Hamburg University
German Jordanian University

photo\ Dr. Sadiq Rahman & GJU
OUR JOURNEY CONTINUED
Dear Reader,

You are reading the second booklet, illustrating and describing 2 years of cooperation between Jordan and Germany, digitally as well as in person. These projects surrounding encounters, exchanges, cooperation and collaboration were funded by the DAAD (GAES) under the name “Transnational Higher Education”.

There were 2 distinct themes in the last 2 years of the project. During the first year, so in the timeframe from September 1st, 2020, to December 31st, 2020, the clear focus was on facing the then-current experiences of dealing with an international pandemic in everyday life and the corresponding restrictions. From the first year, there is a separate booklet, containing stories and descriptions of the movies, which stem from the first year of the project, which had to be done completely digitally, as there were strict lockdowns in place in Germany and Jordan.

The second timeframe from September 1st, 2021, to December 31st, 2021, allowed for the members of the project to physically travel to one another and discuss experiences on alienation in the dimensions of language, media and culture. This was done in four working groups, which present their results in this booklet.

In this booklet you’ll find the results and findings of the project as a whole and the groups in particular. To add to this, you’ll also find first person reports from Germany and Jordan, Illustrations, Poems to add to it.
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THE PROJECT TIMELINE
2021–2022

01.02
Publication of 2020 booklet

FEBRUARY 2021

FEBRUARY – MARCH 2021

Discussing the second vase of the project

April–May 2021

Preparing the proposal and documents for the DAAD

AUGUST 2021

DAAD promotes THE 2021 project
The project participants...
SEPTEMBER 2021

09.09\ | Starting the first group meeting
16–15 September GJU team in Hamburg

16–15.09\ | September GJU team in Hamburg

17.09\ | Campus tour

18.09\ | Introduction by a representative from the International Office of Hamburg University and introducing and organizing the 2nd vase of the project

19.09\ | Preparing the project groups
20.09\ | Sightseeing

21.09\ | Uni-meeting and a presentation by Ilse Stangen Profale

22.09\ | Uni-meeting and presentation by Dr. Jens Rogmann

23.09\ | Working groups

24.09\ | Uni-meeting and presentation of the interim results

25.09\ | Working on proposal, meeting a representer from GJU’s International Office

26.09\ | Exploring Jordan (Petra, Wadi Rum and Red Sea)

27.09\ | Reflection

OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 2021

20.10–07.11\ | Hamburg team in Jordan

30.10\ | Welcoming

31.10\ | Meeting Prof. Ralf Roskopf, Vice President for International Affairs and Prof. Alsalm, Dean of the School of Applied Humanities and Languages. Proceeding the day by working in groups

01.11\ | Working in groups

02.11\ | Working in groups

03.11\ | Working on proposal, meeting a representer from GJU’s International Office

04–05.11\ | Exploring Jordan (Petra, Wadi Rum and Red Sea)

06.11\ | Reflection

https://www.ew.uni-hamburg.de/internationales/aktuelles/2021-jordanien-the.html

SEPTEMBER THE PROJECT STARTS OFFICIALLY

09.09\ | Starting the first group meeting
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“Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” - Henry Ford

08.12\ | Virtual group meeting preparing the final project product

17.12\ | Virtual group meeting finalizing the project product (deadlines...)
The cooperative project “Transnational Higher Education” (THE) between University of Hamburg and German Jordanian University, has been funded by means of the funding line Deutsch-Arabische Transformationspartnerschaft Programmlinie 2: Kurzmaßnahmen and has consisted of two funding periods.

In the first timeframe from September to December 2020, the project had to be fully digital due to restrictions on travel and personal contact in the COVID-19 Pandemic and was dedicated to the theme “Intercultural understanding and overcoming the pandemic”. In four digital conferences to plan, two digital workshop weekends and two digital assessments, methods and tools from the fields of storytelling and film study were used to create, and initiate processes of intercultural understanding, which resulted in a multitude of research topics for coming cooperation. The examination of cultural differences in feelings and experiences of alienation and processes of alienation was made the central cause of the project, due to experiences and interest from members of the project.
In the second year of the project from September to December 2021, the project was developed around two visits from Professors, Lecturers and Students to the respective other University, in order to differentiate, deepen and edit the themes of research developed in the first year of the project in an intercultural context. Work on the project was supported in both locations of the project by means of culture oriented lectures, discussions, as well as excursions. Four distinct fields of research were developed with the overarching theme of alienation. In these fields, research was conducted by a group of culturally and academically diverse working groups. These fields are:

1. Linguistic Alienation
2. Social Alienation
3. Alienation within Social Media
4. Cultural Alienation

Currently, the research groups are continuing their work digitally. The goal is to answer their respective research questions and attract further research in these fields.
Project Proposal

Hamburg
Thinking in Stories. Explorations in Alienation and Identification

Gordon Mitchell

“Wir sind die Generation ohne Bindung und ohne Tiefe. Unsere Tiefe ist der Abgrund. Wir sind die Generation ohne Glück, ohne Heimat und ohne Abschied.”

