German and Russian Studies Honors Projects

December 2005

Testing the European Dream: Social Ideals and Cultural Realities in a Unified Europe

Lindsay Jorgensen
Macalester College

Testing the European Dream

Social Ideals and Cultural Realities in a Unified Europe

By Lindsay Jorgensen
December 2005

German Studies
David Martyn, Advisor

<u>Testing the European Dream: Social Ideals and Cultural Realities in a Unified Europe</u>

This paper addresses the viability of the European Dream proposed by Jeremy Rifkin through an examination of the tension resulting from cross-cultural acts of violence. Using primary sources and reactions to these events in the press, I show the inadequacy of Rifkin's theory to address certain aspects of European reality. Centering on the case of Germany, I then explore depictions of the European Dream and of the obstacles faced by non-Germans in pursuing that dream in a variety of texts by immigrant and minority authors. These case studies enable a closer inquiry into the structural flaws, the theoretical and practical accessibility, and the reality of the European Dream.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction

This thesis is a reflection of the American Dream. It is the result of the opportunity and the freedom to pursue my ideas, of my work ethic, of my faith in the individual mind and in its potential for advancement. In the same measure that this paper is a product of the American Dream, so is the United States. For more than two centuries, the American Dream has been one of the great driving forces behind all manner of advancements, discoveries, and migrations. However, in recent years, increasingly disparate wealth distribution, economic recessions, and globalization (among other factors) have worn away some of the polish from the American Dream. The promise of unlimited opportunity, of economic advancement, of personal freedom, individualism, and, theoretically at least, of equality for all has become less possible and less believable. The result has been a backlash against globalization and cultural imperialism – even from beneficiaries of the American Dream itself. This leads inevitably to the idea that the American Dream is no longer effective, and that the time has come to look for alternative dreams.

Among those who believe the American Dream to be a destructive, unsustainable, and exploitative force is Jeremy Rifkin. He sees it as inherently incapable of carrying the world, or even the American people, through the next century. He is not, however, predicting the fall of modern civilization. Rather, Rifkin places his hope for the future in his notion of a dream which stems from the European way of life. He explores this idea in his recent book, *The European Dream*, in which he sets up the European Dream in opposition to the American Dream. The European Dream is the goal that drives Europeans, that lies at the heart of efforts of the European Union, and which entices

foreign citizens to immigrate to Europe in record numbers. Unlike the American Dream, with its focus on the individual, on the accumulation of wealth and property, on unlimited advancement, on a Protestant work ethic, and on assimilation, the European Dream as Rifkin describes it is focused on community, quality of life, sustainable development, human rights, and cultural diversity.

Rifkin's book loudly challenges common goals, lifestyles, and self-images of Americans. It has received a great deal of press since its publication, mostly in the book review sections of those publications with strong political leanings. Depending on their direction, its author, Jeremy Rifkin, has been hailed and condemned for his critical stance toward the American Dream. Most reviewers, if they read beyond the book's subtitle, focus on the author's critical stance toward America and on the how and why of the apparently inevitable failure of the American Dream. Less attention has been paid to Rifkin's depiction of the European Dream and its potential as our ideological salvation in the twenty-first century. Rifkin's idea of a European Dream is certainly intriguing, but just how realistic or feasible is that idea?

It is this question which I will pursue in this thesis. I will ask whether the European Dream is truly realistic and feasible enough to replace the American Dream as one of the primary motive forces in the world, or, for the matter, in Europe. I will attempt to answer this question along a number of different lines of inquiry. I will first examine the internal structure of Rifkin's proposal and the relationships between its fundamental principles. I will also examine the appeal such a dream holds, because the feasibility of a dream is nothing if no one wishes to pursue it. Finally, since the American Dream moved such large

numbers of people and held appeal beyond the borders of the United States, I will pay special attention to the allure the European Dream seems to have for non-Europeans and immigrants.

The structure and nature of Rifkin's proposal is best understood by *testing* it in the context of European reality – particularly as that reality has evolved through the widespread immigration that has changed the face of Europe over the last several decades. To this end, I will explore the ways in which Rifkin's theory explains – or fails to explain – cross-cultural acts of violence as a part of European reality, focusing primarily on journalistic documentation of such violence. The reactions to these events by cultural critics also illuminate the relevance of the European Dream for European life. Lastly, I will explore depictions of the European Dream and of the obstacles faced by non-Germans in pursuing that dream in a variety of texts by immigrant and minority authors. Two issues immediately reveal themselves to be of primary concern: first, the relationships between the building blocks or foundational ideas of the European Dream, and secondly, the relationship between the dream and those in pursuit of it. These issues lead to an investigation of identity, multiculturalism, and conflict, as both problematic elements of European reality and critical flaws in the European Dream.

As will become clear, a key issue for the validity of Rifkin's argument is what might be called the "location" of the European Dream. Does the European Dream have a locus? If so, where is it and what are its boundaries? If the dream is necessarily located within European territory, thought, or identity, then only by buying into that thought or identity and by living within that territory can the dream reasonably be pursued. Rifkin does not

admit this to be the case. However, his conception of the European Dream entails what he calls "embeddedness" in economic, social, and cultural "networks," which appears to have consequences Rifkin seems unwilling to recognize. As I will show, gaining access to or embedding oneself in a network entails empathizing with members of that network. And empathizing requires a certain identification with the recipient of the empathy. Thus, if the European Dream is necessarily located within a distinctly European network, it is reasonable to draw a connection between pursuing the European Dream and pursuing a European identity.

This is an issue that will be discussed at length in the final chapter, which looks closely at texts and films by minority or immigrant authors. Cultural minorities in Europe are faced with a catalogue of issues which may hinder their progress toward the European Dream, including conflicting sources of cultural identity, the feasibility or necessity of assimilation, and the problem of networks so thoroughly different that they seem to be mutually exclusive. The difficulty posed by such problems is reflected most clearly in the challenge of moving between or switching networks. These issues also give rise to the problem of true identity or the obstacle of authenticity: if identity shifts and changes based on the network in which one is embedded, is that identity real and whole? Rifkin's conception of networks is based primarily on mutual trust and solidarity. But because of the nature of cultural networks, especially in light of Rifkin's insistence on preservation of cultural identity, it seems impossible for an individual to move freely between networks and to maintain a single, true, wholly authentic identity in every network. Instead, individuals may find themselves shifting identities to adjust to their current network.

While this allows a greater degree of freedom, it would seem contrary to the trust and solidarity on which the network system is based. This will prove to be an issue for anyone pursuing the European Dream. Essentially, Rifkin asks minority cultures to perform the contradiction of preserving their cultural identities while taking on European conceptions of freedom, fundamental rights, etc. In the meantime, he makes relatively few demands of the dominant culture or network. This is significant because it undermines Rifkin's claim that the European Dream is the vision of the future and the best system for coping with an increasingly globalized world.

 While writing this thesis, I have attempted to address Rifkin's theory with regard to the future of Europe and its dream rather than his doomsday predictions about the end of the American Dream. I have also attempted to avoid the pitfalls of my perspective as a believer in the American Dream and a member of a dominant cultural network. It is easy to criticize an ideal. It is my hope, however, that this thesis will do more than rain on Rifkin's utopic parade. While *the* European Dream may prove to be inaccessible and unrealistic, perhaps there is *a* dream which truly is moving the continent and the people on it.

II. The European Dream

In *The European Dream*, Jeremy Rifkin presents what seems to be little more than the opposite of the American Dream. He describes the European Dream as an idealistic, socially sustainable "vision of the future." Not only is the European Dream apparently the way of the future, it has already begun to "quietly eclipse the American Dream." Essentially, he gives us the key to socialist living in a globalized era which simultaneously nurtures the development of the European Union and is embodied in its ideal principles.

The book is more than a political statement; it is a proposal for the way governments, communities, cultures and individuals should interact in order to best cope with globalization. Rifkin goes deeper than state socialism: he lays out the workings of the kind of carefully balanced society necessary to support the style of government proposed, which is itself one of the supporting pillars of that society. The European Dream can seem like a relatively straightforward, if liberal, ideal way of life:

> [it] emphasizes community relationships over individual autonomy, cultural diversity over assimilation, quality of life over the accumulation of wealth, sustainable development over unlimited material growth, deep play over unrelenting toil, universal human rights and the rights of nature to property rights, and global cooperation over the unilateral exercise of power.[1]

Boiled down to the most general, basic concepts, these touchstones of the European Dream (and antitheses of the American Dream) reflect the necessity of interdependence, multiculturalism, quality of life, and sustainable development

---

[1] Jeremy Rifkin, <u>The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream</u> (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2004) 434, p. 3.

economically, socially, and culturally. A dream based on such principles seems like it would

be not only difficult to achieve, but also difficult to pursue. One is faced with the extreme

difficulty of supplanting the individual with the "good of the community" even when the

individual may suffer for that good. Most Americans would certainly object to replacing

individual autonomy with community relationships and responsibility in their hierarchy of

values. Europeans, however, simply do not have the same faith in the individual as

Americans do.[2] Rifkin believes that European optimism about the importance of

community has been shaped in large part by the history of the continent, beginning with

feudal castles.[3] While many Americans fail to see a distinction between quality of life and

accumulation of wealth and consider the accumulation of wealth to be an important

avenue to a higher quality of life, Europeans often fail to see how quality of life can be

separated from the welfare of the community.[4] According to Rifkin, it is this sort of value

difference that separates American thought from European thought, and the two different

schools of thought which produce and are products of the dreams discussed here.

One of the most fundamental differences between the European and American

dreams is the absolute dichotomy separating their respective conceptions of freedom and

security. Americans, Rifkin argues, see freedom as autonomy: "if one is autonomous, one is

not dependent on others or vulnerable to circumstances outside one's control."[5] To be

independent and invulnerable is to be secure. This American variety of freedom is

attainable through the acquisition of property and wealth, which itself provides

---

[2] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 327.
[3] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 90.
[4] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 83.
[5] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 13.

exclusivity.[6] It is the pursuit of this freedom and the accompanying autonomy, independence, wealth, and exclusivity that defines the American dream. Americans have officially claimed the pursuit of this dream as a right – to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness – since the earliest stages of the nation in the Declaration of Independence.

That the European Dream is premised on a European conception of freedom is not a small thing. Rifkin claims that the uniquely European conception of freedom evident in everything from European history to cell phone trends to transnational economic practices is unequivocally grounded not in autonomy, but in what he refers to as "embeddedness."[7] What Rifkin seems to mean by "freedom in embeddedness" is that European freedom comes from having a sort of generally secure position which is held secure by its myriad connections with other secure positions. These positions, whether social, economic, or cultural, form a kind of web or network. It is, then, by embedding oneself in such a network and being interdependent with several others that one is free. While the network can help protect a position against circumstances outside one's control, it is oriented toward European-style freedom of access. Inclusiveness is key to this conception of freedom; where the American version depends on **ex**clusiveness, the European Dream relies on **in**clusive relationships between individuals, communities, and networks to ensure security.

Rifkin applies what he calls the deathbed test to the American and European freedom ideals: if real freedom, as a measure of a life, is the "power to experience the full

---

[6] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 13.
[7] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 13.

potential of one's being in the world,"[8] all we have to do is choose which approach will help us best experience our potential as living beings to the fullest. Unsurprisingly, Rifkin sees European freedom winning out. He believes that a life spent pursuing relationships has been better used than a life spent pursuing material wealth and autonomy. This is because more relationships grant access to more communities, and "the more communities one has access to, the more options and choices one has for living a full and meaningful life.[9]"

Personal value judgments aside, it is important to remember that Rifkin is presenting ideals rather than realities; there will always be circumstances outside one's control which cannot be protected against either by wealth or by connections. As ideals, however, the American and European conceptions of freedom speak volumes about the dreams they inspire. And it is the pursuit of the European Dream which, in Rifkin's opinion, ought to shape the future. Rifkin emphasizes that the actual achievement of a dream is less the point than the articulation of that dream as something to work toward.[10]

Rifkin's delineation of the European Dream sets up several goals[11] which are inextricably bound to the European conception of freedom. Although it may seem initially logical, it soon becomes evident that it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish whether a particular ideal of the European Dream supports or is itself supported by that European freedom ideal. Furthermore, these tenets of the European Dream are all tied up in one another, making it equally difficult to analyze a particular aspect of the European Dream

---

[8] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 192.
[9] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 13.
[10] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 15.
[11] Community relationships, cultural diversity, quality of life, sustainable development, deep play, universal human rights and the rights of nature, and global cooperation.

independently of the others. Given the tangled nature of the dream's pillars, two issues require a closer look. First, can these distinct ideals combine as seamlessly as Rifkin believes to form a coherent, cohesive, and relevant dream? Secondly, is the tightly knit interdependency of the European Dream's pillars, not to mention the social structure Rifkin proposes, really conducive to the inclusiveness the dream requires? Is the dream intellectually accessible? This last question is particularly important to address. The accessibility of the dream in terms of individual thought says a great deal about Rifkin's primary claim (and subtitle) that the European Dream is a vision for the future and is eclipsing the American Dream. If the European Dream is based on European thought, the adoption of the dream by non-Europeans may indicate an adoption of European thought. At the very least, it would seem that in order for the European Dream to live up to Rifkin's claims, there must be at least one building block which could function as a sort of theoretical gateway to the structure of ideals (Rifkin's castle in the clouds). Can the dream be approached from outside European thought? Does adopting it as a goal necessarily entail adopting a European perspective, set of values, or way of life?

The European Dream is focused on sustainable development. This is not limited to the specifically environmental sense of development that can be sustained indefinitely by renewable natural resources. Rifkin intends sustainable development environmentally as well as economically, socially, and politically. Europeans agree; he cites the European Commission[12] measures of quality of life and happiness (among others) by an economy that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future

---

[12] "Our Common Future." World Commission on Environment and Development. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1987. Cited in Rifkin, p. 82.

generations to meet their own needs.[13]" Economically sustainable means network commerce based on the principles of "reciprocity and trust[14]" as well as environmentalism. He elaborates on the network system of commerce at some length, but at the heart of the network model (which Rifkin applies to a variety of systems, not just economic) is "the feeling that we're all in this together.[15]" This solidarity should mean an end to destructive commercial tactics and increased awareness of the larger impact of economic actions and decisions. This sense of solidarity and trust will also replace competition for dwindling natural resources with cooperation to make the most out of the steady, renewable, sustainable (but still limited) supply of said natural resources.[16] The cooperation of a network economy should help equalize distribution of wealth, which will contribute to sustainable social development.[17]

But a network economy of the kind Rifkin suggests, one that will contribute to social development, may not be at all possible without a preexisting social foundation. Rifkin's network commerce is based on principles of reciprocity and trust and the "feeling that we're all in this together." For solidarity and trust to replace current economic competition in the form of a network economy, or even as conditions necessary for the development of a network economy, they must exist prior to the equalized distribution of wealth such a network economy promises. The origins of the critical elements of trust and solidarity, or embeddedness, are not clarified. Indeed, all sorts of the sustainable development discussed above reward, deepen, and even produce the sense of

---

[13] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 82.
[14] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 187.
[15] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 189.
[16] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 185-192.
[17] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 190-192.

embeddedness that is the European freedom ideal. But they may also *require* embeddedness in order to work, indicating that it is the primary element of sustainable development. Sustainable development may deepen or intensify embeddedness, trust, and solidarity, but it cannot be constructed without it.

Leisure and deep play, also tenets of the European dream, would naturally do a lot for quality of life. Life is better when we have the time and resources to relax and play games. While Rifkin never exactly explains what he means by deep play in this book, he has clarified the term in other writings. Deep play is an activity which is an end in itself, such as art, religious, secular, social justice, civic, community, and sports activities.[18] He asserts that the importance of deep play lies in the fact that social relationships, which originate in language and "agreed upon ways of behaving," the basics of culture, are primary to all other relationships.[19] Only when a society "[has] enough trust and [its] members] have created sufficient bonds do they create trade and then government.[20]" By engaging in deep play, we create the shared experiences out of which a culture can grow and the "deep bonds of participation to explore our humanity, our relationships to the human principles of life.[21]" The community that plays together, stays together.

Quality of life seems self-explanatory on the surface, but given the previous discussion of the divergent American and European dreams, it is worth explaining what exactly Rifkin means by that phrase. The American understanding of the term includes "access to a decent education, assuring our good health, providing adequate care for our

---

[18] Kenneth Bailey, "Claiming Our Primary Role in Our Society and Global Economy," <u>Nonprofit Quarterly</u> Feb. 2001 2001 <http://www.nonprofitquarterly.org/section/171.html>.
[19] Bailey, p. 2.
[20] Bailey, p. 1.
[21] Bailey, p. 1.

children, and living in safe neighborhoods and communities.[22]" In most of these areas, Rifkin's statistics indicate that Europe has outdone the U.S. But, like freedom, Europe's ideas about quality of life are far removed from American standards. The European Commission has defined quality of life as the "immaterial aspects of the living situation like health, social relations or the quality of the natural environment;" it should be a measure of both actual, concrete living conditions and the "subjective well-being of individual citizens.[23]" Quality of life is equated with happiness: "the extent to which social cohesion is deepened, social exclusion diminished, and social capital is grown," which, along with a sustainable economy, are the hallmarks of European quality of life.[24] It is not surprising, then, that the European Dream, like freedom, is more about "advancing the quality of life of a people" rather than one's individual well-being.

