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IKG - INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT

MANDALA OF IDENDITIES

Wintersemester 18/19



ABOUT US

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5
INTRODUCTION

6
METHODOLOGY

10
CHAPTER ONE
WAR BRIDES

20
CHAPTER TWO
GUEST WORKERS

26
CHAPTER THREE
AFTER THE FALL

31
CHAPTER FOUR
MISCELLANEOUS

INTRODUCTION



Mandala, Sanskrit for circle, is the metaphysical, and artistic depiction of Buddhist and Vedic conceptualizations of the universe. In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, mandalas are created through sandpainting, a time-intensive artform consisting of painstakingly placing innumerable grains of multicolored sand to create intricate designs. Upon the completion of a sand mandala they are ritualistically destroyed to symbolize Anitya and Samsara, the impermanent and the cyclical nature of existence. Similarly, this project has attempted to produce a visual conceptualization of identity on three levels:

1. The individuals carefully evaluate and select the grains of sand from which their own identities are constructed to produce their personal mandalas.
2. We gather together these individual mandalas, themselves like so many grains of sand, to then create familial mandalas of identity.
3. Lastly, the synthesis of individual and familial mandalas combines to create a totality; a mosaic mandala of migrant-background identities from around the world.

IDENTITY:



AN INCOMPLETE GUIDE

These definitions are intended to provide a framework for facilitating a deeper understanding identity formation generally and amongst immigrant communities specifically.

Acculturation is the process of change, which occurs when one culture adapts to realign itself around the values and practices of a more dominant culture. This process can be further broken down into the following four terms:

Assimilation

the subsuming of migrant cultures and identities in favor of the hegemonic cultural identity of the host community. Partial assimilation occurs when the minority group loses aspects of their heritage culture and adopts the cultural practices the majority group. Complete assimilation occurs when the two groups are indistinguishable, and the minority group will often no longer identify as such.

Integration

the subsuming of migrant cultures and identities in favor the adoption of the cultural norms of the host community while simultaneously maintaining the heritage culture. Integration can also be seen as having access to all segments of social life within the host community (such as education, employment, marriage, social, etc.)

Separation

the rejection of a host community's cultural values in favor of heritage culture and identity, often resulting in ethnic enclaves. There are for myriad reasons for it, but this often occurs in cases in which the host community consistently alienates or ostracizes migrants, thereby leading to their own rejection of the host community.

Marginalization

the opposite of integration, this is exclusion from participation in the many facets of daily life within the host community.

*Further Reading: Berry, John W. Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation. Applied Psychology: An International Review, 1997.46 (1). pp. 5-68
doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x*

Transnationalism

a predominantly contemporary phenomenon facilitated by technological innovation, it is the simultaneous membership in multiple national identities, either through frequent physical relocations, or through constant communication with friends and relatives in multiple countries.

Multicollectivity

the theory of personal identity which states that each individual is a member of multiple collectives, groups sharing at least one interest (some chosen, some innate), and that these collectives overlap in unique ways to produce individual identities.

Further Reading: Klaus P. Hansen. Kultur, Kollektiv, Nation. Stutz, Passau, 2009.

Hybridity

the combination of two or more identities to create something new and unique. This term is most often used to describe, “Hyphenated identities” prevalent in the United States, such as African-American or Asian-American and the same process on the level of the collective.

Further Reading: Wicker, Hans-Rudolf. “Flexible Cultures, Hybrid Identities and Reflexive Capital.” Anthropological Journal on European Cultures, vol. 5, no. 1, 1996, pp. 7–29. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/43234784.

Renaissance

the reinvigoration of a minority culture, frequently aboriginal, or by third, fourth, or later generations of migrant communities, whose culture had previously been diminished or even lost to cultural assimilation. This can be combined with remigration, is frequently combined with identity politics, and is marked by renewed interest and efforts to save heritage languages and cultural traditions, through various methods such as bilingual educational policies. Examples include the Hawaiian Renaissance, Maori Renaissance, etc.

