National Socialism but dates back to the founding of the Institute of International Education (IIE) in New York, which created the Russian Student Fund for refugees after the revolution in 1917 (Duggan, 1943, p. 6; IIE-Scholar Rescue Fund, n.d., online at www.scholarrescuefund.org/about-us/our-history, accessed 18 July 2019).

education but also highlight a tension between humanitarian and utilitarian responses to the growing crisis. The need to respond at a humanitarian level to the persecution of scholars is often confounded by a utilitarianism that seeks to establish the scholar's potential value to the hosting society. In general, it can be said that these initiatives provide invaluable support to individual scholars and perform a vital service in monitoring the infringement of academic freedom worldwide. The US-based Scholars at Risk Network (SAR), for example, keeps tabs on the growing threat to scholars around the world. This international network of higher education institutions and associations works to protect scholars and to promote academic freedom.

Beyond the humanitarian and utilitarian arguments invoked in the discourse of rescue, the question arises as to the political and epistemological dimensions of aid networks for scholars. It is worth considering that the causes and nature of flight in the twenty-first century differ from those in the 1930s. While the *Berufsbeamtengesetz* of 1933 resulted in German scholars being banned from universities mainly on racial grounds, scholars today are often targeted because of their disciplinary affiliations: under attack are entire fields of knowledge rooted in critical traditions like postcolonialism, genocide studies, and gender studies. As the recent examples of Turkey, Hungary, Poland, and Brazil show, these fields are challenging policies and truth claims of right-wing populist governments. It is for this reason that it is important to closely attend to the kinds of knowledge traditions that are represented by exiled scholars but which may also arise out of a condition of exile. Critical thinking might serve as an umbrella term to encapsulate the fields and disciplines that are being systematically undermined today.

Historically we associate the concept and practice of critical thinking with the experience and scholarly output of German and German-Jewish émigrés who disseminated European learning in exile. In the 1930s, film scholar Siegfried Kracauer (1906–1975) sought exile first in Paris and later in New York, literary scholar Erich Auerbach (1892–1957) and physicist/philosopher Hans Reichenbach (1891-1953) first made a home in Turkey, while philosopher Martin Buber (1878–1965) settled in Palestine and philosopher Max Horkheimer (1895–1973) in Switzerland.[2] As a result of this exodus, academic émigré communities sprang up in places like London, Los Angeles, New York, Paris, Jerusalem, and Istanbul. There were two places that at the time claimed to have re-established the form and spirit of the German univer-

2 For more on German emigration to the United States, see Berthold et al., 1993; Jay, 1985; Pross, 1955; and Fermi, 1968. Strauss (1991) focuses on emigration within certain disciplines. For more on exile in Turkey, see Cremer and Przytulla, 1991; Widmann, 1973. For a study of German exile in Los Angeles focusing on Thomas Mann, Bertolt Brecht, Theodor W. Adorno, Arnold Schönberg, and others, see Bahr, 2007.

sity abroad: Istanbul University and The New School for Social Research in New York. Both institutions benefited from the German brain drain in profound ways.

At an institutional level, critical thinking has left a lasting mark on The New School for Social Research, which opened its doors in 1919, with educational reformer John Dewey one of the founding members. Alongside other scholars, Dewey had taken a public stance against the United States' entry into the First World War and he was censored by Columbia University's president. As a result, Dewey and his colleagues resigned from Columbia and initiated the process of founding The New School (The New School for Social Research, n.d.).[3] When, in 1933, the director of The New School, Alvin Johnson, became aware of the laws banning socialist and Jewish scholars from German universities, he founded the University in Exile specifically for the benefit of displaced German scholars. In the foreword to the first volume of *Social Research: An International Quarterly of Political and Social Science* published in 1934, Alvin Johnson set the stage for what was framed as a new beginning for higher education. To introduce the establishment of a Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science that hosted the 'largest organic grouping of continental scholars abroad', he invoked the flight of Byzantine scholars from the Ottomans. In his foreword to the journal he wrote:

> It would be impossible, even if it were practicable, for an organized body of continental scholars to function abroad exactly as they had functioned at home. When the Greek scholars were expelled from Constantinople in the fifteenth century they were not able to set up in the Western world exactly the same scheme of literary education, of training in art, of criticism and philosophy as had been established in the old Byzantine Empire. They were forced to widen their views, to apply Greek methods to Italian and Austrian and French materials. The consequence was a cross-fertilization of cultures, a renaissance that definitely closed the Dark Ages. (1934, pp. 1–2)