All of these primary tenets of the European Dream keep returning to interdependence and inclusiveness, which have shown themselves to be some of the absolutely fundamental aspects of the European Dream. This is not without its problems, however: there are a few aspects of the European Dream which are accurate assessments of European thought but simply cannot, by definition, aspire to the same level of inclusiveness as others. That is to say, some of the pillars of Rifkin's proposal permit interdependence only between those who adhere to a certain set of beliefs. The European concern with universal human rights and the rights of nature are a good example of this exclusive manner of being inclusive. Principles which extend (or aim to extend) a set of rights universally are inclusive in that they include all humanity (or the natural world) as

---

[22] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 78.
[23] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 82.
[24] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 82.

entitled to that set of basic rights. But at the same time, it is impossible to contain an inclusiveness of values within the concept of universal human rights or rights of nature. The rights which should be extended to all humans assert themselves, and by association, the culture which is their source, as superior by excluding conflicting beliefs and value systems. The implication is that subject cultures would need to adjust their values and traditional beliefs if universal human rights were to be made truly universal. The goal of this specific pillar of the European Dream is to include all humanity in the same set of fundamental rights. But it is a distinctly, even exclusively European understanding of fundamental rights which would ideally be spread.

The fact that the European Dream espouses cultural diversity becomes problematic in light of the importance of universal human rights. Rifkin claims that the European Dream "is based on preserving one's cultural identity and living in a multicultural world.[25]" Cultural diversity sounds very nice, and is in many ways the opposite of the traditional American melting pot/assimilationist view of how cultures should interact. But this non-assimilationist, multiculturalist view seems to conflict with the interdependent, inclusive sense of solidarity that makes the European Dream cohesive if not necessarily feasible. Multiculturalism, the preservation of distinct cultural identities, can easily come in to conflict with universal human rights. Furthermore, cultural diversity is only possible if multiple and distinct cultures coexist with one another without becoming the same. Culture is tied up in language, social behaviors, religion, and even politics, making it relatively simple to be embedded within one's own culture, thus achieving a certain degree of European freedom. And while one may have access to other communities in theory, that

---

[25] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 14.

access may not be real in practice, particularly if all one's needs can be met without leaving one's primary network of relationships. But how can distinct cultures (or members from distinct cultures) accommodate one another in community relationships, engage in deep play with one another, commit to universal human rights, the rights of nature or sustainable development together while preserving their cultural identity? This may be especially tricky if the source of one's cultural identity does not have a tradition of such values. There is ample room for extreme cases on either side of the integration debate. It is not difficult for an individual or a community to seek to improve the quality of life of a people when that means they are helping themselves and their immediate community or primary network. It becomes much more complicated and difficult when several profoundly varied groups are preserving their cultural identities, and with them, varied understandings of freedom, quality of life, etc. and are asked to improve the situations of communities to which they do not have practical or intellectual access. It is undeniably possible for a cultural group to construct such a dense social and economic network that the group becomes insular. It is also possible for a cultural group to become acculturated and hybridized by over-assimilating to a dominant culture. This is the obvious and much-lamented fallout of globalization.

The problem is further complicated by the very concrete issue of territory: many native or "local" subcultures are based on traditions rooted in physical territory which may not always be open, while at the same time, immigrant subcultures or traditions may also require physical foundations. Unfortunately, Europe is crowded, literally and in the figurative sense of local subcultures, which makes for a good deal of territorial as well as

cultural defensiveness on all sides. It is one thing to make physical space, especially in light

of the shrinking numbers of native Europeans. The population of native Europeans is on a

sharp decline; without maintaining immigration, the aging and longer-lived older

generations would surely overburden or completely cripple the social welfare system which

is such an integral factor in quality of life.[26] To make ideological space is another thing

entirely, and its difficulty is likely exacerbated by territorial issues. While certain tenets of

the European Dream would be necessarily compromised in order to make ideological room

for cultural diversity, Rifkin notes that immigration appears to be vital for sustainable

development within Europe.[27]

Although Rifkin barely addresses the apparent conflict between preservation of

cultural identity and embeddedness or the European freedom ideal, the issue is not

insurmountable. There are, of course, several potential solutions to the problem of

embedding oneself within a network while preserving one's cultural identity and place

within a cultural network. First and foremost is the fact of globalization. Hardly anyone

maintains just one cultural identity or social allegiance; multiple identities are now par for

the course. Similarly, cultural identity functions on more than one level. While it serves to

differentiate an individual from the outside world, it also provides a "social vehicle to assert

one's right to access to global flows."[28] Cultural identity becomes a means to freedom in

the European sense. When identity is regarded as something embedded in multiple

networks, it is that much freer, but also that much more difficult to define and preserve.

The gray area between preservation of cultural identity and moving between networks gives

---

[26] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 253.
[27] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 252.
[28] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 248.

rise to a host of potential problems for Rifkin. If an individual is embedded in multiple networks, does that individual still have an authentic identity? What if the different networks are so different in terms of traditions and value systems that they are mutually exclusive? It would seem that if one maintained an authentic identity but switched between mutually exclusive networks, being embedded in either would be difficult at best. Although he does not address these concerns specifically, Rifkin finds the solution in a healthy civil society.

Civil society, according to Rifkin, is a "forum for the expression of culture."[29] Deep play originated in the civil society sector, or the third sector (the first two are business and government). This sector is ideally represented to modern European government by civil society organizations (CSOs). In the schema of the European Dream, CSOs need to be actively involved in the political process. Rifkin alleges that they are more trusted than the government or business in Europe, and are constituted of engaged, invested parties. Essentially, Rifkin proposes that CSOs, particularly those oriented toward universal rights (the civil rights movement, the environmental movement, the women's rights movement, the animal rights movement, etc.) and those which represent the interest of local and ethnic cultural groups (native and immigrant) who are trying to preserve their cultural identity. Rifkin does seem aware of the dangers and pitfalls of this solution. The important thing, he argues, is to keep cultural groups from feeling threatened by larger forces to assuage the fear that one's culture is something to defend, which participation in transnational policy through CSO and government cooperation ideally accomplishes. Provided that a given cultural group "can see Europeanization and globalization as a way

---

[29] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 235.

to…gain greater independence, maneuverability, and access to the outside world, they may come to view their culture more as 'gifts to share'."[30] This would be aided by the prevalence of multiple or multi-network identities and allegiances. Essentially, Rifkin argues that active engagement in both the local and transnational community through participation in CSOs and an awareness (and acceptance) of the European freedom ideal, it will be possible to preserve the basics of one's cultural identity.

Hence, Rifkin does not see the potential lack of common ground between universal human rights and cultural identity as a necessarily crippling problem. While the European Dream is supposed to "connect the human race to a new shared story," he sidesteps the issue of that story being a particular and in some ways very exclusive narrative. He does acknowledge that universal human rights can be at odds with cultural rights. He also briefly acknowledges that the recognition of human rights and the rights of nature "suggests a meta-narrative," but only in the context of the post-modernists who preceded the European dream.[31] The post-modernists acknowledged that "there exists at least one universal idea to which everyone can potentially agree – that is, that every human life has equal value and that nature is worthy of respect and consideration," and it was their downfall.[32] He glosses over the fact that this universal idea is one to which only *almost* everyone can agree, not to mention that it is an idea born of a very particular Western hegemony. What this indicates, then, is that some degree of cultural assimilation to at least some values held by the cultural majority (*Leitkultur*) is expected. This is not bad; it certainly does not debunk the European

---

[30] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 244.
[31] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 7.
[32] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 7.

Dream. But it does create a number of internal as well as external problems for Rifkin's theory.

Internally, the necessity of some cultural assimilation undermines the high value placed on cultural diversity, as well as the viability of deep play, quality of life, and sustainable development. Global cooperation and universal human rights can coexist as theories, but only if the global cooperation fits in the premises of universal human rights. Externally, a demand for cultural assimilation can at best lead to value judgments of cultures, particularly judgments by members of the *Leitkultur* regarding immigrant groups. Cultural hierarchies, especially when enforced by a governing body, can inspire exactly the kind of defensive attitude regarding one's own culture and/or cultural territories that Rifkin warns against, not to mention deep subcultural rifts, culturally restricted and restrictive insular networks, as well as a general shift toward divisive, exclusive cultural awareness rather than the interdependent, inclusive attitude that is the European ideal.

At this point in his proposal, Rifkin rescues the European Dream from the threat of structural flaws by falling back on an optimistic view of humanity and invoking "empathy." The lynchpin of the European dream, he argues, is empathy: without the ability to recognize one's own life struggle in the frailty, vulnerability, and struggle of others,[33] none of these tenets are particularly viable, especially not in the way Rifkin intended. Empathy is what allows cultural groups to trust one another as well as work and play together while maintaining their distinct cultural identities. It keeps any group from demanding too much, and certainly aids fair distribution of resources. Empathy allows certain value adjustments to be viewed as a sort of fee for greater access and European

---

[33] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 280.

freedom; Rifkin believes that if cultural adjustments are approached in this way, people will see their cultures as "gifts to share." The European Dream seems to require that cultures (*Leitkulturen* and subcultures) strike a fine balance between value assimilation and preservation of cultural identity. Empathy is also the foundation for a strong network economy and network government with CSO participation. Empathy makes sustainable development and fairer wealth distribution easier as well.

Rifkin's description of the European Dream is appropriately complex – networked, even – enough to make it more or less structurally sound. However, this also makes it somewhat less plausible. As discussed above, each pillar enables but also requires the existence of another. Where the American Dream is fairly linear or cyclical (acquire wealth to become more independent to acquire more wealth) the European Dream is a more interdependent network of ideals. Some of the theoretical tenets of the Dream would conflict if they stood alone, but because they all affect one another and all tie back into empathy and embeddedness, the cohesive idea stands a chance. It does all sound very idyllic, like a semi-socialist, economically enlightened, socially advanced utopia; it has only ever been a dream. Just like the American dream, the European Dream sounds like it will disappoint its share of people. But is the European Dream actually present in the European consciousness? Is it this embedded, sustainable, interdependent, inclusive, cooperative, networked future which Europe is really working to achieve? An exploration of a few instances of social and cultural shock/upheaval may reveal more about the relationship between Europeans and the dream Rifkin claims they are pursuing.

III. (In)Tolerance and European Reality

As reflected by the previous analysis of Rifkin's theory, the European Dream is based on generalizations, is overly broad and needs some clarification. But does it reflect what Europeans are striving toward? Does it take into account the actual mood in Europe right now or shifts in the European consciousness in the past? These objections can be supported by isolating recent trends or even single events in Europe. But because it is usually not difficult to find a statistic or an instance supporting whatever one wishes to say about a particular community, it becomes important to explore reactions to trends or events as well as the events themselves. Rather than reviewing just the history of action surrounding a watershed event, it is often useful to explore the history of thought leading up to and especially resulting from it: how a society or a culture copes intellectually, publicly, and psychologically with a particular incident can say just as much about that society or culture (or network) as an analysis of the event itself.

Tolerance and the Murder of Theo van Gogh

Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, like many artists, was never so famous as after he died. His murder made headlines on several continents, in part because of the motive and the manner in which he was killed, and in part because of the fact that it happened in Amsterdam. Amsterdam has long been hailed as one of the most successfully multicultural cities in Europe; after van Gogh's murder, the European press particularly mourned the Netherlands' lost innocence and shattered ideals. Given the nation's reputation, the van Gogh case – the murder, the victim, the killer – can be regarded as a litmus test of Rifkin's

European Dream. It is easy to see that something must have gone wrong in order for the murder to have happened at all; hardly anything about the actors, not to mention the murder, reflects the principles Rifkin thinks Europeans are working toward.

Theo van Gogh was a provocative Dutch filmmaker with a legendary mean streak, who relentlessly criticized his government, his society and his colleagues for ignoring intolerance. He embodied the tolerance paradox: he fought for tolerance by refusing to tolerate intolerant subcultures. He was a strong critic of any and all forms of religious fundamentalism, "Islamic oppression of women and homosexuals," and, famously, the "culture of victimhood" he saw in Jewish literature and film.[34] He did not simply state his criticism: he believed that critiques should be shouted openly, "as loudly and offensively as possible, until people got the point."[35] This philosophy was more than evident in his last film, "Submission," made in collaboration with Somalian-born Dutch politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali. The film detailed various abuses of Muslim women in the name of their religion while words from the Koran were shown written on naked female bodies.

Van Gogh certainly aimed to provoke, but as was the case with other provocations, his was a "violent rhetoric of a place where words are normally without serious consequences."[36] It was in no small part because of this atmosphere that van Gogh felt the need to be as vulgar, shocking, and provocative as he was. Obviously, his film was taken not just as an insult to Islam, but as heresy. He was murdered November 2, 2004 on his way to work. He was shot several times, and his throat was slit; a note containing some jihad slogans and general threats to the West, as well as accusing Ali, his collaborator, of

---

[34] Ian Buruma, "Final Cut," <u>New Yorker</u> 80.41 (2005): 26-32, p. 28.
[35] Buruma, p. 28.
[36] Buruma, p. 28.

various, equally serious offenses to Islam was found pinned to his body. More scandalous than the fact of van Gogh's death, at least as far as cultural politics are concerned, was the fact that he was not killed by a foreign jihad crusader; his murderer had once been the image of successful integration. Mohammed B., as he was referred to in the press, spoke perfect Dutch, had completed a Dutch education, and was reputedly very much engaged in his community.[37] He was born in Amsterdam and was a first generation Dutch citizen. He could even navigate the complicated red tape of the Dutch welfare system and had applied for welfare subsidies for his community. But for any number of reasons, he seemed to simply "come unhinged," and fell in with an extremist crowd.[38]

Neither van Gogh nor his work appeared to embody the principles of multiculturalism, solidarity, or community building as pillars of the European Dream that Rifkin presents. Obviously, neither does his murder. But it is too simplistic to argue that this case conclusively shows Rifkin to be wrong about the goal toward which much of Europe is working. Instead of reviewing who did what to arrive at this point, or the history of action surrounding the murder, the analysis of Rifkin's theory would benefit more from an exploration of the kind of thinking or progression of ideas surrounding the murder and any resulting shifts in popular thought.

The reactions in the European press reflect a need to understand what went wrong, not only politically, but also culturally and socially. Most public voices can agree that at some point, integration failed. If it had been successful, Mohammed B. would have been

---

[37] Ulrich Beck, "Globalisierung des Hasses: Parallelgesellschaften und Multi-Kulti-Träume," Süddeutsche Zeitung 20 Nov. 2004, , sec. Feuilleton: 13, Lexis Nexis. p. 1.
[38] Buruma, p. 27.

able to tolerate van Gogh and his work. Deconstructing this failure often begins by placing the blame on one group or another for letting young men like Mohammed B. slip through the cracks. Naturally, there has been a great deal of debate as to what could be done to solve the problem (of integration, or assimilation, or acculturation, or immigrants – this has not quite been agreed upon); as much or more energy has been devoted to a discussion of whose responsibility that change should be. In many cases the blame was placed on the Dutch people and the Dutch government. At the same time, in defiance of the fine line separating blame from responsibility, the responsibility for change was placed squarely on the shoulders of immigrants and subcultural groups; assimilationists claimed that a healthy society could only function within the boundaries of the dominant culture. Multiculturalists disagreed: while the dominant Dutch society certainly could be blamed for the current state of cultural conflict, the responsibility for change also belonged to the cultural majority. On the one hand, assimilationists are arguing against the breed of unrestrained multiculturalism in the Netherlands because it is too tolerant of intolerant subcultures. On the other hand, multiculturalists argue against the current form of cultural diversity because it is not really tolerant of subcultures. Assimilationist thinking seemed especially prevalent in the Dutch press; an apologetic multiculturalist line of thought seems more prevalent in the German press. Additionally, some European columnists held that the blame was the immigrants', and the government's for allowing them into the country; responsibility for change lay in the hands of the people to rise up and expel the foreigners from their country. Clearly, this opinion was generally espoused by the far-right, but since van Gogh's murder, this group has seen a surge in new membership.