Further Reading: Van Meijl, Toon. “Multiple Identifications and the Dialogical Self: Urban Maori Youngsters and the Cultural Renaissance.” The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, vol. 12, no. 4, 2006, pp. 917–933. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/4092572.



METHODOLOGY



Theoretical background

The Peircean sign is often defined as related to something, but also related to the someone processing it and to whatever it is processed into. Due to these three related dimensions, it is expressed as a triangle, each point signifying a different dimension of the sign: 1) The representamen, that is, the material sign, whether it is the spoken word, the written word, some visual or material element or the like, 2) the object it refers to and 3) the interpretant, which can be considered the concept in the mind of the interpreter, with which he/she makes his/her interpretation and that combines the aforementioned dimensions.

The relations of meaning and form are thus not arbitrary but based on and arise from the interest of the makers of signs and are always newly made in social interaction, which turns the construction of signs in a very personal and individual process, which at times may be hard for outsiders to comprehend.

Identity as well can be considered as a sign or a collection of signs in the sense that it is a meaningful expression of one's being in the world. It is a meaning that has a certain form and denotes to myself and to others what it means to be me.

As a sign it signifies the person – the walking-talking human being – and the symbolic world, where one has a certain kind of identity, where one expects oneself and is expected by others to act, feel and think in certain ways. Signs connect human beings with this symbolic world; this connection facilitates access to culture and history. Signs are therefore carriers, an expression of that symbolic world and our individual being in it.

It is abstract to the extent that it is impossible to put into words the totality that is me. Yet this totality is very much present in everything we do and everything we are, as an implicit and taken-for-granted background of our everyday functioning. Signs can represent a way of reconnection by objectifying this nebulous field.

Through signs the idea of oneself, the one identity and the symbolic world one belongs to can be objectified and become visible to others and to oneself.