Alvin Johnson employed the utilitarian argument to generate support and funding for the continental scholars fleeing to the US. Suggesting that the impact of German scholars in the United States might parallel that of the Byzantine scholars who had fled the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans almost five centuries earlier, which represented a substantial contribution to the European Renaissance, Johnson mounted a powerful historical appeal. He was able to raise funding from the Institute of International Education, which set up the *Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced Foreign Scholars*. The New School received 60 per cent of the grants made by the *Emergency Committee,* which translated into a total of 21 hires (Duggan

3 Other sources claim that he either never resigned or returned to Columbia while maintaining close ties with The New School throughout his life: see Foulkes, 2017. For another account of the founding of The New School, see Calhoun, 2009.

and Drury, 1948, p. 69). Johnson saw the flight of German scholars as a potential source of enrichment for the US academy and pointed out that the 'Nazi policy, in destroying academic freedom in Germany, had in effect exiled the German university as the world knew it. Hence the name adopted for the proposed Faculty by the New School: The University in Exile' (Duggan and Drury, 1948, p. 80). While the Emergency Committee supported the assimilation of the individual scholar into the United States, Johnson's vision was the 'assimilation of a Faculty as a whole' (Duggan and Drury, 1948, p. 80). He established the Faculty of the Political and Social Sciences at The New School, which went on to become one of the leading political and social science faculties in the world. As the spread of fascism began to affect other countries, Johnson extended the offer of sanctuary to scholars from countries other than Germany (Duggan and Drury, 1948, p. 78).

At the other end of Europe, in Istanbul, a similar rhetoric was mobilized concerning the renewal of education and culture through a renaissance: The year 1933 was construed as a kind of zero hour for modern tertiary education in Turkey.[4] Turkey's ministry of education decided to close Dar-ül Fünun, the most prominent institute of higher learning in Istanbul, dating back to Ottoman times, and founded Istanbul University in its place. In so doing, the ministry dismissed two thirds of Dar-ül Fünun's faculty and hired European professors and Turkish scholars trained in Europe. As it happened, plans for founding Istanbul University coincided with the National Socialists' rise to power and, hence, with the banishment of German-Jewish and antifascist scholars from German universities. The Turkish government seemed to quickly realize that Nazi Germany's loss through the expulsion of scholars could well be its own gain. The doors of intellectual exchange were opened by exiled scientist Philipp Schwartz, who negotiated with the ministry of education in Turkey and founded the aforementioned organization to assist German academics in emigrating. The *Notgemeinschaft deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland* (Aid Organization for German Academics Abroad) put forward the names of more than forty German émigrés, who were immediately hired by Istanbul University; many more were employed by other universities, state-run institutes, museums, and other institutions across Turkey. Among the émigrés to Turkey were well-known composers, architects, and scholars like Ernst Reuter, Fritz Neumark, Bruno Taut, Carl Ebert, and Eduard Zuckmayer.[5]

4 In his speech marking the inauguration of Istanbul University, Minister of Education Reşit Galip announced that the new university had no relationship with Dar-ül Fünun. A transcript of the speech can be found in Hatiboğlu, 1998, p. 118.

5 It is estimated that through these channels alone at least eight hundred German professionals and their families could look upon Turkey as their salvation: see Cremer and Przytulla, 1991, p. 27. The Berlin-based organization *Verein Aktives Museum* estimates that 1,040 Germans emigrated to Turkey between 1933 and 1945 (2000).

In 1933, the Turkish minister of education Reşit Galip attached special meaning to the emigration of scholars to Turkey. He construed and welcomed the arrival of European scholars as a form of compensation for the fifteenth-century Byzantine scholars who had fled Constantinople after its surrender to the Ottomans.[6] In the same vein as Alvin Johnson in New York, Galip stressed that the flight of Byzantine scholars had provided an important impetus for the Renaissance. His hope was to instigate a new kind of renaissance that would be achieved through the 'return' of European scholars to Turkey. Galip hoped that by hiring emigrants, Europe's heritage could be reinstated in its birthplace. Classical learning, so the rationale went, would be reborn in the very city it had once deserted.