Wolfgang Borchert
Storytelling can be a way to arrange our experience, helping us to express who we see ourselves to be, and how we feel about that. It is a way of engaging with abstract theories, at the same time as relativizing them through unsettled characterization. When Wolfgang Borchert (1921-1947) wrote the play Draußen vor den Tür he had just returned home to Hamburg at the end of a cruel war, as does his protagonist. He is home only to find that he remains as excluded as ever. Part of him longs for community, only to be rebuffed, returning to the familiar outside. Borchert’s play, his short stories and his poems explore ways of not belonging. They resonate for readers with similar experiences of exclusion, due to migration, orientation, generation, or opportunity. A well-told story leaves the reader space to think, and create their own stories. The irony, the reined in passion and the simplicity of Borchert’s writing can be borrowed by other writers.

The city of Hamburg again provided a backdrop, this time for workshop participants from the Middle East and Europe. Their task was to explore ways in which academic research might engage with the theme of ‘alienation’. Writing stories is a form of product-based inquiry. It is a process which draws on our own raw experience, on what others reveal, or on what we imagine the life experience of others to be. It is seldom a linear process from idea to product. What might begin as a destination, may soon slide into hesitation and doubt. In hindsight every doubt, every decision was an act of thought. The emerging story becomes a way of coming to terms with these experiences, of examining them, and of talking about them.
Saturday 18th of September, the guests from Jordan have been only two days in Hamburg and the first welcome events have taken place. It’s time to get to work. Merve and Carolina plan a morning workshop. The goal is to explore the concept of “alienation” and divide into several groups. The participant group is characterized by a mixture of status. There are students, lecturers and professors from the two involved universities: the German Jordanian University (GJU) and the Universität Hamburg (UHH). The disciplines which the participants study, research and teach are diverse and include translation studies, creative writing, qualitative methods of educational research, sociological aspects of education, diversity in education, and German as a second language. After a warm-up exercise, the first conceptual work begins. With such an interdisciplinary group the first step is to brainstorm and collect associations to the concept of “alienation” from the participants: isolation, disconnection, identity, economics, failure, power, judgement, segregation, marginalization, exclusion, separation, lack of respect, loneliness, rejection, mental health, feeling special and geography. These varied first approaches are commented in plenary session and written down on the black board.
Photograph 1_Brainstorming on “alienation”
The introduction gives way to a phase of input. Several materials are presented: pictures, poems, books of poems and short stories, magazines, scientific books, scientific articles, biographies… These are distributed throughout the classroom according to the perspective they represent. A literary point of view is given by materials on Wolfgang Borchert, Herman Hesse, Mahmoud Darwish, and Semra Ertan. Sociology is represented with short insights into Theodor W. Adorno, Karl Marx, Georg Simmel, Ferdinand Tonnies and Émile Durkheim’s work. Participants are encouraged to move around the classroom and get an impression on the different materials. They are equipped with their notebooks and note down quotes, references, ideas, and concepts.

After this individual phase of work, temporary groups are built and given index cards and markers. From all their individual notes, groups have to select which aspects are the most relevant and fix these in the index cards. The negotiation over the contents of the index cards implies a processing of the materials and a judgment of relevance according to the understanding of the concept of alienation. At this stage a process of abstraction takes place, visualized in the index cards which each group then proceeds to introduce in turn.
Workshop

Photograph 4: The index cards are presented
Every group has introduced their index cards and now participants are asked to pick up one or two cards that interest them most and move to a distanced area of the classroom. If another person has already selected the same card, participants are asked to join that person in the area in which they stand. Several groups have formed throughout the classroom. Participants should then form a circle and look around for connections between the concepts in their index cards. Fewer groups remain. Persons standing on their own are asked to join one of the bigger groups. However the moderators control that the groups are even in number and from different universities. The last criterion is difficult to hold due to the uneven number of participants from the GJU and the UHH. 4 groups are formed and asked to start working on their perspective on “alienation”. At the end of the workshop the working groups are ready to start:

Group 1 - Social media
Group 2 - Social alienation
Group 3 - Culture
Group 4 - Linguistic alienation

In the following days the participants of each group make decisions on what they will produce. After the guests from Jordan return, collaborative work takes place online. A key aspect to the collaborative work is the choice for communication tools – all groups decided on having a WhatsApp group for sharing ideas, pictures and texts. Some used MS-Teams to work collaboratively on documents and meet synchronically.

A most awaited further stage starts when the Hamburg participants become guests in Jordan. The groups retake their work in presence, gain new input and interactions and present their work process to each other. Final decisions on the group products are made. Finally, after the Hamburger visitors stay in Jordan comes to an end, the groups take on online collaborative work again. An online plenary meeting awaits to give the whole project a unison shape: this booklet.
“Linguistic Alienation”
Alia, Carolina and Khalida
Recollections of a transnational working group on linguistic alienation

Introduction
These recollections are not an article on a study in a classic form, but they present a summary of the actions, decisions and conceptualizing processes that took place within the working group linguistic alienation during the exchange program Trans-national Higher Education (THE) in autumn 2021. The group was formed by one student and one lecturer from the German Jordan University, and one lecturer from the University of Hamburg.