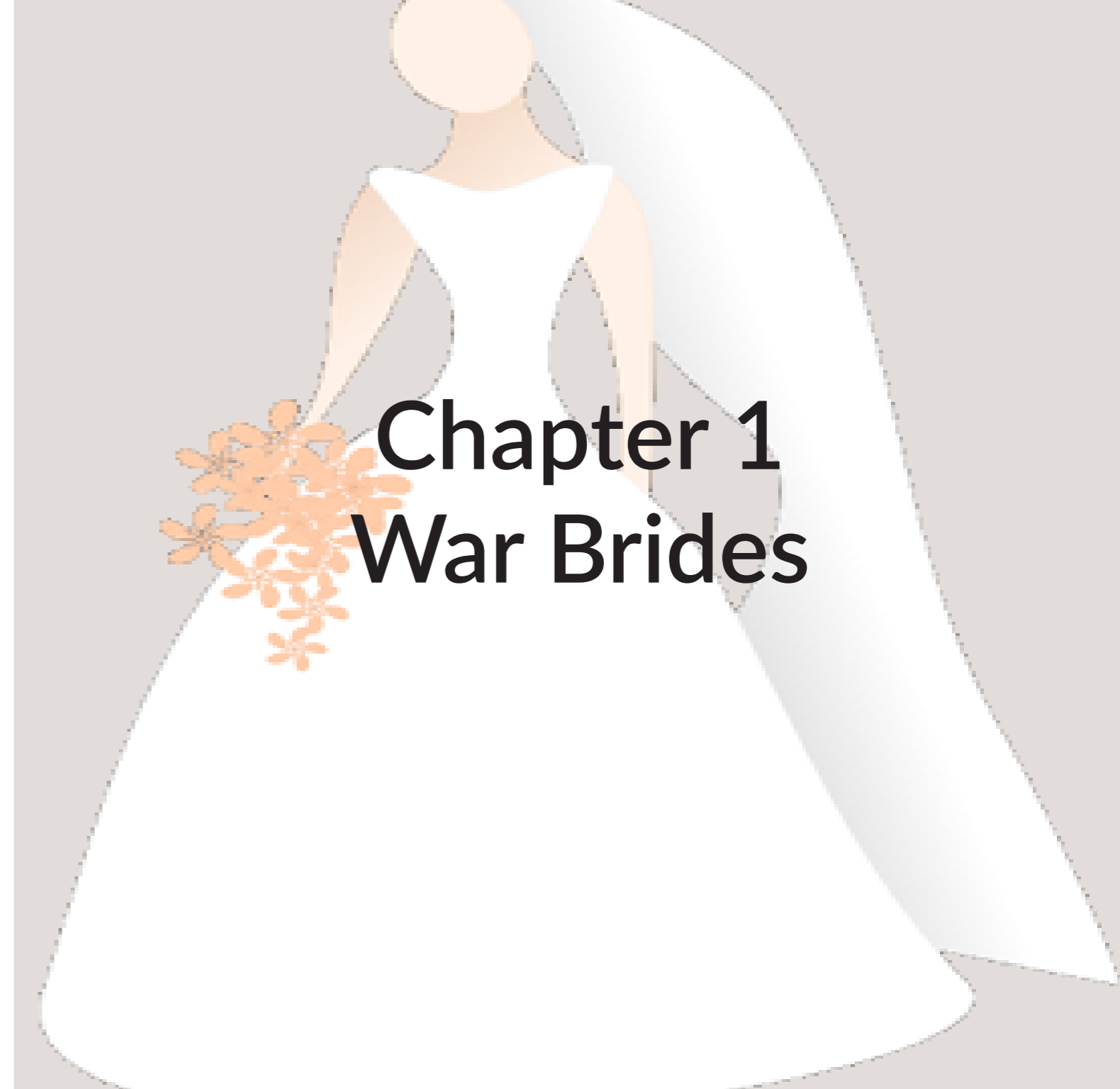
Approach

We asked members of different families with different migration-backgrounds to select those objectified signs through which their individual identities can be made visible and to arrange those objects into their personal semiotic mandalas that represent their identities.

To understand the personal meaning of those objects, we required the participants to formulate a short explanatory text in addition to completing a questionnaire and briefly outlining their biographies.

Criteria for participation

The families were chosen based on their histories of international migration, with at least one member of a generation born abroad, and at least one member of another generation born in a new country of residence. The new generation must have been raised in the new country and must be old enough to effectively participate in the study. The Snow-Ball method of ethnologic research was utilized to find willing subjects (we asked families we knew and crowd-sourced participation through requests on social media and through personal networks). After sorting through responses, nine (9) families were selected to participate. Sample sizes varied; the smallest sample we received was two individuals in a family (the minimum for participation), and the largest sample was four participants within a family, spanning three generations.



JAPAN TO THE UNITED STATES



The phenomenon of victorious soldiers returning from foreign campaigns with new brides in tow, or more commonly leaving bastard children behind, has existed for millennia. Alexander the Great married Roxanna, a Persian princess, after his conquest of the Persian Empire, and many of his men followed suit. This phenomenon continues into the modern age and has contributed to relatively small, yet significant ethnic and cultural admixtures. In this chapter we will present the case studies of two Japanese American families, whose origins in the US date to the American occupation of Japan following World War II. The first family relocated to the American Midwest. The second family settled in Hawaii. They had divergent experiences but share a remarkable number of similarities.

The context for their migration is the end of World War II. The Japanese mainland was occupied by the US from 1945 to 1952, however it was also used as a staging area for deployed troops during the Korean War (1950-1955) and the Vietnam War (1962-1975). Okinawa, the southernmost prefecture of Japan, was invaded by the US during the war and remained occupied until 1972. During the course of the WWII, much of Japan was devastated by the American firebombing campaign, and food insecurity and starvation ravaged the civilian population for several years following the official cessation of hostilities in August 1945. Many children died of malnutrition during the occupation, famously immortalized in the Studio Ghibli film "Grave of the Fireflies." In this context, a few thousand

Japanese women married American servicemen who promised a better life in America, the land of opportunity. Yet, due to the animosity between the two former enemies, many Japanese war brides were shunned by their own families as well as their new host communities. Most did not expect to ever be able to return to Japan.

