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Sporting Nationalism and Turkish-German Ethno-Comedy: Tiger's  
"Süper EM-Stüdyo"

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Soccer stands as one of the examples par excellence of globalization. In its contemporary commercialized, hyper-capitalistic form under the international non-governmental organization FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association), soccer embodies many of the debates that globalization has ignited. On the one hand, club soccer organizations gather teams of international players under local banners. An example: FC Bayern München's 2009 team roster includes players from ten nation-states, all competing in the *Bundesliga* (the top German league) under Bavarian colors – at once cosmopolitan and provincial. On the other hand, FIFA regulates soccer at the international level and international tournaments are global media events. In a time when the provincial is allegedly fading in deference to the global, the sports industry of international soccer continues to allow for the symbolic assertion of the nation. Soccer and conceptions of nationalism remain tightly interwoven, and soccer matches, more specifically the soccer fandom in and outside the stadium, remain vestiges of exaggerated performances of nationalism. It is the performance of nationalism that places the Federal Republic of Germany in an exceptional position.

It is needless to say that Germany's turbulent twentieth-century history has complicated the expression of German nationalism in the public sphere. The public display of nationalism has been and remains an exceptional event in Germany because of an increasingly interpretable signification of historically burdened images. Symbols of the nation like the flag or the national anthem can no longer exclusively signify any one ideology or narrative, despite the deafening roar of the National Socialist or, to a lesser extent, the Cold War years. However, the temporal, political and generational distance to WWII has not completely dissolved the connection between national symbol and National Socialism. The NS as persistent referent has dictated the display and performance of nationalism, and accordingly nationalistic display has generally not been a common sight in the public realm of postwar West and reunified Germany. All the more reason the German press was astounded in 2006 (when Germany hosted the FIFA World

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Cup) to see such jubilant fans in large numbers waving the German flag in support of the men's national soccer team.

The already complicated interstices of nationalism, mass gatherings and sport became even more complicated in 2008. Turkey's membership in UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) has often placed the Turkish men's national team in direct competition with the German men's national team, a competition read not merely as the contest between two sovereign democratic nation-states dictated by base factors of political geography and sports industry, but more importantly as the contest between two nations connected by histories of postwar migration. In 2008 during the UEFA European Championship hosted by Austria and Switzerland, Turkey faced Germany in a semi-final match, a match that Germany ultimately won. This spectacle of international sport brought a population out onto the streets of German cities that proved how ethnically and culturally diverse Germany has become. Images of the flag-furling, multicultural masses attracted much attention from journalists, cultural critics, sports sociologists and theorists of nationalism. Not only did a multiculturalist discourse become a dominant theme in the German news coverage of the tournament, but also identity politics – the pesky gadfly of multiculturalism – entered the discourse, often in order to discern the 'true' allegiances of Turkish, Turkish-German or German fans.

Amid the multicultural and multi-medial *Fußballfieber* of 2008, Turkish-German comedian Tiger "die Kralle von Kreuzberg" produced a playful web series about the soccer tournament. The web series "Süper EM-Stüdyo" (Super European Championship Studio) used the games of the UEFA European Championship 2008 as a platform for Tiger's own brand of ethno-comedy. Initially the series seemed like just another drop in the sea of German-language soccer-related entertainment, but the series gained a fair amount of print and online media attention during the course of the tournament, for it seemed to capture the spirit of the multicultural discourse in Germany: Who cheers for whom? Who waves which flag? And who belongs where? While these questions seem reductive and culturally positivistic, they shall here serve as a starting point to trace the more complicated phenomenon which Tiger's Turkish-German ethno-comedy brings out: sporting nationalism.

This form of nationalism has a long history in regards to German soccer and German media. As one of the most successful international teams in the history of FIFA, the German '*National-Elf*' has inspired a loyal and consistent fandom under national banners. The West German World Cup victory in 1954, known as the "Miracle of

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Bern,” inspired unexpected displays of German fandom and nationalism in the immediate postwar period, and in addition to the Second German Television (ZDF) sport documentaries, Sönke Wortmann thematized this victory in the narrative film *Das Wunder von Bern* (2003). Three years later, Wortmann produced another film about German national soccer, *Deutschland. Ein Sommermärchen* (2006), which intimately documented the lives of the men’s national team during the World Cup. Many German sport documentaries include images of sporting nationalism in the players and fans; *Ein Jahrhundert deutscher Fußball* (2000) produced by the German Football Association (Deutscher Fussballbund) and *Gib mich die Kirsche: Die 1. deutsche Fußballrolle* (2005) by Oliver Geith and Peter Hüls are but two examples.