German scholars – often deeply embedded in humanist education themselves – henceforth contributed to an enormously productive cohort that defined the parameters of secular learning for Istanbul University's new faculties. In the 1930s and '40s, the university hosted the largest concentration of exiled German scholars in the world. Although Istanbul University hired scholars across the disciplines – from philosophy to law and physics – the Faculty for Western Languages and Literatures that philologist Leo Spitzer opened upon arrival in 1933 stands out as a pioneering model for the secularization of education in a predominantly Muslim society.

The rhetoric of renewal was prevalent in both New York and Istanbul. While it would be difficult to measure and compare the respective impact, the historical record suggests that emigration left a lasting mark through the founding and shaping of entire faculties and disciplines. In both Istanbul and New York, new institutional formations were the result of a humanitarian crisis, on the one hand, and the desire to reform higher education, on the other. In Turkey, preserving the foundations of a humanist Europe served the interests of émigrés and Turkish reformers alike. For émigrés, it meant a chance to prevent the loss of their scholarship and, indeed, in many instances, to preserve their very lives; for Turkish reformers, it was a way of reinventing and fashioning themselves as Europeans.[7] The response to the exodus from Germany was comparable in the United States. The American philologist Harry Levin would later say that 'Those losses to European faculties, which have meant such gains for our [faculties], have completed the maturation of American higher learning' (1969, p. 480).

Three points can be taken from this sketch of mid-twentieth-century scholar rescue. The first concerns the perceived value of the exiled or refugee scholar. The hope – expressed so often in the past – that knowledge could be revived through the hosting of European refugee scholars may have been overly optimistic. It was predicated on the assumptions that intellectual life was in a state of stagnation and that

6 The Turkish original of this passage can be found in Hatiboğlu, 1998, p. 111.

7 For a study on German-Jewish emigration to Turkey in the 1930s, see Konuk, 2010.

it would be receptive to an injection of new ideas. Such sentiments glossed over the profound difficulties encountered by scholars upon arrival in their respective host countries. Among these difficulties were disciplinary differences, the loss of access to the archives and libraries they left behind, ongoing uncertainties regarding citizenship, the barriers presented by an unfamiliar language, and the pervasive antisemitism faced by many Jewish émigrés. The second point concerns the fact that there was, and still is, an unresolved tension between utilitarian and humanitarian arguments for supporting refugee scholars.[8] At the heart of this dilemma was the question of whether scholars were to be rescued 'merely' because they were in danger or on the grounds that they provided potential benefit to the host country and were thus to be considered particularly 'worthy'. The third point emphasizes the knowledge rather than the scholar as the agent of that knowledge. It relates to the idea that forming exile cohorts facilitated the concentration, absorption, and transformation of knowledge at host institutions. Creating cohorts of refugee scholars is arguably the most effective model for us today – one that foregrounds the conditions and modes of transforming knowledge in exile.

The Value of the Refugee Scholar

In the 1990s, humanities scholars examining the experience of exile in the context of postcolonial cultures highlighted exile as a condition for generating new forms of critical consciousness. Abdul JanMohamed, for example, drew on the trope of exile for his concept of the border intellectual (1992). In his view, border intellectuals – whether exilic or postcolonial – were privileged in the new field of cultural studies for their capacity to contribute to a kind of critical pedagogy (JanMohamed, 1992).[9] Edward Said took up the question of the intellectual in exile in his well-known 1993 Reith Lectures, which explored the concept of displacement and the condition of marginality. Said's interest lay in the masterpieces produced by Adorno, Auerbach, and Naipaul in exile wrought by the displacements caused by the revolutions, fascism, deportations, and the genocides of the first half of the twentieth century. In Said's view, exilic displacement enabled the intellectual to be liberated from his or her usual career or prescribed path. While Said did not deny the challenges and hardship of exile, he emphasized the condition of marginality as a potential asset to the intellectual.[10] He coined the phrase the 'executive value of exile' (1983, p. 8).

8 For an article discussing both the refugee crisis in the 1930s and the current challenges for scholar rescue networks, see Lässig, 2017.

9 For the concept of the border intellectual within the framework of critical pedagogy, see Giroux, 1992.

10 To Said, 'the exilic intellectual does not respond to the logic of the conventional but to the audacity of daring, and to representing change, to moving on, not standing still' (1994, p. 64).

