Chapter 2
"Why Do I Suffer and What Should I Do?"

The Desire Lines of Sufi Breathing-Becoming

> desire line (di.ZYR lyn) n. An informal path that pedestrians prefer to take to get from one location to another rather than using a sidewalk or other official route.
>
> —Nick Shepherd and Nöeleen Murray[1]

"Why do I suffer, and what should I do?" I was listening to Ayşe, sitting in her apartment during one of the hottest Ramadan afternoons in July 2014. I watched how Ayşe's eyes sparkled with an existential longing inherent in the question. "Now I can say [the word] God without stress," Renate said with visible relief in another part of Berlin. I was listening to Renate's trouble with the word "God" in the same year, sitting in her garden. "Whatever you do becomes part of you," Sufi dancer Claire expressed an aversion toward fixing identity and belonging in her navigation of techniques from different traditions. We were sharing our respective breathing, wayfaring journeys at my Friedrichshain apartment earlier in the spring of 2013.

How are Sufi subjects narrating the journeys of breathing, wayfaring hearts? What kind of experiential subjectivities emerge from these narratives? This chapter focuses on these questions. It deals with the formation of the postsecular subjects of Sufism in Berlin, articulating their languages of experience. Tracing the desire lines of breathing, wayfaring women, I illustrate how the pathways of their (Sufi) becoming, were constituted by their search for something else (here and in chapter 4).

Sufism and the discussion of gender have contributed to a growing field of interdisciplinary scholarship across Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority contexts.[2] Following these lines of inquiry, during my fieldwork, I spoke to both men and women. I have redrawn these narrative lines here, but they are not selected randomly. The most detailed, insightful, and evocative life stories were entrusted to me by only a few remarkable women I met in the field. It is hard to tell whether it is my gendered presence or their eloquence that resulted in this skewed collection of life histories. In any case, I have tried to retain as much diversity[3] as possible in their retelling, situating the desire lines in between the lines of majority history narratives of the postwar, divided, and reunified nation-state.

Desire Lines of Breathing-Becoming Sufi

Transitional Subjects of the Divided and Reunified Germany

The ethnographer walks with her interlocutors on a shared journey, however brief that is. She listens, watches, senses, feels, and accompanies them along lifelines. She articulates their pathways to becoming. Becoming continues to happen along these lines of desire.[4] The geographical metaphor of desire line grounds the trajectory of the subject by the analogous pedestrian desire to use alternate routes on the path s/he walks. Conceptually, the term is related to the Deleuzian line of flight, "the act of fleeing or eluding but also flowing, leaking, and disappearing into the distance" (Massumi [1987] 2004, xvii). My interlocutors narrated their desire lines in English and German, following up on questions I posed or walking in the directions their stories took themselves.

I redraw these desire lines with three life stories to articulate the pathways of (Sufi) becoming, among a generation of women in their mid and late forties. Compared to the desire lines and frames of reference of older Sufi wayfarers in postwar Germany (Gertrud, Ganga, and Rabeya in chapter 4), in the narratives about their healing quests in the divided and post-unification German society of my younger interlocutors, different historical forces are at play. Listening to the traces left by the submerged social forces in the narratives of Sufi women is an exercise of sensing the postsecular imagination within the multidirectional transition routes: from Turkish secularism to Sufi Islam (Haqqani-Naqshbandi) and from state-enforced atheism to Inayati Sufism.

As a student of anthropology and a postmigrant writer, I read Germany's majority history discourse with a newcomer's curiosity, learning to deal with collective time in a new country. The formative periods of the nation-state (Germany) and the city (Berlin) had intersections that cut both of these landscapes deeply. From Sufi women who grew up in postwar Germany (see chapter 4), I gradually shifted attention to the time when Germany was divided into two nation-states, and Berlin was not one but two. It was also a time for the labor migration that helped build the (former) West German economy with the arrival of the so-called guest workers from Turkey.[5]

Different subjectivities emerged among the women who grew up during the 1960s and 1970s. The narratives in this chapter are shaped by age differences and connected to the historical circumstances that accompanied them. State-enforced atheism in socialist East Germany and the arrival of Turkish labor migrants in West Germany are critical events. In addition, the 1960s and 1970s were also when the proliferation of alternative healing techniques and religious traditions became widespread in the first wave of the so-called hippy period in Germany.[6] The life stories of my interlocutors are embedded in these intersecting forces that constitute the post-secular landscape of Berlin today.

"Who Am I . . . Why Do I Suffer?" Postmigrant Ayşe's Discovery of Sufi Islam

It was the month of Ramadan in the summer of 2014 (July 21). Mild heat encapsulated the city. Ayşe and I met in the cool shade of her apartment in Kreuzberg for an interview. Ayşe was forty-six years old. Together with her husband, she played a leading role at the Sufi-Center Berlin (Haqqani-Naqshbandi). We had previously met in the crowd that gathered at the center during weekends. We also met in the more intimate space of the Easter retreat of the network in southern Germany earlier in April 2014 (figure 2.1). On the day of our interview, Ayşe opened the door and greeted me with a smile. She was fasting but offered me herbal tea, which I thankfully accepted. She asked me how long I was planning to stay in Germany and how I managed everyday life in the city.

Figure 2.1. Ayşe during a Sufi retreat in southern Germany, 17 April 2014. © Nasima Selim.

A huge flat-screen TV hung on the wall of the living room on one side. Two comfortable sofas stood on the other side, with *ney* and *bendir* at the corner. The walls were decorated with the seals of the Naqshbandi network and the late Ottoman Empire. A huge wooden shelf stood against the wall, filled with books in several languages, mostly German and Turkish, with a few in English and Arabic. I saw several copies of the Qur'an, Turkish-German dictionaries, and texts on Reiki healing, among others. I sat on the sofa next to Ayşe and began my usual set of questions.

Ayşe was born to a "secular Muslim" Turkish family and left Turkey with her parents when she was only four. She lived most of her life in another major German city before moving to Berlin with her husband. She organized dhikr for women on Thursdays and often translated the lectures of the sheikh from Turkish to German. At that time, she was also working hard to set up another Sufi center in the German city where she grew up. Ayşe had a professional university degree but was not working at the moment. In the course of that conversation, Ayşe described to me a long, tortuous desire line constituted by her long-term depression, with a parallel, intense desire for meaning and purpose in life.