What differentiates Tiger from these films is not only medial form i.e. low-budget internet clips versus feature-length film production. It is also the kind of sporting nationalism that Tiger presents. Wortmann primarily depicts the objects of sporting nationalist enthusiasm i.e. German soccer players, and he depicts (West) German fandom as divided by social class and generation but united by a national past (*Das Wunder von Bern*). Tiger’s sporting nationalism, however, raises a question more fundamental: What is a German fan? We could use sports sociologist Alan Bairner’s definitions of nationalism to answer this question: According to ethnic nationalism, which posits natural origins of the nation often bound up with language and race, a German fan is ethnically defined i.e. white and / or Germanic (3). According to civic nationalism, which emerged with the artificial creation of nation-states during the nineteenth century and recognizes citizenship over racial or ethnic determinations, a German fan is a legal citizen of the nation-state (ibid.). According to sporting or social nationalism, which stresses a shared sense of national identity, community and culture but is also accessible to outsiders who identify with its social characteristic, a German fan is an embodied ethos, a sympathetic national soul (ibid.). But Tiger’s ethno-comedy and sporting nationalism suggest an easier way to answer this question: A German fan is anyone who wears a German soccer jersey.

What these forms of nationalism understate is performance. Sporting nationalism is the will to celebration and spectacle. It plays with nationalist signification and perennially forgets a nation’s past and present for the sake of the sporting moment. The carnival of the fan miles in Germany is *pure* performance. A fan’s sporting nationality is articulated not through government sanctioned documents or skin color but through revelry and costume. The transitory, perennially

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(historically) forgetful, and celebratory of sporting nationalism cannot be stressed enough because it is the purely performative aspect of sporting nationalism that differentiates it from civic and ethnic nationalisms. Sporting nationalism in contemporary Germany complicates the concept of 'nation,' for it further unmoors the 'German nation' from essential origins and relegates it to the play and carnival of performance, both because of and despite German socio-political history.

This analysis of Turkish-German ethno-comedy, then, serves as an occasion to consider this form of nationalism critically, for the character of Tiger is the quintessential German sporting nationalist of the twenty-first century. Tiger's web series is an aesthetic cultural product that ties together the threads of soccer and medially constructed ethnicity into a format of popular culture, and thereby offers a medial topos for the examination of the performance and reception of sporting nationalism. In order to contextualize the audience and journalistic reception of Tiger, this paper shall on the one hand describe the ethnic and cultural stereotypes that comprise the Tiger character and argue that Tiger fulfills the role of native informant and ethno-tour guide for a sympathetic and tolerant German-speaking audience. On the other, the exceptionality of international soccer as a media event will be examined, an exceptionality that called for the identification and construction of reconciliatory images of peaceful "Turkish" / "German" relations and found it in the non-offensive form of the Tiger character. Tiger's web series also serves as an occasion to examine the idiosyncrasies of German multiculturalist discourse as it shapes and reacts to aesthetic 'Multikulti' production. The development of German multiculturalism in the postwar period has often focused on the surface of visible alterity, the accentuation and imagined stability in that alterity and the resolution of difference through fusion, often producing "instruments of exclusion in its efforts to promote inclusion" (Mani 22). The multiculturalist practice of redefining demographic and cultural homogeneity as heterogeneity simply by identifying and organizing, but not incorporating, difference in the majority society cannot serve here as a guiding analytical tool. Instead, this reading of an object in pop-culture will examine how a text performs authenticity, in this case an ethnic, national and sporting national authenticity in the immigration state that is contemporary Germany (Ruthven 78).

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 Tiger “die Kralle von Kreuzberg”
 