The assimilationist approach to the newly tense situation, placing the blame on the Dutch and the responsibility for change on the cultural minorities, is a tricky position to defend because it finds fault with tolerance and multiculturalism, values which were previously immune to criticism. Paul Scheffer, a Dutch journalist and social commentator, exemplifies the assimilationist position in his argument that the Dutch have simply been too tolerant for their own (or anyone else's) good. His assertion that tolerance can only exist within certain boundaries has become a sort of slogan for assimilationists across Europe. He explains that because neither the Dutch people nor their government set realistic boundaries and held immigrants to them, cultural minorities in the Netherlands have rarely become more than superficially assimilated. In many cases, the children of immigrants fall into the category of those who may speak Dutch, have Dutch jobs, and be Dutch citizens, but do not necessarily share the basic values of the dominant Dutch culture. As far as social critics like Scheffer are concerned, these superficially acculturated quasi-Dutch are reaping the benefits of living in a western, liberal, society like the Netherlands without engaging in it, without taking any responsibility for maintaining it, and without having any particular allegiance to it.[39] Mohammed B. is a prime example of the worst that this kind of superficial acculturation can do. If Mohammed B. had felt a sense of ownership about the Netherlands, or had even a primary allegiance to the nation, he would have had more pride in the values of freedom of speech and religion that allowed van Gogh to say the things he said than pride in Islam. Scheffer is not alone in his

---

[39] Paul Scheffer, "Das Schweigen der Muslime," <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 9 Nov. 2004 2004, , sec. Feuilleton: 40, p. 2.

position; the assimilationist slogan has been a rallying point for many likeminded intellectuals. Richard Wagner puts a fine point on the issue which Rifkin completely fails to address: multiculturalism cannot exist at the price of human rights. If human rights were sacrificed to multiculturalism, governments would find themselves faced with the impossible task of protecting the rights granted to all its citizens without interfering in, to say nothing of prohibiting, actions rising from or in the service of preserving cultural identities, even if it means those same citizens violate the rights the government is designed to protect.

Essentially, Scheffer and other assimilationists are calling for less boundless tolerance. The implication is clear: it is the privilege of the dominant culture in a society to make acceptance of its values the cost of admission or the market price of the benefits it offers. It is the responsibility of that culture to enable and reinforce the minimum of value assimilation necessary for the society to function, that is, to continue to provide those benefits. While assimilationists do value multiculturalism and diversity, the necessity of these boundaries or ground rules trumps all. In many ways, Scheffer echoes Rifkin's argument for interconnectedness, inclusiveness, and solidarity. Unlike Rifkin, however, he recognizes that this is hard to come by in a society in which tolerance has perhaps gone too far, and, evidently, that it is impossible if the participants cannot agree on the boundaries within which they interact. It is easy to draw a connection between Rifkin's theory and the goals of the *Achtundsechziger*: women's liberation, accessible education, multicultural society, and environmental protection are considered quite important by both. These ideals have been realized more completely in the Netherlands than almost anywhere in

Europe. It is precisely the commitment to these principles, which must be recognized on some level as being culture-specific values, which causes assimilationists to insist on deeper change and acculturation on behalf of cultural minorities. Assimilationists recognize these liberal, Rifkinian principles as "dieselben Tugenden, die bisher die Wohlfahrt des Landes garantieren" of the nation but also as a threat to community.[40] As one columnist put it, when a nation has achieved as much as the Dutch have, economically and socially, it is not surprising that its citizens are afraid that there's nowhere to go but down.

On the other side of the integration debate are those unwilling to give up on the utopian ideal that diverse cultures can not only peacefully coexist but be revitalized and strengthened by their awareness of each other. Rather than placing the blame for the social rift on the dominant society for being too tolerant and giving subcultures the responsibility for changing, multiculturalists place the blame on the dominant culture. Ulrich Beck, a German sociologist, argues that the dominant culture wrongfully demands exclusive loyalty and reduces individuals to a single characteristic.[41] This, in addition to the fact that adherents of the *Leitkultur* cling to their stereotypes of minorities and refuse to reassess their own beliefs and values, particularly the (occasionally apologetic) belief that their culture is truly superior, has given rise to the recent waves of extremism and cultural retrenchment on all sides. Beck points out that there is plenty of dangerous fundamentalism on the part of Christians as well as Muslims, and sees multiculturalism as the logical opposite of and remedy for fundamentalism. The reality of a globalized world,

---

[40] Dirk Schümer, "Sorgenraum Europa," <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 25 Jan. 2005, , sec. Feuilleton: 35, <u>Lexis Nexis</u> 7/14/05. p. 1.
[41] Beck, p. 2.

however, makes singular allegiance or identity improbable at best, especially on the part of cultural minorities or immigrants, who can be reasonably expected to have more complex or pronounced transnational identities and loyalties. Increased globalization also makes it more and more unlikely that members of the national dominant culture will be able to maintain a single-layer identity or to restrict their loyalty to their "native" culture. In light of such factors, multiculturalists argue that it is the *Leitkultur* that needs to change in order to accommodate both minorities and its own members. This stance on the assimilation issue is also appealing to many politicians and public figures: demanding that a subculture assimilate and asserting (however implicitly) the superiority of one's own culture is a bit too close to nationalism and racism for comfort, especially in Germany.

Rifkin would agree with Beck on some points, particularly in his analysis of the transnational identity. Just as Rifkin relies on empathy to inspire and hold together progress toward the European Dream, Beck argues that forgiveness is the key to breaking the cycle of parallel societies, violence, and stereotypes, which will allow multiculturalism to thrive.[42] He goes a step beyond Rifkin in that he does acknowledge that to recognize the worth of a foreign culture is a difficult and complicated process; unfortunately, he does not give any practical suggestions as to how to do it. Beck calls on several other concepts common in Rifkin's work, such as inclusiveness, engagement, empathy and most of all cultural diversity. At the very least, Rifkin is shown to be in touch with the liberal-intellectual currents of the continent. However, there is a serious distance between the European Dream as Rifkin describes it and the reality of the situation in the Netherlands. The hesitancy of intellectuals like Beck to insist on some change on the part of cultural

---

[42] Beck, p. 3.

minorities or to address the problem of tolerating intolerance weakens their position

significantly, and Rifkin's theory faces a similar problem.

Multiculturalism is an integral part of the European Dream, and the van Gogh case seems

to show that it cannot coexist on equal footing with other building blocks of the European

Dream (empathy, solidarity, and interdependence). Does the van Gogh case conclusively

destroy Rifkin's theory? Probably not. It does emphasize the theory's central structural flaw:

all its principles are interdependent. While it is unlikely that the European Dream could

be realized without placing at least some value on diversity and multiculturalism, it seems

possible that with a more linear, and less interdependent hierarchy of principles, Rifkin's

theory might weather such critiques with more success. To tolerate an intolerant culture

would necessarily mean that human rights in the European sense held a lower priority than

multiculturalism, thereby running the risk of some cultural groups enjoying more freedoms

(of speech or religion especially) than others. To refuse to tolerate an intolerant culture

would put human rights in their European conception in top priority, ensuring that the

values of one culture are propagated above others. Either way, cultural inequality seems to

be the inevitable result, and one that is not in step with Rifkin's proposal. But if Europeans

buckled down and acknowledged the position European/Western culture occupies, or

admitted to believing in and perpetuating a certain degree of cultural superiority, it would

allow them to use human rights as a foundation for the other principles of the European

Dream. They would no longer be able to claim a commitment to true multiculturalism, but

it seems impossible for true multiculturalism to coexist with a serious commitment to any

kind of universal human rights, and it would ease the contradiction of pursuing

inclusiveness and preservation of cultural identity in equal measure.

However, to admit cultural hierarchy would cause some tension in the paradoxical

goal of combating intolerance by refusing to tolerate subcultures which do not conform to

the basic goals and values of the European Dream. In purely practical terms,

assimilationism could prove to be problematic because of the risk that immigrants might be

unwilling to pay that price to be a part of European society. Were that the case, minority

cultures would likely be further isolated and antagonized; this would more than likely lead

to more violence, perpetuating rather than solving the problem. If immigration numbers

dropped in much of Europe, the social net which is such a huge part of the Dream would

collapse. If nothing else, this situation would show Rifkin's theory to be flawed. Essentially,

if an immigrant were unwilling to assimilate his or her values to those of the dominant

culture in order to pursue the European Dream, it would refute Rifkin's claim that the

European Dream has the potential to lead us into the next century. On the contrary, this

situation would reinforce the suspicion that the European Dream is not a popular dream

in the sense of the American Dream. The European Dream may lack the allure that moves

and inspires huge numbers of people. It may be little more than a dream for a group of left-

leaning, European intellectuals. Assimilation does not seem capable of saving the

European Dream. But multiculturalism, even in the kindest light, does not seem like the

solution either.

Dirk Schümer, a German columnist, argues that multiculturalism cannot rescue the

situation. It has already failed, he claims, in that tolerance of diverse cultures has regressed

to indifference, actually making people less aware and understanding of other cultures. The issue of indifference is as much a problem for Rifkin's theory as the conflict between multiculturalism and universal human rights, and a deeper, more complicated one at that. While it is neither easy nor pragmatic to rely on forced assimilation of values, it is perhaps more difficult to force consideration and participation. Indifference, as evidenced by the van Gogh case, is a real and serious trend, particularly in societies such as the Netherlands that seem closest to achieving something like the European Dream. But this trend is contrary to everything about Rifkin's theory: indifference should have no part in the interdependence, the community engagement, the commitment to human rights, the network commerce, the sustainable development, and least of all the multiculturalism that Europe is supposed to be striving for. Rifkin seems to assume that Europe is populated by engaged, dynamic idealists with a vested interest in one another; his theory makes no allowances for apathy or egotism. If Scheffer and company are correct that the indifference has come from too much politically correct tolerance, Rifkin's theory needs to rearrange priorities.

Could the European Dream be rearranged enough that van Gogh, crusader against indifference, could be a part of the Dream rather than a threat to it? Perhaps. But van Gogh's position in the Netherlands, the nation closest to achieving some form of the European Dream, was an important one. He was obnoxious, but at least it engaged people. According to cultural theorist Slavoj Žižek it was van Gogh's ability to engage people that made him valuable. He believes political correctness and multiculturalism are the

neutralization of real differences and the "Ideologie des globalen Kapitalismus."[43] Žižek

argues that multiculturalism in the form of tolerance actually is a kind of racism: the

multiculturalist respect for the particularities of another is actually the assertion of one's

own superiority.[44] Rifkin's empathy, then, would seem to pander too much to the

"politically correct fear that anyone's specific sensibility may be hurt."[45] In doing so, it is

not solving differences or even acknowledging them. Žižek's theories shed a certain light

on the principles of the European Dream which makes the dream look implausible in its

original expression. In this light, should the European Dream be achieved, there would be

no avoiding indifference or, at the very least, boredom. And perhaps it was the early stages

of indifference brought on by tolerance that forced van Gogh to be so obnoxious in his

commentary. The pillars of Rifkin's theory are all interconnected, but there is no tension

to keep them in balance.

Assimilationism is risky. Tolerant multiculturalism clearly does not work.

According to Žižek, Europe is becoming excessively politically correct and more quietly

racist, which isn't helping anything. There is obviously no silver bullet solution to bring

Rifkin's theory into step with the reality of Europe. It is worthwhile to wonder what other

alternatives there are. Before tolerance, there was assimilation; before assimilation, there

was acculturation. When that failed, there was generally warfare to fall back on. This would

be out of the question in Rifkin's utopia, because the level of interconnectedness and

inclusiveness has to be so great for the Dream to be achieved in the first place that all

---

[43] Isolde Charim, "Slavoj Zizeks provokanteste These," <u>Die Tageszeitung</u> 07 Dec. 2004 2004, , sec. Kultur: 16-7, <u>LexisNexis Academic</u>. p. 17.

[44] Buchowsky, from Mark Siemons, "Buschkowsky verstehen: Was ist eigentlich "Integration"?" <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 15 Dec. 2004, , sec. Feuilleton: 37, p. 38.

[45] Slavoj Zizek, "Passion in the Era of Decaffeinated Belief," <u>The Symptom</u> Winter 2004.5 (Spring 2005), <http://lacan.com/newspaper5.htm>.

conflict would seem paralyzed. The social and economic networks could, in theory, reach such a density that they would absorb any conflict (it may seem farfetched, but imagine a mafia family kind of network on a European scale, but with a dispersed power center). Rifkin's theory needs to make a place for conflict. As Žižek points out, repressing differences does not eliminate them. It feeds the conflict. As the current situation in Europe shows, tolerating or ignoring differences is not making them easier to deal with. But Germany's past also reflects the very real danger presented by refusing to address differences or acknowledge conflict.

Intolerance and the Hoyerswerda Riots

The argument for the importance of a forum or outlet for tension and conflict is furthered by the experience of German reunification. This argument, considered in light of the relative peacefulness of reunification, makes the wave of violence that gripped the new Germany somehow unsurprising. In may have been every bit as predictable as van Gogh's murder. Thousands of violent crimes were committed between October 3, 1990 and 1993, primarily against foreigners or non-Germans, primarily by East German youth with some sort of radical right leanings. However, this violence was not restricted to radical youth. Both tacit and active support for these actions was present in entire communities, especially in the former East Germany. The first incident that brought this to light was the riots in Hoyerswerda.

At the time of reunification, Hoyerswerda was a mining town of about 70,000. Many of its residents had been moved there from all corners of the country by the East

German government to work the brown coal mines in the nearby hills. [46]   It was a city of monstrous *Plattenbauwohnungen* and disconnected families. The government had also made Hoyerswerda and its mines one of several industrial areas open to *Gastarbeiter*, who were essentially ideological currency. They received three year contracts along with the chance to acquire technical knowledge in the jewel of the Communist Bloc, which they would take back to their home countries and share.[47]   After reunification, however, many *Gastarbeiter* did not leave. Instead, they were joined by a new wave of asylum-seekers. So when the wall fell, rents were raised, jobs lost, and disillusionment with the capitalist West was growing quickly, Hoyerswerdans who had lived and worked next to foreigners before began to find their presence irritating. They seemed to be everywhere, and they were a problem. They were blamed for a lack of apartments, higher rents, increasing crime rates, and even the high price of milk.[48]

In October of 1991, an attack on a Vietnamese street merchant spiraled into almost a week of violence, fires, and rioting which culminated in the evacuation of the *Ausländerheime* in which most of the town's 300+ asylum seekers and guest workers lived. [49] Although attacks against non-Germans had been escalating in Germany since reunification, Hoyerswerda was a watershed event. It sparked a much louder discussion about culture, xenophobia, and East-West issues which were as yet largely unaddressed. Previously, violence directed toward non-Germans – regardless of their status as guest workers, asylum seekers, or even ethnic minorities with German citizenship – had been

---

[46] Knut Pries, "Hoyerswerda," <u>Süddeutsche Zeitung</u> 27 Sep. 1991, , sec. Reportage <u>Lexis Nexis</u>.
[47] Mark Fritz, <u>Lost on Earth</u> (New York: Routledge, 2000) 306, p. 98.
[48] Fritz, p. 100.
[49] Fritz, p. 100.

exclusively the work of radical right wing groups, skinheads, and neo-Nazis. It was easy for the majority of German citizens, especially Westerners, to dismiss issues of xenophobia, tolerance, and violence as issues which were restricted to fringe groups. In Hoyerswerda, the attacks on the dormitories housing non-Germans began with a faction of radical right-wing youth, but a disturbingly large contingent of residents turned out to cheer them on. Knut Pries reported that residents brought their children to the riots after work to applaud the Molotov-cocktails.[50] Riot police and firefighters were apparently present, but according to many reports, their efforts were only half-hearted and less than successful. After nearly a week of riots and street fighting, Hoyerswerda's public officials ordered an evacuation of the dormitories. Hoyerswerda was free of foreigners.

This wave of violence, like most others experienced in the new German republic, was started by a group of young right-wing radicals. Popular opinion blamed a variety of factors including alcohol, peer pressure, poor parenting, violence in the media, economic depression, and identity crisis for the existence as well as the actions of such individuals. An image of radical youth was propagated which was not dissimilar to that of the young men responsible for school shootings in the United States: their lives lacked structure, they played too many video games, they were drunk and out of school or work, and they did not feel like part of a community.

