

# Migration, Islam and Masculinities: Transforming Emigration and Immigration Societies

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## Catachresis: Queering Diasporas

Delving into Berlin's largely Turkish-inhabited neighbourhood of Kreuzberg, the film *Lola und Bilidikid* (1999) explores complex issues such as migration and racism, German and Turkish homophobia, heteronormativity and diasporic masculinities. By means of the analysis of the film, our paper will try to challenge the stereotypical constructions of 'the Migrant', 'the Islam' as well as 'the Muslim Man'. Interrogating the production of cultural difference that is performed on both sides, we seek to unfold how sexuality becomes an ideological battleground for competing hegemonic discourses.

Queer seems to have become a marker for 'cultural maturity' in the West. An interesting example of this is the introduction of a mandatory test in some regions of Germany that is part of the naturalisation process, wherein one of the questions tests the ability of 'the Migrants' to integrate into German society by asking how they would react if they were to find out that their boss is gay. Specially targeting the Muslim immigrants, this so-called „Muslim test“ was supported by the LSVD (one of the biggest gay and lesbian organizations in Germany), the insinuation being that all (Muslim/Turkish) migrants are homophobic. Here we see the continuities of Orientalist constructions of Islam as the Other à la Said.

On the other hand, non-normative sexualities have been declared to be incommensurable with 'Muslim culture' and as 'evil' western influences that endanger 'traditional values'. What is overlooked here is that criminalisation of homosexuality is itself a colonial legacy in most postcoloni-

al contexts. Something that is conveniently disregarded in the representations of Islam in the West as 'retrograde' and 'sexually repressive'.

For the postcolonial feminist Gayatri Spivak a concept-metaphor without an adequate referent is a catachresis, an effect produced by the displacement of concept-metaphors from their proper context. Likewise, we would argue that master words like 'Muslim Man', 'Islam', 'migrant' are catachreses or improper words because they claim to represent all Muslims and migrants, as there are no corresponding referents, which would stand for these terms.

Postcolonial queers are a provocation, a catachresis for both: the postcolonial sensibilities as well as their western counterparts. For the former, they disturb the construction of the postcolonial nation-building as a heteronormative project, for the latter they can only be freak exceptions that disrupt the western self-construction of being progressive, free and emancipated.

In our lecture we will employ postcolonial queer perspectives to explore issues of sexuality, migration, homophobia, religion and masculinities.

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