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The comedy of Tiger “die Kralle von Kreuzberg” or “das Herz vom Kiez” is the project of producer / director / writer Murat Ünal and actor Cemal Atakan. Beginning in December 2006, Tiger’s initial medium was radio. The form and content of Tiger’s radio comedy has been and remains fairly consistent and proved translatable to the film format: Tiger, in many (but not all) ways the stereotype of the working-class Turkish-German male, addresses the audience directly (either the radio listener or internet viewer) in the form of short monologues about various facets of urban ‘hood’ life or “Kiezleben.” Tiger has been broadcast on *Radio Bremen* and *Westdeutscher Rundfunk Köln* in the radio program “Funkhaus Europa” and on Berlin’s now defunct *Radio Multikulti* in the program “Süpermercado.” The success of these radio programs led to the establishment of Desire Media Filmproduktion in 2007 with Ünal as director. While Tiger remains on the radio, Desire Media’s thematically simple and low-budget digital Tiger clips and most recently the 30-minute length “Süper Tiger Show” have been broadcast on *Myspace*, *Myvideo* and *Tagworld* and are currently available on *Youtube*. While Desire Media is owned and operated by Turkish-Germans, it is not an example of “ethnoscapes in German media” as Ayşe Çağlar describes them in terms of content and intended audience demographic, meaning Turkish-language models of ethnic media which direct their commercial efforts at the specificity of the bilingual Turkish-German communities (52). Because German is the primary language of Tiger productions, Tiger is accessible to Turkish / German bilinguals and German monolinguals, but not Turkish monolinguals.

Desire Media provides a synopsis of the Tiger character on their website as “ein neues Format, das die Grenzen zwischen Fiktion und Realität neu definiert,” for Tiger is a man who “bringt Dinge anders auf den Punkt, als man es so kennt, aber er hat dabei seine eigene lebenswürdige Art” (Ünal). These descriptions leave to interpretation if the Tiger character is ‘real’ or staged, if Atakan is merely ‘being himself’ before the camera or acting from a prepared persona and script. While the Desire Media website might encourage what Leslie Adelson calls a “sociological positivist” reception of Turkish-German artistic productions, namely the presumption that such texts reflect “empirical truths” about their Turkish-German creators regardless of fictive,

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narrative contents (245), elsewhere Ünal has stated that the Tiger character is indeed staged and scripted (“Türkische Fußball-Comedy”).

Tiger attracted the largest audience and the most press media attention with the series “Tiger’s Süper EM-Stüdyo,” a series of twenty-four, three to six minute video clips commenting on the games of the UEFA European Championship 2008. The primary mise-en-scène for the series is a back lot of an anonymous building in Berlin-Kreuzberg, a neighborhood known for its high Turkish and Turkish-German population. In allusion but obvious contrast to the elaborate German television “EM-Studio” of ZDF constructed in Bregenz, Austria for the channel’s high-budget coverage of the games, Tiger’s “EM-Stüdyo” consists of cheap furniture, a chalk board, various crudely made signs and maps, a large piece of artificial grass with strips of tape signifying a soccer field, wooden toy figures to represent players in tactical explanations and Tiger’s small glass and saucer for Turkish tea. Those clips coinciding with either Turkish or German national team victories do not take place in the “Stüdyo” but are filmed out on the streets of Berlin in the midst of the fan miles and near public viewing sites. In these clips, the public carnival of fandom is the bulk of the content. When in the “Stüdyo,” Tiger judges the games played according to categories: best player, best move, best car convoy and best game (“Bester Spieler, Beste Hareket, Beste Autokonvoi, Beste Spiel”). In the German, these categories are written approximations of Tiger’s Turkish-German slang, meaning a vernacular of code switching and unconventional standard German grammar.

The unifying features of the “Stüdyo” format are, of course, international soccer and Tiger’s world view. Tiger is often the only actor or person in any given episode. The “Süper Tiger Show,” which began internet broadcasts in 2009, employs the talk show format, typically featuring local personalities from Berlin as guests. The ethno-comedy, soccer-related humor and singular source of content anchored in Tiger himself, however, remains relatively unchanged. While ethno-comedy is certainly nothing new in German-language artistic productions, Tiger’s particular style of ethno-comedy consists primarily in stereotype.

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## Ethno-Comedy and Cultural Stereotypes

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Tiger is stereotype, a constructed representation informed by a particular cultural constellation of historical development (the cultural and socio-economic history of postwar Turkish migration beginning with the guest worker program in 1961) and of a particular set of cultural assumptions and stereotypes contributing to an imagined Turkish-German male. This representational ethnic construct is informed by an institutional “ethnic logic” and a “racial knowledge” that renders stereotypes immediately meaningful in a society (Terkessidis). This representation limits reception of this entertainment product, for if Tiger is the vehicle of the series and his persona as Turkish-German is the defining attribute which generates humor, then that humor is primarily relevant not only in its cultural context, but also only relevant to those viewers familiar with this particular set of stereotypes. Those viewers who ‘get the joke’ must have a conception, however reductive, of a city-dwelling Turkish-German male of the working-class, must be familiar with the stereotypes of that figure, then must be able to identify some or all of those stereotypes as constitutive features of the Tiger character. The regular viewer of the Tiger clips, then, is one familiar with the cultural context and is most likely sympathetic to multiculturalist practice in some form, espousing cultural tolerance in regards to the kinds of media consumed and the sources thereof.