"It was 2001. I have gone the same way as most others who come to the Sufi center. I had 'suffering of the soul' (*seelisches Leid*)—psychological problems (*psychische Probleme*)." Ayşe has battled with severe depression since she was sixteen. At some point, after realizing that she did not wish to be occupied with only the "distractions" of life events, Ayşe started to question her non-religious education as a source of suffering:

> I had distractions, time and again. First love! Then everything was so nice, then separation. *Ugh!* Then again, depression [*laugh*]. That is how the [material] world distracted me time and again. Studying, in the beginning, was great. And then again not so good! I always thought it could not be that the human being is dependent on external circumstances. Happiness must be a deep state of peace and bliss. It should not be dependent upon external circumstances . . . Earlier, I was not at all spiritual. Not at all! I had no religious education from my parents, although I am Turkish! (interview with the author, 21 July 2014)

Ayşe connected her biographical journey to Sufi Islam as a typical pathway that, according to her, represented how most members came to the Haqqani-Naqshbandi center in Berlin. She connected the hidden suffering of their "difficult destinies" (*schwere Schicksale*) to the pleasant and playful ambiance of the Sufi center, the *dergah*:

> Maybe it is the impression or the image that we have of the Sufi center . . . [The visitors think] "Ahh! There is so much laughter, there is music played and sung, and a lot to eat and drink" [*in a funny voice*] "Where is, then, the healing!" [*feigning surprise*] someone may ask. Or, "Do people come here to eat and drink, to laugh . . . ?" one may ask. That is the image. But behind this image, . . . the sheikh knows the best; there are difficult destinies. People who come here have very difficult destinies behind them, or [they are] in the middle of a life crisis triggered by either a difficult life situation or early experiences. This suffering of the soul may have many origins/causes, but these are only [triggering] occasions/events. In the deeper sense, it is about [the questions] "why do I suffer, and what should I do?" (*Warum leide ich und was soll ich tun?*) (interview, 21 July 2014)

Ayşe's narrative emphasized that people came to the Sufi center due to current life crises or past experiences of suffering. She argued that drugs and psychotherapy were only temporary support for the suffering of the soul and psychological problems. Sufi Islam, provided the necessary healing in her view, as she described the Haqqani-Naqshbandi center as a place of *spiritual psychiatry*:[7]

> Many, who came to us, were in psychotherapy. Maybe they were taking medicine. Last week we had three people, who were in psychiatry [psychiatric treatment]. Sometimes they can go out . . . But they must always go back there. They sleep there. They are allowed to come out, sometimes even in the evening. They have been there for years. And they have somehow found us because they noticed, there is no [permanent] solution in pills and talks with doctors and psychologists. They seek alternatives. Our center is an alternative . . . It is spiritual psychiatry! (interview, 21 July 2014)

After becoming disillusioned with psychoactive drugs and conventional psychotherapy, Ayşe sought healing in what she called "the spiritual scene." In 2004, having spent almost a decade in yoga centers, Hare Krishna temples, and Buddhist centers, Ayşe still desired a community. She said that her "heart did not accept it!" "It" meant the techniques and traditions she had experimented with. Ayşe felt she needed a guide, someone who could lead her on a path of healing, because she felt she could not continue alone.

Ayşe confronted her internalized Islamophobia by realizing how her relation to the Islamic tradition was shaped by both the anti-Islam sentiments of secularist Turkish circles and the prevalent anti-Muslim racist discourses in Germany: "I was very much anti-Islam. What people say, . . . , Islam is misogynistic!" A deeply moving encounter with a disciple of the late Sheikh Nazim got her interested in Sufi Islam. Ayşe met a friend for a casual chat over coffee. The friend had just returned from Turkish Cyprus, where the late sheikh lived at that time. As her friend continued to describe her own experience, Ayşe said that she began to feel an increasing sense of excitement and expectancy. The reporting of the breathing sounds of dhikr found a moving resonance within her heart. The entity "Sufism" was a grand discovery within the tradition she imagined as "misogynistic" Islam. In her words:

> My heart was so excited. [I asked], "Which mantra?" She said, "We were doing dhikr. That was *La ilaha illallah. La ilaha illallah.*" I heard this for

> the first time in my life, although I was born into a Muslim family. I began to cry . . . I asked, "What else have you been doing?" She said, "Allah. Allah. Allah. Allah." I was crying. I wanted more of that. My body was shivering . . . I said, "I want more of that. What is that? All my life, I have been looking for this." She said, "This is Sufism!" (interview, 21 July 2014)

Ayşe eventually met the late grand sheikh, whom she described as loving and full of humor.[8] She described the rest of her life history as following the Sufi path and all that came with it. Her initial exploration of Sufism met difficulties and troubles from her secular Turkish family. They hardly understood why Ayşe decided on this path. Her birth family considered Sufism to be "backward" (*rückständig)* involving "brainwashing" (*Gehirnwäsche*). They made derogatory comments, for example, "That is stupid!" (*Das ist dumm!*).[9] According to Ayşe, these internalized anti-Islam sentiments were common among the secularist Turkish Muslim circles to which her parents belonged. Despite resistance from her immediate family, she continued the journey of her breathing, wayfaring heart.

For Ayşe, the most important element on the Sufi path was to be able to ask existential questions and find healing in the cultivation of self-confidence/consciousness (*Selbsbewusstsein*) in making life choices. She emphasized this point with an example:

> [T]hat is the way to healing: To be more confident/conscious [*bewusst*] about oneself. That is self-confidence/self-consciousness. Who am I? What am I doing here? Why do I suffer? What is suffering? Where does it come from? All these questions are very existential questions that every human being should ask oneself. Why am I here? And that for only a short time? Why does it [life] come to end at some point? Why isn't it allowed to go on for eternity? [*laughing at the existential humor inherent in this question*] (interview, 21 July 2014)

Part of this existential process of questioning and cultivating self-consciousness, for Ayşe, was about coming to terms with psychoactive medication and the decision to give it up. While attributing healing to the development of self-consciousness, the question of authority was significant. While the individual must learn to cultivate consciousness, the sheikh's words were crucial agents that rendered such healing possible. The sheikh guides the development of the members of the center. In Ayşe's view, listening to the words of "the one authorized by heaven," remembering Allah through uninterrupted dhikr and regulatory daily prayers, slowly and surely the seeker could find healing:

> Sheikh [Eşref Efendi] says, "Come, and you do not need [to do] anything. Come, do dhikr, and listen! You do not need to do anything. We do!" They notice that, over time, something has changed inside. Yes! The words suddenly find certain forms/patterns (*Gestalten*) [of thought] also inside, [they think] in daily life may be [there is] another way to deal with the situation. (interview, 21 July 2014)