Our exchange program THE allowed us to meet both in the premises of the University of Hamburg and of the German Jordan University. Our work started in Hamburg and continued for some weeks online until we could retake our collaboration in presence in Jordan.
Methodological and theoretical approach

As a working group we started by doing exploration of the uses for the concept linguistic alienation. We first carried out a small online survey for the members of our THE program. Their intuitive associations with the term linguistic alienation varied. Some participants focused on lack of grammatical correctness, while others referred to the inability to express oneself or communicate without misunderstandings (either in the first language or in a foreign language). A common ground of several answers was the feeling of being out of place in a group.

With this first orientation, we took a second step and undertook a brief literature search. Our aim was to identify how linguistic alienation had been defined in previous empirical or theoretical work. The results were scarce and diverse. On the one hand, we did not find any scientific publications on linguistic alienation in the context of higher education. On the other hand, we found references to linguistic alienation in different disciplines such as philosophy, critical social theory and sociolinguistics. Gay (1998) employed this concept to refer to intentional obstacles in the possibilities of communication and related it to linguistic violence. He draws on Rossi-Landi’s work, who takes on arguments from Marx concept of alienation in economics and brings it to the field of linguistics, claiming that “language can function as capital with huge profits being reaped by the elite groups that control the means of linguistic production.” (Gay 1998, p.2). In this way, Gay theorizes on the field of language and power, including linguistic alienation as a dimension of oppression. In a similar line, Ingrid Piller defines linguistic alienation as

Experiencing linguistic barriers to participation, fearing linguistically motivated violence, and being subject to microaggressions can result in a deep sense of isolation and exclusion, even while it is impossible to separate linguistic isolation and exclusion from gender and racial discrimination. (Piller 2016, p. 154)
Obstacles not only in communication but also in participation are a characteristic of linguistic alienation for Piller. Piller refers to linguistically motivated violence in connection to linguistic alienation. Another aspect that she emphasizes is the fact that linguistic alienation is always linked to discrimination.

From this brief insight into previous theoretical studies on linguistic alienation we learned that the concept had been used to refer to obstacles in communication and participation as means for oppressing or discriminating and that it was linked to linguistic violence. With this conceptual orientation we developed a guideline with questions for making interviews and getting an idea of how this phenomenon could be relevant in context of higher education.

Methodologically, we took several decisions in line with empirical qualitative social research (Reichertz 2016). For example, the analysis of the interviews would be a base for generating a hypothesis. However, other decisions separated our process plainly from how qualitative social research is usually made. We decided for instance not to record the interviews but write conversation records with notes on the most relevant aspects. This decision had disadvantages but also advantages. As a disadvantage we considered that an ad hoc filter of relevance had to be employed by the interviewee, thus turning the notes for the conversation records a first interpretation of the data. However, the advantage was that our interviewees could feel comfortable and free to speak about a difficult topic, for it could entail talking about discrimination, oppression, difficulties and obstacles in communication and participation. Considering that we sought a first approach to the concept, our priority was clear: to gain the sincerest answers we could.
One of us, as a student of the GJU, had an optimal access to interview fellow students. The other two members of the working group, as lecturers in their respective universities, waited until they met again in Jordan and interviewed together different staff members. The notes on these interviews were shared, and a wide variety of aspects became visible. We coded the notes to gain a better overview of the dimensions and aspects of both perspectives.

Results

We reduced the codes to the relevant ones to our question “is such a phenomenon as linguistic alienation and which relevance it could have in higher education?” The reductions of the codes brought us following results:

• Some students at GJU experience negative feelings when forced to speak German, both in seminars as in real life. They felt “stuck” and were afraid of confirming the stereotypes of lack of intelligence in students. One of the students formulated the fear as the confirmation that “I am worse than they think I am”

• Both students and staff spoke about the incapability to speak with older family members that spoke languages or dialects different than themselves.

• Non-native German staff experience insecurities when using professionally this language while teaching or working. Some staff members are afraid to be regarded as insufficiently cultivated or intelligent. One of the interviewees formulated it as feeling “a bit of an idiot and not properly educated nor particularly clever”.

• Lecturers seem to develop a positive attitude towards linguistic alienation, drawing from it as a source for motivation and self-development.

Traditional hierarchies and roles at university play an important role in how our interviewees understanding of the term “linguistic alienation” and how it affects them positively or negatively. Fears of confirming stereotypes are in fact a very relevant result for higher education, for phenomena like the so-called self-fulfilling prophecy or stereotype threat can affect intellectual performance.
(Inzlicht & Schmader 2012). Also, denied access to mastering certain languages or dialects is seen as a form of linguistic alienation. In this sense there is a clear link to how Gay (1998) conceptualizes the term and to Rossi-Landi’s understanding that linguistic alienation can be considered a form of oppression. The positive aspects of linguistic alienation are not easily interpreted in the frame of our small exploration.

Conclusion

Although unfortunately our collaborative work could not cover a full empirical qualitative research on the matter, the working group gain insight about how “linguistic alienation” could be conceptualized in context of higher education. In future research on linguistic alienation the focus could be set on the role of the English language. All in all, the concept of linguistic alienation seems to open a fruitful dimension to explore language and power relations in transnational higher education.