This kind of ethnic humor is culturally contextual and, in Tiger’s specific case, entirely driven by behavior, mannerism and the play with stereotype rather than situational comedy or slap-stick. Turkish-German film scholar Deniz Göktürk describes this sort of comedic ethnic role-play as frequently drawing on “crude stereotyping that amounts to little more than blatant racism, where the power of laughter is kept in the hands of the powerful,” but she concedes that “humor can be instrumental in releasing tensions and breaking up encrusted fixations in the way we perceive ourselves and others” (103). Tiger’s possibly “crude” stereotyping is in contrast to other Turkish-German comedies. For example, the television series *Türkisch für Anfänger* develops situational humor based on the bucking of stereotypes featuring middle-class, ‘integrated’ Turkish-German characters. Also, Turkish-German comedian Django Asül bucks the stereotype by delivering his standup routines in neither the stereotypical broken German of the immigrant nor standard German but in the Upper Bavarian dialect. Tiger, by contrast, embraces

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the stereotype. An adequate comparison from the United States is Richard Marin's "Cheech" character, the quintessential working-class, Southern Californian pachuco slang-speaking chicano of the 1970s. In the sense that Cheech is an amalgamated, hyperbolic chicano, the Tiger character is an amalgamated, hyperbolic Turkish-German.

Features of the Tiger character that can be identified as stereotypical in a contemporary context are Tiger's rapid-fire but often grammatically incorrect, Turkish-accented standard German, a macho heterosexual masculinity in the form of advice on how to woo, pacify and juggle female lovers and his humble, low-tech surroundings serving as studio production. Tiger's monologues are often comically didactic, as if Tiger were a tour guide for the culturally curious tourist. This description as tour guide does not mean that Tiger explains the physical urban landscape or history of Berlin-Kreuzberg in any way. Instead, the cultural Tiger-tours explicate life in the "Kiez," and according to Tiger's stereotype, his life tutorials are limited to the stereotypical imagined spheres of male, working-class Turkish-German existence: women, sport, food and cars.

Tiger's role as 'cultural tourist guide' falls into a familiar role occupied by many Turkish-German artists as determined by critics, translators and scholars; that is, the role of cultural informant and mediator, a role restricted to enabling communication and "improved understanding" between discrete cultural realms (Cheesman, *Novels* 34). The Tiger character does not, however, fulfill all stereotypes of the working-class Turkish-German male. These stereotypical deficiencies render the character an easily consumable entertainment product that therefore speaks to a particular viewer demographic.

Turkish-German Studies scholar Tom Cheesman paints a broad picture of Turkish-German artists and the (predominantly majority German) culture industry that supports them. Cheesman characterizes the model Turkish-German artist as a humanist and secularist with leftist sympathies and the model producer or publisher as an internationalist leftist with the understanding that cultural diversity provides a marketing opportunity (*Novels* 46). Cheesman is not merely suspicious of the relationship between Turkish-German artists and German culture industry due to Frankfurt School critiques. Cheesman is also addressing a broader distrust of contemporary German multiculturalism which finds articulation in anti-racist activism, literature and theory. This distrust is based on the presumption that "racialized Germans" need not fear xenophobes, whose hatred is manifest and, in certain ways, honest, but instead they should be suspicious of supposedly tolerant, humanistic

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intellectuals because if one would “scratch the surface of their left-liberal cosmopolitanism” one would see their “xenophobic stripes” (ibid. 23). While the source of production has already been established in the case of Desire Media, meaning the producer Murat Ünal does not fit the mold of the shrewd majority German opportunist looking to profit in the “Multikulti Zoo” (Zaimoğlu 11), Cheesman’s combined characterizations of what could be designated the multi-culture industry can help determine the function of Tiger’s relationship to cultural stereotypicality and reception.

