

# GFL



*German as a foreign language*

**For Feridun Zaimoğlu's *Leyla*: Crime Facts and Fictions**

Tom Cheesman, Swansea

ISSN 1470 – 9570

## For Feridun Zaimoğlu's *Leyla*: Crime Facts and Fictions

Tom Cheesman, Swansea

Feridun Zaimoğlu was accused of committing acts of plagiarism and 'symbolic matricide' in his novel *Leyla* (2006). The accusations are groundless. The controversy exposes misconceptions among German critics regarding the nature of literary fiction in general, and literary fiction by ethnic minority or 'migrant' writers in particular. This paper examines the allegations, sets *Leyla* in the context of some of Zaimoğlu's other work, and analyses some contested passages in relation to passages in the allegedly plagiarized novel *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserai* (1992) by Emine Sevgi Özdamar.

... the books which make us happy we could write for ourselves at a pinch. But the books we need affect us like a misfortune which causes us great pain, like the death of someone we loved more than ourselves, like being banished into forests, far from all human beings, like a suicide; a book must be the axe for the frozen sea in us.

Franz Kafka<sup>1</sup>

In November 2007 I attended a conference at the University of Copenhagen on 'Migration and Literature in Contemporary Europe'. The English-language *Copenhagen Post* carried a story headlined: 'Bomb blast symbolic of police-immigrant unrest' (Anon. 2007). This is a story of life imitating Zaimoğlu:

Officials in the city of Århus fear that the bomb that destroyed a young police cadet's car last week has also demolished attempts to give the police a better image amongst minorities.

The bomb was detonated under the car owned by a cadet known as Mudi to viewers of the television programme 'Police Academy', a reality show which follows police cadets, as he visited his parents in the Gellerup council estates.

No-one was injured in the blast, but Mudi, who has Turkish roots, was seen as a positive role model for young men from minority groups.

---

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Oskar Pollak, 27 January, 1904 (Kafka 1958: 27f.). I dedicate this paper to the unknown policeman who broke my rib with his riot shield as he charged to arrest a man who threw an apple-core at Fascists rallying near the Brandenburg Gate in June 1999. All translations are mine.

Officials are now concerned about the effects it will have on their efforts to recruit minorities into law enforcement.

The report continues with a quote from the local chief inspector of police, who states that threats against officers of the law are 'serious enough', but this is worse, because the victim is 'someone who is trying to improve the lot of immigrants'. Mudi and another cadet from Gellerup (a notorious neighbourhood) have been harassed before because of their choice of profession. The attorney general, Lene Espersen, states: 'Conflict between the police and young minorities flares up because the youths feel as if it is "us" and "them" [...]. We had hoped that police with the same background would have an easier time getting through.'

The article does not make fully explicit who the bombers are presumed to be. At first glance, not knowing the context, one might think the obvious suspects were racist nationalists or neo-Nazis. But in Gellerup,<sup>2</sup> 'young minorities' are so disaffected that one of 'theirs' who seeks to join the 'enemy' forces of the state becomes a target of righteous violence. Here, life imitates the main action in Feridun Zaimoğlu's novel *Leinwand* (2003), billed as a 'Kriminalkomödie'. The Danish, non-fictional case has an extra post-modernist dimension, in that the protagonist is a reality-television celebrity. *Leinwand*'s protagonist, Seyfeddin Karasu, is a German police officer with a Turkish background, personally rooted in Hamburg. He is not a cadet, but a Kommissar, and when the novel opens, he has recently returned from a stint with the Los Angeles Police Department. He is now applying the brutal methods of the LAPD to Hamburg's multicultural criminal classes, and he is specifically at war with a gang of mainly Turkish (that is, Turkish German) youths. Members of this gang finally blow up his car, with him and a female colleague in it. Defying genre conventions, the book ends with that explosion.

---

<sup>2</sup> A Google search for 'Gellerup police' turns up an organisation called 'Stop Islamiseringen af Danmark'. SIAD demonstrated in Gellerup in June 2006, ostensibly to test the ability of the Danish police to protect anti-Islamists rallying in a predominantly Muslim area: 'the police [...] ordered us out of the area for fear of 800 extremely infuriated Moslem immigrants, [which] showed for the first time that anarchy now prevails in the Danish ghetto areas.' (SIAD 2007) See also Ammitzbøll and Vidino 2007. On the 'Gates of Vienna' blog (US-based, Europe-focused, 'counter-Jihadist'), one Iqbal Khaldun responds to a related post about Gellerup: 'Wow this post, heck this entire blog is serious. At first I thought this was all satire. But you really think the Muslim hordes want to conquer Denmark.' (Khaldun 2007)

The shockingly abrupt denouement of Zaimoğlu's novel reads like an impatient writer killing off his own parody of crime fiction. It also reasserts unpleasant reality in place of any fond multicultural idyll. After some 150 pages of writing which mostly seems seriously intended – in the idiom of the 'Tatort' series and similar examples of police procedural fiction, with parodic touches – the effect is like a slap in the face to 'Krimi' fans. The brutality is all the more atrocious because the reader has been persuaded to take an interest in the Kommissar and his female associate. Cunningly, Zaimoğlu first establishes Karasu as an entirely unsympathetic, ignorant boor. He is the antithesis of the cultured, reflective Kemal Kayankaya of Jakob Arjouni's detective novels (see Teraoka 1999). In the opening pages of *Leinwand*, discussing a recent drugs haul, a colleague refers to Shakespeare's *As You Like It* ('Was ihr wollt': whatever you want), but dumb Karasu fails to recognize the reference (2003: 8). When a good-looking, clever and forceful young woman, forensics specialist Claudia Preetz, is assigned to him, Karasu displays all the worst characteristics which are stereotypically ascribed to Turkish men: he patronizes and belittles her, and tries to sideline her professionally, while treating her with exaggerated, 'Oriental' courtesy. But with the action paced over three days, their sparring dialogue gradually develops an undertow of warmth, not to mention mutual sexual interest. An 'intercultural relationship' is on the cards. Preetz's blunt criticisms of his attitudes start to have an impact. Karasu begins to learn and change. The reader's interest in both of them is keenly engaged. By the time the two of them get into his car, on page 158, they are on the verge of admitting and acting on the erotic tension between them. Then they are killed off. All the intervening plotting (a main case involving a body in a lake wrapped in painted canvasses, and a couple of side-plots) turns out to be a barrel of red herrings. The novel ends immediately with Remzi and Kemal, the young bombers, giving each other high fives.