References


“Social Alienation”
Malina, Mahasen, Saba and Zina

Introduction
In the beginning of our work progress we talked a lot about what social alienation means to us. We brainstormed about different situations in Germany and Jordan where we found other people or us social alienated. So we had the idea to do something in this direction for our group project. We wanted to show situations of our everyday life where social alienation is a big part. Also we wanted to make clear that social alienation in Germany and Jordan is totally different. To make the situations more clear we add pictures to the stories. A poem in the beginning describes what social alienation means in general.
“Alienation or Corruption?”

Imprisoned in a cage
With outdated beliefs
And the key of thousand possibilities
Is in my hands
Forged with a storm of thoughts
Clashing with ancient and new swords
But the courage of breaking free
Is slipping out of my hands
And I cannot seem to grasp it

“Alienation or Corruption?”
A hideous figure of grey
With claws and fangs
And deformed limbs
Is a beast of change
Change is a block of ice
Strolling with hands in fists
And nose in the clouds
Change is a leopard
It follows you from afar
Hides between the shadows
Until you make it a friend
Change is a chameleon
Of many faces

The Alster River is the perfume of Alienation
It feels like nighttime
It sips hot chocolate
Then grips the wooden chair
Alienation has forgotten how to breath
To count to ten and inhale
A deep breath
It has lost its memory
Of marveling the stars
And how it is to be an alchemist
The unwelcomed beast and the breathless mundane go
Hand in hand
With hope
A captive of theirs
Social Alienation in Germany is a very big topic of the everyday life. Especially in the north of Germany, and so in Hamburg, a lot of people are very social alienated, because so many people are unfriendly to each other. So this try is about a few situations of social alienation, that people go through in their everyday life. One thing in a normal day is driving with the metro. In the metro you see a lot of people but they are so far away from each other as possible. So when there are four places to sit, people would never sit right in front of you. Especially now with Covid-19 you can have the situation that people don’t want to sit right next to you, because they are afraid. I think a lot of people see one good thing in wearing a mask: it is that they don’t have to react to a smile from a stranger. A lot of people in Hamburg doesn’t know how they should react when strangers smile at them because for a lot of people it doesn’t mean something good. It is more that the people are afraid that there is something on their face or body to laugh about, so they feel like the smile from a stranger is embarrassing them. You see a very strong aspect of social alienation in here, because a lot of german people in Hamburg would rather not talk to anyone on their way to work or home then getting compliments or a smile from a stranger. But it is not like people from Hamburg are completely social alienated. It is more like people have
very close friends, but are not that opened up to strangers. So not everyone would talk to you if you just speak to people on the street. Everyone is more or less in their own bubble, in their own safe space, in their own comfort zone and is not willing to leave it.

This social alienation, which is described in the text, is not to say for everyone. There are some differences, for example in the age. I would say that for example children are not a big part in that social alienation in the metro or in the everyday life. Children in Germany are more opened to other people and are not that afraid to talk or smile to a stranger.

I would say german people are very social alienated from each other in general, but there is no good reason for it. Like people keep ignoring smiles or compliments because they think it is not meant nicely. They don’t trust each other.
Losing a friend is heart breaking. When it happens abroad, its heart shattering. We would never acknowledge the possibility that we might experience it. Instead, we are willing to sacrifice just about anything to maintain the shadow of a peace that might only exist in our imagination.

Without exception, all humans want to become heroes. It is a childhood dream that is never forgotten. For a hero’s job is to protect, no matter what power they possess. They are determined to change fate or that. When all we want is to protect the peace we have worked so hard to achieve, how is that any different from heroism?

The alienation that comes from losing a friend is a unique type of pain. Just imagine how much it multiplies when you are studying abroad. You have lost your partner, the home you are supposed to come back to after a day filled with many forms of alienation. It is every student’s nightmare.
Money has always been a confusing subject. Being different, is both freeing and limiting. There are quite an embarrassing amount of people in Jordan who think that they’re entitled to determine what treatment others get for money they own. To them, everything is business, prices can put on for absolutely anything. To say that the lines are blurred would be an understatement, limits do not exist.

“But what about the rest of us? What about the nobodies and the nothings, the invisible girls? We learn to hold our heads as if we wear crowns. We learn to wring magic from the ordinary. That was how you survived when you were not chosen, when there was no royal blood in your veins. When the world owed you nothing, you demanded something of it anyway.” - Leigh Bardugo

The rich and the poor. Two different worlds in Jordan with problems of their own, when collided, shards of chaos would inevitably fly everywhere. And the road for repair is long and hard.
A Hollow Sunday

Walking on a Sunday afternoon could make one feel isolated. Almost everything is closed as Germans continue an age-old tradition to take a rest day. A day for church and family. The sight of empty trees makes me chuckle as I walk through the city. As if it would hide how lonely I feel. As if by searching every nook and cranny, light could be found in a shadowy corner.
“Alienation within Social Media”
Hanan, Mariam and Miles