A 1993 compilation of statistics from the *Landeskriminalamt* of Sachsen produced a statistical profile of the province's average violent right-wing radical. Contrary to popular belief, he typically did have work, or still went to school. He usually had not had previous run-ins with the police and was typically not at all or only a bit drunk. He was involved in

---

[50] Pries, *Hoyerswerda,* p. 1.

violent attacks carried out in unorganized groups of other like-minded young men, late at night as well as in broad daylight, under the slogans of various extreme right-wing parties. However, he generally was not a member of these groups, and knew relatively little about National Socialism. He placed himself in violent opposition to non-Germans of all kinds, guest workers, economic refugees, and asylum seekers alike, but for any of a number of reasons, did not or could not take part in the national discourse on the subject. Finding himself excluded from that discourse, he regarded violence as "ein annehmbares Mittel zur Lösung von Problemen."[51]

This profile is particularly interesting in relation to the Hoyerswerda riots because it shows how little distinguishes radical youth from the general population of former East Germany. The primary points of difference are the proclivity toward violence, the use of National Socialism, and the tendency to act in groups, and as was shown in Hoyerswerda, violence and group action are in no way restricted to radicals or to youth. The problems the violence was supposed to solve, then, were also not restricted to radicals or youth. So which problems was the violence supposed to solve? The most immediate and obvious answer is the economic and social problems unleashed by reunification. The violence against non-Germans was often understood in media commentary as an expression of despair on the part of former East Germans. It is undoubtedly true that these people felt some measure of despair: their experiences had trained them well enough for life in East Germany, but now could only provide them with "second-class citizenship in a reconfigured country that, if they were lucky, would provide them with dead-end jobs in

---

[51] "Aus der Mitte der Gesellschaft: Dokumentation zu rechtsextremistischen Gewalttätern," <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 12 July 1993, sec. Politik: 4.

dying towns.[52]" They were fighting for a chance; they wanted their futures back. But these problems, in many ways, were symptomatic of deeper problems of identity, cultural hierarchy, and security. Whether former East Germans had supported or despised their nation, it had been the only one they'd ever really been a part of, and like it or not, it had been involved in virtually every facet of their lives. It had been the foundation of their cultural identities, which now needed rebuilding. It had also been an important network at a variety of levels, from which former East Germans had been un-embedded.

According to interviews with teachers and religious leaders in Hoyerswerda, the violence against foreigners was less an issue of economics and social disparity than an issue of uprootedness (un-embeddedness).[53] Because of the demographics in a predominantly industrial town such as Hoyerswerda, the community was a prime example of true "urban alienation."[54] Families had been relocated there by the East German government; they did not have connections with neighbors, with their new surroundings, or, often, with each other. There was very little in the way of social outlets and very little reason to form much of a real community. Add to this the economic and psychological shock of reunification, shaking or even crumbling the foundations of those few connections they did have, and Hoyerswerda must have exemplified the European nightmare.

The alienation probably contributed a great deal to the "permissive society" which some commentators, including Reinhard Adam and Dr. Hans-Dieter Schwind, cite as another primary factor of the violence in Hoyerswerda. According to them, this stems from

---

[52] Fritz, p. 91.
[53] Pries, *Hoyerswerda,* p. 2.
[54] John Marks, "New Germany's old fears," U.S. News & World Report 14 Oct. 1991: 20.

a combination of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and media influence.[55] As Uwe Blazwjczyk, the

principal of the Pablo-Neruda-Oberschule in Hoyerswerda, pointed out, authority figures

of any kind could not stand up to the young radicals and say "Ihr dürft diese Meinung

nicht haben," because "das wäre wie bei der SED."[56] Even in the disillusionment of post-

reunification, people were hesitant to compromise their new rights. The prevalent attitude

here was not necessarily indifference but deference to the right to an opinion, no matter

what it might be. However, this deference slipped easily into a failure to challenge the

opinion.

By failing to challenge (rather than prohibit) the opinions of radical youth, the

citizens of Hoyerswerda missed an opportunity to make room for conflict. And as Zizek

would have predicted, the failure to acknowledge or make room for conflict contributed to

the violence. In addition, the increasing influence of the media and the decreasing shock

value of everyday violence and vulgarity left few alternatives but the last absolute taboo left

in Germany: fascism. That a taboo was broken is generally agreed upon. Why it was broken

is a source of much speculation: it might have been because East Germans did not have an

opportunity to work through their fascist past, or because the citizens of the five new

provinces were not yet "ripe for democracy,"[57] or simply because the young radicals knew it

would "ihre Eltern verstummen und ihre Lehrer blass werden [...] lassen."[58] It may have

been a cry for release from the value of tolerance itself: especially in the wake of the

peaceful revolution, a case could be made that the conflict which usually accompanies such

---

[55] Konrad Adam, "Die verlassene Generation," <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 4 Jan. 1993, sec. Feuilleton: 31, <u>Lexis Nexis</u>.
[56] Pries, *Hoyerswerda*, p. 3.
[57] Giovanni di Lorenzo, "Der Mob siegt in Hoyerswerda," <u>Süddeutsche Zeitung</u> 25 Sep. 1991, sec. Meinungsseite, <u>Lexis Nexis</u>.
[58] Adam, p. 28.

drastic change found a different forum for expression/outlet in intolerance (of foreigners, certainly, but also of one another). While National Socialism may always itself be taboo in Germany, the excess of publicity received by the neo-Nazis who perpetrated so much of the violence against foreigners, as well as the political change that violence affected, changed the public reception of intolerance. As Elisabeth Bauschmid pointed out, it became more acceptable, or at least less shocking, to identify oneself as opposed to immigration, or even as xenophobic.[59]

The uprootedness, the permissive society, and the failure to address conflict point to two critical elements which may help explain what happened in Hoyerswerda. First of all, the town had apparently never developed much in the way of local networks. Without a local network within which to embed themselves, Hoyerswerdans might have been especially embedded in other networks at other levels, such as the national network or a job or industry related network. These networks were effectively destroyed with reunification. The lack of networks or a cohesive community probably contributed to the failure of the community to challenge xenophobic opinions and behavior in the town's youth. Citizens (even elected officials) evidently did not feel secure enough in their positions to assert any kind of authoritative judgments. This insecurity can be examined at a community level, where citizens may not have felt like a part of the network, thus having no right or no reason to assert opposing opinions. It can also be examined at an individual level: perhaps citizens did not feel secure enough in their identities to have the conviction of opinion to voice any opposition.

---

[59] Elisabeth Bauschmid, "Ziemlich fremd im Einigvaterland," <u>Süddeutsche Zeitung</u> 29 Oct. 1991 1992, <u>Lexis Nexis</u>.

This failure to challenge xenophobia, of course, was also due to the fact that anti-immigrant sentiment was not restricted to radical youth. After losing national and many job-related networks, the citizens of Hoyerswerda, like most former East Germans, made the cultural network of West Germany their target network. They wanted access to it, to the rights and privileges it made available, and to the life it made possible. The fact that the new (i.e. West) German cultural network was suddenly in such high demand was a critical element of the violence in Hoyerswerda. Hoyerswerdans understood that target network as having limited space, and saw immigrants as competition and a threat to their chances. In this case, the heightened attention toward non-Germans of all kinds may have helped East Germans, especially those involved in the violence, to ensure that they were included in the reconfigured definition of "German." By helping create a negative or exclusionary definition of the term, they made a loud and angry point that they were included in it. Along with demands that all foreigners be deported and assertions of white superiority, these rioters also yelled slogans like "Ihr koennt mir alles nehmen, nur nicht das Recht, Deutscher zu sein."[60] As Adam points out, it sounds more like a cry for help than a cry of triumph. It is the sound of someone who knows he's being left behind.[61] This sense of being abandoned by society made radicals feel that their inclusion in the term "German" was threatened.

But why weren't former East Germans automatically included in the dominant cultural network? Ideally, Easterner or Westerner would not have mattered after reunification. That it did became clear even a few months after the initial euphoria wore

---

[60] Adam, p. 29.
[61] Adam, p. 29.

off. It was relatively simple to reunite the two nations politically compared to the cultural

reunification that had not yet taken place. To erase the border on a map did not aid any

sort of reunification of cultures. According to Reinhard Mohr, many former citizens of

East Germany not only felt exploited and marginalized, but colonized by the West.[62] At the

same time, West Germans felt put upon by the economic needs of the five new provinces.

With higher taxes in the west and higher unemployment rates in the east, economics was

certainly an issue. Bauschmid has also argued that social problems must have played a role

in the violence.[63] The disequilibrium on both sides of the old border was palpable; neither

Easterners not Westerners felt at home in their new unified nation. They suddenly felt like

foreigners in their own towns, which in many ways prevented them from participating or

taking an interest in the dialogue between the East and West. Both Easterners and

Westerners shared a perception of loss related to the foundations of their cultural

identities which inspired a certain idealization of the past and a defensiveness toward their

present cultural networks.

Peter Glotz observed that this was not just a question of geography: "die Sprach-

und die Verhaltenscodes der bürgerlichen Schicht, die eigentlich zusammenhalten müsste,

geraten durcheinander."[64] This confusion in the codes or norms of the new Germany's two

halves is especially problematic in light of the governing bodies and economy. All in all, it

was easy to claim that there was an unequal distribution of power, political, economic, and

cultural, and all scales tipped toward the West. Mohr argued that when East Germans were

---

[62] Reinhard Mohr, "West-ostliches Panoptikum," <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 16 Sep. 1993, sec. Feuilleton: 35.
[63] Bauschmid, p. 15-16.
[64] Peter Glotz, "Die neue deutsche Sinnkrise," <u>Süddeutsche Zeitung</u> 22 Jan. 1994, sec. Feuilleton.

faced with the "Banalität der Freiheit," combined with the disappointment of the

continued disparity in almost all facets of life between East and West, the rift between the

two cultures was deepened rather than mended.[65] According to Mark Siemons, it also

helped to perpetuate the victimization of East Germans.[66] What all this boils down to is

the failure of dialogue between the two formerly independent nations:

> "der Osten artikuliert sich vornehmlich in unberechenbaren
> Trotzreaktionen; im Westen, der die
> Kommunikationshoheit besitzt, unter deren Schirm sich
> freilich eine von ihr abgekoppelte östliche
> Eigenkommunikation etabliert hat, breitet sich Unbehagen
> aus."[67]

There seemed to be no truly national discourse in which to participate, and certainly not

one which would have been equally accessible to all Germans. By so rarely relating violent

behavior to the individual, the media discussion probably only reinforced the perception of

distance between these individuals and an appropriate forum in which to address the

conflict, which may in turn have contributed to the sense of defensiveness on the part of

the rioters.

The failure to address conflict in Hoyerswerda, as well as the defensive attitudes of nearly

everyone involved in the situation reflect some of the same issues which were raised in the

wake of the van Gogh murder. First and foremost, a parallel can be drawn between the

failure to address latent conflict and intolerance. However, the rhetoric surrounding the

intolerance in Hoyerswerda takes on more complex mutations because intolerance could

---

[65] Mohr, *West-ostliches Panoptikum,* p. 35.
[66] Mark Siemons, "Die Ossis sind wir," <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 12 Aug. 1994, sec. Feuilleton: 25, p. 25.
[67] Siemons, p. 26.

not be as easily dismissed as "foreign," making the relationship between that intolerant subculture and the dominant cultural network rather muddied. In the case of van Gogh, the dominant cultural network was able to put more distance between itself and the intolerance of minorities. The belief that such violent conflict was practically inevitable given the low assimilation of immigrant populations was prevalent in the wake of the van Gogh case. In the case of the Hoyerswerda riots, popular opinion seemed to reflect that the violence was the natural conclusion to the abuse of Germany's liberal asylum laws. This stance was common among conservative politicians, including Wolfgang Schmitz, the district administrator (*Landsrat*), whose comments to the press in the days during and after the riots were nothing short of a public relations catastrophe.[68]

There were, naturally, voices opposing this attitude. Schwind, for example, proposed five basic solutions to the issues raised by the violence in Hoyerswerda, including the suggestion that steps be taken to ease integration into German society. He suggested that this could be achieved by simplifying the process of naturalization for German-born foreigners, raising standards for housing and education for young foreigners, the acceptance and inclusion of non-native Germans in civil service, and a consistent and comprehensive asylum law for all European Community member states. The discussion surrounding multiculturalism, though not as loud as the discussion following van Gogh's murder, was also present in the aftermath of the Hoyerswerda riots and seemed to lean the same direction. In some cases, multiculturalism was decried as unnatural and having

---

[68] Pries, *Hoyerswerda,* p. 3.

proven itself to be "multikriminell" as well.[69] Moderates, like Schwind, pinned

multiculturalism down as "utopian" and insisted that it could not function and never had

in the face of high unemployment and lack of living space such as Germany was

experiencing at the time.[70] Even Helmut Kohl, the German chancellor, said what was often

alluded to in the aftermath of the van Gogh murder: "whoever will not play by the rules of

democratic, peaceful coexistence will be deported."[71] If subcultures won't conform to the

values or customs of the dominant culture, they will be excluded from the network. The

van Gogh case and the violence in Hoyerswerda in particular (and all of reunified Germany

in general) had similar impacts on public opinion and even policy. Despite the counter-

protests, and in some cases, counter-violence, German politics listened to the rioters. The

asylum seekers and guest workers were evacuated from Hoyerswerda. And, like the Dutch

after the van Gogh murder, Germans themselves supported stricter asylum laws, and 3 out

of 5 were apparently "sympathetic to the motives behind the attacks.[72]"

The new Germany portrayed in the media fallout from the Hoyerswerda riots

seems to reflect very little of the European Dream Rifkin describes. As Schwind so astutely

notes, empathy seemed to be rarer and rarer, while indifference grew.[73] Alienation of

individuals and cultural groups was typical. The only evidence of networked economy or

government seemed to be in the groups of Westerners who saw economic or political

opportunity in the new provinces. Hoyerswerda itself, though certainly far from the

---

[69] Dr Kurt Heissig, "Ausgeliefert und die Multikultur-Ideologen," <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 18 Jan. 1993 1993, sec. Politik: 9.
[70] Dr Hans-Dieter Schwind, "Sind wir ein Volk von Auslaenderfeinden?" <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 24 June 1993 1993, , sec. Politik: 8.
[71] Regierungserklaerung, June 16, 1993. Cited in Schwind, p. 9.
[72] Marks, p. 2.
[73] Schwind, p. 12.

European Dream ideal to begin with, was a display of the powerful vacuum even an ideal can leave behind.

It can be argued that the GDR had prepared its citizens for a life in some measure closer to the European Dream, with interconnectedness, solidarity, and networked government and economies. But the interconnectedness and the networks took on the form of corruption and distrust, and the multiculturalism was little more than a front for ideological currency. Hoyerswerdans, at least, were certainly unhappy before reunification. East German author Brigitte Reimann described the city in the 1960s as monotonous and ugly, with incidences of violence and an ominous feeling in the air.[74] Even the East German city planners had understood that they needed to keep its residents still, which was more or less achieved through higher salaries, more apartments, and a wider variety of goods for purchase in Hoyerswerda than in most comparable populations.[75] So what were former East Germans looking for in the West? As mentioned earlier, they may have been looking for a way to embed themselves in the West German network. They may have been looking for a new foundation for their cultural identities. And perhaps some, having been disappointed by the inaccessibility of their target network or by the "Banalität der Freiheit,"[76] were looking for a way to idealize their lost homeland.

Being abandoned or rejected by a network creates a conflict, which in the case of Hoyerswerda was not effectively addressed. The loss of or threat to the identity attached to that particular network sparks the defensive attitude toward identity as based on being a part of a network. It is not unlikely that it arose from the drastic social and economic

[74] Pries, *Hoyerswerda,* p. 2.
[75] Pries, *Hoyerswerda*, p. 2.
[76] Mohr, *West-ostliches Panoptikum,* p. 36.

changes taking place in the wake of reunification. The dissolution of social and economic structures familiar to the citizens of Hoyerswerda effectively dislodged or un-embedded them from various networks, most obviously the overarching national network that was the GDR. This sense of loss would have been especially acute in light of the lack of local networks and the sense of isolation ascribed to Hoyerswerda. And as peaceful as the dissolution of that network may have seemed (or perhaps because of that peacefulness), it was the source of repressed conflict. But the threat to identity could not have been simply the loss of social services.

This threat probably grew out of the loss of one network and the (at least perceived) competition for another. Hoyerswerdans were, in some ways, trying to force their embeddedness in the new German network. They seem to have perceived their inclusion in that network, which is to say their identity as Germans, threatened by immigrants because they understood the network to have limited space and resources available. As evidenced by the violence in Hoyerswerda, the issue of exclusive and finite networks is a very real problem. This understanding of networks is not one which Rifkin addresses, but it does have some serious implications for his theory. Rifkin's explanation of the European Dream relies heavily on his definition of freedom as embeddedness in a network. If a network has limited space and finite resources, or is even perceived as such, it cannot grant access to all those who might want it. The very idea that a network grants or refuses/fails to grant access to someone seems contradictory to the principles of inclusiveness touted by Rifkin. It also seems that such a conception of networks would inspire rather than quell

competition, accomplishing the opposite of the solidarity and trust which are the foundation of those networks.

Could competition for networks be avoided? It is not unthinkable. In a school lunchroom some tables, like networks, are perpetually contested and others have room to spare. The difference can be accounted for by the social hierarchy. The way to ease competition to sit at the popular table is for it to become less popular. Similarly, cultural networks with limited space could avoid competition if a single network were less in demand. Hoyerswerdans, like many former East Germans, were sensitive to the fact that while they had long been interested in what it was like in the West, most Westerners had been more comfortable patiently ignoring their neighbors. This reflects the internal structure of the new German network, where the West occupied a dominant position, able to restrict access and set the boundaries within which subcultures ought to function. Restricted networks seem to crack Rifkin's theory through its emphasis on solidarity: if not everyone can be embedded in a particular network, can we still "all [be] in this together?"[77]

---

[77] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 189.