Zaimoğlu's first publications were based on interviews with disaffected, racialized, working-class young German Turks of Remzi and Kemal's type – many of them with tales to tell of battles with the police, among other opponents. But he also gave a platform to one young man from this kind of background who said that he hoped to join the police, in order to fight crime in the 'underclass' communities, fight the criminalization of young racialized men, and fight the cultural racism which stereotypes young, male Turks as innately predisposed to criminality. This is the ambition proclaimed by 'Ali', whose monologue in

Zaimoğlu's first book, *Kanak Sprak* (1995: 27-33), also expounds pro-social hip hop philosophy. In fact, the real person on whom 'Ali' is based, musician and dancer Ali Aksoy, a close friend of Zaimoğlu's from Kiel, was a key source of inspiration for that first book (see Cheesman 2007: 148). Kommissar Karasu, unlike either the fictional 'Ali' or the real Ali Aksoy, is bereft of social and political conscience. Far from fulfilling well-meaning, liberal hopes of ethnic minority police officers 'getting through' and 'building bridges' between the state and disaffected, racialized, criminalized groups, Karasu fulfils the latter's often legitimate fears. Officers recruited from 'minority' ranks in small numbers may harass 'minorities' all the more, in order to be accepted within an established, racist police culture. Their 'insider knowledge' may improve police efficiency, but the social, economic and political perspectives of the marginalized do not thereby improve.

Zaimoğlu's work has repeatedly engaged with intractable social conflicts around 'racial', national and religious difference, class struggle, 'deviance' and crime. He has always claimed that in doing so, he is not trying to provoke, but depicting what he observes, while refusing to defer to liberal sensibilities. I am not aware of any bombing incidents in Germany like that in Denmark, but without doubt there will have been such incidents. Zaimoğlu's stories come to him from reality. Some stories he reports directly from life, using documentary methods – but taking creative stylistic liberties – as in the anthologies of 'statements', *Kanak Attak* (1995) and *Koppstoff* (1998), or the interview-based novel *Abschaum* (1997), or most recently *Schwarze Jungfrauen*, a sequence of dramatic monologues based on interviews with Muslim or Islamist young women in Germany (co-authored with Günter Senkel and premiered in 2006).<sup>3</sup> Other stories he makes up, but they are still based in life. His novels include the adolescent romance of *Liebesmale, scharlachrot* (2000), which cross-cuts between Hamburg and the Turkish Riviera; *German Amok* (2002), a satire of the contemporary arts world and of the Berlin Republic, mingled with thwarted romance; the anti-Krimi, *Leinwand*; and, soon to be published, *Liebesbrand* (2008), a homage to Romantic ideals in the form of a stockbroker's love-quest across

---

<sup>3</sup> *Schwarze Jungfrauen* is to be published in 2008. Five of the ten monologues performed in Neco Çelik's original production at Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin, appeared in *Theater heute* 5 (April 2006), with the cover headline: 'Sex und Islam'.

Germany and Austria, from Kiel to Vienna. Here, and in the multifarious stories of *Zwölf Gramm Glück* (2004), half of them set in Germany, half in Turkey, all of them dissecting male desire for love – with protagonists of various backgrounds, or ethnically unidentified – Zaimoğlu weaves autobiographical elements and direct observations into fully imagined fictional worlds which closely resemble contemporary realities, and so sheds original light on them.

His novel *Leyla* (2006) can be said to stand at the centre of his work so far. It is his most ambitious work in some ways, his most successful in commercial terms, and in formal terms it combines his two ways of working. *Leyla* fuses documentary and fictional techniques. It is based on his mother's life-narrative, as tape-recorded by him, but in writing the story he leaves its provenance behind, imaginatively recreating her narrative in his own idiom, and focusing the central character's first-person narrative on the major theme of his fiction: the desire to be loved and to love. In the directly documentary work, the form of the dramatic monologue corresponds to the interview technique used to elicit the material: the figures, in their speech, consciously present themselves to the researcher, and to us, the audience or reader. *Leyla* is a first-person narrative, but one where the narrating present corresponds to narrated time. Leyla, the protagonist and narrator, is not remembering her story but living it as she narrates, in the present tense. At the same time, Leyla is presented as an imaginative narrator in her own right: she did not witness all the scenes narrated, and first-person pronouns often drop out of the narration, which takes a position of apparent omniscience, even reporting the thoughts of other characters. This thoroughgoing formal transformation of the raw material results in a work of pure fiction, despite the documentary starting-point. Criteria of documentary 'authenticity' are strictly irrelevant (at most, such criteria might be relevant for readers personally implicated in the 'authentic' story: Zaimoğlu's family members or close friends of the family). And this is Zaimoğlu's most ambitious work also in the sense that here, he imagines a world he has not himself experienced – the world of 1940s and 1950s Turkey in which his mother grew up. The novel is dominated by Leyla's brutal father, and it ends when, shortly after his long-awaited death, she arrives in Germany as a migrant worker, historically a few years before Zaimoğlu himself was conceived.

As Zafer Şenocak observes, in an article touching on *Leyla*, literary fiction is categorically distinct from documentary or reportage, even if many borderline examples can be cited:

Literature always plays with reality; it is an inflaming counter-force in the imagination to reality's frozen models of interpretation. Essential to literature is an extension of the sense of reality. This also has to do with the fact that literary characters are not registered with the police. (Şenocak 2006)

Reality, or in other words, 'normal' social discourse, is characterized by 'frozen models of interpretation', by stereotypes which limit what we imagine, think, feel and say. The task of literature is not to console us with ready-made certainties. Şenocak alludes here to Kafka's famous image of a book as the axe for the frozen sea in us (1958: 28). A critical question for all literary representations of real social groups (and in this respect all are minorities, be they ethnic, ideological, behavioural, professional, generational or whatever) is: does the representation confirm the already-known, the pre-circulating content of social discourse regarding such groups? Or does it disturb, disrupt and so provoke new thoughts and feelings? Fictional characters – when properly realized as such – are invitations to imagine, not depictions of the real. They bear features of the real, inevitably, but they are neither citizens nor aliens in any real state. Yet *Leyla*'s monstrous father is a fictional figure who at first glance corresponds to pre-existing, all too familiar Eurocentric, 'Orientalist' stereotypes regarding the brutishness of Turkish and/or Muslim men – as do such figures as Remzi and Kemal, as well as Kommissar Karasu and Ertan Ongun. So, does the novel *Leyla* work to confirm the known real, or to open new vistas? This question has become linked with another question, regarding its originality and its artistic integrity.