The Tiger character fulfills in many ways a Turkish-German stereotype, but the stereotype he fulfills avoids certain traits that would alter, if not forbid, a multiculturally sympathetic reception. His behavior is ‘accented’ enough to build a stereotype that indicates his roots in contemporary German society and with those roots a given set of assumed socio-economic assumptions; ‘assumed’ because Tiger is always the host or entertainer in all Tiger productions and never visually linked to a domestic or work sphere. The viewer never sees his apartment, job, family or even the often mentioned girlfriends he struggles to please. The viewer also never sees Tiger in any religious setting. The only clue to Tiger’s religious heritage is his occasional expletive utterance “Allah!” which arguably says more about a linguistic than a religious heritage. Otherwise, Tiger remains religiously anonymous, if not manifestly secular. A specific work, religious and domestic sphere must then be assumed, meaning preconceived and imbedded in the visual markers of his stereotype, or imagined, meaning built upon the very same visual markers of stereotype.

This lack of manifest social milieu disappoints the stereotype of the Turkish-German street hustler or criminal. More significant to the reception of various Tiger productions, however, is Tiger’s failure to embody the role of young, male, violent street youth or the “Kanaksta” (combination of the words ‘gangsta’ and ‘Kanak,’ a racial epithet). The figure of the “Kanaksta” was initially, and controversially, depicted by author Feridun Zaimoğlu in his early novels of the 1990s, most notably *Kanak Sprak* (1995), and has since been reproduced in various medial forms by various Turkish-German and German artists. The “Kanaksta” is the disenfranchised Turk, living in Germany but with a Turkish passport, defiant in the face of German “Fremdenliebe” and “Fremdenhass.” The “Kanaksta” speaks a fluent torrent of (sometimes creative) obscenities expressing physical and sexual violence and incorporating American hip-hop slang. The “Kanaksta” is a misogynist and, in the tradition of Turkish fathers, a future iron-fisted patriarch.

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Tiger fulfills this role in almost no way. His routines and anecdotes express no violence or hatred. While Tiger might seem streetwise and fast-talking, there are no gang-related implications in the character's behavior and no mention of criminality whatsoever. The Tiger character might seem womanizing in his references to various girlfriends but it would be a stretch to label Tiger as a misogynist. Linguistically, Tiger's broken "Kiez-Deutsch" is a softened, warm variant of stereotypical Turkish-German youth slang. Tiger's language, despite the Turkish-German accent and the occasional code-switching, is direct and understandable to the average German speaker, even to the German speaker with no familiarity of the Turkish language. Moments of code-switching from German to Turkish are brief, normally consisting of only a few words in a German-language sentence, efficaciously signaling Tiger's ethnic identity and granting his monologues a certain amount of 'authenticity.'

In a word, Tiger is non-threatening, assuming a majority-German audience. This means, the content and character of Tiger do not directly challenge political practice or conviction in provocative ways. Tiger is not aligned with any formal activist group. An example of the latter is the anti-racist group *Kanak Attak*, which produces provocative videos in an agit-prop style, meaning in a style not interested in taking on complex positions nor deploying "any formal sophistication" which would suggest video art but pointing out the existence of hidden racism "under the surface of urban normality" (Heidenreich and Vukadinovic 149). The Tiger clips neither manifestly identify with any anti-racist movement nor do they confront any notion of ethnic or cultural prejudice. Tiger's play with stereotypicality is not that of Zaimoğlu's, which seeks to "subvert the multiculturalist discourse of identity by devices which include the aggressive over-fulfillment of stereotypical expectations" (Cheesman, "Akçam" 187). But more than that, Tiger's play with ethnic stereotype does not cast a broad social net by, for example, thematizing Turkish migrant marginalization, a strategy found in the autobiographically driven literary humor of Hatice Akyün and Aslı Sevindim, albeit to a very tempered and light-hearted extent.

The citation of these examples does not intend to exclusively equate anti-racist politics with aggression, force or threat. Nor does it intend to empty Tiger of all political expression by comparison. It does intend to address an imagined majority-German reception of Tiger both from viewers and from the press – again, a presumably multiculturally sympathetic and soccer-loving audience. The innocuous Tiger stereotype is

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easily digestible, suggests a Turkish-German existence, thematically presents light-hearted ethno-comedy through the everyman's realm of soccer and allows viewers and media to consume or contribute to vague multiculturalist practice. The aforementioned softened ethnic stereotype not only contributes to this reception but also Tiger's function as a stereotype in popular culture. Tiger's habitus displays the visual markers of the Turkish-German, yet Tiger is visually and metaphorically isolated in the camera frame. He is an individual Turkish-German and simultaneously a collective assemblage of ethnic enunciation, meaning he "speaks" for his "people" as an isolated individual set a comfortable distance from the "people" for which he speaks (Deleuze and Guattari 18).