Multicultural Identity and the European Dream

One of the primary characteristics of the sort of dream discussed above is that it can be

universalized. That is, it is a dream which is attractive to those who are not members of the

culture or nation from which the dream emerged. This is particularly valid for the

European Dream insofar as Rifkin spends a great deal of time comparing it with the

American Dream, which in many ways was the driving force behind much of the economic

change in the world over the last century. So how accessible, literally and figuratively, is the

European Dream to non-Europeans? Is Rifkin's vision of future society something toward

which immigrants are trying to move? Is it in pursuit of that dream that they come to or

stay in Europe?

As shown in earlier chapters, there is plenty about the relationship between

Europeans and the European Dream which can be understood through primary sources

and media reactions to events which seem to threaten the dream. The relationship between

immigrants and the European Dream, on the other hand, is more tenuous and shifting, and

less easily observed. There is a much greater margin of error when immigrant voices are

represented in majority media. In addition, threats to the European Dream can take the

shape of foreigners (as in the van Gogh murder), resulting in a reflexive exclusion of

foreigners from the discourse. The more threatened the European Dream, it seems, the less

accurate a measure of its accessibility and appeal to non-Europeans can become. For this

reason, the window into the relationship between immigrants and the European Dream

which is provided by non-Europeans through films, novels, or other cultural artifacts is

especially valuable. Through their depiction of the dream (explicit or implicit), as well as their portrayal of Europe and non-Europeans, it is possible to gain some insight into their pursuit or rejection of the dream. In this chapter, I will explore the depiction of the European Dream in the films of Fatih Akin, a novel by Zafer Senocak, and Vladimir Kaminer's satire. A study of these artists and their works will clarify some non-European approaches to the dream. Some of the unforeseen obstacles to achieving it, as well as the responses to those obstacles, may also provide some illumination to the question of the accessibility of the European Dream from outside European thought. Furthermore, it is possible that the accessibility of these "minority" texts to Europeans can reveal more about the evolution or perhaps even realization of the European Dream.

Conflicted Identity in Fatih Akin's Films

Among the most well-known "non-European" filmmakers at work in Germany today is Fatih Akin. His films, which include *Kurz und Schmerzlos (1998), Im Juli (2000), Solino (2002),* and most famously, *Gegen die Wand (2003),* tend to prominently feature immigrants and the conflict between traditional and modern life. His films and the characters in them also typically gravitate toward Istanbul, which Akin often portrays as a sort of romanticized, milk-and-honey, end-of-the-journey kind of place. *Solino* is his only major film which does not deal explicitly with Turkey at all, dealing instead with Italian immigrants, but its story is easily extended to Turkish immigrants as well. In other films, such as *Kurz und Schmerzlos,* Turkey itself is never shown, which actually reinforces its position as a sacred place or

refuge. Germany, usually Hamburg, presents a convenient foil to Turkey: Germany is imperfect, familiar, and when one of Akin's figures leaves Germany for Turkey, it is almost always due to some sort of crisis situation and accompanied by a dramatic, revelatory shift in character. The change of location often accompanies a change of identity. Taken together, these changes reflect changes between networks, which will prove to be one of the most primary obstacles to the European Dream for Germany's minority and immigrant populations.

In *Kurz und Schmerzlos*, Akin depicts three close friends from Hamburg struggling to maintain their friendship as their goals diverge. Gabriel, a Turkish-German, has just been released from prison and has resolved to get his life together and stick to the straight and narrow. His friend Bobby, a Serb, is moving in the opposite direction, trying to start a career with the Albanian mafia. Costa, a Greek, is at loose ends after his relationship with Gabriel's sister fails; after swearing off petty theft, he gets caught up in Bobby's plans. *Kurz und Schmerzlos* is something of a standard with regard to Akin's approach to multicultural life in Germany: conflict between tradition and modernity is a part of every day. It is rarely resolved, and almost never without violence. It seems that the hyphenated Germans in the film didn't stand much of a chance at happiness or success in Germany. Gabriel, the film's protagonist and the only one of the three friends to survive, follows the "return to the lost homeland" pattern when he escapes to an Istanbul the audience never even sees. He is arguably reestablishing rather than searching for his identity, but it is clear that he cannot do either with much success in Hamburg.

In *Solino*, Akin tells the story of an Italian *Gastarbeiter* family in Duisburg. The father works in a mine but quits after a short time because he finds the work degrading. He and his wife decide instead to open an Italian restaurant and pizzeria. Meanwhile, their two young sons develop a friendship with a German girl from the neighborhood. The longer the family stays in Germany, the more fragile their relationships with one another become. Eventually, it is torn apart by jealousy, crime, ambition, and the mother's illness. The mother leaves her husband and Germany to return to her hometown of Solino, Italy, which she never really wanted to leave in the first place. Her younger son follows when her illness becomes serious, leaving a budding career in documentary filmmaking and his lover (the German girl he and his brother befriended as children) at the mercy of his brother, who promises to come after a few weeks to take his turn at caring for their mother. However, mother and son are more or less abandoned by the other members of their family. The elder brother seems to take over his younger brother's life, even accepting prizes in his name, and does not make it back to Italy until years later. In the end, the elder brother is alone and unhappily successful in Germany, while the dutiful younger brother is happily married and invested (embedded) in his hometown. This story reflects one of the most prevalent themes in Akin's work: foreigners in his films are unlikely to find happiness in another country; they stand a better chance where they came from.

Akin's most successful and complex film to date is undoubtedly *Gegen die Wand. Gegen die Wand* is the first in a trilogy of films called *Liebe, Tod und Teufel*. The film is, Akin insists, nothing but a love story. He had hoped to explore how love is constructive and destructive, how the good and evil in the world and in individuals reacts and interacts with

it. The film is certainly a love story, but that love story also acts as a vehicle for exploration (however inadvertent) of other issues of identity, integration, and freedom. Cahit, a forty-something bum, meets Sibel, a fiery twenty-year-old, in the psychiatric ward of a hospital after he tries to kill himself by driving his car into a cement wall. Sibel has recently slit her wrists in an attempt to escape her conservative, traditional family. She proposes a marriage of convenience, which Cahit eventually accepts. She moves in with him after the wedding, and although they appear to have nothing in common but their Turkish heritage, they grow closer. In the meantime, however, they both have affairs; this (inevitably) ends badly when they realize that they are in love. Cahit goes to prison for the accidental killing of one of Sibel's lovers, and Sibel, disowned by her immediate family, moves to Turkey to live with her divorcee cousin. She promises to wait for Cahit. But after a downward spiral of drugs, rape, and violence, she is mysteriously rescued by a taxi driver. By the time Cahit is released and comes to Turkey to find her, she seems to have moved on with her life (she has a husband and daughter). Eventually she arranges to meet Cahit at his hotel. They finally sleep together and she agrees to go away with him to his native village. The end of the movie is appropriately open-ended: Cahit sits in a bus, Sibel's whereabouts are unknown. Although it is a far stretch from a happy ending, it seems cautiously optimistic, especially in comparison to the screenplay's original ending, which brought Cahit and Sibel back to the point they were at in the beginning of the story.[78] As in so many of Akin's films, these characters are looking for themselves; the ending successfully conveys Akin's intention that the search is far from over for either Cahit or Sibel.

---

[78] Fatih Akin, <u>Gegen die Wand</u>, ed. Schubert, Stefan and Ralph Schwingel (Germany: Timebandits Films/Potsdam, 2003). Audiokommentar von Fatih Akin.

As an effect of Akin's interest in "seekers" and his life experiences in the "multikulti" Altona neighborhood of Hamburg, most of Akin's films are occupied by navigating the space between culture and tradition[79] as a part of the search for identity. *Gegen die Wand* is certainly his most complex response to the issue, in that it does not reduce its multicultural characters or their elusive identities to an either-or decision. It does not condemn Turkish traditionalism or conservative families, nor does it depict German culture as inherently corrupt and destructive. However, it also does not allow either culture to act as a cure-all for the central characters' conflicted quests for identity. Akin avoids any binary discussion of culture both in his films and his interviews, and dislikes being referred to as someone who makes films for foreigners or *Gastarbeiter*. He is, he insists, nothing more than a German filmmaker with Turkish roots, and certainly not some sort of spokesperson for Germany's immigrant population.[80] He understands the marginalizing effect such a classification can have on the reception of his work.

Despite his efforts to eliminate ideas about cultural binaries from the discussion about immigration and assimilation, Akin is nevertheless considered a minority, a Turkish-German, and the subject matter of his major films reinforces the distinction. The popularity of *Gegen die Wand*, and the position it occupies in cultural discourse, are aided by the enthusiastic responses of other Turkish-Germans who identify with the conflicts presented in the story. Akin's own background is relatively common: he was born in Hamburg in 1973 to Turkish parents who emigrated as *Gastarbeiter* in the 1960s. Although

---

[79] Jörn Seidel, "Fatih Akin und seine Filme," Leipzig Almanach Kulturtagebuch (2005), <http://leipzig-almanach.de/film_gegen_die_wand_ein_portraet_des_berlinale-gewinners_fatih_akin_joern_seidel.html>.
[80] *Gegen die Wand,* Audiokommentar.

he traveled often to Turkey and considers Istanbul his "holy city,"[81] Hamburg was and is his home.[82] *Gegen die Wand* was inspired by real situations which arose in Turkish-German families. That it has been hailed by many Turkish Germans as a realistic representation of usual personal and cultural conflicts is unsurprising, as is its treatment by many non-Turks as a sort of primary source material for cultural critique. Would the same kind of credence be given to his work if they were made by an ethnic German? It seems unlikely.[83] His heritage lends an authenticity to his commentary on and representation of the situation of minorities in Germany.

The media depictions of the Turkish-Germans involved in *Gegen die Wand* reveal that a large gulf remains between what is accepted onscreen and what is accepted in reality. The film was praised as an accurate portrayal of Turkish-Germans, but a distorted expectation of the Turkish-Germans who did the portraying seems if not common, then prevalent in the media. It is interesting that it was the *Bildzeitung* which crusaded against Sibel Kekilli, the lead actress, when her earlier work in pornographic films became known. Although Turkish-Germans also condemned her past, it was a German media outlet which took on the task of essentially punishing her for failing to fulfill a conservative, stereotypical image. By doing so, it may have done more to reinforce what it understands (and criticizes) to be Turkish traditionalism than the traditionalists themselves. The *Bildzeitung* seemed to suffer from a feeling of entitlement toward the expectations of that Turkish traditionalism. What inspires this appropriation of cultural or moral authority? It may be a distorted

---

[81] *Gegen die Wand,* Audiokommentar
[82] *Gegen die Wand,* Audiokommentar
[83] It is equally unlikely that Akin's work would have been given a similar treatment in this paper.

multiculturalism which entails an awareness or understanding of various cultures, but also requires clearly drawn boundaries which define as well as restrict movement between different cultures. Although his films reflect an awareness of this kind of cultural restriction, Akin argues for the opposite. He quotes Ataturk: "every language is a person, a culture...for every person there is a different lifestyle."[84] The central figures in his films reflect this attitude, particularly in their failure to completely embed themselves in any networks.

The issue of cultural boundaries is among the issues relevant to the European Dream which Rifkin failed to consider. Akin's films accurately illustrate some common problems immigrants face in pursuit of the European Dream, including the problem of multicultural identity and embeddedness in various networks framed by cultural and historical conflict. As discussed above, the characters in *Gegen die Wand* are searching for themselves. Although the search begins in Germany, it brings them to Turkey, where the audience sees them last. Evidently, nothing in Germany can direct them; their identities are arguably located outside of Western Europe's borders. However, the film ends as the figures continue their respective searches, so their identities are not necessarily located in Turkey either. The fact that the central figures in the film leave Germany and Western Europe in search of themselves is not in itself terribly significant to the European Dream. What is significant is the relationship between what they had or had access to in Germany compared with what they are trying to find in Turkey.

Among the most discussed obstacles standing between immigrants and integration, as well as the European Dream, is the myth of the lost homeland. It is common for

---

[84] *Gegen die Wand,* Audiokommentar.

immigrants to idealize their origins, particularly when their host country does not live up to its image. This idealization typically entails a sense of exile: the homeland, as perfect as it was, is gone forever. That the homeland is lost is important because it provides an explanation or excuse for the immigrants' continued presence in their host country. Although this attitude is becoming rarer in minority texts, it is difficult to judge whether it is equally rare among minorities. If nothing else, it is regularly attributed to minority populations, especially in the wake of cultural conflict.[85] But this attitude toward the homeland does not carry into Akin's work. While Sibel and Cahit are of Turkish descent, and even speak some Turkish, they do not regard Turkey as a lost homeland; it is not a place they or their families seem to romanticize or idealize, nor is it a place to which they cannot return. Although Turkey is certainly more romanticized in Akin's earlier films, the country is never placed on the pedestal of being forever lost. Instead, Akin portrays "the homeland" as a last ditch escape route. It is never free of risks, it is certainly not as familiar as Germany, but it does provide the way out for several main characters whose attempts to achieve the European Dream in Germany appear to have failed. When Sibel's attempts at switching between networks fails and she is rejected by both her family network and the Altona network, she conveniently avoids forcing the issue by abandoning hope at belonging to either and flees to Turkey where she is arguably not a member of any network at all. It is worth noting that Akin does not depict any immigrants returning to their homelands in triumph.

---

[85] The media discussion of this attitude is almost as proprietary as the Bildzeitung's crusade against Kekilli. It seems that regardless of whether immigrants actually romanticize their lost homelands, the insistence on the part of the dominant culture that they do appears to be a distancing strategy. It is easier to avoid taking responsibility for failed integration if immigrants refuse to give up an idealized version of their homeland.

Another issue Akin questions is the unified, insulated family and community structure as well as the homogenous value system which it propagates. The exclusive nature of immigrant communities in Europe is somewhat legendary. So called *Parallelgesellschaften* are often blamed for failed integration, as was the case in the wake of the van Gogh murder discussed above. This is not just a threat to integration, however. It is an obstacle to the European Dream. Although it is true on some level of any network, insulated and exclusive networks enable better enforcement of social codes and a common value system. Without interaction between networks, this hinders the empathy, interconnectedness, and access to different networks which are fundamental parts of the European Dream. The scenario of insulated, exclusive communities is regularly associated with conservative Turkish or Muslim communities in Europe. Akin rejects this image of Turkish communities in *Gegen die Wand.* Instead, he depicts a traditional community which is clearly separate but not completely isolated from modernity. He also illustrates variations of value systems and social codes, or at the very least various degrees of adherence to or faith in them. Especially in his portrayal of Sibel's family, he shows differences in opinion between family members. In the interactions between her family and Cahit or his "uncle," it is clear that although they can discuss which village in Turkey they come from, they do not share the same values or beliefs about their native culture. The attitudes toward religion also vary widely from character to character. It is also important to note that Sibel's mother disagrees with her husband on several occasions, mostly about Sibel. Akin's film reflects an intricacy in (traditional) networks which is not apparent in Rifkin's theory. In light of this, it is important to examine just what constitutes a network.

Cahit and Sibel do not go to Turkey in pursuit of their lost homeland. It is possible but unlikely that they are fleeing the conflict between tradition and modernity. They had or at least had access to a spectrum of relationships in Germany. The structure of Rifkin's European Dream appeared to be present in Germany: Sibel had a family and Cahit had his friend and "uncle." More than that, what social and economic structure is depicted in the film could arguably be related to the interconnected network structure of the European Dream. Cahit does not have real family, but the network connections are there in the form of his job with his friend and his relationship with the hairdresser, which are encompassed by the community centered around the bar they visit regularly (Cheers ala Altona?). When Sibel lands in this network, it helps her find a job, lovers, and some support after Cahit is sent to prison. It is not much of a community, but it is there. Furthermore, it is contained within the German social system, which plays its own well-intentioned but kind of dopey role in the form of the health care system in general and the doctor in particular who try to put Sibel and Cahit back together after their attempted suicides. The effectiveness of the system is questionable, but it is certainly representative of some kind of empathy and embeddedness.

The developments which take place in Turkey, on the other hand, can hardly be related to Rifkin's European Dream. It is not just physically cold, it is portrayed as an indifferent city. A simple contrast between the bar in Altona with the bar in Istanbul reflects the absolute dearth of community or network Sibel finds in Turkey: while the one is warmly lit and appears accessible, the other is dark, with cold green and red light. When

Sibel's lover is killed in the Altona bar, everyone present notices that something is wrong and it seems a matter of course that help is called immediately, but when Sibel passes out on the floor in the Istanbul bar, no one there gives more notice to the body on the floor than it takes to step over it. Later in the film she is stabbed and beaten nearly to death in the street. The beating itself can be interpreted in a variety of ways, but it is only chance that she survives. If the Turkish health system has anything to do with her recovery, it is neither shown nor referred to. If the European Dream is even weakly reflected in Akin's portrayal of Hamburg, it is completely absent from Istanbul.