American society from the 1940's until the 1970's was extraordinarily racist. Racial quotas banned all Asian immigration until 1952. Anti-miscegenation laws made interracial marriage illegal in the majority of the United States until *Loving v. Virginia* in 1967. Even after legalization, public disapproval of interracial couples remained the norm well into the 21st century and is still controversial in parts of the country. Racial segregation was legal throughout much of the US until 1952, but discrimination was still legal until the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In this context, many new Japanese American war brides were woefully unprepared for the level of hostility they would face. Those who migrated to the West Coast found a ready community of Japanese Americans who had been forced into "internment camps" for the duration of the war. This harsh experience of external alienation developed their sense of ethnic identity to a sharp edge and was instrumental in mobilizing the people of Hawaii to petition for statehood, and the full rights of citizenship that came with it. Those that migrated to the Midwest often found isolation, exclusion and ultimately assimilation into Anglo-American society.

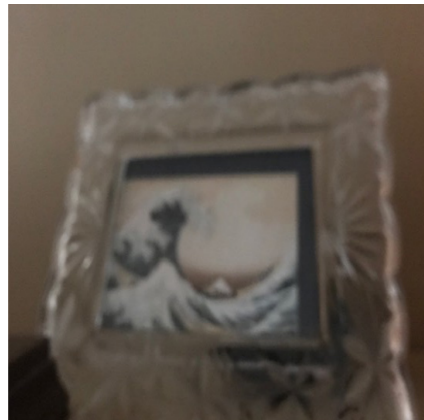


Family 1, First Generation, Japan to America, Female, Age 85, Migrated 1955, Grandmother

I am surrounded by pictures of Japan & Japanese items that remind me of home before the United States. I have a strong connection to family in Japan.

Family 1, Second Generation, America, Male, Age 58, Father

Strong love of my Japanese lineage. Strong feeling for Mt. Fuji. Great pride and love of the United States of America. Great pride in my father's selfless service in the US Air Force- 41 years 5 months 13 days Korean War vet. Great pride in my oldest son. US Army Special Ops. Vet. My service in US Navy & Law Enforcement.



Family 1, Second Generation, America, Female, Age 62, Aunt

My family at my house for a cookout. Me in Japan. My two grandsons.



Family 1, Third Generation, America, Male, Age 24, Son

I chose clouds for art, family for past experiences and motorcycles because they're a big part of my memories.



Family 2, First Generation, Japan to America, Female, Age 80, Migrated 1961, Grandmother



I made the two Hawaiian quilts in the picture frames. The bigger one is a Taro plant. It is a food staple in old Hawaii. The smaller quilt depicts the native torch ginger flower. It took months of work to stitch the thousands of little hand stitches needed in both quilts. I joined a Hawaiian quilt club and learned to do it myself.

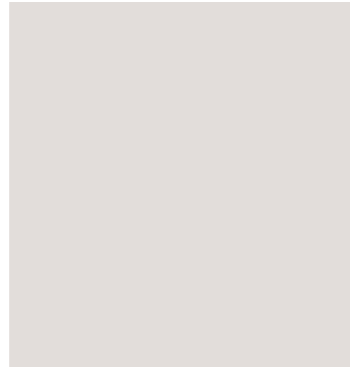
The five figurines are Okinawan Shii saa or Ryukyuan cultural artifacts brought back to Hawaii on my visits to Okinawa. These lion-dogs are supposed to ward off bad luck and keep the good luck that you may have acquired. One has its mouth open and the other its mouth closed. The male Shii saa is aggressive with its mouth open, and the female is conservative and keeps the good luck with her mouth closed.