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### Tiger in the Media: Reconciliatory Drive

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The events which contributed to Tiger's most intense media exposure (beyond the Tiger productions themselves) must be explicated. The German-language media organizations *Tagespiegel*, *Welt Kompakt*, *TAZ Berlin*, *Blond*, *Bild* and *Spiegel Online* made Tiger the object of light-hearted journalistic reportage either in print or online with the journalistic content ranging somewhere in between the typical 'human interest' story and celebrity news. This media exposure was not simply Tiger's moment in the sun nor was it merely due to Tiger's particular brand of ethno-comedy (which is in and of itself not extraordinarily innovative). In many ways, this media exposure was predetermined and initially had very little to do with the actual content and medial form of the Tiger clips.

The event which led the press to Tiger was, of course, soccer. International soccer is a media event in much of the world, and certainly in Germany. This is a more complicated statement than it would initially seem. Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz ascribe several attributes to the televised media event that can be applied to televised international soccer tournaments. Media events are "interruptions of routine," meaning not only do they halt everyday routines, but they do so "monopolistically" by suspending and preempting regular broadcasting with "a series of special announcements and preludes that transform daily life into something special" (Dayan and Katz 5). Club soccer is routine, a common television fixture nine months out of the year, including many annual national and international club soccer tournaments (DFB-Pokal, *Bundesliga* Championship, UEFA Champions

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League, Europa League, FIFA Club World Cup etc). International soccer competitions, however, are interruptions of routine, and like national or religious holidays, which Dayan and Katz call holidays of “civil religion,” media events temporarily “propose exceptional things to think about, to witness, and to do” (5). Subsequently, media events are characterized by a “norm of viewing in which people tell each other that it is mandatory to view,” resulting in communal viewing practices (8-9). The public viewing sites, not just in private establishments but also the organized television viewing sites in German cities, are the obvious examples in international soccer.

Media events are live, unpredictable and organized “outside the media,” by which Dayan and Katz mean that the events take place outside the studio in “remote locations” and that “the event is not usually initiated by the broadcasting organizations” (5). International soccer tournaments are indeed broadcast live and therefore the action on the pitch remains unpredictable (if only for ninety minutes), but this live broadcast is also preplanned, announced and advertised in advance. This advertised and live media event is anticipated and subsequently “presented with reverence and ceremony” (ibid. 7). Any one game in an international soccer tournament will consist of pre- and post-game ceremony and the reverence of the fans in and outside the stadium is merely one part of the pageantry. The reverent and ceremonious presentations as such do not celebrate conflict, even when the media event’s referent consists in conflict directly or indirectly. They instead celebrate reconciliation:

This is where they differ from the daily news events, where conflict is the inevitable subject. Often they are ceremonial efforts to redress conflict or to restore order or, more rarely, to institute change. They call for a cessation of hostilities, at least for a moment. (Dayan and Katz 8)

In the case of international soccer, which still tempts some sports journalists and cultural critics to employ military terminology and warlike rhetoric, the conflict on the field is of course the highly regulated ‘mock battle’ of team sport. Instead of highlighting conflict, the message remains reconciliatory, inviting fans to unite “in the overcoming of conflict or at least in its postponement or miniaturization” (ibid. 12). Media events “integrate societies” and evoke a “renewal of loyalty to the

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society and its legitimate authority,” therefore this semblance of integration is hegemonic and quickly “proclaimed historic” (ibid. 9).

This media theory is here employed not merely to formalistically examine televised international soccer tournaments. This theory also begins to establish a framework for the examination of the medial representations of the sporting nationalist fans miles and the multiculturalist discourse. Sporting nationalism is the will to celebrate and is therefore an inclusive form of nationalism; those with the appropriate costume and colors may cheer for the nation, regardless of cultural affiliation or ethnicity. Sporting nationalism is, however, perennial, transitory and only temporarily and selectively forgets national, cultural or ethnic histories for the sake of carnival. While a nation’s past is more readily an object of selective forgetting e.g. the persistent NS referent of German nation symbol, a nation’s present is necessarily closer to the temporal and cultural surface and threatens to intrude into the carnival. For the Turkish-German population in all its diversity, the present consists of lingering systemic economic and educational inequalities, restrictive state naturalization policies and continuing debates over integrative vs. assimilative cultural and political policies. In 2008, this present threatened to inject conflict into the fan miles and divide fans along nationalist and ethnic lines. Despite peaceful celebrations in the tournament hitherto, a sense of nervousness seemed palpable in anticipation of the semi-final match between Germany and Turkey. Sporting nationalism as an extension of the media event of international soccer, however, seeks reconciliation rather than conflict. Faced with images of German, Turkish and Turkish-German sporting nationalism, this *reconciliatory drive* sent the German media out in search of Turkish-German representation (‘vertreten’ not ‘darstellen’). And the media found it in the character of Tiger.