All of this seems to imply a disconnect or a contrary relationship between the identities of the two central figures and the European Dream. Would it have been possible for Cahit to turn his life around after leaving prison if he had returned to his network? He seems to consider something along those lines in a scene just before he goes to Istanbul, where he stands for a moment outside his ex-lover's salon, watching her, but turns away without going in. It is unlikely that he could have returned to his old life and old community without also returning to the drugs and alcohol that lubricated his interactions with them. Sibel's situation is a bit more complicated. The morning after Cahit is presumably arrested and she slits one of her wrists, she sees her brother waiting for her outside her apartment. She turns and runs. It is clear that he has come in order to exact retribution for the family's "sullied" honor. It seems that she has not only lost access to her primary network (her family) but also the second one she shared with Cahit (their neighborhood). After she arrives in Turkey, the only figure with whom she appears to identify is a Turkish weightlifter on television.

By the end of the film it is clear that whatever Sibel and Cahit are looking for, they will not find it in one another. This makes sense, in light of the fact that they seem to gravitate away from established connections (embeddedness). Assuming a relative definition of identity,[86] the more firmly embedded one becomes in a single, restrictive network, the less likely one is to establish an identity that extends beyond that group. This sort of identity definition also precludes embeddedness in a variety of networks, or access to a variety of relationships, which Rifkin sees as freedom under the European Dream. The central characters' struggle to establish or discover identities independent of their primary networks, then, can be read as a quest for the freedom of the European Dream. If an identity can be more clearly defined through exposure to a variety of networks or communities, or through freedom, can that identity also be embedded in those networks? Rifkin fails to address the issue of fundamentally conflicting networks. Sibel's immediate family can be considered as a network, but it seems impossible for her to be a part of that network as well as the Altona network. The only way in which to access both of them is by repressing part of her identity in each. The failure of this strategy results in rejection from both networks.

Given that empathy and identification feed off of one another, is it humanly possible to actually be embedded in several networks? Is it possible to empathize and identify with two thoroughly conflicting networks, and still be actually embedded in them? It would seem that if one identifies indiscriminately, that identification is either meaningless or there is no central identity to do the identifying. There is perhaps some sort

---

[86] A definition based on one's categorization as a member or non-member of various groups (embedded or non-embedded in various networks).

of limit beyond which empathy or identification with another actually dissolves distinct identities. This may explain Sibel's desire to buy into the European Dream by embedding herself in a variety of networks. She needed more variety or difference in order to figure out her own identity, so she moved beyond her restrictive primary network. But to embed herself in another, completely different network, and to access the relationships she wanted, she was forced to compromise her position in her primary network.[87] To identify simultaneously with her conservative Turkish network and her modern Altona network proved as impossible as identifying with only one of them. Working from the premise that identity requires difference rather than empathy, it seems that Cahit and Sibel must go their separate ways to define their identities. Although Akin emphasized their differences at the beginning of their relationship, each takes on aspects of the other over the course of the film. Even after years apart, they empathize too much with one another to help clarify the boundaries of their individual identities. Among the obstacles to the European Dream presented in the film, the simple fact that the search for individual identity takes precedence over and even seems to preclude embedding oneself in a community or accessing a variety of relationships through diverse networks is one of the most basic problems Rifkin's theory faces.

Considered on the larger scale of cultural identity, dissolution can be seen as the first stage of acculturation. Ideally, a give-and-take relationship between different cultures

---

[87] The only way for her to even maintain access to both networks requires a shifting or a double identity. In the conservative Turkish network, she is a married Turkish woman. In the modern Altona network, she is a wild, promiscuous hairdresser. It appears impossible for these two identities to coexist and still be authentic, carrying all their respective connotations with them. It is certainly impossible for Sibel to maintain even a modicum of authenticity in this regard, as evidenced when she invokes her identity as a married Turkish woman (tradition) to put off a former lover in Altona (modernity). But at the same time, she cannot restrict her identity to either network.

eventually makes them one. They dissolve into one another. But when the situation involves a cultural hierarchy, it is less likely that the dominant culture will take on aspects of the minority culture. This problem of dissolving identity, or the conflict between preserving cultural identity and promoting empathy and interconnectedness, is one of the fundamental problems facing Rifkin's theory. If identity is to be preserved on an individual or a cultural level, difference, rather than empathy, seems necessary. This presents Rifkin's theory with something of a paradox: to achieve the European Dream, one must empathize without compromising identity, and maintain the boundaries of identity without creating an exclusive or insular network.

Constructed Identity in *Gefährliche Verwandschaft*

This problem of conflicting networks and cultural identities is at issue in Zafer Senocak's novel, *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft.* His talent with essays is reflected in the structure of his novel, where each chapter reads a little like a narrative essay. Senocak uses this structure to convey the episodic nature of his narrator's search for identity, which focuses primarily on his past and wrestles with the fact that Sascha Muteschem is the product of wholly conflicting networks and the convergence of opposite sides of history. Much like the figures in Akin's films, Sascha's struggle to locate or define his identity, as well as his difficulty with accessing or embedding himself in various networks, reveal some potential obstacles to achieving the European Dream. Senocak examines the influence of history, memory, and travel on identity, the exclusive nature of networks, the construction rather

than location of identity.[88] An exploration of these themes will further illuminate the relationship between immigrants and the European Dream.

Like Sascha Muteschem, his narrator and protagonist, Senocak has resisted being classified as a representative for any particular group. Sascha is a German-Jewish-Turkish writer who has returned to unified Berlin to write his first novel. His plan is interrupted and redirected by the deaths of his Jewish-German mother and Turkish father, and by their estate. Part of the estate is a silver box full of diaries which belonged to his Turkish grandfather. Although Sascha was always a little curious about the man and his mysterious suicide, he becomes preoccupied with him, his role in the Armenian deportations and genocide of 1915 and his death in 1936, and the implications this could have for the identity Sascha feels he lacks. Sascha's interest in his family's history is rather underdeveloped in the story, but it provides an effective vehicle for Senocak's exploration of history and memory and their effects on individual identity. Sascha's heritage as "the grandchild of victims and perpetrators" puts him in a unique position with regard to history; according to the author, it is history that eventually becomes the "real protagonist of the novel."[89] The novel is extremely complex, built on layers of history which may be remembered rather than lived through, or distilled through the memories of others, reaching from turn-of-the-century Turkey to Reunification.

Sascha's search for his identity is tied up in his search for his family history, but rather than becoming a detective story focused on the historic and personal events or the facts about his ancestors which culminated in him, the story often takes on a more active

---

[88] Inclusion/exclusion, security, definition/redefinition, appearance.
[89] Andreas Huyssen, "Diaspora and Nation: Migration Into Other Pasts," New German Critique.88 (2003): 147, p. 160.

and in some ways more productive guise as the construction of an identity. While Sascha shows little interest in any artifacts his parents may have left behind, he is fascinated by his grandfather's diaries. But they were written in Turkish when Turkish was written with the Arabic alphabet and sometimes even transliterated into Cyrillic script, making them impossible for Sascha to read. Despite his intense curiosity about his grandfather, however, Sascha does not resort to a translator until almost the end of the novel. He seems to use the diaries as a prop for the construction of an identity based on an imagined family history. At the end of the novel, after moving into his first private apartment, Sascha feels ready to relate his grandfather's story "...wie sie sich ereignet hat. Sie könnte ungefähr so enden."[90] The reader never really knows whether or how much of the end of the grandfather's story is true, but it is true enough for Sascha.

Senocak uses Sascha's unique heritage and relative ignorance about his family's history to convey how history and memory, both real and imagined, personal and cultural, function as a foundation for identity. Without a history, where does one begin? History allows a certain degree of categorization, and provides a point of entry into a network. Unfortunately, the conflicting aspects of Sascha's heritage only offer access to mutually exclusive categories; he needs a story to explain how those categories produced him and to tell him how to reconcile them. If *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft* were a simpler work or perhaps a fairy tale, Sascha might discover some heroic act or dramatic love affair which caused a culture to be rejected or an identity thrown off, thus reconfiguring at least the victim/perpetrator equation of his heritage. But heritage is rarely that simple, and certainly not for Sascha. He perceives the apparently contradictory aspects of his heritage as a

---

[90] Zafer Senocak, Gefährliche Verwandtschaft (Munich: Babel Verlag, 1998) 137, p. 134.

balance that allows him to walk upright.[91] What he lacks is a way to reconcile them in one identity. The chances of finding something to reconcile the Turkish with the Jewish with the German are slim, and it is perhaps this knowledge that drives Sascha to create the story himself.

He arrives at this point after testing some approaches to identity. Sascha begins the story believing that belonging in Germany is regulated by money,[92] which he has. But he does not feel as if he belongs. He is tempted by an exclusionary understanding of identity, that "wer oder was man ist, kann man sich nicht aussuchen, das entscheiden die anderen, die einen nicht zu sich zählen."[93] This attitude enjoyed a great deal of support in Hoyerswerda, for example, but it is not particularly useful to Sascha. This is because although he cannot choose who he is, he can decide to not count others as one of his group. He can, according to this idea, choose who may not identify with him. In a roundabout way, then, he can still choose with whom to identify, and this seems to be his problem in the first place. It is unproductive at best for Sascha's identity to be reduced to groups from which he is excluded, because the groups he comes from would exclude one another, doing nothing to aide his search for identity. Sascha also finds himself forced to reject assimilation: for him, "assimiliert ist nur derjenige, der die Perspektiven, Urteile und Vorurteile des Assimilierenden ganz uebernimmt.[94]" But regardless of which dominant culture is being referred to, adopting its perspectives, judgments, and prejudices entails a

---

[91] Senocak, p. 43
[92] Senocak, p. 12.
[93] Senocak, p. 39.
[94] Senocak, p. 93.

rejection of the perspectives, judgments, and prejudices of the other two thirds of his heritage.

Sascha proves to be a seeker much like the central figures in Akin's films. In Berlin, he notices that people around him "zunehmend Probleme hatten"[95] with his lack of identity. His search for identity turns him back to his family's history. This history was not discussed when he was young: his German-Jewish mother avoided discussing the Holocaust, how her family died, or how she survived; after his parents divorce, his father does not discuss much of anything with Sascha, let alone his history. It is worth noting that this void of family history, rather than personal history, is what Sascha feels he needs to fill to have an identity. His own life does not seem to be enough. In this sense, he faces the opposite problem of most second generation non-Germans. He does not have enough tradition, and lacks any family structure or network within which to really be embedded. His parents' deaths signify the final dissolution of the last real network he has, as well as the loss of the only immediate access points to his family history. Why didn't Sascha pursue his identity or conflicted heritage prior to his parents' deaths? While some sort of imagined history seems to be the best if not the only way for Sascha to ease the conflict in his heritage, he cannot begin to construct his identity or to write the story that might reconcile his heritage with itself until he is the only point of access to that heritage. But the strategy he finds can be equated with the tactics Sibel and Cahit use: he travels.

He travels to several different countries, and everywhere he goes, he seems to suffer from a variation of romanticizing the lost homeland: he romanticizes the place he lived last and is no longer *as* his home. It is losing it which makes it significant. In Berlin, his home

---

[95] Senocak, p. 74.

is the American Midwest, in America it was Munich, and so on. This tendency seems to parallel his interest in his family's history once everyone who can tell him about it is gone. It is impossible to tell if or how embedded he was in his previous homes, but his relationship with his family's history seems to be one of retrospective embeddedness. Sascha points out that especially in the period after reunification, identity is the closest thing to security available:[96] it allows a person to compartmentalize himself and to belong to something. But his conflicted heritage prevents him from feeling as if he truly belongs to much of anything until it is lost. Only then is he able to readjust the memory of that place, network, or history, making it a part of himself while avoiding potential conflict. As Andreas Huyssen observes, Sascha's skewed perception of home fits well with his uprooted (or even absent) and complex family history. Home, according to Huyssen, is the "territory and homogenous culture from which diasporic community has been displaced."[97] This territory and culture have to be maintained through memory or nostalgia to retain their positions as foundation of a cultural identity.[98] Sascha's family failed to maintain any of the territories or cultures from which they had been displaced through memory or nostalgia, at least not in any way that he was aware. In this way, Sascha was deprived of a foundation for cultural identity. His search for identity leads him to displace himself repeatedly in order to experience (or create) that memory and nostalgia that is home. Luckily, Sascha's situation in reunified Berlin allows him, "die Stadt [zu] verlassen, ohne aus ihr wegzuziehen,"[99] to displace himself and make the city home without having to go to

---

[96] Senocak, p. 47.
[97] Senocak, p. 153.
[98] Senocak, p. 153.
[99] Senocak, p. 133.

an altogether new city. He is creating his own foundation for identity, through his grandfather's imagined story and the reconfiguration of territory and culture of Germany.

Taken together, Akin's films and Senocak's novel reveal several aspects of minority life and multiculturalism which create problems for the European Dream. In Rifkin's proposal, empathy is a sort of trump card which is primary to the other pillars of the dream, including the multiculturalism and preservation of cultural identity which he finds so important. One of the fundamental obstacles to this setup is evident in the works discussed above. Cultural identities are uneasy things; multicultural identities even more so. It is the conflict within the multicultural backgrounds of the protagonists which inspires the search for their identities. The preservation of a traditional cultural identity may require a certain rejection of a new, modern one. But if Rifkin's definition of empathy stands, it is improbable at best that one could empathize with members of a distinctly different culture without on some level extending one's identity to include some part of that culture. The characters in the texts discussed above experience the pull of tradition and the identification with a new culture in a variety of ways, most of which involve a sort of snap or revelation followed by an escape from the "new" culture to the old one, or from the location of the conflict to a presumably less complicated space. In theory, this ought to relieve the tensions between the two conflicting cultural identities. In Sascha's case, the cultures he inherited conflict with one another more than with modernity, precluding any escape to any old countries. Instead, he escapes to a sort of "dead zone," a place which is (re)constructing itself, and an apartment which he sees as a truly empty space within which

he can construct his own history. The characters in the texts discussed above seem to

present more evidence for Ataturk and Akin's opinion that every language, culture, and

lifestyle is a person. But the belief that a language, culture, or lifestyle extends beyond a

person to a category of people is the force behind the pressure to be categorized or to

belong to something. Without that pressure, would these characters experience such

conflict?

One of the fundamental flaws in the extension of a culture to a category of people

is that cultures are not static and categories are. Cultures are constantly shifting, migrating

and changing with people.[100] The belief that cultures (or histories, or identities) can be

permanent and unchanging is a topic common in the integration debate, often tied to

culturalist racism.[101] The perception of culture as an unchanging category aides the

perception of loss of that culture and with it, cultural identity, when the culture changes or

shifts. The perception of loss is not restricted to minority or diasporic cultures, but is

evident in majority cultures as well. It often inspires members of either to begin

"safeguarding identity and fortifying their borders, thus ossifying the past and closing

themselves off to alternative futures."[102] It would seem, then, that even in the case of

basically equal integration, integration without a cultural hierarchy, the changing of a

culture could easily be perceived as a loss.

Because culture is a changing thing, cultural identity must be able to change with

its source or risk becoming ossified. The characters discussed above face a complex

---

[100] Regina Roemhild, "Wenn die Heimat global wird," <u>Die Zeit</u> Dec. 2002.
[101] A reification of cultural rather than racial biological difference for purpose of exclusion. Etienne Balibar, cited in Huyssen, p. 154.
[102] Huyssen, p. 154.

problem: they must reconcile conflicting sources of cultural identity without succumbing to the perception of loss that may accompany necessary adaptations of the source in order for it to help form a functional identity. This reconciliation must be performed repeatedly. Although Sascha, Cahit, and Sibel appear to be searching for their identities, they are actually searching for a way to translate the conflicting sources of their cultural identities into functional, cohesive identities. In addition, they are searching for a way to reconcile these composite identities with the networks through which they move. Their apparent failure to accomplish this kind of identity gymnastics is unsurprising, as is Sascha's decision to construct an identity himself. This presents a new variation of the problem presented by multiculturalism for the European Dream. Multicultural identities, while increasingly common, occupy a variety of networks, but to embed oneself completely or authentically in any network seems increasingly unlikely. Instead, parts of identities may be embedded in certain networks.

The implications of this partial embeddedness on the European Dream are difficult to pinpoint, but it is doubtful that it will aide Rifkin's theory. For one thing, networks, especially economic networks, are based on trust and solidarity. It would seem difficult to inspire trust in or to have solidarity with someone whose identity is fragmented or who is only partially embedded in the network. After all, if only a part of an individual is embedded, we are not really all in this together. As Senocak's work has shown, the influence of history, memory, and travel on identity serves both to change it and to enable its construction, as well as to prevent complete embeddedness in exclusive networks. The exclusive nature of networks gives credence to the idea of partial embeddedness or multiple

identities as a strategy to achieve Rifkin's conception of freedom and gain access to a variety of relationships and networks. Exclusive networks also illuminate the value of construction of identity rather than location of identity within a network as a way to avoid the internal conflict which can arise when a cultural identity is drawn from mutually exclusive sources.