Introduction
This chapter of the booklet is to be seen as a fist attempt, to illustrate the topic “Alienation in social media” in different ways, in order to allow further research in this rather unexplored field. As the still ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic is still very much a part of everyday life worldwide, where social media is also home, taking a closer look at the processes and experiences of alienation in digital spaces, which are a part of everyday life in most places on the planet for a large number of people is crucial in understanding alienation as a whole.
THE
GOOD
AND
THE
UGLY

ASPIRATION  ADDICTING
LIBERATION  LOW SELF-ESTEEM
INTERACTION  ISOLATION
ENTERTAINMENT  EXILE
LOVE  NOT FITTING IN
ACCESSIBLE  AVOIDANCE
TOLERANCE  TOXIC
INCLUSION  ILLUSION
OVERCOME  OBSESSION
NECESSITY  NEGLECT
Does Social Media Make Young Adults feel Alienated?

According to French sociologist Émile Durkheim, the term alienation “refers to the distancing of people from each other, from what is important and meaningful to them, or from themselves.”

Social media use has become a substantial part of millions of people’s lives around the globe and is gaining on popularity by the day, probably because it gives people power and a voice, as Mark Zuckerberg states. Being a relatively new field of study, there is not enough research to establish long-term negative or positive consequences of the use of social media. However, studies have linked excessive daily intake of social media to depression, anxiety and even suicidal thoughts.

The questionnaire with the title “Alienation on Social Media” was answered by 38 university students from Jordan and Germany. It aimed to figure out whether or not social media make young adults feel alienated. Out of the 38 survey takers, only one student was not using any social media platforms. The most popular platform among the students was Instagram, followed by Snapchat, Tiktok, Facebook and Twitter, respectively. The student’s use of these platforms varied from actively engaging in content shared by others, to only consuming content to creating content themselves.

To avoid a biased conclusion, and although the questionnaire aimed to highlight the negative effects of social media use on university students, the latter were asked both about the positive and the negative effects of social media on them.
While 9 students felt lonely because of social media, 28 of them felt connected to what is important and meaningful to them as well as to their families and friends. On the other hand, 13 students felt a lack of belonging to their environment because of the content they get to see on social media, while the same number of students felt validated through it, although the majority of them stated that what they see on social media does not reflect reality. Moreover, a little over a quarter of the participants stated that they felt torn inside because of the content they see on social media and over a third of them have become attention-seekers because as a result of social media use.

Despite negative feelings such as loneliness, lack of connection to the environment and being torn inside, which are serious indicators of social alienation, the participants could not resist the benefits of having instant access (though virtual) to what is important and dear to them, leading a staggering 84% of Jordanian students and 56% of German students to believe that the advantages of social media outweigh its drawbacks.

Summing up briefly: Despite the majority of participants confirming the benefits of social media use, yes, social media does make some young adults feel alienated and we are not doing them any favors if we turn a blind eye on them. Only because the majority can handle the pressure posed on them through social media, it does not mean that some are struggling and need to reach out for help.
drawing3, Sanya Qumuq
يُعد فولفجانج بورشرت أحد أهم الكتّاب الألمان في فترة ما بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية، وذلك عن الرغم من قلة أعماله الأدبية ووفاته في ريعان شبابه. عانى بورشرت من ويلات الحرب، فقد اضطر إلى التقال في صف الجيش النازي، لكنه ما لبث أن أصيب وعاد إلى الوطن. كتب بورشرت إبان عودته من الحرب مسرحية بعنوان «في الخارج أمام الباب»، وهي تنطق بلهجات حال الكثير من الألمان في فترة ما بعد الحرب، لكن الموت كان حليقه فتوفى متأثراً بوباء ناتج عن إصابته في الحرب.

ولد بورشرت في هامبورج لأب يعمل أساتذة مدرسة، وأم امتهنّت رواية القصص حيث بدأ كتابة القصائد في عمر الخامسة عشرة. قاده شغفه بالكتب والكتابة إلى تعليم مهنة بيع الكتب. لكنه لم يكمل تعليمه وتعلم المسرح والتمثيل عوضاً عن ذلك، وأخذ ينشر قصائده في صحيفة محلية في هامبورج، ثم تم ممثلًا في مسرح مدينة مجاورة، وقد وصف هذه الفترة «أجمل سنوات عمره».

استدعى بورشرت للخدمة الإلزامية في الجيش الألماني وأصيب بعد عام أثناء خدمته، فانتقل فايروس الدفتريا إليه عن طريق إصابته الجسدية، حيث أ állه بمحاولة إلحاق الأذى بنفسه ولكن بورشرت بُرئ من التهمة لاحقًا ووضع تحت المراقبة. لكنه لم يكمل البقاء في السجن حتى دخل السجن بتهمة الإساءة للجيش الألماني من خلال «أقواله الانهزامية». أرسل بورشرت بعد الاستئناف إلى الجبهة الشرقية وسرعان ما تدهور حالته الصحية، فوضع في أحد المستشفيات الميداني وسرح منه عام 1943.