The media attention Tiger received rendered him an imagined collective source of cultural reconciliation between ‘Turks’ and ‘Germans,’ proof that, despite the anticipation of ethnic and nationalist hooliganism (which never came to pass), the Turkish and German fans could indeed coexist in a multicultural parade of goodwill. Tiger’s role in the press media, then, is made to transcend that of an entertainer and occupy the role of cultural ambassador, a role problematic for several reasons. Of course, Tiger is a fictive character and not some sort of cultural attaché for the actual soccer fans on the street. But this remark runs the risk of once again misrecognizing variants of nationalism. Sporting nationalism is neither ethnic nor civic nationalism, therefore the performance of sporting nationalism in no way stems from some

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true origin of ethnic or national identity. The sporting conflict of the semi-final match pitted Germany and Turkey against each other; two represented nations but not nation-states since neither the Turkish nor German football associations are government controlled. The fan miles, however, were often assumed by the press to constitute ethnic and civic divisions of nation, forbidding the conflation of things Turkish with things German. The press reading of the Turkish / German fan miles is quintessentially multicultural; the identification, stabilization and timid celebration but never inclusion of difference, the decidedly non-dialectic construction and maintenance of ethnic and cultural binaries.

The multiculturalist, reconciliatory drive to establish Tiger as a Turkish soccer ambassador is contingent upon his use of stereotype. This stereotype is easily recognizable and non-threatening. To emphasize Tiger's stereotypicality as a source of collective enunciation reveals a certain kind of epistemological search; this means, a search for the confines of ethnic societal relations, a search Etienne Balibar aligns with racist practice and a "desire for knowledge." According to Balibar, racism is not only a way of "legitimizing privileges or disqualifying competitors or continuing old traditions," it is also an investigation of societal and identical limitations:

[I]t is a way of asking and answering questions about [...] why we find ourselves unable to resist the compulsion of violence going beyond the "rational" necessities of competition and social conflict. The answer provided by racism to all these questions [...] is this: it is because we are different, and tautologically, because difference is the universal essence of what we are – not singular, individual difference, but collective differences, made of analogies and ultimately, of similarities. The core of this mode of thought might very well be this common logic: differences among men are differences among sets of similar individuals (which, for this reason, can be "identified"). (Balibar 200)

It might seem paradoxical to incorporate Balibar's comments on racism as a universalism in this context. After all, multiculturalism is commonly perceived as an inclusive ethos, granting acknowledgement and a certain amount of positive cultural status to ethnic or racial minorities in a heterogeneous society. But the reception of Tiger in a time of imagined ethnic conflict addresses materialist characteristics of

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sporting nationalism that includes the desire for racial knowledge. The journalistic reception of Tiger seeks to understand, perhaps in an act of good intentions. But in the process of understanding, this reception codifies and isolates difference, shrinking the 'Ding an sich' that is cultural alterity to a 'knowable' quantity, a subjective knowledge that merely reflects preconceptions and resists forming new conceptions.

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### Performative Sporting Nationalism

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The performative quality of sporting nationalism unmoors national determination from biology, ethnicity or law. Sporting nationalism can only be expressed and identified when it is performed. Heritage, citizenship or social identity can certainly provide the impetus to perform sporting nationalism, but the impetus is visually lost in the mass pageantry and materialism of fandom. Sporting nationalism is materialist practice, meaning it is not a mimetic, platonic performance, offering simulacral material display of an immaterial realm of 'true' ethnic and national forms. Sporting nationalism is a materialist process of performance and thus surface. It is inclusive, selectively forgetful of histories and purely celebratory.