Şenocak was commenting, in the article I have cited, on a bizarre controversy which blew up in June 2006, sparked by an anonymous accusation that, in *Leyla*, Zaimoğlu had plagiarized an earlier, celebrated novel about a Turkish girlhood culminating in migration to Germany. Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserai...* (1992) is another fusion of the real and the fictional, of direct or reported experience, and imagination, only it is based in Özdamar's own autobiography. This novel is celebrated above all for its daring cross-linguistic play, its use of vernacular genres in literal translation (prayers, proverbs, figures of speech, etc), its paratactic narrative sequencing, its bold use of repetition, its dramatic montage effects, and its 'magical realism' fusions of fantasy and reality. By

contrast, *Leyla* is written in quite conventional, though very vigorous and sensual, realist prose. It is an altogether easier read, with no comparable avant-garde textual features. Superficially vastly different, the novels nevertheless share a lot of common content. The two narrators' lives – both real and fictional lives – unfold(ed) in the same social settings in the same places in the same historical period.

Soon after *Leyla* appeared, an unknown German academic drew up a 'charge-sheet' listing scores of verbal parallels, motifs and narrative incidents found in both novels. This apparently strong proof of plagiarism was passed to Volker Weidermann, literary editor of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. All the German newspapers and magazines which cover literary life went on to feature the story during June 2006.<sup>4</sup> The charge-sheet itself has never been made public and its authorship remains unknown. Weidermann's article (2006) broke the story to the public, after he broke it to the two writers, in phone calls. More surprisingly, he also broke the story to Zaimoğlu's mother, in a phone call to Istanbul. She was, naturally, most upset to be told that her son stood accused of stealing *her* life story from another writer. As Şenocak comments, the fact that a critic would make such a phone call exposes a deeply disturbing attitude towards literature, specifically the literature of the Turkish minority in Germany: an assumption that such literature literally, rather than imaginatively, represents experience and reality. The reality of this social discourse upon literature marked as 'ethnic minority', the really existing confusion between fictional characters and persons 'registered with the police', is a social fact which Şenocak considers far more worrying than any allegation of plagiarism. It implies a denial of imaginative freedom to writers marked as 'ethnic minority'. Instead, these writers are thought and expected to function as informants – rather like police recruits, hired in order to 'build bridges' with the resident aliens, to represent 'natives' ('us') and 'others' ('them') to one another, and to furnish what 'we' regard as 'positive role models' for 'them'.

The controversy regarding the allegation of plagiarism soon subsided. Özdamar quickly made clear that she had no intention of pursuing a legal case. Zaimoğlu vigorously denied having read Özdamar's work. He allowed the journalist and writer Hilal Sezgin to listen to

---

<sup>4</sup> For references to nine articles (not including Sieglinde Geisel's) see Cheesman 2007: 190.



the tapes of his mother's life-story, and she reported in *Die Zeit* that contested incidents and phrases were indeed found in the tapes (Sezgin 2006). As she (and others) also reported, Zaimoğlu argued that the vast majority of verbal parallels derive from the common geographical, historical, social and cultural background of the two novels. He stressed that many of the anecdotes they shared belonged to a common fund of Turkish migrants' narratives, very specifically migrants from the town of Malatya, where both his mother and Özdamar grew up, in the same social milieu, at about the same time, before migrating to Istanbul and subsequently to Germany. This commonality of life-trajectories made many parallels inevitable. A few parallels remained surprising: detailed narrative incidents with more specific, personal resonance. To explain these, Zaimoğlu revealed that when Özdamar first came to Germany, at the age of 18, and lived in a migrant women workers' hostel in Berlin (as described in her second 'autofictional' novel, *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, 1998), Zaimoğlu's mother's sisters were living in the same hostel, and his mother often visited. Stories found in both novels might be traced to communal story-telling sessions from that period. They might be based in the experiences, or the imaginations, of any of these women or indeed those of others they knew and with whom they shared stories.

Zaimoğlu mounted this self-defence in terms of documentary evidence and in terms of stories' oral, vernacular origins in real life – that is, in terms of 'authenticity', rather than in terms of the liberty of the imagination. Given the reality of the social discourse surrounding 'minority' literature, this was no doubt wise. Some of Zaimoğlu's detractors (as we will shortly see) claimed that the notion of a 'common cultural fund' is intrinsically 'Orientalist' (in Edward Said's sense) or culturally racist, for it implies belief in the existence of some fixed, timeless 'essence' of Turkish culture. However, others object that no such implication is necessary, and I would agree. Two novels depicting a girl growing into womanhood, in the same time and place, in the same social stratum, each based on autobiographical material, are likely to throw up many parallels, even if the autobiographers concerned had not actually met in a context where story-telling was a routine pastime.

If an actual dependence of *Leyla* upon *Karawanserai* could be demonstrated, an alternative kind of defence might theoretically be mounted in terms of intertextuality. It might be argued that Zaimoğlu's work 'rewrites' scenarios in Özdamar's work, to some aesthetic or

cultural purpose. But this is in fact the approach taken by Zaimoğlu's detractors. Its most interesting exponent is Sieglinde Geisel, who took the plagiarism allegation further than any other commentator, in an article which demands detailed consideration. The piece appeared in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* under the title: 'Leyla – eine Travestie?' (Geisel 2006). Possible alternative translations for 'travesty' here are 'burlesque' or 'unsuccessful attempt at cross-dressing'. Geisel applies a fairly sophisticated model of intertextuality in order to denounce Zaimoğlu not just as a plagiarist, but as an anti-Muslim ideologist, and as an imaginative matricide. He not only plundered Özdamar's work for fictional material, he also twists her depiction of a kindly Turkish father into a stereotype of Muslim barbarism, and finally he 'symbolically' kills her off within his novel, Geisel says.