After narrating stories of healing and existential reflections, Ayşe suddenly stopped. I remembered that she was fasting. I sensed that her throat was dry from too much talking. I decided to give it a rest by keeping silent. We sat there, each buried in her world of affect-laden thoughts. It was in that charged, silent moment that I realized how the desire to find answers to similar existential questions led each of us on our pathway to different kinds of Sufism, whether it was for healing, meaning, or coming to terms with identities and entities significant in our lives. As postmigrants in a society fraught with anti-Muslim racism, both of us have to come to terms with the kinds of Islam that we were brought up with and the conditions of possibility in the Sufi Islamic tradition. The privilege of our access to higher education does not protect us from everyday anti-Muslim racism in German society, but rather makes it difficult to learn from and live with existential resources provided by the Islamic tradition. We deal with everyday suffering and life crises within our individual and collective life histories. Whether in the name of religion, spirituality, alternative healing, or dual apprenticeship, we learn to follow desire lines that resist the racist discourses of majority German society and draw existential resources from Sufism.

Few women or men I met in Sufi-Berlin stayed with the tradition they were born to.[10] Most people I spoke to, framed Sufism as the *other* tradition. They were born in families that harbored prejudices against certain forms of Islam or were immersed in the prescriptive formations within Islam. Some were raised within Protestant and Catholic traditions, or the apparent absence of faith, as in state-enforced atheist secularism. Ayşe's narrative articulates her formation of subjectivity in the transition of Turkish secularism to Sufi Islam in another society where both she and the tradition she now belongs to migrated. What that might mean in the larger politics of subjectivity is not within the scope of this book, but the question can be followed further to ask to what extent such pathways are representative of the Turkish-German women who shifted from a particular kind of secularism to (Sufi) Islam.

In contrast to Ayşe, Renate's life history provides insights into another kind of transition. From her childhood and early youth in former East Germany to life after unification, Renate crossed over from strict state-enforced atheism to a gradual deepening of Sufi practice with the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat network. Like Ayşe, her story had to do with suffering from chronic illness and searching for healing. But her desire line took her in another direction.

"Now I Can Say [the Word] God without Stress!": An East German Atheist Seeks Sufi Healing

I met Renate at the European Sufi Summer School 2013 in Proitzer Mühle, a small village in northern Germany between Berlin and Hannover. Later we saw each other on many occasions at the Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat *khanekah*. We also met serendipitously on the subway. Renate was one of the few Inayatis who responded to my email call for an interview. During one warm afternoon in the spring of 2014, I went to her place in a peripheral neighborhood in the former East Berlin. Renate looked tired after a full working day (she had a permanent position in a public institution). We chatted about life stresses before I raised the formal set of questions. Over the next hour, her face gradually lit up, and she relaxed. I prodded her to describe her initial encounter with the Sufi breathing practices. I requested her to trace back her desire line, asking what brought her to the Inayatis.

Renate had suffered from a chronic health condition for more than twenty years. She availed herself of all possible biomedical treatments and alternative therapies. In a healing center, she had met someone who suggested that she should visit a psychotherapist, who was also a member of the Inayati network. Through them, Renate was introduced to the breathing practices of dhikr and *wazifa*, the Dances of Universal Peace, the (embodied) walks, and the healing rituals. In the beginning, Renate was only curious about the healing practices, and she joined the dances. After a number of sessions, however, Renate felt a "heart connection" to the Inayati community. She befriended many members in the course of the following years.

After four years of occasionally attending the dances and especially the healing ritual on Mondays, Renate decided to become initiated as a *murid*.

Renate articulated her experience of the movements, breathing techniques, and utterances of the ninety-nine names, using terms like "collective energy" (*gemeinsame Energie*) and "collective wholeness" (*Gesamtheit*):

> First of all, it is like this, that I generally find that when one sings with others, one is connected. I feel (*spüre*) then the connection with the others [happens] as well. Well, with the voice, through the collective energy, through the collective sound! That I find totally nice. And let us say [that through] this body movement with each other, yes, I am connected with the others, finally also with those whom I do not know. I find it already intense when I know the people. But then I find it even more intensive when I do not know them . . . That is, let us say, for me, a collective wholeness. (interview with the author, 7 May 2014)

The healing ritual (*Heilritual*) provided Renate with the possibility of activating and transmitting "healing energy" to people with affliction and to herself (see chapter 5). Renate was hesitant to suggest that "spontaneous healing" occurred to relieve her condition. But she considered the recitation of *Ya Shafi, Ya Kafi* to be an integrated daily practice that helped her in dealing with everyday stress. The paired utterance of *Ya Shafi, Ya Kafi* (O divine healer, O divine medicine) was one of the most common healing-breath meditations practiced by the Inayatis. These breathing meditations, she said, helped her in living with a prolonged health condition, coming to terms with an incurable illness that was progressively disabling her, and mitigating the side effects of the medication she took regularly. Breathing silently in the city subways and public transport system, moving through her hectic, working days in spite of a chronic, painful condition, Renate found comfort in the *feelings* generated by her Sufi exercises:

> I feel this healing energy . . . Not only for others but also for me.
>
> [In response to my question of whether Sufi practices affected her health condition]
>
> It is always difficult [to say], but, I think it does. This [Sufi practice] has also helped me. I cannot say that there is some kind of spontaneous healing . . . It is like that, through the daily practice there, tuning into the healing energy. Every day I do a healing-breath exercise (*Heilatemübung*).

> I just practice [uttering] *Ya Shafi, Ya Kafi*. This daily practice helps me to get inside the energy . . . sometimes when I have pain in my joints . . . I get along with my illness and manage my medications . . . I notice that when I am stressed, it goes immediately to my joints . . . This stress! For that [stress], it [Sufi exercise] is wonderful. Sufi exercises are wonderful for calming down . . . I like it the most to simply breathe *Ya Shafi, Ya Kafi* . . . When I take a bus or take the S-Bahn, or I am on my way, for example, [I recite] *Allahu Akbar* . . . to get energy. I take hold of the energy . . . I make use of the traveling time. I practice in the train—*Ya Shafi, Ya Kafi* [*she breathes in and out, simulating her daily practice*]. (interview, 21 July 2014)

In addition to the "wonderful" effects of breathing/uttering names, Renate described the difficulty of sustaining affiliation with her community. She said that her current partner was initially skeptical about her practices. He expressed his concern about spiritual communities in terms of a prevalent fear of "the sect" in German society. However, in the five years they have been together, he gradually warmed up to the practices himself. Renate admitted that his reaction was similar to her own in an early encounter with the energetic rendition of the healing ritual. She recalled that she initially sneered quite cynically, saying: "What is all that!" (*Was ist das denn!*).