Thanks to the work of these and other scholars, exilic detachment came to be seen as a precondition for critical thinking. It has come to be accepted that profound experiences of alienation and detachment sometimes force scholars to shift their thinking in innovative and productive ways. Yet exile is double-sided: while it triggers reflection and recollection and prompts comparisons between the familiar and unfamiliar, it also demands new affiliations with the place of destination. Detachment from one place does not, after all, preclude émigrés from availing themselves of new, if temporary, attachments. Whatever the positive quality born of exile – innovation, improvisation – it is not born from a condition of stasis and lacking. Although some exiles may remain in a state of limbo, they are inevitably drawn into an everyday world that necessitates dealing with invalid passports, temporary visas, statelessness, ongoing trials, inadequate health insurance, and other exigencies before they can ever contemplate translating their knowledge into a new institutional framework. The implication that the loss of home necessarily confers an 'epistemological advantage' over those who remain behind is false and perhaps arrogant. Such an assertion wrongly implies that critical thinking is first made possible by the trauma of deracination and denaturalization and, hence, cannot be learned.

If exile is to remain a useful concept for characterizing scholars' critical distance vis-à-vis (neo)imperialism and authoritarian nation-states, it is necessary to differentiate between different kinds of exile – ranging from exile caused by governments criminalizing scholars (as in present-day Turkey) to that caused by so-called soft forms of repression (as is currently the case in Hungary and Poland). Historicizing the figure of the 'refugee scholar', a figure that has been referred to as exile, émigré, refugee, expatriate, displaced scholar, pariah, or, as is the trend now, simply person 'at risk', is helpful in identifying the intellectual traditions that inform current international aid efforts in higher education.

The current 'brain drain' from Turkey and the Middle East – as well as the persistent signs of 'soft repression' in Eastern Europe – requires that we rethink the paradigms for constructing support networks. As has been demonstrated, intellectual emigration from Europe in the 1930s was legitimized by invoking the Renaissance, a claim that was doubtful even then and would be utterly misplaced today. Notwithstanding the fact that institutes of higher education in the global North thrive on the international exchange of scholars, the integration of refugee scholars remains a challenge. Insufficient research has been done on the refuge sought by Middle Eastern literati, scholars, and journalists in Europe in the 1970s and '80s, for example. Those who found refuge from coups and other forms of political turmoil created diasporic networks that supported political resistance in their respective home countries. In Europe, exiles from the Middle East were, moreover, the driving force behind the recognition of the Armenian genocide, the establishment

of the Kurdish Institute in Paris, and the flourishing of a transnational Kurdish literature.

In recent years, hundreds of critical scholars in the humanities and social sciences in Turkey have been banned from practising their professions, criminalized, and prosecuted. In the face of such repression, scholars are now seeking exile in order to continue their critical work abroad (Konuk, 2018). In the past three years, most applications to Scholars at Risk, Scholar Rescue Fund, the French program PAUSE, and the Philipp Schwartz Initiative have originated in Turkey, suggesting that Turkish academics are currently one of the most threatened groups of scholars worldwide.[11] The erosion of academic freedom, however, is not merely symptomatic of the rise of political Islam, and it is far from being a development peculiar to Turkey. Examples from other countries perhaps involve less prominent verbal assaults on academic freedom, but they are nonetheless characteristic of the current conjuncture. In 2015, for instance, the Russian government accused the Centre for Independent Social Research in St. Petersburg of acting as a foreign agent, and in 2016 it endangered the future of the European University at St. Petersburg by revoking its teaching license. This university was founded as a distinguished private graduate school at the time of the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991. Likewise threatened is the Central European University (CEU) in Hungary, an American–Hungarian institution founded by the philanthropist George Soros with the aim of promoting liberal values. Other initiatives funded by Soros in Eastern Europe have become targets, too, with the former North Macedonian prime minister explicitly calling for a 'de-Sorosization' of society.[12] The Open Society Foundations moved staff from Budapest to Berlin in 2018 and closed its office in Istanbul, and CEU is currently in the process of relocating the entire university to Vienna. In Poland in 2018, the government took concrete measures to criminalize suggestions that the Polish state or Polish people were complicit in the Holocaust. As has been reported in the press, LGBT activists, artists, and scholars are increasingly under state-directed attack in multiple countries. To name but one example: For the past year, Brazilian colleagues have reported that there is growing pressure on critics of the government, with gender and LGBTI studies programmes being targeted in particular.