The majority of critics were inclined to dismiss the allegations and give the appearance of supporting Zaimoğlu. A prominent exception (whose approach shares a lot with Geisel's) was Professor Norbert Mecklenburg of Cologne University (2006).<sup>5</sup> He mounted a lengthy ad hominem attack, arguing that Zaimoğlu stole from Özdamar's work in order to supplement inadequate material in his family's stories, because the author was anxious to achieve commercial success by producing the kind of stereotyped tale of Turkish patriarchal violence which enjoys guaranteed popularity in Germany, as in the work of Saliha Scheinhardt and more recently Necla Kelek. But Mecklenburg's case is weakened by his failure to analyse a single example of alleged plagiarism. He states that the features of Zaimoğlu's text which have precedents in Özdamar's never have the same wording, hence there can be no question of plagiarism in the classic sense. Mecklenburg treats this as evidence of a deliberate cover-up. There is no sign in his text, however, that this critic has read *Leyla*. His purpose is to extol the virtues of Özdamar's now 'classic' work, and to damn Zaimoğlu as a literary criminal, on flimsy second-hand evidence.

Geisel argues – after some detours – at a more sophisticated level, displaying slightly more knowledge of *Leyla*. For her, the question is not 'whether' Zaimoğlu plagiarized Özdamar,

---

5 For discussion of Mecklenburg's work on Zaimoğlu see Cheesman 2007: 190-93 and also 20-21. In response to Mecklenburg's essay in *literaturkritik.de*, I submitted to that journal a critique of his (and Geisel's) approaches, under the title 'Pseudopolitisch, pseudokorrekt'. A shorter and more polemical version of the present article, it was published by *literaturkritik.de* in June 2008, together with a reply by Mecklenburg.

but 'why he might have done so' (this kind of cautious phrasing, also used by Mecklenburg, reflects the fact that Zaimoğlu threatened a libel action when the scandal broke). Once Geisel gets round to this argument, her article is very thought-provoking. Before that, she puts forward a series of points which, like Mecklenburg's, are conspicuously aggressive, vague, based on superficial reading, or self-contradictory. She begins by trying to pick holes in Sezgin's presentation of the affair in *Die Zeit*. She suggests that the 'six audiotapes' mentioned by Sezgin cannot contain sufficient material for a book of *Leyla*'s length (around 500 pages). We are meant to infer that Zaimoğlu must have turned elsewhere for supplementary material. But the confusion of imaginative literature with reports about reality reaches a point of absurdity here: just how many tapes would it take to obviate suspicion? Indeed, Geisel admits that 'such suspicions are irrelevant'. She tries a new tack. She argues that 'clues' to plagiarism are to be found, not at the level of single details, as listed in the notorious charge-sheet, but at the level of textual patterning or composition ('sprachliche Inszenierung'). This is an intriguing argument. She gives only one example:

What is at issue is not the fact that *Leyla* also mentions the taboo on cutting one's nails at night, but the fact that it is mentioned in just the same way as in *Karawanserai*: as the opening item in a list, a dense series of taboos that a young girl hears over time. This form of presentation has nothing to do with 'Turkish' traditional culture, instead it is a literary creation of the author ['der Autorin', i.e. Özdamar].

Zaimoğlu's work depends on Özdamar's, then, not so much in respect of individual verbal or narrative items, but in respect of compositional devices or structures which shape whole passages. The passages she refers to here (*Karawanserai*, pp. 123f.; *Leyla*, pp. 85ff.) do both involve a series of proverbial, folkloric taboos or prohibitions. But do Geisel's claims stand up? The claim that they involve a similar 'form of presentation' needs to be examined. But first, the claim that Özdamar invented any such form can be dismissed.

Citations of superstitious proverbs, often in list form, are a generic feature of novels of provincial life and modernization (not only in Turkey), rather than Özdamar's original invention. Here it is noteworthy that the German and international interest in *Karawanserai* is quite mysterious for readers of the Turkish translation. In Turkish, Özdamar's novel appears as an autobiographically-inflected example of a well-worn genre, the village novel,

in which a protagonist grows up under the oppressive yoke of Anatolian traditional culture, and eventually frees herself (or himself), typically by migrating to the big city and/or abroad. Yaşar Kemal is the most celebrated exponent of this kind of novel in Turkish. The tradition has close correlates in many other languages. A series of superstitious injunctions often illustrates the way folk traditions are losing their authority under modern conditions. Turkish Germanists such as Gürsel Aytaç (1997) and Nilüfer Kuruyazıcı (1997) point out that the originality of *Karawanserai* lies in the fact that it uses German, and in the way that it does so. It uses a montage technique where the great majority of elements in the composition are (as Aytaç puts it) ‘written and oral materials that are by now almost Turkish common cultural property, that is, texts that she often heard in her early years as the daughter of a petty bourgeois family in Anatolia’ (1997: 172). By developing a method of literal translation from Turkish into German, Özdamar created the textual ‘charm’ which delights readers in German – and also readers of the French translation, as Aytaç notes (176). Only for non-Turkish readers do the material and the way it is presented appear original. Özdamar’s translingual strategy introduced to German metropolitan literature a genre which does also exist in German, but only in forms which are beneath the notice of modern critics and prize committees: the ‘provincial girl comes of age’ novel, a subgenre of ‘Heimatroman’ and of autobiography.

Let us look at the two passages Geisel mentions. We will see just how unjustified she is in imputing plagiarism here, and how very differently the novelists use similar material. Their two lists feature completely different sets of folkloric prohibitions, apart from the one about clipping fingernails at night. The two series are presented in entirely different ways and serve different functions in the respective narratives. Özdamar briefly states some twenty prohibitions, one after the other, each as a one-line paragraph. There are many similar lists of items of vernacular culture in the novel. This sequence is attributed at the start to the narrator’s friend Saniye, who recites the prohibitions in order to tell her: ‘what I must do in life so that our family’s kismet never gets knotted again: Not cut my nails at night. / Not drink water standing up. / Not visit strangers at full moon. / Not sew or knit at full moon’, and so on. The list culminates with: ‘If a girl runs from one end of a rainbow to another, she’ll turn into a boy, if a boy does, he’ll turn into a girl’ (124). The narrator records no reaction to this recitation. She is generally in awe of Saniye, the wealthy neighbours’