Renate was afraid that she might end up in a manipulative religious/spiritual sect. This is not an uncommon response from white (East) Germans, especially those brought up with an atheist, secularist disposition. This is also prevalent among the literalist and reformist religionists and authenticity-seekers who readily and dismissively attach the derogatory tag of the New Age or sect to a relatively new spiritual community to differentiate them from the more conventional communities built around recognized world religions.

Toward the end of our conversation, Renate and I got into discussing Inayati Sufism's connection to Islam. Renate did not consider Islam and Sufism synonymous, while others in the same Inayati network had different opinions.[11] Renate even resisted calling Sufism a religion. She expressed her aversion to prescriptive, literalist Christianity, associating them with the "dark churches" (*dunkle Kirchen*). In my interpretation, this is related to her life in former East Germany and, in part, to the prevalent anti-Muslim racism and fear of religious radicalization in German society, leading her to reject the word *religion* altogether.[12] Sufism was *spirituality* for her, practiced with the movements of bodies, breathing, and healing energies. Contrary to "religion," Sufism, makes "unity thinking" (*Einheitsgedanke*) possible, imagining Allah/God as "a part of us":

> Renate (R): I do not connect [Sufism] with Islam . . . For me, it [Sufism] is not a religion . . . It has nothing to do with belief . . . Let us say, this idea— the total Christian ideas are dogmatic . . . the thousand rules . . . dark churches . . . So far, I find the idea of Universal Sufism independent of all that . . . Well, of course, we sing, we pray . . . but as a rule, it is totally independent of some kind of image of God . . . [Rather] this unity thinking . . . God is a part of us . . . Images of God are totally occupied by the religions… [Since I] shifted my attitude, now I can say [the word] God without stress. There is no image.
>
> Nasima (N): What is your imagination of God, then?
>
> R: I have no imagination of God. My mind says this is beyond everything . . . God is the universe, energy, and all . . . That [word, God,] does not disturb me anymore.
>
> N: It is not God with a white beard! [*we laugh together*]
>
> R: This compassion. These personal qualities/attributes [the ninety-nine names] . . . I do not have an image [of someone] . . . who observes and records our sins (interview, 21 July 2014).

Renate may not entangle her ontology of Sufism with the phenomenon called religion. Still, her narrative inhabits a contradiction inherent in the term "spirituality," which is too close to religion to be separated from it entirely. The kind of energetic rendition that Renate made of Allah definitely differs from an anthropomorphic image of God as the grand patriarch in prescriptive, literalist, reformist Islam that postmigrant Muslims (including Ayşe and I) have experienced, influenced by Christianity and hegemonic patriarchy.

Michaela Özelsel (1949–2011), a white German psychologist and Sufi Muslim woman, wrote in her dervish diary how the transition of an anthropomorphic God to the Sufi conception of a transcendent/immanent Allah made her think of a different kind of imagination of power: "These [Sufi practices] were only tools of this set-above, goal-oriented, Allah-named power, that replaced my naïve, childhood understanding of God" (1993, 42). The power that Özelsel named Allah was an entity, unlike her (former) naïve imagination of God. Like Renate's Allah, there seems to be a postsecular imagination of the transcendent/immanent deity at play. Informed by the

Sufi discourses of the past and the present, such imagination does not reproduce a vision of the moralizing male patriarch who watches from far, punishes us for our sins, and rewards us for subservience to the prescriptive authority. Allah-named power invites human subjects to explore life to meet its existential demands.

As a conclusion to this section, I draw the third desire line of engaging the senses, combining the spiritual quest with the breathing sounds (of dhikr and Sufi music) and movements (of *sema* and the dances) without fixating on one specific tradition of belonging. This is the desire line of a nomadic subject entangled with the political dangers of cultural appropriation, purifying Sufism from the Islamic tradition.

A Nomadic Sufi Dancer: Claire's Fascination and the Dangers of Cultural Appropriation

> Everything that you do becomes part of yourself!
> —Claire[13]

I saw Claire for the first time in the autumn of 2012, a few months after I arrived in Berlin. I had not yet started my fieldwork formally. Aimlessly walking on the streets, I saw the advertisement for the *Way of the Heart* event in Kreuzberg. At the event, Claire was wearing a Mevlevi-inspired hat and a long white skirt, whirling with her eyes closed along with Hafiz (figure 2.2; Introduction). Later we met a number of times in various settings. In the first phase of my fieldwork, I took part in the "Sufi trance dance" evenings that Hafiz led (chapter 3). We met in the living room of a retired, elderly woman in Kreuzberg. Claire was a regular participant there, and she led the group when Hafiz was absent. We also met at the Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sufi-Center Berlin during festivities and at the dhikr and *sohbet* evenings.

Claire is a whirling dancer and practitioner of what she called Aroma Art (*Aroma-Kunst*), the art of perfumes. At the time of our conversation, Claire was in her midforties. She had traveled extensively in terms of geographical locations and the body practices she learned. Her story is a reflexive narrative of embodying the movements and traditions she encountered and a sustained ambivalence against prescriptive religious traditions. Sufi movements in *sema* and dhikr were two techniques (among others) that she practiced regularly.

Figure 2.2. Claire and Hafiz whirling together, 28 October 2012. © Nasima Selim.

I interviewed Claire early in my fieldwork, in spring 2013 (April 24). On the appointed date, I cooked a Bengali lunch for us at my apartment in Friedrichshain. We discussed at length the recipes and modes of eating before discussing Sufism. The first part of the conversation was in German. Later we switched to English. Claire's initial impression of what she considered Sufism was "mysterious." She used words like *unheimlich* (uncanny) and *mysteriös* (mysterious), *fremd* (foreign), and *unbekannt* (unknown) to describe what was pulling her to Sufi practice: "I just had a vague feeling [of what Sufism was]. It had something to do with music. Something mysterious, uncanny . . . *Trotzdem dass das so fremd war, hat das mich angezogen* (Although it was so foreign, it pulled me)" (interview with the author, 24 April 2013).