ما لبثت المصائب تتوالى على بورشرت، فقد ألقى القبض عليه إثر محاكمة هزلية لأحد أكّر أعوان هولنتر وقائد الحملة الإعلامية النازية، بوفرز غوبنر. قام بها بورشرت في أحد المقاوي حيث كان يعمل. حكم على بورشرت بالسجن لمدة سبع سنوات، لكنه لم يكملها وأرسل عوضاً عن ذلك لـ«مراقبة العدو» على الأراضي الفرنسية. فتألق القبض عليه في فرنسا. لكنه هرب من السجن والوطن متهماً من المرض والإصابة، عمل بورشرت بعد ذلك كمساعد مخرج في مسرح هامبورج، واستمر في الكتابة، فكانت نصوصه مسرحية في دار مسرح هامبورج. وصارت مشهورة في الغرب. ومنهم شهد أحولها. وفي يناير من عام 1947 ومدينة بازل السويسرية حيث كان بورشرت يلقى ملاجئه، علم بانه أمره استجابة للشكاوى. فكتب في غضون أسبوع أشهر مؤلفاته، مسرحية «في الخارج أمام الباب» والتي تلخص معاناة العائدين من الحرب، وهو ما تُعدها مسرحية مسموعة بعد وفاته بيوم واحد فقط.

Quelle: https://www.hdg.de/lemo/biografie/wolfgang-borchert.html
Introduction
While discussing the topic ‘cultural alienation’ within our group, we quickly started to realise, that we all had a different understanding of what the term ‘culture’ actually encompasses. The following chapter therefore aims to shed light on different understandings of culture and the advantages and problems that come with such a uniquely subjective perception. We also chose to look at the way the term is understood in the scientific community.
What is culture?

- All these aspects together are your surrounding and your aspects of socialisation and all these together are the specific culture you have grown up in which is not comparable to others because all these aspects together in subsumption lead to a totally individual way of being cultured.

- Culture can establish connection to a place, time and people and define “home” for example, but it can also cause the exact opposite. It can be your home.

- It can be your home.

- Culture has positives and negatives; it depends on how people of that culture feel that their culture either sets them back or pushes them forward.

- You share it, you feel part of something. Humans have that need to feel included in a group so it fulfils a very deep need to belong. But groups are always defined by what they exclude, who they exclude. So there is always going to be someone that’s out, somebody that is not part of the culture and where the limits are set is always problematic.

- Well I know it’s a very controversial topic or a very controversial term. I would say it offers a frame for behaviour, believes, values and I don’t consider it as nation bound, even though it is often referred to as a very nation bound term, I think it goes through borders and sometimes not.

- Cultures have very specific geographic regions, I think and if you leave your particular region or the culture that you identify with and visit another culture then you might feel alienated.

- It’s just your background, it’s what makes where you come from, it’s everything that makes up who you are somehow.

- All cultures are based on which country you come from.

- One should be careful to use the term culture, because it’s not nation and it’s not race.

- It makes people coming from different cultures unique, like each culture leaves a mark on its people.
Culture- an approach
Throughout history, the concept of culture was defined from different theoretical and methodological approaches and across different academic disciplines including psychology and sociology. In the following, a brief development of the concept of culture will be presented, starting by traditionalist understandings of culture and moving towards progressive models.

With the so-called “Kugelmodell der Kulturen”, the German philosopher Herder introduced a model in which culture is depicted as a self-contained sphere. The core idea of his model is the assumption that a culture is nation-specific and homogenous in each nation. According to the spheric idea of culture, the heterogeneity of cultures concerns different nations; inner heterogeneity is not considered (Evers 2016).

The model by Herder has since been criticised but still prevails in public discourse and subjective theories of individuals. The idea that culture is not dependent on a certain ethnical background was first introduced by German psychologist Alexander Thomas (2003). According to his understanding, individuals do not become part of a certain culture qua birth but can become a member of a certain community. However, he also supports the idea that a culture equals a nation. A central role in his definition are the so-called “cultural standards” (German: Kulturstandards). Cultural standards are nation-based collectively shared consciousness which determine different dimensions of thought processes as well as patterns of action. Moreover, he argues that the mode of impact is one-sided: culture shapes human thought and action but not vice versa (Evers 2016).
Progressive models of culture

Transdifference
Progressive ideas of culture include the concepts of transdifference, transculturality and hybridity (Bhabha 1994).
The concept of transdifference goes back to Breining and Lösch (2002) who contested the ideas of homogeneous and self-contained cultures which dominated the discourse on culture before. In their definition, every culture consists of transdifferent aspects which are contradictory and superimposed. According to their definition, the emergence of culture is tied to exchange processes between individuals. A core term within their understanding is that of transdifferent space in which cultural boundaries are temporarily deconstructed and are then reconstructed. The authors believe in the binary opposition of cultures and nation-states equating cultures.