daughter. The reader may infer that she takes Saniye's teachings on trust, at this stage, though it is not clear how seriously Saniye takes them. For the reader, the list functions essentially as a sample of folkloric material: exotic, colourful, and relating only in a general, abstract way to the narrator's way of life. There is no emotional weight to the prohibitions, no sense that either Saniye or the narrator feels threatened by them. No power appears to lie behind them. No sanctions are attached to most of them; the breach of one taboo is said to result in childlessness, the one about the rainbow in gender switching. Neither sanction will particularly disturb these girls, who envy boys their freedoms. No sanctioning agencies are invoked, though these are numerous in Anatolian Islamic and pre-Islamic traditions (God, Satan, jinns, devils, etc). The taboos do not seem a matter of belief and fear. Presented in an apparently random but colourful and poetic list, they seem mere items in an inventory of superstition already considered historical, belonging to bygone times, 'dead' folkloric tradition. Other characters in the novel – older characters – still hold traditional beliefs regarding the power of unseen forces to harm those who break customary taboos. But this list evokes no such dread. It is a recitation without conviction.

When Zaimoğlu mentions the fingernail-cutting taboo, among a series of others, the corresponding passage is in every way different. Fewer taboos are mentioned and each one is elaborated in terms of traditional beliefs and explained in its practical relation to the narrator's way of life. Gruesome sanctions are threatened. The passage is embedded in the narrative of Leyla's rebellion against her father and other authority figures. It opens, not with the fingernails (*pace* Geisel), but with an injunction regarding the dead: 'The room which has a dead person's spirit in it must be consecrated' (85). Death, suffering and gross bodily functions – the Bakhtinian grotesque – are pre-eminent in Zaimoğlu's sequence, while they are absent in Özdamar's. The injunction on consecration is followed by about one hundred words detailing the associated folkloric practice and its rationale in terms of souls of the dead trapped in this world, caught between God and the Devil. A new paragraph begins: 'I must not cut my fingernails at night', followed by the explanatory rationale: 'The demons grab hold of the nail-clippings, swallow them down, get pot-bellies, and since they crawl about on all fours, their fat stomachs can be heard scraping on the floor.' This imaginative universe of vivid horrors is entirely unlike the fragmented remnants of tradition which Saniye evokes with her pretty, sanitized formulae. Next: 'It's

forbidden to clean the house on a Tuesday, it brings ill fortune,' with a similar kind of detailed rationale. Another four domestic prohibitions are stated, with rationales. Up to now the source of all this folklore has remained unnamed. Then comes a prohibition relating to the use of the outdoor latrine (earth closet), which is attributed to 'my mother's husband' (Leyla always refers to her tyrannical father with such distancing phrases). Evidently he is the source of all the oppressively fear-inducing superstition retailed so far:

After I have done my business, I must not turn my back on the closet, or else a jinn will appear and beat me senseless. The hole into which one evacuates is like a fearsome ruler, says my mother's husband; the ruler gives his hatchet-man a sign whenever a servant fails to display the necessary respect. (86)

Leyla's mother is more realistic: 'But my mother says it really is a good idea not to turn my back on the earth closet, because rats as big as cats often crawl up it.' Now Leyla declares: 'They can say what they like, I won't obey' (86). Further examples of superstitious maxims and practice are given. Leyla again: 'They can beat the laws of the house into me as brutally as they want, I don't believe it, I don't believe.' (87)

The nail-clipping example supports no case against Zaimoğlu for stealing motifs, structural principles, narrative techniques, or anything else from Özdamar. Geisel's few and sketchy other examples are just as limp. She suggests that Zaimoğlu's depiction of a sex education lesson is anachronistic in 'the rural Anatolia of the 1950s', but adduces no information about Kemalist syllabuses. Then she tackles the question of the shared cultural background: 'Apart from the fact that it explains nothing, the idea of an ethnic pool, from which Turkish authors more or less unconsciously draw material, is questionable anyway.' Why should anyone introduce such a patently ridiculous notion? This conjures up a straw man, an invented, inveterate 'Orientalist', whose role is to insist that Turkish reality consists of nothing but stereotypes. For Geisel, the 'ethnic pool' idea 'suggests the image of a pre-modern Turkey where people still tell stories in the marketplace.' But the uneven modernization of Turkey after the Second World War is setting and theme in both novels. In some places, people still do tell stories in the marketplace, even now. Geisel points out that Malatya is a large town with the population of Zurich, as if that clinched its monolithic 'modernity'. So much, then, for the 'rural Anatolia' she invoked a few lines earlier. And so much, too, for the importance of oral traditional genres in both novels, but most of all in the

one which Geisel means to defend from Zaimoğlu's imputed thieving. She (like Mecklenburg, who makes the same argument) apparently equates all invocations of traditional ways of life involving shared culture with the Eurocentric myth of 'eternally primitive' Turkey. Yet both novels make very frequent reference to strata of communal, traditional knowledge and belief, or *doxa*, and both novels also show very clearly how individuals use and abuse, manipulate, or challenge and reject such *doxa*; and how new *doxa* come to displace the old, brought in by new experiences, people, and media – and this is an all but obligatory theme in any depiction of Turkish society in the 1950s and onwards.

Geisel now approaches her central argument, bluntly asserting that *Leyla* perpetuates 'social clichés'. She evidently has Leyla's verbally and physically brutal father foremost in mind when she states that *Leyla* is pure stereotype, cynically designed for contemporary consumption. *Leyla* is:

the novel of the current debates about Islam. Zaimoğlu tells us what we always thought we already know about the world from which the honour-killers come, the violent Berlin school students ('Rütlichüler'), the Islamic terrorists and the parallel societies in general.<sup>6</sup>

Geisel grows sarcastic: 'That is perfectly legitimate: even a wild "Kanakster" like Zaimoğlu can obey market trends.' With cautious phrasing she now, at last, broaches her most original argument. 'But if it should be proved that [...] he helped himself to motifs from Özdamar, then things look different.' As she says, it would then be possible to read *Leyla* not just as a work of little artistic merit, designed to cater for market demand, but as a calculated 'travesty' of *Karawanserai*. 'Travesty' alludes to the fact that Zaimoğlu, as a man, adopts a woman's narrative perspective in *Leyla*. But here the term also suggests that his novel is not a frank parody, but a disguised, devious appropriation of another. *Leyla* has purportedly been constructed by systematically selecting and recomposing motifs and structures from Özdamar's work, giving these features new meanings, and all this with a specific ideological purpose: 'The structural motifs gain a new meaning, and unlike the unsystematic choice of random elements, there is method to this change of meanings.'