Claire described her entry to Sufism as a series of contacts. She encountered Sufi breathing sounds, movements, and smells brought by people who came close to her during the various phases of her life. They "had something to do with Sufism," Claire said. Her contact, and subsequent fascination, with the intensity of Sufi sounds and music, played a key role in her life. She described Sufi music as the space where she came in contact/touch with Sufism ("Wo ich richtig in Berührung mit Sufismus kam"). In her late twenties and early thirties, Claire met postmigrant musicians of Algerian, Gambian, Moroccan, and Pakistani origin. They came from societies strongly influenced by Sufism, especially in terms of traditional Sufi music and its contemporary fusion variants.

Having traveled for several years, working in the visual media and the underground music scene, Claire returned to Germany. She learned dance techniques and enrolled in Dance Studies at a public university. In the course of her studies, she was fascinated by a Sufi dancer's performance. It was about the same time she got in touch with Hafiz, having read his text on *sema*, published in a local magazine popular among Berlin's spiritual circles (chapter 3). In 2009, Claire met Hafiz, and it was the beginning of a close partnership. She wrote about the traditional *sema*, Hafiz's Sufi trance dance techniques, and learned to whirl. Later on, she began to participate in Sufi performance events in the city.

Since "fascination" (*Faszination*) was a key term in Claire's language of experience,[14] I probed, asking her what she meant by the word. Claire situated her fascination with a discourse of what I call popular, affirmative orientalism, rooting it in German dance history:

> Nasima: What was it that fascinated you?
>
> Claire: If you look at German dance history, in the 1920s and 1930s, influences were coming from the East . . . Mary Wigman[15] was the most influential expressionist dancer of that time. She used dervish dance in her choreography.
>
> Mary Wigman always said, "whirling is total dance!" . . . It already had an impact on German dance history. She also did performances with whirling . . .
>
> Nasima: Did you learn the whirling?
>
> Claire: We learned spiraling . . . That [whirling] I learned later.
>
> (interview, 24 April 2013)

Claire was born to a Catholic mother and a Protestant father in a small German town. In her early twenties, she stepped out of her church affiliation. She did not share with me many details about her early life, but, at some point in the interview, she told me that she was not too keen on sharing her interest in Sufism with her mother. Nor was she particularly enthusiastic about monotheistic religions, such as Christianity or Islam. Claire articulated her desire for a spiritual tradition that could integrate the performance arts:

> I was always looking for a spiritual practice or tradition—let's say—that integrated music and dance. Because in the Christian religion, it is very cut-off, you know! Like—dancing is not good. Singing is not good. Music is not good unless certain . . .
> [I interrupted her: "But what about the Gregorian chant?" Claire dismissed my comment and said] *Ja! Ja!* But, Shamanism, [making a passing comment, "Sufism is coming from Shamanism"][16] has this aspect of dancing, music, and the arts like healing . . . like this aspect of healing in the arts or you could heal yourself through arts, through dancing, through music, through theater. This is why I was also interested in Sufism. Because, even if for many people, Islam is very dogmatic . . . then you have the Sufis, who are very broad and very different, and you have the dancing, and you have the singing, *ja*, music! (interview, 24 April 2013)

In response to my question, "why Sufism?" Claire emphasized her interest in the healing effects of performance arts and the prominence of the arts in Sufism. In comparison to the literalist formations within religions (Christianity and Islam), Sufism for Claire was about combining the performance arts, healing, and spirituality: "For me, art is therapy . . . Whirling has a very strong effect. Dhikr also. I feel it physically, but [it is] also in my mind. It is very good for me . . . [It has a] healing effect on me . . . [It makes me] calmer" (interview, 24 April 2013).

I was perplexed about how to address her ontological separation of Islam and Sufism. Statements like "Islam is very dogmatic," sounded too close to the populist discourses propagated by anti-Muslim racism in the white secularist German society that Claire otherwise distanced herself from. I decided to stop myself from arguing with her about what Sufism had been in its global history. This bracketing helped to keep the conversation going in the direction she wanted to take it. While discussing her interest in multiple body practices, I asked her if she considered herself a Sufi. Claire said: "Everything that you do becomes part of yourself . . . I practice whirling and dhikr. So I must have a Sufi in me" (interview, 24 April 2013).

This comment may be interpreted as a typically "New Age" expression or the symptom of an eclectic "cultural appropriation" of techniques from various traditions without paying attention to the rich history of these traditions or being mindful of the personal and professional gains from appropriating techniques. The political dangers of uncritical cultural appropriation from other traditions haunt nomadic breather-wayfarers like Claire. Although Claire's long-term commitment to Sufi practices was evident in the way she practiced dhikr and *sema*, in her vibrant longing to step beyond the materialist German society, she did not seem to be adequately reflective of the political dangers of cultural appropriation. Her ontological separation of Islam and Sufism (like Renate) could be interpreted as perilously close to the discourses of anti-Muslim racism and Islamophobia, that propagate the notion that "Sufism is good and Islam is bad" (chapter 6). I am mindful of these political dangers that white German Sufis, and especially the nomadic wayfarers, need to be more aware of. But, I would still argue that a nomadic subject often inhabits a perpetual in-betweenness that cannot be explained by her propensity toward "cultural appropriation" alone.[17]

Nomadic subjectivity is constituted by diverse traditions and techniques that provide the conditions of possibility in life. Postsecular life is not necessarily anathema to belonging to an intentional community or deepening one's practice in a specific tradition. Neither is such subjectivity superior to another in terms of being more authentic. The nomadic formations are not restricted to New Age conditions or uncritical cultural appropriation. Such formations are part of a global history where minor traditions are known to have formed at the intersections of more established, world religions.[18]

Claire may not seem well-informed by the global history of Sufism and its rootedness in the Islamic tradition. But her bodily engagement with Sufi techniques leaves no doubt about her commitment to and mastery of Sufi practice. There might be other reasons for Claire not to choose to be part of a formalized Sufi community. Expressing her intense engagements with Sufi dhikr and *sema*, Claire reflected on her ideological conflicts with Hafiz and the prescriptive injunctions issued by the late Grand Sheikh Nazim. In her view, the Sheikh assigned restrictive gender roles to women and men.[19] Claire declared her sustained passion for Sufi techniques and ambivalence toward the prescriptive authority of the Haqqani-Naqshbandi Sheikh. This was evident in her comment, "I like the whirling. I don't like the gender roles!"