Transculturality
The separation between nation-states and cultures was first introduced by Welsch (1995). Although Welsch (1995) recognised that national borders exist, he only appointed them political meaning, suggesting that cultures are not confined to these borders. The core idea of Welsh’ theory of culture is to emphasise that identical ways of living as well as thought and states of consciousness can be found in different areas of the world and are thus not a question of a certain national identity. Moreover, he stresses the internal differentiation of cultures. His objective by focusing on similarities rather than differences between communities (e.g. in Herder’s depiction of culture) is to point out that people in different part of the world have chances to connect. He further argues that a territorial attribution (e.g. Herder) in which a culture is shaped by homogeneity and so-called purity can lead to racist discourses (Evers 2016).
Hybridity
The idea of hybridity was introduced by postcolonial theorist Bhabha (1994). His central assumption is that the meaning of statements and (cultural) identities only emerges in the concrete moment of interaction by the exchanging individuals. Bhabha thus emphasises the relativity of statements and infinity of potential meanings due to its negotiation between individuals. A central term in his theory is that of third space: Bhabha uses this metaphor to describe the potentially ambivalent and contradictory expressions or the processes produced in the articulation of cultural differences. It is from this third space of ambivalence that individual or communal cultural identity is developed. For Bhabha, this third space is not concretely graspable, it is ambivalent in itself and does not exist continuously since the attribution of cultural identity exists only for the duration of the negotiation process (Evers 2016).

Works cited
Describe a time you felt alienated from your own culture, how did you feel/react? not just national (uni/family)?

- When I was in Germany last month, I got used to the European culture, customs and lifestyle, and it was good to learn a new culture, but my problem was when I came home I was behaving like a stranger and I had forgotten most of the Arab customs and traditions, so I used to sit among my relatives to recall the actions I had forgotten, and now I can say that I am fine.

- One of the situations that really made me feel alienated when I entered the university in my first semester of being from a conservative society that has many customs and traditions that govern it. Because our university has a great openness, it was at the beginning a problem for me.

- I felt alienated many times because I have multiple backgrounds. Both my parents come from different countries with an extreme difference in culture, and various gaps in between; for example, accent, traditions and mindset. I never felt I belong anywhere in both cultures; it was as if I was in between but never completely in one. It bothered me a lot as a kid but as I grew up I learned to embrace and accept myself as it is, it tough me to love the world, to see life beautiful without any boundaries or exceptions.

- I—as a practicing Muslim— feel alienated sometimes in some parts of Amman because of my Hijab. Yes, in Amman! People suppose that you are uneducated or inferior and speak with you in a disrespectful tone because they think you're just a “housewife” who knows nothing about the civilized world, with all due respect to housewives! I faced this kind of discrimination both
from males and females, from ladies at the gym and my children’s doctor. This shouldn’t be the case, I live in a Muslim country where wearing hijab is still the norm in vast areas of the country. I don’t treat people according to what they wear and I expect the same. Sadly you cannot change that in people’s minds and it’s sometimes better not to react at all, however, it gives you a temporary feeling of not fitting in. If someone is being overly disrespectful I stand up for myself.

• There are many examples: it’s very alienating in Jordan when you publicly take out your book and start reading, when you’re at a family gathering and put on your plate the amount of food you’re comfortable with eating, if you’re an introvert you feel alienated most of the time

• When I first moved to the US to live with a Japanese family, I didn’t speak the language, have not tried much Japanese food or had really deep knowledge of the traditions. That in combination with their expectations and stereotypes of what a German is made me feel really alienated at first. But it got much better really quickly!
“Clarity, purity and freedom, the world is vast, but we are the ones who make it narrow and complicated”
الصفاء والنظافة والحرية، العالم واسع.
ولكن نحن من نجعله ضيقا ومعقداً
Dear reader,

It has now been 4 months, since the heart of the THE project, travelling from Jordan to Germany and vice versa, has taken place. In the fast pace University life usually has, this would mean everyone has moved on, the project has generated a product and that is that.

However, from the start, this project has been a little different and has not really fit into the usual ways exchange programs are done, for 2 major reasons. For one, this was one of the first points of contact between a University in the Arabian world and the faculty of education of the UHH. On the other hand, from the very beginning, it was planned with the still continuing COVID-19 pandemic in mind. From the first year, where the project was only possible in a fully digital format to the second year, where travel was possible again, the pandemic served as the background for everything happening in the project and simultaneously as the basis for research, as well as any activity done in the scope of the three short months we had.

This is not to say, that the THE project, especially in 2022 was just a project to simply deal with the ongoing pandemic, but it can also not be fully separated from it either. What stemmed from the time both sides invested into the project however, is much more than a simple establishing of contact between 2 universities. Maybe even because we were able to have a physical exchange in the midst of an international pandemic and work together in person, which was still a fresh new thing in the time we did it, there was a certain atmosphere of inspiration in the air, every time there was a meeting or we had the chance to work together as a group.

Miles Schröer
This also caused everyone in the project to see it as a given, that it should be tried to extend the run we currently have into another year and maybe also turn the span of 3 months we had so far into a longer project, which gives more people of all ranks at both universities the chance to take part in an exchange.