---

<sup>6</sup> On German controversies over 'honour-killing' and 'parallel societies', see Cheesman 2007: 113-7. 'Rütlichüler' refers to the Rütli Hauptschule in Berlin-Neukölln, where teachers called for police

Geisel argues this with reference to two characters; firstly, the father:

Both father figures are businessmen and bankrupts. They borrow money from rich men and pawn the family belongings, they wear a special hat and drive an expensive car, both hide in the men's café and have a Koran hanging over the bed, out of which they read to the women at critical moments.

One can add that they both get involved in criminal schemes and spend time in prison, leaving their families to endure extreme poverty; and indeed there are many other points in common. One can also add that Leyla's father is illiterate, so that his readings or rants 'from' the Koran, designed to intimidate his wife and children (their sons as well as daughters) are a grotesque charade, an unwitting parody of Muslim patriarchy and misogyny. But Geisel goes on:

At the level of action and character the two figures have nothing in common. In Özdamar's novel the father is a loveable, self-mocking, melancholy failure in life; Zaimoğlu describes a bigoted, despotic fundamentalist, who is feared by the whole family – and who fits exactly into the West's image of Islam. This kind of manipulation of the original material, in order to turn it into its ideological opposite, is a classic method of political propaganda.

This accusation – that Zaimoğlu is an Islamophobic culture-warrior, a propagandist whose work serves the ideological purposes of the West by demonizing Muslims – is astonishing.

Unlike the secularist Özdamar, Zaimoğlu affirms an undogmatic, private and personal Muslim religiosity, both in his literary work – most explicitly in several of the stories in *Zwölf Gramm Glück* – and in various essays, speeches and interviews (e.g. 2005) (see Cheesman 2007: 74-81). He was invited as a representative of 'non-organized Muslims' to participate in the German Islam Conference initiated by interior minister Wolfgang Schäuble in September 2006, and later resigned his place in the forum, criticizing the failure to invite headscarf-wearing, women believers. In fact, Zaimoğlu is Europe's most prominent imaginative writer of Muslim faith. It is of course possible that his work might lend itself, unintentionally, to anti-Muslim readings. We will look more closely at the figure of Leyla's father in a moment, in order to consider whether such an interpretation is

protection in March 2006, following violent incidents. The majority of school students are the children of asylum seekers.



apt. The key questions are: first, whether the father is depicted as representative of Muslim men; second, whether he is so two-dimensional a figure as to be a mere 'stereotype'; and third, more generally, whether a Muslim author, or indeed any author writing about Muslims, can get away with depicting a Muslim male who is not a 'role model' in the eyes of Western, secular, liberal readers.

Geisel concludes her article with another sensational and fascinating claim:

If one reads the two novels with the eyes of a detective, it is impossible to ignore the presence in *Leyla* of a character with Özdamar's first name. 'Mad Sevgi' laughs 'like a hyena boy-cub' and otherwise does what the first-person narrator in *Karawanserai* does: she tells funny stories, fools around, loves her mother, fights with boys. But in *Leyla* she comes to a bad end. 'She is dead, says Selda, but she lives on in men's and women's malicious gossip.' The fact that Zaimoğlu kills off a Sevgi in his novel proves nothing. But if the parallels in his novel really should come from *Karawanserai*, the conclusion is unavoidable that with this (almost classic) act of literary matricide, symbolically at least he wanted to dispose of the writer who had provided him with building materials for his novel.

At first sight this may seem plausible. Özdamar is informally called Sevgi. *Leyla*'s fictional friend Sevgi is a vivid, non-conformist character – like *Leyla*, a rebel against social strictures in general and against abusive authority in particular. So in some respects the fictional Sevgi does resemble the feisty protagonist of Özdamar's autofictions. Even if there is no case for an intertextual dependence (plagiaristic or other) of *Leyla* upon *Karawanserai*, one might still argue for reading her death as 'symbolic matricide'. The younger man's novel inevitably enters the German literary arena as a generic 'rival' to Özdamar's previously acclaimed work, and so Zaimoğlu might suffer from a kind of 'anxiety of influence' (Bloom 1975), even if he were not familiar with Özdamar's texts. This might be sufficient motivation to invent a 'Sevgi' who bears features of his older, more established colleague, and to kill her off as a way of liberating himself – whether consciously or unconsciously.

But the textual facts do not support this idea. Several girls among *Leyla*'s friends and acquaintances are in various ways rebellious, tomboyish, avid story-tellers and jokers, and so on. These features, associated with Özdamar, are not particularly associated with 'mad Sevgi'. For instance, *Leyla* herself is the main storyteller in the friendship group: 'Someone

who tells such lovely stories cannot be completely rotten,' as her teacher says (102). Her gun-toting Kurdish friend Manolya mounts the strongest challenge to gender norms and traditional authority: 'The law, the law, Manolya curses, under my feet the law.' (243) In any case, Leyla has two classmates called Sevgi: there is 'normal Sevgi' and 'mad Sevgi'. The former is shy and nervous. The latter is unpredictable and can be vicious. Leyla is close to neither. All her childhood friends (except her oldest friend, Fulya) fade from view about halfway through the book. However, 'mad Sevgi' is recalled after an interval of some eighty pages.

The passage concerned (330-333) closes a chapter which first describes the women of Leyla's family engaged in domestic piecework in their flat in Istanbul, then relates how a rich neighbour, a footballer's wife, attempts to seduce Leyla. This woman introduces into the novel a verbal motif which henceforth recurs in varied forms: 'Don't you want to love because you want to be missed?' (330). The novel ends with Leyla arriving in Germany: 'I want to love this country because it wants to be missed' (525); the phrase sums up her fundamental desire for reciprocal love. For reasons of her own, Selda (Leyla's eldest sister) plays the role of Leyla's 'pimp' to the footballer's wife, despite knowing that Leyla has chosen a young man to marry. When Selda discovers that her stratagem has failed, in that Leyla resisted seduction, she announces the death of 'mad Sevgi' bluntly, in an act of anger: 'Mad Sevgi is dead, she says suddenly, and walks off' (330). Later, relenting, Selda relates Sevgi's bizarrely tragic story, which she has learned from friends back in Malatya. Leyla calls it 'a small town drama', feeling little emotion, for Malatya now seems very far off (331). Sevgi had married a soldier, and he was called home one day to find his wife and a strange man both lying dead on the pavement beneath the window of their seventh-floor flat. The dead man is said to have been Sevgi's lover since school days. 'I never heard anything about that,' says Leyla (332). Nor was it a 'simple' case of double suicide: the man's body bore knife and gunshot wounds. The supposition is that Sevgi's lover wanted to leave her, and she fought him. As Selda says, it remains a mystery whether she killed him and then herself, or whether he followed her out of the window.