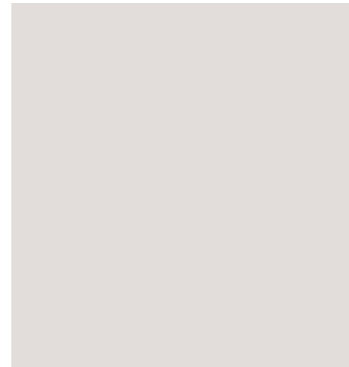
The back of the chair is draped with kimonos. The print of the two kimonos on the left are of Okinawan design. The difference in the designs are more than just dyes used. Kt is the ancient weave pattern used only in Okinawa. I wore the bright blue and white kimono on the right in a dance performance at the Hale Koa Hotel (House of the Warrior). The colorful kimono on the far right is worn at more formal occasions.



This is the address placard where the house that my mother's family once resided



This symbol identifies my concern and support for all living creatures, environment, ocean life, ecology, etc.



My love for cooking is a big part of my life. It is a trait my mother taught me. She was always feeding somebody (the sick, homeless, neighbors, etc.)



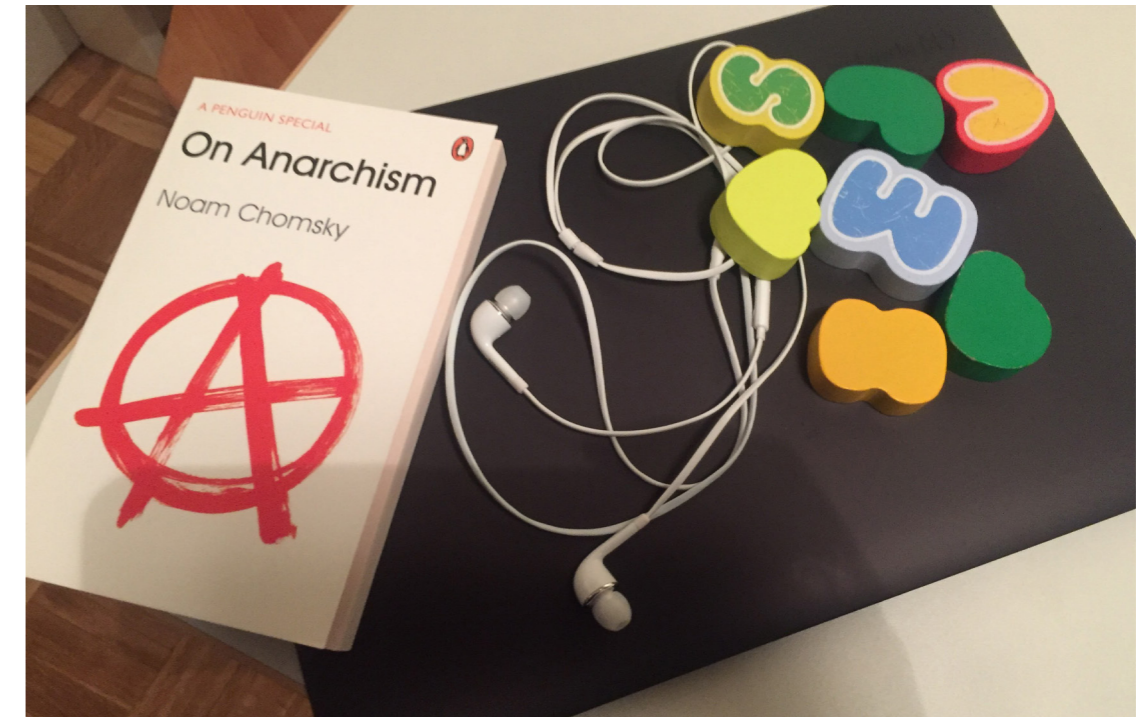
My grandson helping me in the kitchen.



Okinawan family photo, my first-time meeting all of my family that still lives in Okinawa.



Family photo of myself with my three children.



My laptop keeps me connected to family and friends while abroad. The toys represent my son and watching him learn. The book represents my love of abstract ideas. I would have used a sociology book, but they are all at home [in the US]. The headphones represent my love of music. Note: my item choices are limited because much of what I own here [in Germany] has a temporary feeling.