Toward the end of the interview, Claire mentioned that Özelsel had a strong influence on her. The latter explored the interrelation between Shamanism and Sufism in terms of healing (Özelsel 1995). We ended our conversation reflecting on the significance of the non-materialist dimension in our lives. Claire considered a materialistic life restrictive, while the spiritual dimension widened the horizon of possibilities: "It cannot be that there is just this material world. It makes you feel ill! There must be something beyond us . . . . This spiritual dimension in Sufism or other spiritual techniques . . . If this dimension is not there, you get materialistic. Life becomes very narrow" (interview, 24 April 2013).

During our conversation, Claire's otherwise bright, sparkling eyes were occasionally dimmed, tinged with sadness. Still, she laughed with her mouth wide open. Even when she was speaking of the struggles in life, she oozed the impression that sadness could not take hold of her. Claire's passion for perfumes triggered in me the impetus to experiment with essential oils. She was excited to discuss her interest in the essential oils with an animated voice and widened pupils. Writing this ethnography, among other things, is an exercise to articulate the senses. I am still searching for an appropriate word to describe the perfume she wore on the day she came to my apartment.

I complained about the aches and pains in my lower back due to "too much dancing." She applied a drop of lemon-scented perfumed oil on my hand and advised me to smell it. The citrus smell reminded me of lemon but also hints of other chemicals and other essential oils. Her perfume filled up my senses. Smelling Claire's oil also brought to mind how Hafiz used to apply drops of perfumed oil on our knuckles before we proceeded to get into the Sufi trance dance that he aspired to teach us. Claire shifted into that state with apparent ease, while I struggled to reach any state that can be called remotely ecstatic. Claire, like her companion Hafiz, was bent on presenting Sufism in its subtlety and sensuousness, a combination of movement, breath, sound, and smell. To get a sense of Claire's narrative, one must imagine not only what the Sufi places, people, and events looked like or sounded like, but also how they smelled.

Listening to Claire's narrative time and again, I find some parallels with the assortment of bodily techniques I have drawn from diverse traditions as a postsecular nomadic subject (chapter 4). I name three examples of breathing practices that mark my nomadic, wayfaring journeys across diverse traditions: the extemporaneous breathing-singing in the Bāul-inspired syncretism of Bengal, the breathing-sitting technique of Buddhism-inspired Vipassana meditation, and the breathing in Sufism-inspired recitation of dhikr and whirling *sema.* Claire and I both share an aversion toward prescriptive religious formations. But our opinions differ in terms of what prescriptive, literalist formation means, in the question of the ontological difference between Islam and Sufism. My experience of Sufism stands in stark contrast to Claire's, especially on the question of the teacher-student relationship. Claire did not mention any Sufi teacher with whom she shared an initiatic bond. In contrast, my immediate experience (*Erlebnis*) and the growing, sustained experience (*Erfahrung*) of Sufism have been formed under the tutelage of my Sufi teachers, Khidr and Murshida Rabeya (Preface, chapters 1 and 4).

The desire lines of breather-wayfarers, like Ayşe, Renate, Claire, and I, are co-constituted by the navigation of the "modern topographies of the self" (Vicini 2017, 120) as much as they are about the cultivation of the "sensibility of the (breathing) heart" (2017, 120) rooted in the Islamic tradition, whether Sufism is (discursively and) ontologically separated from Islam or not. These desire lines are about putting into practice the lessons of the affective pedagogy of Sufi practice, as articulations of longing beyond conversion narratives.

Desire Lines beyond Conversion Narratives

The human subject is the condition of experience.[20] The narratives, with which the subjects designate "Sufi" experiences, are where Sufi subjectivities are constituted, as in moments of speaking, listening, moving, and breathing.[21] It is necessary to combine field concepts with anthropological theory to understand these narratives (Lambek 2015, 64). The English word experience becomes two in German, *Erfahrung,* and *Erlebnis*. The concept of *dhawq*, or tasting, in the rich archive of Sufism, accommodates both the immediate (*Erlebnis*) and the longer-term (*Erfahrung*) dimensions of experience. The desire lines in this chapter and the next are lines of longing for this *dhawq*, of knowing and becoming on the path of tasting/experiencing Sufism.[22]

Anthropologists articulate Sufi subjectivities by drawing from local contexts in terms of historical and geographical locations.[23] Sufi interlocutors draw their pathways of breathing-becoming from diverse and often deterritorialized sources. The postsecular quest of the women who engaged with the diverse ontologies and repertoires of practices in Sufism (and Islam) allowed their horizons of becoming to open. Turning attention briefly to Renate's narrative, I juxtapose it with Ayşe's; two diverse strands become one. Renate was born in the former East Germany and grew up in state-enforced secular atheism. In post-unification Germany, faced with a chronic illness, she met and befriended an Inayati Sufi woman and entered the path of Inayati Sufism. Now she can laugh about her earlier discomfort with the word God. Her laughing statement that "Now I can say [the word] God without stress!" is a profoundly postsecular articulation of the "God" problem in the hegemonic secularist discourse.

When we listen to Ayşe's voice, we hear another story. The secularized Turkish family migrated to Germany, and Ayşe grew up without being grounded in her faith. From the repertoire of the Islamic tradition, she followed the Sunni-Sufi Islam practiced by the Haqqani-Naqshbandi network. Her desire line turned her from a secular Muslim to a Sufi Muslim. That is another formative moment of understanding postsecular subjectivity. Rather than digging deep into the past/background of Renate as a former East German atheist and Ayşe as a Turkish-German postmigrant, I stay close to what emerged from the narratives and the relational effects of their utterances in our interlocutory presence.

These younger interlocutors were asking existential questions arising from mental illness and suffering as postmigrant subjects (Ayşe) or transcended atheistic prejudices to mobilize healing energies in everyday life (Renate) in the afterlife of the state-enforced atheism of the former East Germany. The respective desire lines led these women to a future with various Sufi communities, following the guidance of a Sheikh or Murshida, and finding everyday healing in their respective intentional communities.

In Özelsel's case, her desire line was a lifelong pursuit of bridging differences between apparently incommensurable entities, Sufism and "Western" psychology. In contrast, Claire and I are nomadic wayfarers. We navigate our multiple belongings by paying attention to learning and practicing techniques, albeit differently. Our languages of experience and pathways of becoming navigate the secular and religious/spiritual life while attempting to transgress forms and formulations of oppressive prescriptions (chapter 4).