We might ask what difference it makes if the scholars seeking refuge today are not the philosophers and humanists trained in the Weimar Republic, but rather the sociologist from Nigeria threatened because of her work on Boko Haram, the

11 The first round of calls for applications by the Philipp Schwartz Initiative in 2019 resulted in the award of 26 out of 38 fellowships to applicants from Turkey and seven to applicants from Syria (Philipp Schwartz Initiative, 2019).

12 In Romania, Soros was named a 'financial evil' (Lyman, 2017). Available online at https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/01/world/europe/after-trump-win-anti-soros-forces-are-emboldened-in-eastern-europe.html. (Accessed 5 April 2017).

Pakistani political scientist with a PhD from a prestigious US institution, the Kurdish literary critic from a provincial Turkish college, or the scholar from Hungary whose entire field – gender studies – has been defunded in that country? One of the most obvious differences between émigrés of the past and exiles today concerns the status of transnational mobility. Not only is such mobility often a path to career advancement, but as a human rights concept the freedom of movement has also come to be seen as an integral feature of academic freedom. National governments are generally invested in internationalizing their institutions for economic reasons but also with the aim of advancing knowledge and scholarly excellence. In distinction to the émigrés of the 1930s, many scholars today are already participants in a globalized academy in which English is the lingua franca. As members of a global, if highly inequitable, academy, scholars today are less profoundly threatened by the possibility of losing what Adorno referred to as 'the historical dimension that nourished his knowledge'. For the privileged, polyglot few, whose training was undertaken abroad and whose professional networks remain active, exile is a personal horror but one that is mitigated by a tenuous safety net. For the vast number of scholars whose training has been regional, whose sphere of influence local, and whose skills and knowledge are not readily transferable, exile continues to pose an existential threat.

Academy in Exile

It was growing awareness about the acute needs of dissident Turkish scholars that motivated me to call for a brainstorming session with recently exiled scholars in late 2016, which would prepare the way for fundraising initiatives. Our initial idea was to host a cohort of scholars in Germany and develop a model that emulated places like The New School and Istanbul University, where émigrés were able to continue being productive.[13] Mindful of the need to involve threatened scholars themselves in the process of generating safe spaces in higher education, Academy in Exile was founded in Germany in 2017. Academy in Exile started as a joint initiative of the Institute for Turkish Studies at the University of Duisburg-Essen, the Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut (KWI) in Essen, and the Forum Transregionale Studien Berlin. The Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Institute of Advanced Study) and the Volkswagen Foundation provided start-up funding and personnel support.

13 In 2018, Arien Mack at The New School reinvested in the institution's historical legacy and initiated The New University in Exile Consortium, a network that connects universities and colleges which host scholars at risk. https://newuniversityinexileconsortium.org. (Accessed 16 August 2019).

Academy in Exile offers scholars the opportunity to resume their research in Germany. Unlike comparable initiatives that support scholars at risk, we focus on intellectuals who are threatened specifically *because* of their academic or civic engagement for human rights, peace, and democracy. Without wanting to discredit the vital work of seemingly similar initiatives, it is worth pointing out that other tertiary educational aid organizations usually refrain from taking a clear stance with regard to the political leanings of the scholars seeking their support. At an international level we can think of reasons why aiding scholars at risk is potentially contentious. Many tertiary educational institutions are dependent on revenue provided by overseas student tuition. Inevitably, this impinges on the ability of university administrations – and possibly also individual faculty members – to engage in open critique of these countries.[14] Yet even at German institutions, where there is no tuition and where academic freedom is protected under the constitution, the risk of triggering a diplomatic crisis is a factor in deciding whether or not to host a threatened scholar. Similar conflicts of interest are posed by foreign governments offering to fund professorships or support entire departments – in some instances, it is the very funding that acts as a smoke screen for the repression that has driven scholars into exile in the first place.[15] Academy in Exile is mindful of such forms of intervention and tries to navigate these difficult waters in scholar rescue.

Academy in Exile provides a forum for reflecting on the pressing challenges to intellectual life, critical thinking, reason, social justice, and diversity that we face today. Academy in Exile fellowships afford scholars the opportunity to continue their careers in Germany and to work on a research project of their own choosing in a multidisciplinary environment. Fellows contribute to and shape the research agenda and intellectual profile of the Academy generally. AiE is based on a model that creates multidisciplinary cohorts of scholars from the same region or around a unified theme, with the aim of enabling threatened scholars to collaborate with one another.