Authentic Identity in *Russendisko*

Much like Akin and Senocak, Vladimir Kaminer presents characters in *Russendisko* who are very likely struggling with conflicted identities. He writes as a sort of denizen of immigrant life in Berlin, granting his readers access to the difficulties of Vietnamese cigarette sellers, the ambitions of Russian professors, and even the private life of his German case worker at the employment office. However, he does not approach the conflict in the same manner used by Akin and Senocak. First of all, the conflicts and characters Kaminer describes are not fictional. Secondly, Kaminer writes satire. His sense of humor has made his work quite popular, but it is also what makes his critiques (especially of Germans) so effective. Because of this, an exploration of Kaminer's work has the potential to reveal more about the relationship between immigrants and the European Dream, particularly with regard to issues of multiculturalism and network switching. As we shall see, these aspects of the European Dream seem especially evident in Kaminer's observations on solidarity, authenticity, and reasons for immigrating.

The manner in which Germany approaches its "*Ausländerproblem*" is perhaps one of the reasons for the solidarity among immigrants described by Kaminer. The immigrants he

describes seem preoccupied with finding ways to outsmart the German government and to otherwise take advantage of trusting native Germans.[103] German government officials and authority figures are also the subject of frequent ridicule. Kaminer has experienced the frustration and the bureaucracy firsthand. After the Soviet Union collapsed, he was not issued a new Russian passport because he already lived in Berlin. He still has his Soviet passport, but to become German, he must first get a passport from an existing nation. One of the most common themes in his work is the perceived dichotomy between German and non-German; he gives several accounts of Germans and immigrants who seem to think that it matters only that one is not a native. In his essay *Suleyman und Salieri,* he observes that much of the public discourse on the subject of hostility toward foreigners

> ...nichts [löst]. Plötzlich entsteht ein Gefühl der
> Zusammengehoerigkeit bei vielen, die nicht
> zusammengehoeren und früher vielleicht gar nichts
> voneinander wissen wollten – Araber, Juden, Chinesen,
> Türken – weil sie genau diese 'Ausländer' sind.[104]

Kaminer's description of the solidarity (empathy or identification) among foreigners indicates that exclusion from a network can be just as formative as inclusion in it. In fact, the exclusion from the category of "native" has aided the creation of an umbrella "foreigner" network. Furthermore, the exchange of enlightened (dominant culture) opinions was unlikely to have included the opinions of the very foreigners who are being discussed. This attitude is an altered version of the ones presented by Akin and Senocak. While the native/foreigner dichotomy is certainly problematic for them, they focus much

---

[103] Vladimir Kaminer, <u>Russendisko</u> (Germany: Goldmann, 2002) 191, p. 98.
[104] Kaminer, p. 73.

more on issues of specific networks and the difficulty of switching between them. However, the division between networks often falls along these lines. Although there were minorities in the Altona network in *Gegen die Wand*, the workings of that network seemed quite German. Perhaps switching networks would be easier when moving between two networks based on minority cultures rather than from a minority culture network to a network based on the dominant culture. Is the fact that Sibel was shifting from minority culture to dominant culture the reason for the perception of loss? If so, it may explain the defensive attitude toward the foundations of her cultural identity which inspire her to invoke the figure of a married Turkish woman – a sort of holy or incorruptible image, whose honor demands respect – when confronted by her German lover.

What effect do the kinds of exclusionary attitudes reflected in Kaminer's work have on the relationship between immigrants and the European Dream? Perhaps immigrants come to Europe in pursuit of the very European Dream Rifkin presents. It would seem that they would stand a better chance of achieving it within the immigrant community. Kaminer's work is very much tied up in the pursuit and accessibility of *a* European dream, but it may not be the dream Rifkin describes. In *Russendisko*, there are only a few reasons cited for immigrating to Germany: money,[105] curiosity,[106] or because it is easier to reach than the United States.[107] These motivations do not reflect the European Dream. They may even represent flight from the very principles which support Rifkin's theory.

---

[105] Kaminer, p. 120.
[106] Kaminer, p. 191. None of these, according to Kaminer, are considered particularly good answers to give when asked in an application for citizenship why one came to Germany.
[107] Kaminer, p. 12.

Furthermore, the nostalgic position toward socialism which Kaminer occasionally takes is problematic for the dream. This is the kind of nostalgia which is sometimes considered to be evidence of maintaining the foundations of one's cultural identity, and which is often considered a threat to successful integration. While maintenance of cultural identity is desirable under Rifkin's theory, this nostalgia functions much like Sascha's sense of home. The most explicit example is "*Deutschunterricht,*" in which Kaminer describes his favorite German textbook, a Russian book from 1991 called *Deutsches Deutsch zum Selberlernen*. The book presents a comically idyllic picture of Soviet life: "Genosse Petrov ist ein Kollektivbauer. Genosse Petrov lernt Deutsch. Er ist fleissig. Diese Arbeit ist schwer aber interessant. Die Wohnung des Genossen Petrov ist gross und hell. Das Wetter ist immer gut."[108] Kaminer falls asleep reading *Deutsches Deutsch*, and dreams of standing on Berg Fichtelberg with Comrade Petrov and Karl Marx where "das Wetter ist gut, die Sicht ist klar." [109] They speak in German, and Marx tells them about his beautiful apartment which is large and airy. This is happiness for everyone involved.[110] The implications of this kind of nostalgia could go one of two ways. Either it shows that this kind of life is lost, and will remain lost in order to maintain the foundations of cultural identity, or it reflects the desire to return to a more socialist way of life. Unfortunately, if this way of life were reestablished (the European Dream achieved?), the foundation of cultural identity might shift to the culture which would be lost, and in which that identity now functions.

Kaminer also addresses the multiculturalism which is so important and problematic for Rifkin's European Dream. In his essay *"Geschäftstarnungen,"* he relates his naïve surprise

---

[108] Kaminer, p.184.
[109] Kaminer, p. 184.
[110] Kaminer, p. 185

at discovering how immigrants play on stereotypes and expectations of various nationalities to improve business at their restaurants: Bulgarians pretending to be Turks, Greeks pretending to be Italian, Arabians pretending to be Greeks, a girl from Buriatia running a sushi bar owned by Jewish Americans, a Belgian running an African restaurant, etc. Kaminer's anthropologist friend claims this is a fairly common practice because "Berlin ist zu vielfältig. Man muss die Lage nicht unnötig verkomplizieren."[111] Immigrants have learned to meet the (admittedly low) expectations of native Germans and, in some ways, one another. Perceived identity is as important as true identity, if not more so. What does it mean for the European Dream that minorities pretend to be different minorities? Is it true multiculturalism?

First of all, the expectation of authenticity in a restaurant or any business related to a minority group reflects an unwillingness to allow thorough integration or acculturation. By tacitly rewarding authenticity, distinct cultural boundaries are encouraged, and it is clear that authenticity is rewarded: given a choice between Chinese food cooked by Chinese and Chinese food cooked by, say, Texans, it seems natural that one would choose the "real" Chinese food. Secondly, that immigrants adopt an ethnic "image" in order to maximize business implies that they are less interested in embeddedness, true multiculturalism, or other aspects of the European Dream than they are in profits. This situation seems to support the *Bildzeitung* conception of multiculturalism insofar as it reflects the importance of distinct boundaries. But it only illustrates the restrictive nature of those boundaries in that one should appear to be firmly within the boundaries of one culture or another, depending on what one is selling.

---

[111] Kaminer, p. 98.

It is therefore interesting to note that Kaminer's books and essays are extremely popular, and the *Russendisko* event, a party at Café Burger which Kaminer hosts a few times a year, has achieved cult status, attracting not only huge numbers of Russians and other immigrants, but Germans, Americans, and even Japanese tourists. Despite all his insights on German society and culture, and his access to such a wide variety of relationships (especially among other immigrants) which point to empathy and identification to some degree with all his subjects, Kaminer remains within the boundaries of the labels he carries: he is a Russian writer, an immigrant writer, etc. He does not (at least not in his essays) seem to have serious doubts about his identity.

It is important to note that Kaminer's lack of identity conflict does not correspond to the hollowness evident in characters like Sascha in the early chapters of *Gefährliche Verwandtschaft*. How does he manage to avoid the kind of identity crisis experienced by the figures Akin and Senocak describe? Several key differences between Kaminer's approach to identity and the strategies employed by Akin, Senocak, and their characters reveal two sides of the same coin. First of all, Kaminer refuses to take identity, his own or anyone else's, too seriously. He seems secure in his identity, and does not question or mourn any changes which may occur from exposure to other cultures. Secondly, he is not attempting to take on any part of German identity. He does not actively pursue embeddedness in German networks, or really, anywhere. He subverts the hierarchy of cultures by refusing to place the German cultural network as the object of his ambition, in a position which may require him to abandon other networks. Thirdly, Kaminer presents no threat to German cultural networks. He himself is not in Germany because of economic ambition. He does not

demand or even request that the dominant culture change. Even if the belief that a network can accommodate a finite number of members is flawed, the fact that Kaminer does not appear to want one of these spots also aides the perception of the author as the embodiment of a harmless foreigner. This perception is further encouraged by the simple fact that his identity seems authentic and cohesive.

Kaminer fills a position which Rifkin does not address in his construction of the European Dream. The dream is, naturally, not something which is already in place. But to arrive at it, or even to move toward a realization of it, requires a way to move beyond a divisive, either-or understanding of cultural networks. Because he appears non-threatening to the dominant culture, and has access to such a wide variety of immigrant networks, Kaminer's work can help open avenues of communication between networks which rarely converse. Furthermore, Kaminer does not reinforce the existing cultural hierarchy in his work. Regardless of how much Akin and Senocak problematize the power structure between various networks, by depicting movement from minority to majority cultural networks, they tend to highlight the position of the dominant culture (the modern, or, bluntly, the German) as the desirable network. Kaminer, on the other hand, is able to show a variety of target networks. He even tells the story of a German trying to find his way into the dominant cultural network in Russia.

Kaminer's work represents a new approach to cultural conflict and identity. His non-threatening, satirical critiques of cultural mechanisms and his subversion of the cultural hierarchy presents a third way to approach the European Dream, beyond the confrontational, provocative approaches of van Gogh and the radicals of Hoyerswerda and

beyond the more pacifist internal struggles to define individual identity in the face of exclusive cultural networks presented by Akin and Senocak. Van Gogh, for example, wanted to change society. The characters in works by Akin and Senocak wanted to change themselves. Both of these approaches inspire defensive attitudes because change is often equated with loss. But Kaminer is non-threatening; while he does not ignore conflicts, or the need for change, he does not request or demand it on a personal or social level. His observations of a variety of networks are accessible to a diverse audience, and his humor leaves his audience to draw their own conclusions about if or what kind of change is required.

The cultural artifacts discussed in this chapter have presented the European Dream with what seems to be a multitude of problems. Akin's films illuminate the fundamental issue of mutually exclusive networks and sources of cultural identity. Senocak's work brings the idea of mythologized history and constructed memory as the foundation for a constructed identity to the apparent conflict between various cultural identities and modern networks. Kaminer's work is most helpful in its dethroning of the dominant culture as a target network, revealing the potential for a community of networks which are regarded as equal on the cultural hierarchy.

While these works suggest a variety of strategies for coping with conflicted identity and network relations, it does not appear to be enough to overcome the obstacles they present to Rifkin's conception of the European Dream. First and foremost, they raise the obstacle of authenticity. This seems quite necessary to achieve the trust and solidarity upon

which Rifkin claims networks are based. However, authentic identity, especially when drawn from conflicting cultural backgrounds, may not be granted access to some networks. Either access to a variety of networks or complete and authentic identity must be compromised. This basic conflict shakes the foundation of Rifkin's theory of network economy and society. It is further weakened by the evidence given that preservation of cultural identity conflicts with free movement through networks, as well as with true multiculturalism.

The exploration of the culturally traumatic events and the cultural artifacts discussed in previous chapters has raised a variety of questions which lead us to doubt the relevance of Rifkin's theory of the European Dream to those allegedly pursuing it. At best, the fallout from the murder of Theo van Gogh and the violence in Hoyerswerda in the months following reunification point to a shift in focus for European consciousness. The values of the European Dream can be recognized in the social and political development prior to such events. It is precisely the commitment to multiculturalism, accessible education, minority rights, and other Rifkin-esque values which made the Netherlands such a bastion of tolerance and liberalism, and made the van Gogh murder all the more shocking. And while these values were not the driving force behind reunification, neither were they completely absent from the rhetoric or the efforts of the event. The fact that such acts of violence as the riots in Hoyerswerda and the murder of Theo van Gogh occurred in the face of such progress indicates that not everyone was buying into the European Dream. The reactions to those events in the media reflected the unforeseen difficulty in reconciling such contradictory goals as tolerance, multiculturalism, and assimilation. Public commentary also supports the conclusion that the values of the European Dream were losing ground in the face of such obstacles among many permanent and less-than-permanent residents.

The texts produced by minority or immigrant authors reveal a similar disinterest or lack of commitment to the European Dream on the part of non-Europeans. In stark contrast to the American Dream, which is seen as a primary motivation for immigrants to

the United States, pursuit of the European Dream Rifkin presents is usually not a reason for immigrating to Europe. These immigrant texts also illuminate several obstacles standing in the way of actual achievement of the European Dream which may be the reason behind such disinterest. These include issues of authenticity, exclusive networks, conflicting sources of cultural identity, the constant shifting of cultural and network boundaries, and most of all accessibility.

One of the most primary flaws to the system Rifkin proposes is the contradictory relationship between the values of inclusiveness, solidarity, embeddedness, and universal human rights on the one hand; and preservation of cultural identity on the other. As evidenced in the reactions to the Hoyerswerda riots and the van Gogh murder, the preservation of cultural identity may be valuable in principle, but for many, it is seen as valuable only within the confines of the value system and the rights dictated by the dominant culture. The Dutch, for example, do see cultural diversity as important, but only as long as the diverse cultures in question can exist within and respect the values and boundaries – including equality, freedom of speech, etc. – of the Netherlands' dominant culture. Even to the extent that a limited participation in the European Dream is envisioned as possible for non-Europeans, the texts by Akin, Senocak, and Kaminer have pointed to a problematic correlation between buying into the European dream and buying into the dominant cultural network. These works show that restrictive attitude to be a major difficulty because it entails identification with that dominant culture.

This belief that a pursuit of the European Dream necessarily entails a pursuit of European identity is one of the most prominent stumbling blocks for the dream. Is the

European Dream only accessible from within European identity, thought, or history? As I have shown, gaining access to or embedding oneself in a network entails empathizing with members of that network. And since empathizing, according to Rifkin, requires a certain identification with the recipient of the empathy, it is reasonable to draw a connection between pursuing the European Dream and pursuing a European identity. This identification, in turn, threatens the authenticity of identity by forcing a choice between adapting one's identity to one's present network and reconciling the different aspects of one's identity (or the various network-anchored identities) with one another. Considering the distance and animosity between certain cultural networks, as shown in Senocak's work, chances of successful reconciliation may be slim. But to switch identities with networks would seem to diminish the trust upon which the network system is based. Neither of these options quite satisfies the deathbed test, the "power to experience the full potential of one's being in the world,"[112] which Rifkin uses to show the superiority of the European freedom ideal.

So how could native Germans work around the issues raised by minority or immigrant texts? Since they already occupy the dominant culture, it would seem impossible for them to choose their own cultural network as a target network. But in many ways, they have. This is reflected in the implied superiority of European thought, values, and indeed, the European Dream. Movement between networks seems to be headed in one linear direction, from minority to majority. Do Europeans switch out of their dominant network? While the texts discussed in this paper do not explicitly address this question, the minority networks depicted do not seem to have been the target of anyone trying to switch out of

---

[112] Rifkin, *Dream,* p. 192.

the majority network. This indicates that such network switching is rare. The real problem may lie in the fact that while the rhetoric surrounding cultural conflict often denies the existence of a cultural hierarchy, the exclusionary behaviors regulating the dominant cultural network reinforce it. Is it really an acceptance of this unmentionable hierarchy that the dominant culture is requiring when it insists on an acceptance of certain values?

As long as this contradictory stance is perpetuated, the authenticity of the European Dream would be undermined by members of the dominant cultural network saying one thing and doing another. This is especially interesting in light of the fact that the dominant cultural network has shown itself to be so interested in enforcing the boundaries of minority cultures through propagation of stereotypes or by co-opting positions of moral authority. This interest is most clearly reflected in actress Sibel Kekilli's experience with the *Bildzeitung* crusade after her work in pornographic films was publicized. The *Bildzeitung* took on the moral outrage and public shaming that one would expect to hear from a conservative Muslim. Although this may seem to reflect identification with a minority network, it really does nothing but reinforce the boundaries of that minority network through pressure from the outside.