These multifarious pathways of becoming are formed through narratives and body practices. These oral narratives emerge in the juxtaposition of written texts, published testimonials, and media reports. They are also conceived in silence and the raw, poignant moments of intimate sharing with me. Such narratives are usually framed, in social science, as *conversion narratives*. A conversion narrative invokes the notion of distinctive worlds marked by the "before" and "after," telling a story of rupture (Roberts 2012, 276). More than conversion, desire line, and breathing-becoming do justice to the experience-near narratives I engaged here.

The experiential narratives of human subjects are not typologies of conversion.[24] The pathways of breathing-becoming are not sculpted by the contrasting regimes of power relations alone. They are lines drawn with fluctuations, navigating after-lives, and serendipity. No conversion or transition is ever complete. The postsecular subjects do not and cannot afford to lose their grounding in secularist German society, which is fraught with anti-Muslim racism.

My interlocutors (and I) consider Sufi practices as techniques to mobilize the bodily locations of healing (chapters 3, 4, 5). These healing narratives articulate the desire lines of the dual apprentice and her interlocutors as akin to joy. Joel Robbins (2013) invited us to question the disciplinary suspicion of joy, a tendency to dismiss joy as a fantasy of the neoliberal subject, an ideology of marketed happiness narratives. Joy is not a utopian, enduring state of happiness, but ineffable, candescent moments (and their durable memories). Few anthropologists swim against a dominating current that explains (and reduces) the human condition to a state of perpetual "social suffering."[25] Finding an intentional community is not about finding never-ending ecstasy. There is a lot at stake when the Sufi subjects transition from secular, or religious literalism, to their second lives. All the more reason for anthropologists to take the narratives of desire lines seriously. Why must the complex, layered narrative of a Sufi woman fit the fancy of a social science scholar to gain respect? What is the purpose of the question of whether she fits the typology of conversion? Who is supposed to be the normative representative of Sufi or Muslim women?[26]

Practicing Sufism cannot be explained as an absolute surrendering to the neoliberal logic of self-help, making the individuals responsible at the cost of structural solutions, or cultural appropriation alone. Even if the organization of Sufi practices and their practical arrangements[27] operate within the political economy of these arrangements, there are existential resources to draw from, transformative techniques of participatory performances, and experiential narratives that allow the possibility of sensing, breathing, and living, that is not entirely determined by the politics and economy of a definite period and place.

Those who dismiss postsecular Sufi practice by labeling it "New Age" (hence not really Sufism!) or "pseudo-reasoning," are probably looking for essentialized, authentic versions of indigenous *tasawwuf*. These readers/scholars will be disappointed with my formulation of Sufism in this book as an existential resource for postsecular subjectivity, as one condition of possibility, among others. But the task of a dual apprenticeship and the aim of a sensuous praxiography is to illustrate how things are in practice by being part of the practice. The object of one's inquiry (Sufism) exerted a global presence for more than a thousand years across several continents, absorbing multiple styles of reasoning, emerging as tradition, political organization, sociocultural formations, and so on.

It is counterproductive to engage in a polemic against these diverse, historical ontologies to claim yet another as the essence of Sufism. Sufism, and whatever that may mean for human subjects, can be something to be desired enough to conceive a desire line for previously secular or religious subjects. Following these lines, in their biographies, they formulated a pathway through which they became postsecular (Sufi) subjects, not always by overcoming, but always already healing secular and religious suffering, and facing the problems of living (chapter 4).

Postsecular imagination of Sufism is enacted in multiple formations, the narratives of experiential subjectivity being one. Body techniques and especially breathing techniques, however, are central in the Sufi practices of mobilizing subtle and material bodies. In the next chapter, I address the constitutive practices of breathing, wayfaring bodies, shifting attention to the intimate "inner space" of movement, breathing, and energizing as techniques of transformation, zooming in on micro-practices, instructed as they are by the

Sufism of the past and the present. “Why should I suffer, and what should I do?” The answer to Ayşe’s existential quest is not a universal solution for human suffering. But, for the breather-wayfarers on the path, the Sufi techniques of transformation provide the conditions of possibilities (albeit limited) for answering that question.

Notes

1. Shepard and Murray (2007, 1).
2. See Sharify-Funk (2020), Sharify-Funk, Dickson, and Xavier (2018), Diaz (2015), Haitami (2014), Neff (2013), Kasmani (2012, 2022), Shaikh (2012), Sultanova (2011), Küçük (2009), Helminsky (2003), Khosronejad (1996), Malamud (1996), and Schimmel (1982). See also Liebelt and Werbner (2018) who argued for gendering everyday Islamic practice.
3. I have selected narratives from different generations of women, with different social backgrounds (Turkish-German, former East and West German, and bi-national families), professions (language teacher, psychotherapist, lawyer, artist, and natural scientist), and the kinds of Sufism they practiced (Haqqani-Naqshbandi, Inayati, Tümata-Berlin, and nomadic Sufis) (see also chapter 4).
4. See Ernst (1985) for a detailed discussion of the articulation of ecstasy, longing, desire, and love in classical Sufi discourse. The desire of the modern individuals of “the West” to seek personal spirituality in Sufi meditation may be far removed from their counterparts elsewhere (local Sufi devotees of Zindapir in Pakistan) (Werbner 2017).
5. The term *guest-workers* referred to the postwar labor import to West Germany beginning in 1955 from Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Yugoslavia, and, following a bilateral agreement, with Turkey in 1961 (Rist 1978). See Rita Chin (2007) for a more recent discussion of the postwar labor migration, politics, and culture in (former) West Germany.
6. See Gritt Klinkhammer (2009b) for contextualization of divergent trends of Sufism in Germany with three periodic histories. She discussed how in the 1960s and 1970s, Sufi spirituality as therapy emerged as a practice and trope. Sufism is only one among the different traditions that offer existential resources for postsecular subjects today.
7. The detailed analysis of Sufi healing practices and the biomedical discipline of psychiatry lies beyond the scope of this book. See Athar Yawar for a vivid description of the Haqqani-Naqshbandi “psychiatry”: based on the relationship between the patients and the Sufi teacher, shaping their “everyday life, largely through the master’s reported ability to send spiritual knowledge to the ‘heart,’ and to arrange educational (or therapeutic) situations” (2020, 323). See Helene Basu (2014) for the entanglement of Sufi healing practices and psychiatry in India; and, Stefania Pandolfo (2018) and Amira Mittermaier (2011) regarding the intersection of psychoanalysis and Islamic (Sufi) healing in Morocco and Egypt.