In October 2017, AiE published the first call for applications addressed to scholars from Turkey. Reflecting the immense need experienced by scholars at risk in Turkey at the time, we received 105 applications for six fellowships. A committee of ten scholars – all experts on Turkey – reviewed and rated the applications according to academic merit and risk. The review process involved explicit discussion of the academic and humanitarian aspects of the process itself. Decisions were made

14 Without specifically considering the issue of revenue from overseas students, Craig Calhoun points out that the very structure of universities in the US is transformed in such a way that 'questions of academic freedom are inextricably entangled with the political economy of higher education and research' (2009, p. 581).

15 For the current debate over Chinese influence at Australian universities, see Pearson, 2019.

on the basis of the applicant's academic merit, 'at risk' status, and potential contribution to the research profile and agenda of the Academy. With new funding made available from IIE-Scholar Rescue Fund and the Freudenberg Foundation, the Academy was able to increase the number of the initial six fellowships to nine. In late 2018, Academy in Exile received additional funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and began to host a new cohort of scholars at the Freie Universität Berlin. Thanks to support from various other German and international foundations, we were able to award long-term fellowships of 12 to 24 months and short-term emergency stipends of three months to additional scholars. Discrete aspects of the Academy's program are being developed and coordinated by Volker Heins, Egemen Özbek, Georges Khalil, and Vanessa Agnew.

In May 2019, we published a second round of calls for applications that was open to scholars at risk from around the globe. AiE received 65 applications predominantly from Turkey, Nigeria, and Eurasia, but also from Hungary and Brazil. We awarded fellowships to scholars from Hungary, Brazil, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Turkey. To date, AiE has awarded a total of 30 fellowships to scholars at risk and funds two large cohorts in Berlin and Essen. We assist fellows with integrating into the European scholarly community and finding long-term positions. The aim is to forge new ways of responding to the threats posed to institutions of higher learning by populism, the curtailment of free speech, religious extremism, the spread of disinformation, and state-sponsored persecution.

AiE fellows are piloting new teaching formats to respond to the threat to critical thinking in crisis regions. Fellows are developing online tandem-taught courses and virtual learning communities across borders. We envision developing what we are calling a *critical thinking toolbox* for use in places where academic freedom is restricted. These courses will promote not only analytical skills among students but also academic autonomy as a defining feature of a healthy democracy. AiE proposes making such courses widely available so that this innovative model might be replicated by other interested programmes and institutions. The pedagogical aim of tandem teaching across borders involves equipping students with essential knowledge and tools for analytical thinking and critique across a range of scholarly contexts.

Conclusion

Critical thinking has long been the collective term for methodologies that foster self-critical awareness and analytical skills in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Although the term is used loosely and refers to a whole range of methodologies, from critical theory to secular criticism, feminist theory, and postcolonial studies, its role in contributing to democratic processes and an open society

seems uncontested. The pressing question arises as to how to preserve, promote, and transform critical thinking – particularly in collaboration with scholars from Turkey, Hungary, Brazil, Palestine, Syria, and Afghanistan, and other countries that are subject to repression. In light of the rise of authoritarian regimes and populist movements worldwide, we need to reinvest in the concept of critical thinking to mobilize it in policies of higher education. In this era of post-truth politics and the aggressive dissemination of misinformation, we are called upon to protect educational institutions that foster enquiry, reflective learning, and the ability to reason. By enquiring into the ways in which we define and engage with critical thinking, there is an opportunity to understand the conditions that have brought us to this juncture – what AiE is calling, with a nod to Bertolt Brecht's 'An die Nachgeborenen', 'these dire times' – and to re-evaluate the very premises on which our profession is based.

The boundary between the postcolonial scholar who seeks an international reputation and the scholar who seeks refuge is blurred in today's globalized academic world. Given these circumstances, we are called to continuously review and adjust the guidelines of international aid efforts in higher education and the autonomy of universities and research institutes. The ultimate aim is to rethink academia and the notion of the freedom of teaching and research (*Lehr- und Forschungsfreiheit*) in light of the challenges that refugee scholars face today.

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