The attitude that the dominant cultural network often takes in defining minority networks and in regulating access seems both patronizing and disconnected with regard to immigrants. It presumes that non-Europeans would naturally want to come to Europe, take on European values, and embed themselves in European networks without appearing to consider alternative motives. This presumptuous attitude is also reflected in Rifkin's work, reminding us of his own position in a dominant culture. His synthesis of the goals

Europeans are pursuing are only partially reflected in European reality. It seems likely that his theory is otherwise drawn from his own disillusionment with the American Dream and from his position within another dominant cultural network which allows him to see the best way for Europeans (and eventually everyone) to live. This perspective is remarkably similar to the problematic attitude taken by the dominant network in Germany (the *Bildzeitung* in particular) toward minority cultural networks: Rifkin seems to take on a voice of authority which reinforces stereotypes and defines the boundaries of European culture from the outside.

It seems that the European Dream proposed by Rifkin suffers too much from internal contradictions and an unawareness of certain realities (particularly cultural hierarchies) to be truly viable, even as a dream. Furthermore, the evidence presented in this paper indicates that what appeal the dream does have is not enough that Europeans or immigrants are working toward it. By revealing such obstacles to the European Dream, these texts also provide potential solutions. These solutions, such as those produced by the earlier examination of Kaminer's work, are certainly not the silver bullet for the theory's flaws. But they do point to certain changes which could make the European Dream more accessible to immigrants and more feasible as a whole. This thesis has concentrated on the problems facing Rifkin's proposal, and to explore alternative visions of that dream would entail a whole new analysis. At this point, all I can do is point very briefly at some of the hints that have turned up in the last pages indicating the direction such an analysis would take.

The problem of fundamental differences between a target culture and a primary culture (or source culture, the culture from which an individual moves toward the target culture) has been an especially difficult obstacle for European society for decades. This study of Rifkin's theory has brought to light the difficulty of accessing the accompanying networks. Efforts to gain access to a dominant cultural network may be restricted by exclusionary tactics of the dominant culture. As Akin and Senocak in particular have shown, the sort of identity crisis which can result from trying to move between those fundamentally different networks can be exceptionally destructive, and often ends in some degree of rejection of both networks. Kaminer comes closest to providing a solution to the problem, which he accomplishes by refraining from making dominant German culture a target cultural network at all.

The difficulty of accessing the dominant cultural network experienced by immigrants and minorities in Europe raises the issue of whether the European Dream is necessarily located within the dominant cultural network. As reflected in Kaminer's work especially, *the* European Dream as Rifkin proposes entails accessing the dominant cultural network. However, there remains the possibility of *a* dream which extends beyond boundaries or value systems of a particular network.

These issues are central to an analysis of Rifkin's theory because they may also stand in the way of native Europeans. Especially in light of advancing globalization, Rifkin points out, the likelihood of an identity restricted to one network is minimal at best. The problem of 'multiple networks' and conflicting allegiances is not just one faced by immigrants; rather, it is a universal problem in the modern age. So, the Europeans may in

fact have something to learn from the immigrants and from their rejection of the European

Dream. Problems of conflicting networks have been restricted to immigrant and minority

experiences until now, but they will be shared by Europeans themselves, not just in their

dealings with immigrants, but in their own "European" world itself. Judging by the

frequency of exposure to and interaction with cultures not our own, and again relying on

Rifkin's definition of empathy and identification, even exclusive networks would be made

up of individuals who identify with other networks as well. This identification with

minority cultural networks ought to aide in subverting or even eliminating the linear

cultural hierarchy which was so problematic for Rifkin's theory.

The minority and immigrant texts discussed previously show that there are

alternative motives for relocation to Europe, as well as alternative means to pursuing those

motives, which do not necessarily involve dominant cultural networks. While *the* European

Dream seems to require at least some acceptance of European values, there is perhaps *a*

dream which does not. Kaminer, for one, appears to be quite satisfied in his pursuit of a

European dream without looking for it in the dominant network.

Easing the difficulties involved in navigating a multiplicity of networks, however, may not

solve the problem of the location of the European Dream. Would doing away with the

present cultural hierarchy mean that the dream could be housed in any number of

networks? It seems more likely that without a hierarchy to structure the pursuit of a dream,

or to press various conceptions of the dream into a single mold, various networks may

develop various conceptions of that dream. Given the preceding discussion, two potential

solutions to the problem of the European Dream being definitively located within any particular network are particularly interesting.

The idea that a dream could be specific to a network is initially appealing. It avoids issues of hierarchy and compromised cultural identity. But given the multiple networks with which individuals may identify, network level dreams lead to dreams on the level of the individual. And just as Ataturk's reduction of language and culture to the individual makes the concepts of language and culture less useful, the reduction of a dream to the level of the individual does not fit with our understanding of a dream as an idea that has broad appeal and moves large numbers of people. However possible a plurality of dreams at the network level may prove to be, this leads to the more likely possibility of there being no dream at all. Alternatively, however, there could be a single dream, toward which members of those various networks are in fact working but which is colored or shaped for them by the lens of each specific network. If this were so, then the different networks with which one identifies would give each individual a different perspective on that dream, as well as an awareness of the particularity, the "localness" of that variation of the dream.

Optimistic as it may seem, this conception of a dream satisfies the requirement that a dream has broad appeal and moves large numbers of people. As mentioned earlier, an analysis of these alternatives is beyond the scope of this paper, but this does show that, flawed as Rifkin's particular theory might be, the potential for *a* European Dream remains.

<u>Bibliography</u>

Adam, Konrad. "Die Verlassene Generation." <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 4 Jan. 1993,

    sec. Feuilleton: 31. <u>Lexis Nexis</u>.

<u>Gegen Die Wand.</u> Dir. Akin, Fatih. Prod. Schubert, Stefan and Ralph Schwingel. Perf.

    Birol Uenel, Sibel Kekilli, Catrin Striebeck. DVD. Timebandits Films/Potsdam, 2003.

<u>Im Juli.</u> ~. Prod. Schubert, Stefan and Ralph Schwingel. Perf. Moritz Bleibtreu, Mehmet

    Kurtulus, Christiane Paul. DVD. Wueste Film/Hamburg, 2000.

<u>Kurz Und Schmerzlos.</u> ~. Prod. Schubert, Stefan and Ralph Schwingel. Perf. Adam

    Bousdoukos, Regula Grauwiller, Ralph Herforth, Aleksandar Jovanovic, Mehmet

    Kurtulus, Idil Uener. DVD. Universal Pictures Germany/Hamburg, 1998.

<u>Solino.</u> ~. Prod. Emons, Hejo, Stefan Schubert and Ralph Schwingel. Perf. Antonella

    Attili, Moritz Bleibtreu, Lucas Gregorowicz, Hermann Lause, Tiziana Lodato, Barnaby

    Metschurat, Gigi Savoia, Vincent Schiavelli, Patrycia Ziolkowska. DVD. X

    Verleih/Berlin, 2002.

Arend, Ingo. "Nichts Ist Hier Wie Es Scheint: Die Russen Kommen." <u>Freitag</u>.48 (2005)

    <http://www.freitag.de/2000/48/00482201.htm>.

"Aus Der Mitte Der Gesellschaft: Dokumentation Zu Rechtsextremistischen Gewalttätern."

    <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 12 July 1993, sec. Politik: 4.

Bahners, Patrick. "Der Gute Mensch Von Hamburg." <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 5

  Jan. 1993, sec. Feuilleton: 26.

Bailey, Kenneth. "Claiming our Primary Role in our Society and Global Economy."

  <u>Nonprofit Quarterly</u> Feb. 2001

  <<u>http://www.nonprofitquarterly.org/section/171.html</u>>.

Bauschmid, Elisabeth. "Ziemlich Fremd Im Einigvaterland." <u>Sueddeutsche Zeitung</u> 29 Oct.

  1991 <u>Lexis Nexis</u>.

Beck, Ulrich. "Globalisierung Des Hasses: Parallelgesellschaften Und Multi-Kulti-Traeume."

  <u>Sueddeutsche Zeitung</u> 20 Nov. 2004, sec. Feuilleton: 13. <u>Lexis Nexis</u>.

Bernhard, Brendan. "The American Nightmare." <u>L.A. Weekly</u> 17 Sept. 2004, sec. Features:

  28+.

Böhm, Jürgen. <u>DeutschStunden: Aufsätze: Was Jugendliche Von Der Einheit Denken</u>

  Berlin: Argon, 1993.

Buruma, Ian. "Final Cut." <u>New Yorker</u> 80.41 (2005): 26-32.

Charim, Isolde. "Slavoj Zizeks Provokanteste these." <u>Die Tageszeitung</u> 07 Dec. 2004, sec.

  Kultur: 16. <u>Lexis Nexis</u>.

Dawud, Hassan. "Ein Tod Fast Ohne Echo." <u>Neue Zuercher Zeitung</u> 28 Dec. 2004, sec.

    Feuilleton: 40.

di Lorenzo, Giovanni. "Der Mob Siegt in Hoyerswerda." <u>Sueddeutsche Zeitung</u> 25 Sep.

    1991, sec. Meinungseite<u>: Lexis Nexis</u>.

Engardio, Pete. "Nice Dream if You can Live it." <u>Business week</u>.3899 (2004): 22-.

    <<u>http://search.epnet.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=14328505</u>>.

"Flucht Nach Europa: Schoen Sind Wir Sowieso: Jeremy Rifkin Schwaermt Vom Sonst so

    Gescholtenen Alten Kontinent - Ein Amerikanischer Anti-Traum." <u>Sueddeutsche</u>

    <u>Zeitung GmbH</u> 30 Nov. 2004, sec. Rubrik: V2.<u> Lexis Nexis</u>.

Fritz, Mark. <u>Lost on Earth</u>. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Fulbrook, Mary. <u>The Divided Nation</u>. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Gerstenberg, Ralph. "Russendisko." <u>Deutschlandfunk</u>. 7 Feb. 2001

    <<u>http://www.dradio.de/dlf/sendungen/buechermarkt/164961/</u>>.

Gilbert, Mark. "Europe: Paradise found?" <u>World Policy Journal</u> 21.4 (2004): 8-12.

    <<u>http://search.epnet.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=16693147</u>>.

Glotz, Peter. "Die Neue Deutsche Sinnkrise." <u>Sueddeutsche Zeitung</u> 22 Jan. 1994, sec.

    Feuilleton.

Heissig, Dr K. "Ausgeliefert and Die Multikultur-Ideologen." <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 18 Jan. 1993, sec. Politik: 9.

Hellman, Birgit. "Man Sollte Die Wessis 40 Jahre Einsperren." <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 5 Apr. 1994, sec. Jugend schreibt: 35.

Huck, Peter. "Follow that Eurodream." <u>New Zealand Herald</u> 13 Nov. 2004, sec. World News: <u>Lexis Nexis</u>.

Huyssen, Andreas. "Diaspora and Nation: Migration into Other Pasts." <u>New German Critique</u>.88 (2003): 147.

Jasper, Willi. "Stunde Der Gegen-Intellektuellen?" <u>Neue Zuercher Zeitung</u> 11 Jan 1993, sec. Feuilleton.

Kaminer, Vladimir. <u>Russendisko</u>. Germany: Goldmann, 2002.

Libbert, Eike. "Wie Auseinander Waechst, was Zusammengehoert." <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 7 Jan. 1993, sec. Feuilleton: 26.

Lueders, Michael. "Islam Als Wellness-Programm." <u>Frankfurter Rundschau</u> 7 June 2005, sec. Feuilleton: 18.

Marks, John. "New Germany's Old Fears." <u>U.S. News & World Report</u> 14 Oct. 1991: 20.

Mohr, Reinhard. "Die Porno-Rebellin." <u>Spiegel Online</u> (2004)

~. "West-Ostliches Panoptikum." <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 16 Sep. 1993, sec.

Feuilleton: 35.

Nicodemus, Katja. "Ankunft in Der Wirklichkeit." <u>Die Zeit</u> 2004.

Nienhuysen, Frank. "Riss Im Deich." <u>Sueedeutsche Zeitung</u> 10 Nov. 2004, sec. Ausland.

Pfahl-Traufhber, Armin. "Die Extremisten, Die Aus Der Mitte Kommen." <u>Frankfurter</u>

<u>Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 14 Dec. 1994, sec. Feuilleton: 38.

Prantl, Heribert. "Ach, Wie War Es Ehedem...." <u>Sueddeutsche Zeitung</u> 1 Oct. 1993, sec.

Feuillton.

Pries, Knut. "Die Krawalle in Hoyerswerda; Pogrome Als Feierabendritual." <u>Sueddeutsche</u>

<u>Zeitung</u> 24 Sep. 1991, sec. Reportagen: <u>Lexis Nexis</u>.

~. "Hoyerswerda." <u>Sueddeutsche Zeitung</u> 27 Sep. 1991, sec. Reportagen: <u>Lexis Nexis</u>.

Rifkin, Jeremy. "American Capitalism vs. European Social Markets." <u>Spiegel Online</u> 1 Aug.

2005 <<u>http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,366944,00.html</u>>.

~. <u>The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future is Quietly Eclipsing the</u>

<u>American Dream</u>. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2004.

~. "Europe's Commitment Anxiety." <u>Spiegel Online</u> 29 July 2005

<<u>http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,366942,00.html</u>>.

~. "Why America Needs a Strong EU." <u>Spiegel Online</u> 2 Aug. 2005

<<u>http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,366945,00.html</u>>.

~. "Why the European Dream is Worth Saving." <u>Spiegel Online</u> 28 Jul. 2005

<<u>http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,366940,00.html</u>>.

Roemhild, Regina. "Wenn Die Heimat Global Wird." <u>Die Zeit</u> Dec. 2002.

Scheffer, Paul. "Das Schweigen Der Muslime." <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 9 Nov.

2004, sec. Feuilleton: 40.

Scheuch, Erwin K. "Niemand Will Gern Zur Minderheit Gehoeren." <u>Frankfurter</u>

<u>Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 10 Feb. 1993, sec. Feuilleton: 29.

Schiffauer, Werner. "Die Tuerken, Ein Deutscher Gluecksfall." <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine</u>

<u>Sonntagszeitung</u> 28 Nov. 2004, sec. Feuilleton: 31.

Schuemer, Dirk. "Sorgenraum Europa." <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 25 Jan. 2005, sec.

Feuilleton: 35. <u>Lexis Nexis</u>.

~. "Sturz Aus Der Normalitaet." <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 3 June 1993, sec.

Feuilleton.

Schwind, Dr H. "Sind Wir Ein Volk Von Auslaenderfeinden?" <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine</u>

<u>Zeitung</u> 24 June 1993, sec. Politik: 8.

Seidel, Jörn. "Fatih Akin Und Seine Filme." Leipzig Almanach Kulturtagebuch (2005)
    <http://leipzig-almanach.de/film_gegen_die_wand_ein_portraet_des_berlinale-
    gewinners_fatih_akin_joern_seidel.html>.

Senocak, Zafer. Gefährliche Verwandtschaft. Munich: Babel Verlag, 1998.

Shafi, Monika. "Joint Ventures: Identity Politics and Travel in Novels by Emine Sevgi
    Özdamar and Zafer Senocak." Comparative literature studies 40.2 (2003): 193. Project
    Muse.

Siemons, Mark. "Buschkowsky Verstehen: Was Ist Eigentlich "Integration"?" Frankfurter
    Allgemeine Zeitung 15 Dec. 2004, sec. Feuilleton: 37.

~. "Die Ossis Sind Wir." Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 12 Aug. 1994, sec. Feuilleton: 25.

Taubitz, Udo. "Ich Bin Kein Gastarbeiter, Ich Bin Deutscher." Stuttgarter Zeitung 20 Mar.
    2004, sec. Wochenendseiten: 2.

Wagner, Richard. "Nicht Ueber Alles Reden: Was Immigration Bedeutet." Frankfurter
    Rundschau 26 Nov. 2004, sec. Feuilleton: 15. Lexis Nexis.

Wefing, Heinrich. "Baut Mehr Moscheen!" Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 6 Dec. 2004,
    sec. Feuilleton: 33.

Weidemann, Siggi. "Der Toedliche Irrtum Eines Provokateurs." <u>Sueddeutsche Zeitung</u> 4

Nov. 2004, sec. Feuilleton: 13.

Weigel, David. "Trans-Atlantic Tripe." <u>Reason</u> 36.8 (2005): 55-61.

<http://search.epnet.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=15352995>.

Wolle, Stefan. "Hoert Die Signale." <u>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</u> 28 July 1994, sec.

Feuilleton: 23.

Zizek, Slavoj. "Passion in the Era of Decaffeinated Belief." <u>The Symptom</u> Winter 2004.5

(Spring 2005) <http://lacan.com/newspaper5.htm>.