8. The impression of the late Sheikh Nazim differed considerably among my interlocutors. Ayşe found the late Sheikh Nazim to be friendly to women. In contrast, Claire was uncomfortable with the strict gender roles preached by the late Sheikh Nazim and the gender segregation enforced in the network.
9. In 1925, the new Turkish republic banned the Sufi orders and closed down the Sufi centers (known as *tekke*, *dergah*, or *zaviye*) that were influential institutions in late Ottoman Turkey. One could read the reaction of Ayşe's family in line with the Kemalist and secularist discourse, which associated irrationality and superstition with Sufism (Silverstein 2011).
10. Mrs. Schildbach at the Inayat-Khan-inspired Sufi Movement was an exception. Unlike other Inayati interlocutors in Berlin, she was raised by her mother in an Inayati tradition.
11. Unlike Renate, Andrea, another Inayati Sufi-Ruhaniat *murid*, expressed an opposite view (interview with the author, 6 April 2014). She is in touch with the Sufi Islam networks and is involved in the "liberal/progressive Islam" movement in the city. Andrea's desire line connected a lifelong Inayati affiliation with that of Sufi Islam and a later liberal Muslim subjectivity. The question of liberal Islam in Berlin, however, lies outside the scope of this book.
12. In Berlin, I was often confronted with a whole-scale rejection of *religion* as an existential possibility for inhabiting the world. Such views were not only common among former East Germans but also in left-liberal feminist circles. A friend who grew up in East Germany was horrified when I questioned whether and how atheist secularism might be considered a "negative" religion. She felt she belonged to a minority community of atheists in a postsecular world encroached on by religions.
13. Interview with the author, 24 April 2013.
14. My friend and former flatmate Roxanne identified with the "liberal" Muslims. She mentioned *Fernweh,* a longing for the faraway, to explain what made her travel so much outside Germany, and to experience diverse cultural traditions in Muslim-majority societies. The paired sentiments of *Heimweh* (homesickness) and *Fernweh* are intimately connected (Alsop 2002). Affective terms such as "fascination" and "longing" (for the faraway or the other) were common tropes in the languages of experience of my interlocutors. See Andrew Shryock (2010) for a discussion of Islam as an object of fear and affection.
15. See X. Theodore Barber (1985) for a comparative discussion of the Mevlevi ritual and the whirling in contemporary dance in 1920s Europe, including Mary Wigman's (1886–1973) rendition of whirling. Born as Karoline Sophie Marie Wiegmann in Hannover, Germany, she adopted the name Mary Wigman. She was an iconic artist in Weimar Berlin and became known as the founder of modern, expressionistic dance. See Susan Manning ([1993] 2006) for a discussion of Wigman's life and dance techniques in Germany's cultural history.
16. Tümata discourse also draws from a genealogy of the intimate relation between Shamanism and Sufism in Turkey and Central Asia (Güvenç and

Güvenç 2009). See Özelsel (1995) for her discussion on the therapeutic aspect of Sufism from Shamanic and Islamic perspectives. See Sultanova (2011) for an account of women practicing Shamanism and Sufism in Central Asia.

17. The figure of the nomad "lives and resides in some specific location and yet belongs universally wherever it is and no matter what it is" (Nail 2012, 251). The *nomadic subjectivity* resonates with Rosi Braidotti's "nomadic consciousness" that resists the forced imperative of a permanent identity with unpredictable *lines of flight* (1994, 58). See Soudeh Oladi (2017) for a nomadic connection between post-structural thought (Deleuze) and ecstatic Sufi poetry (Rumi). See also Ian Almond (2004) for linking nomadic thought (Derrida) with Sufism (Ibn Arabi).
18. See Jeanne Openshaw (2002) and Lisa Knight (2011) for a discussion of the syncretistic Baul tradition shaped by Sufi Islam, Vaishnava Hinduism, and Tantric Buddhism in Bengal.
19. The late Sheikh expressed his opinions against the use of contraception and delineated the gender role for women: "If I had the power, I would have prohibited women from working outside. I would provide them a higher salary than men so that they would stay at home, to be happy there, and not outside" (Nāẓim 2004, 57). In practice, the late Sheikh was pragmatic about gender roles without forcing his opinions on women followers. Ayşe described him as "loving and humorous."
20. Veena Das followed Wittgenstein to define *the subject* as the condition of experience (Das 2007, 4).
21. Narratives construct coherence through time (Kerby 1991). Through their telling and my re-telling here, the interior lives of my interlocutors are imbued with public meaning. See Nigel Rapport (2012) for an overview of the literary genre within anthropology.
22. Sufi scholar Sara Sviri wrote: "Sufis call this way of knowing *dhawq*, 'tasting' . . . We understand through our state of being, and the scope of our knowledge expands with the expansion of our being . . . The non-ceremonial 'widening of the horizons' through *dhawq* is the true and only initiation on the path" (1997, 40–41).
23. See Katherine Pratt Ewing ([1997] 2006) for a discussion of the Sufi as a postcolonial subject at the intersection of Islam and modernity, as a saint, curer, and exorcist in Pakistan. See Kelly Pemberton (2006) for a discussion of women Sufis in South Asia.
24. Ryan Szpiech (2013) discussed the Christian genealogy of the term *conversion*. Henri Gooren (2014) pointed toward the field of conversion studies and anthropologies of conversion. Monika Wohlrab-Sahr (1999) argued how conversion to Islam in Berlin and West German cities is a symbolic battle between two logics, with the latter frame clashing with the former frame of reference. Esra Özyürek (2010, 2015) framed the phenomenon of the white German converts' ambivalence toward immigrant Muslims within a spectrum of Islamophobia and Islamophilia.

25. Well-being practices and the pursuit of joy are neglected topics in anthropology (Skoggard and Waterston 2015; Robbins 2013; Miles-Watson 2011; Mathews and Izquierdo 2009).
26. Michaela Özelsel's books, for example, circulated widely and gained popularity among the Sufi audience and readers of popular psychology, to the extent that religious studies scholars analyzed her life (and work) consistently as a conversion narrative. She was accused of pseudo-reasoning and considered *not* representative of the converted Muslim woman (Wieringa 2009). In an early polemic against Sufism in "the West," Herbert Hayes lamented how Inayat Khan's Sufism found acceptance among "ladies of suffragette tendencies" who supported Khan's "propagandist work," and Hayes accused the Sufi movement of "sensualism" (1917, 31).
27. Such arrangements include the cost of everyday living, rent, cost of organizing events, seminars, retreats, etc.