Overall, given the odds the THE project faced and the hurdles it had to overcome, it was a huge success, which gives me a lot of hope that although the current run of it is over, there is a good chance, that this is not the last time, the participants and the faculties come together.
A Reflection on a Marvellous Time

The 9 days I spent in Hamburg gave such an exciting glimpse into history and a research life that left me wanting to have more than just a glimpse. I felt transported into a place that was very pleasurable to walk around; there were interesting things everywhere one looked, like locks adorning railings!

Working on the project was very enjoyable in so many ways. Not only has it provided the perfect opportunity for me to work on, as well as enhance my writing skills, it has also allowed me to spend time with such kind and interesting people!

It was very interesting to see so many takes on one topic (alienation). Everyone had such different ideas. People express creativity in very different ways, and it is quite the experience to see them being put into use.

The time we spent together was a blast, that’s what it was!
After having the first project fully digitally in 2020, it was finally time for a second project, in which the participants could meet in person in the midst of COVID pandemic. For starters, we agreed to work on a topic that each of us deals with unconsciously, each in his/ her own way. It was about “Alienation”. We might have never been aware of the fact that alienation was present in the very small details of our lives until we started thinking of it. One felt alienated when talking about something the others do not understand or agree on, the other feels alienated walking in the streets of a foreign land and the list goes on. Despite the complicated procedures we had to take because of the pandemic, everyone was excited to meet the other. The trip to Germany took some of us back in time to when we were in Germany last time and brought back unforgettable memories. In Germany, everything was different, the moments of silence we experienced in online meetings last year did not exist anymore. Instead, we talked and discussed different things endlessly, we visited places and got to know a bit about the history of Hamburg and its university. All while thinking of alienation. At that time, we were able to formulate the first outline of the project, what each group is going to do, which enhanced the skills of working in groups and enabled us to think critically and creatively. Then it was time to say farewell to Germany and go back to Jordan. The next step was welcoming the group of UHH in Jordan, which again was a great experience for both sides, because it made us, Jordanians, more aware of our own traditions and culture. Again, all while thinking of alienation. In that phase, we were able to finalize our group work and come up with the final product, which is this booklet. So, thanks to each one who contributed in that extraordinary product.
Publications and research papers from the project to this point

- During the first run of the project, a blog was created, highlighting various different views and thoughts on the general topic “Transnational Higher Education”. It found various different uses during the second run of the project as well.

- [https://transnationaledenkraeume.wordpress.com/](https://transnationaledenkraeume.wordpress.com/)

- The first run of the project sparked a digital “Storytelling Festival” and a first publication in the shape of a booklet: Iwers, Telse; Marji, Hazar; Mitchell, Gordon; Niemann, Malina; Pfalzgraf, Anne-Marie; Radaideh, Khalida; Schroeder, Miles; Stelljes, Clara Noa (2021). THE. An International Exchange Project Between Universities in Times of the Corona Pandemic. Booklet: [https://transnationaledenkraeume.wordpress.com/2021/03/23/das-the-booklet-2/](https://transnationaledenkraeume.wordpress.com/2021/03/23/das-the-booklet-2/)

- Following the second run, a dedicated publication with a focus on theory-based contextualization of the project in terms of uncertainty was published and is available at: Yilmaz, Sezen Merve & Iwers, Telse (2021). Entwicklung eines reflexionsorientierten Umgangs mit heterogenitätsbedingter Unwissheit. Gruppe Interaktion Organisation 4, 2021. [https://link.springer.com/epdf/10.1007/s11612-021-00597-3?sharing_token=vzCcUVreRVT15sGDZKO2n_4e4Rw1QNcNhNBiy7wbcmAY4ZJMq-0wnid01Bq92cXl0rh6x2XRbVjp-oemtxWExkXPRH4bHcwvOhW94O9zyL_hj0H2-Pr7e8yst7YMVUTgFrTW44T3zeiL6IeygistkWPxAkfzbfQiqsXw%3D](https://link.springer.com/epdf/10.1007/s11612-021-00597-3?sharing_token=vzCcUVreRVT15sGDZKO2n_4e4Rw1QNcNhNBiy7wbcmAY4ZJMq-0wnid01Bq92cXl0rh6x2XRbVjp-oemtxWExkXPRH4bHcwvOhW94O9zyL_hj0H2-Pr7e8yst7YMVUTgFrTW44T3zeiL6IeygistkWPxAkfzbfQiqsXw%3D)

For the second run of the project, a comparative analysis for Reflexion of feedback by those involved in the project about the digital and in-person meeting was conducted.

A Bachelor thesis on the effectiveness of intercultural sensitation for the students involved in the project has been handed in.

An anthology for the publication of the results of the group work within the project is planned, along with further studies into the project.
THANK YOU

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and guests
Dr. Myriam Hummel, UHH, for her presentation
Ms. Ilse Stangen, UHH, for her presentation
Dr. Jens Joachim Rogmann, UHH, for his presentation
Prof. Dr. Salah Al Salman, GJU, for his presentation
Ms. Laura Schergaut, GJU, for her presentation
Sanya Qumuq, GJU, for the Drawing in Group 3
“Stories with flawed characters and unresolved dilemmas set up an ambivalence that invites us to think for ourselves as we fill-in the gaps.”

quote Prof. Dr. Gordon Mitchell