The extraordinary manner of Sevgi's leaving the world is in keeping with her excitable, aggressive character: 'She screamed herself into a rage, I say, that sounds just like her' (332). 'She was never quite normal all her life, says Selda, and she chose a death that

wasn't normal. Peace to her soul'. (333) Sevgi's scandalous death motivates the phrase quoted in isolation by Geisel: 'she lives on in men's and women's malicious gossip' (331). Taken out of context, this phrase seems to condemn the character, and by extension, to condemn her imputed real-life model, Özdamar. But once the context is restored, Geisel's 'symbolic' (implicitly, would-be feminist) narrative of appropriation, rewriting, ideological re-signification, and symbolic murder no longer seems plausible. There are no parallels between the fictional life-story and Özdamar's biography. 'Mad' Sevgi is not much liked by Leyla and other girls in the novel, but they admire her self-assertion and her lack of respect for male power. In her positive aspects, she resembles not only Sevgi Özdamar but many other women, both real and fictional. In her negative aspects – the 'mad' lack of control over her emotions, the verbal and physical violence – she resembles neither Özdamar's autofictional protagonist nor the author herself. An intentionally or even unconsciously created stand-in for Sevgi Özdamar would display features of character or act in ways which connected her, recognizably and specifically, with the translingual author, political activist, dramatist, migrant etc. There are no such connections. It is Geisel, not Zaimoğlu, who extracts elements from a text and gives new meanings to them. I leave it to the reader to speculate on her ideological motives for doing so.

As for Leyla's father, Halid, I have discussed him elsewhere (Cheesman 2007: 194f.), so here I will only briefly restate my view. Halid is a properly 'grotesque' character. He belongs in a line of Gothic anti-heroes, as analyzed by the Marxist critic Franco Moretti (1983: 83-108): anti-heroes whose excessive, ultimately self-destructive rebellion against social norms signifies the dreadful violence of social warfare along lines of class, nation, 'race' and gender. Moretti's key example is Dracula, a figure who represents, for bourgeois readers in the West, a fearsome conflation of three forms of power: ancient, feudal power; the power of the new class of industrial exploiters; and the emergent power of the dreaded swarms of the working classes, and especially poor immigrants. Leyla's father is a Chechen immigrant, an outsider. He claims princely status, but enjoys no respect in Turkey; he engages in a variety of enterprises, but never finds a secure place in society; and he turns violently against his own family, his neighbours and all authority figures. His many acts of violence assert a power which he patently lacks. They often take grotesque, Gothic forms. The Gothic literary legacy is perhaps most apparent when he buries an infant son – after

killing the baby at birth – in a graveyard at midnight (264-70). This is one of the passages where the narrator assumes omniscient powers, relating Halid's inner monologue. The effect on the reader is to temper a mingled sense of horror and disbelief with grudging sympathy for Halid. He incorporates the resentment and rage of all unloved, humiliated, powerless, placeless people who lack (or suffocate in themselves) the capacity to forgive or to pity others. He is far from likable, needless to say, but the narrative's glimpses of his inner life cumulatively prompt the reader to pity him more than fear him.

Halid is no mere stereotype of 'the' Turkish or Muslim violent male. His violence is too idiosyncratic for that, but he is also too comprehensibly motivated, and is depicted with too much depth and interiority, and from a perspective which shifts subtly in the course of the novel. Nor are Halid's views and behaviour presented as typical of the society depicted. They are not generally condoned: he is condemned at intervals by neighbours and relatives, teachers, police and other authority figures. Indeed he is generally ostracized. The novel has plenty of other characters who represent alternative ways of being a Turkish and Muslim man, albeit none of them are straightforward 'role models'. If Halid can appear to some hasty readers as the walking nightmare of contemporary Western, liberal society – being a superstitious, 'backward' Muslim migrant, a gross bigot and monstrous patriarch, resenting and loathing others for their wealth and health, freedom and happiness – then this points to real social and cultural problems both of Halid's time and ours. It raises questions about how imaginations respond to social conditions, both in those who are demonized and in those who demonize. Halid also belongs in a line of characters created from life by Zaimoğlu: characters who view themselves as incarnating demons, in part because they believe society has given them no alternative. They are objects of hatred, they are self-haters, they are misanthropists. This is true of some of the young men in *Kanak Sprak*, and notably of the reality-based narrator of *Abschaum*, Ertan Ongun. His much-quoted 'message' is: 'We are the Kanaks that you Germans were always warning about. Now we exist, corresponding exactly to your image and your fears' (1997: 183). The novel *Leyla* provides enough information for the reader to understand Halid as an exceptional but symptomatic product of a specific time and place, and gives us material with which to think and feel about a fate like his. And while he assumes mythical and terrifying dimensions in

Leyla's young eyes, she grows into a young woman who is very capable of defying him, manipulating him, and finally pitying him.

The confusion of fiction and fact in critical approaches to 'minority' literature results in judgments on the basis of political and policing priorities. Implicit in Geisel's hostile and superficial reading of Halid as a stereotype, particularly when she contrasts him with Özdamar's depiction of her father, is a demand for fiction to perform the work of social policy. Halid certainly makes a poor role model for Turkish boys, and his depiction definitely fails to promote a positive image of Turkish and Muslim masculinity. But for critics to police literary texts for their fulfillment of such injunctions can only damage literature's capacity to report on reality, let alone its freedom to imagine, and to help readers imagine. It is not the task of literature – to paraphrase the report from Denmark with which I began – to 'give minorities a better image among the police.'