Tiger is the sporting nationalist, the performer. In "Süper EM Stüdyo" episode 21, filmed directly after the semi-final match, Tiger wears a half Turkish, half German soccer jersey, reminiscent of the Turkish-German flag prominent in the city during the tournament (the Turkish star and crescent centered on the German black, red and gold). He is once again in the crowded streets of Berlin, fireworks exploding overhead, masses of cheering fans waving German flags. With the fandom visible behind him, Tiger gives highlights of the game in his exaggerated fashion, mimicking the reactions of the Turkish fandom to every goal, every "haraket" (Turkish: move, maneuver). Although Tiger admits that he is "richtig traurig," he congratulates the German national team, swears his oath to cheer on the German national team in the final against Spain and the episode ends with Tiger rushing off to join in the celebration. This depiction of Tiger as a sporting nationalist shows his resiliency and eagerness to continue nationalist revelry even after his preferred national team has been eliminated from competition.

These are images of sporting nationalism, of performance and of the momentary surface. Tiger strategically negotiates symbolic bi-nationalism through the humorous play with stereotype. What makes

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the comedy format such an interesting device through which symbolic nationalism can be represented is its ability to easily switch sides, as it were, for the sake of the sustained production of humorous material. Despite the seriousness that national symbols can convey, in Tiger's hands, these symbols lose some of their gravitas and float in the realm of play and carnival. As sporting nationalism, Tiger's "Süper EM-Stüdyo" is exemplary in its avoidance of socio-economical factors of sports industry and rigid identity politics attributable to German or Turkish national signification. While nationalism provides the primary matrix through which Tiger's comedic commentary on the games finds its articulation, this nationalism serves more pronouncedly as a generator of humor and cause for communal celebration.

It is important to note that the performance of sporting nationalism typically includes an audience, a witness to the carnival. From the perspective of the German press, to witness Tiger and his sporting nationalism is also to interpret and translate this performance into knowledge. The formation of Tiger's sporting nationalism into a narrative seeks an explanation for the celebratory images and, more importantly, the slippage of singular and stabile ethnicity and nationalism. Under the influence of the "civil religion" that is international soccer, this narrative desires to concentrate on some "central value, the experience of *communitas* and equality in one's immediate environment and of integration with a cultural center" (Dayan and Katz 16). The sporting nationalist euphoria in its abandonment of stabile national identities as legitimate sources of articulation is reduced to the manageable and familiar realm of multicultural reconciliation. The press takes on a multiculturally didactic role reminiscent of Domna Stanton's theory of "rooted cosmopolitanism," a program of cosmopolitanism as ethics and pedagogy to be learned and *mediated* through teachers of "languages other than our native or first idiom and the cultures and histories embedded in those languages" (629). This didactic quality aligns itself with Cheesman's aforementioned critique of the Turkish-German multi-culture industry and prioritizes the power of mediation and explication over any actual referents of cosmopolitanism. This means, Tiger, already mediated and a stereotype, is again mediated by the German press, and subsequently multiculturalized and "rooted" to singular ethnic and national identities, when his embodiment of sporting nationalism is anything but rooted.

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## Conclusion

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Tiger's market appeal as an easily digestible, ethnically non-threatening, soccer-supplementary object can be characterized as the desired product packaging of the multi-culture industry. Yet the stereotypes that comprise Tiger do something to destabilize those very stereotypes when affiliated with the national pageantry of sport. As a representation of the sporting nationalist, Tiger's Turkish-German allegiance to nationality can be flexible and neither dogmatic nor extremist. In a word, it can be an expression of performative sporting nationalism. Tiger's brand of ethno-comedy and entertainment borders on the apolitical, but this apolitical (or more precisely selectively political) facet of sporting nationalism is the very sort of celebration Tiger presents and represents.

The reconciliatory drive of international soccer as media event, however, has often petrified sporting nationalism into 'authentic' national expression. The media's persistent separation of fans into two national camps within a single nation strives to depict reconciliation as defined by multiculturalism. But in order to address a genuinely heterogeneous German society not so easily divided into German and Turkish, major and minor, or indigenous and immigrant, perhaps something other than multiculturalism is needed. It remains to be seen whether contemporary Germany can be more adequately conceptualized in terms of cosmopolitanism, transnationalism or hybridity, as contentious as these terms remain. But one thing is certain: The perennial media event of international soccer and the ensuing culturally diverse fandom injects performative nationalism into the German public sphere in ways which no longer strictly adhere to the nationalistic phantoms of the past. Bullish notions of ethnic nationalism simply cannot explain the diverse carnival of soccer fandom, and for this reason, the cultural juggernaut of soccer remains a fruitful realm for the examination of nationalism in a globalized world.

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