## References

- Ammitzbøll, Pernille, and Lorenzo Vidino (2007) 'After the Danish Cartoon Controversy', *Middle East Quarterly* (Winter 2007), at <http://www.meforum.org/article/1437>.
- Anon. (2007) 'Bomb blast symbolic of police-immigrant unrest', *The Copenhagen Post* (November 9-15, 2007), at <http://www.cphpost.dk/get/104237.html> (also at <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2007/11/rhus-turkish-police-cadet-attacked.html>).
- Arlene A. (1999) 'Detecting Ethnicity: Jakob Arjouni and the Case of the Missing German Detective Novel', *The German Quarterly* 72/3 (Summer 1999), pp.265-289.
- Aytaç, Gürsel (1997) 'Sprache als Spiegel der Kultur. Zu Emine Sevgi Özdamars Roman *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserai*', in Mary Howard, ed., *Interkulturelle Konfigurationen: zur deutschsprachigen Erzählliteratur von Autoren nichtdeutscher Herkunft*. Munich: Iudicium, pp. 171-8.
- Bloom, Harold (1975) *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*. London: Oxford UP.
- Cheesman, Tom (2008) 'Pseudopolitisch, pseudokorrekt: Ein deutscher Literaturkritikskandal. Ein später Nachtrag zur Debatte um Feridun Zaimoğlus "Leyla"', *literaturkritik.de*, 6/2008 (June) at [http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez\\_id=11966](http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez_id=11966).
- Cheesman, Tom (2007) *Novels of Turkish German Settlement: Cosmopolite Fictions*. Rochester, NY and Woodbridge: Camden House.
- Geisel, Sieglinde (2006) 'Leyla – eine Travestie?', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (June 24, 2006), at <http://www.nzz.ch/2006/06/24/fe/articleE8O0G.html>.
- Kafka, Franz (1958). *Gesammelte Werke. Briefe 1902-1924*. Frankfurt: Fischer.

- Khaldun, Iqbal (2007) Blog post. <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2007/07/muslim-violence.html>.
- Kuruyazıcı, Nilüfer (1997) 'Emine Sevgi Özdamars Roman *Das Leben ist eine Karawanseraï* im Prozeß der interkulturellen Kommunikation', in Mary Howard, ed., *Interkulturelle Konfigurationen: zur deutschsprachigen Erzählliteratur von Autoren nichtdeutscher Herkunft*. Munich: Iudicium, pp. 179-88.
- Mecklenburg, Norbert (2006) 'Ein türkischer Literaturskandal in Deutschland? Kritischer Kommentar zum Streit um Feridun Zaimoğlu *Leyla* und Emine Sevgi Özdamars *Das Leben ist eine Karawanseraï*', *Literaturkritik.de* 7 (July 2006), at [http://literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez\\_id=9610&ausgabe=200607](http://literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez_id=9610&ausgabe=200607).
- Mecklenburg, Norbert (2008) Gegendarstellung. Zu Tom Cheesmans Artikel "Pseudopolitisch, pseudokorrekt: Ein deutscher Literaturskandal", *literaturkritik.de*, 6/2008 (Juni), at [http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez\\_id=12001&ausgabe=200806](http://www.literaturkritik.de/public/rezension.php?rez_id=12001&ausgabe=200806)
- Moretti, Franco (1983) 'Dialectic of Fear', in *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*. London: Verso, pp.83-108.
- Özdamar, Emine Sevgi (1992) *Das Leben ist eine Karawanseraï hat zwei Türen aus einer kam ich rein aus der anderen ging ich raus*. Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.
- Özdamar, Emine Sevgi (1998) *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*. Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.
- Şenocak, Zafer (2006) 'Authentische Türkinnen', *die tageszeitung* (June 10, 2006), p.13, at <http://www.taz.de/pt/2006/06/10/a0321.1/text.ges.1>
- Sezgin, Hilal (2006) 'Eine Stimme, ein Unschuldsbeweis', *Die Zeit* 26 (June 22, 2006), at <http://www.zeit.de/2006/26/L-Zaimoğlu-Interview>.
- SIAD (2007) 'One-year anniversary for the Gellerup-demonstration', at <http://siad.wordpress.com/2007/06/10/one-year-anniversary-for-the-gellerup-demonstration/teraoka>
- Weidermann, Volker (2006) 'Abgeschrieben? Streit um den Roman *Leyla*: Özdamar gegen Zaimoğlu', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 126 (June 1, 2006), p.37.
- Zaimoğlu, Feridun (1995) *Kanak Sprak. 24 Mißtöne vom Rande der Gesellschaft*. Hamburg: Rotbuch.
- Zaimoğlu, Feridun (1997) *Abschaum. Die wahre Geschichte des Ertan Ongun*. Hamburg: Rotbuch.
- Zaimoğlu, Feridun (1998) *Koppstoff. Kanaka Sprak vom Rande der Gesellschaft*. Hamburg: Rotbuch.
- Zaimoğlu, Feridun (2000) *Liebesmale, scharlachrot. Roman*. Hamburg: Rotbuch, 2000.
- Zaimoğlu, Feridun (2002) *German Amok. Roman*. Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.
- Zaimoğlu, Feridun (2003) *Leinwand. Roman*. Hamburg: Rotbuch.
- Zaimoğlu, Feridun (2004) *Zwölf Gramm Glück. Erzählungen*. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.
- Zaimoğlu, Feridun (2005) 'Der verfemte Gläubige – stärker doch als alle! Warum die Religion unausrottbar ist', *Stuttgarter Zeitung* 90 (April 20, 2005), Kulturbeilage, p.29. <http://www.kiwi-koeln.de/aktuellinhalt.php?showid=861>.

Zaimoğlu, Feridun (2006) *Leyla. Roman*. Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.

Zaimoğlu, Feridun (2008) *Liebesbrand. Roman*. Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.

Zaimoğlu, Feridun, and Günter Senkel (2006) 'Schwarze Jungfrauen', in *Theater heute* 5 (May 2006), pp. 46-55.

### **Biodata**

Tom Cheesman is Senior Lecturer in German at Swansea University, and author of *Novels of Turkish German Settlement: Cosmopolite Fictions* (Camden House, 2007). Other publications on various topics in German literature and culture, and some literary translations: for details see <http://www.swansea.ac.uk/german/staff/cheesman.htm>.