This photo is what I feel to be a simplified representation of who I am. First, the pair of cowboy boots represents the strong aspect of my life that is made up of horses and equine sports/activities. It is a time intensive, and sometimes I feel all-consuming, lifestyle. Surpassing a simple hobby. But I like to think, in the end, it's worth it. This item also, to me, represents a kind of mobility that is represented by footwear; I love adventuring a going to new and exciting places, seeing new things. Whether that means inside the USA or outside, the world is a big place. I most enjoy outdoor adventures and appreciating the various forms in which nature presents itself. Next is my university diploma for my first bachelor's degree. I enjoy university and like to learn and expand my knowledge, and I plan on continuing my formal education. Third, the rightmost picture frame is of my adorable nephew, and this item represents my love of family. We stick together. It's nice to have a support system like that. Being close to my sister is one of the greatest gifts I have. The more people I meet in the life, the more I appreciate my family. Last, in the forefront, my Mushu! She represents my love of animals. She is my companion, keeps me company, never ceases to make me laugh, and she does motivate plenty of activity in the form of walks, hikes, and playing in the snow!

Family 2, Third Generation, Third Generation, America, Female, Age 24, Daughter



THE RECRUITMENT OF GUEST WORKERS, *GASTARBEITER*, AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

“We asked for workers and human beings came “– (Max Frisch, 1965)



55 million people left Europe between 1821 and 1924. They were escaping from persecution, torture, terror and war. In addition, the exodus of refugees and internally displacement caused by the Second World War subsided at the end of the 1940's. Germany therefore experienced a major labor deficit simultaneously with the *Wirtschaftswunder*, rapid economic growth which occurred during reconstruction throughout Europe and East Asia.

Germany and some other European countries began to recruit workers from abroad. The first recruiting contract was signed in 1955 with Italy. Further contracts with Spain, Greece, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia and Yugoslavia followed. In 1964 the millionth guest worker received a moped as welcome gift. By the time a recruitment ban was imposed due to the 1973 oil crisis, nearly 4 million immigrants lived in Germany.

„Man ging davon aus, dass die Menschen nach einer bestimmten Zeit selbst das Bedürfnis haben zurückkehren.“

Essentially, the guest workers were recruited to satisfy the continuing demand for low skilled labor during the economic boom. The main fields of work were thus in the industrial mass production, the heavy industry and mining. These jobs required few or no qualifica-

tions, which consequently led to immigrants ending mostly in low-ranked positions. In addition, most arrived with short-term contracts. Expecting to only stay a few months or years, many left their families in the home country. A permanent relocation was neither forecasted nor intended. When the first families arrived in Germany it was clear that a more long-term stay had begun to be taken into consideration.

No new guest workers entered Germany after the recruitment ban, yet the number of immigrants was steadily increasing due to family reunification. The guest worker had settled in Germany and wanted to share what they considered their new home with their families. But the German government had not expected this turn of events, so no integrative measures had been developed. On the contrary, the so called *Heimkehrprämie*, a law created 1983, rewarded every unemployed immigrant with 10,500 Deutsch Marks (5,357 Euros) if they voluntarily returned to their country of origin within four weeks. In schools, classes made up purely of foreigners were created with the intention of preparing the children for their return to their home countries.

Because of these policies, many immigrants who have remained in Germany stayed isolated.



Family 1, First Generation, Spain to Germany, Female, Age 55, Migrated 1992, Mother

The most important objects on the photo are the pictures of my family. After those probably the ring I inherited from my mother, who already passed away.

The rosary and the images of the Heart of Jesus and Saint Leopold are as well very important to me, since they stand for my faith. I am Christian just like my mother and my grandmother were. I pray to God every day. The key chain with the old currency of Spain, the pesetas, represents Spain. Or at least how it was when I was young. The castanets are a typical item from Andalusia, the Spanish region that I from. My home that I will never forget nor want to.

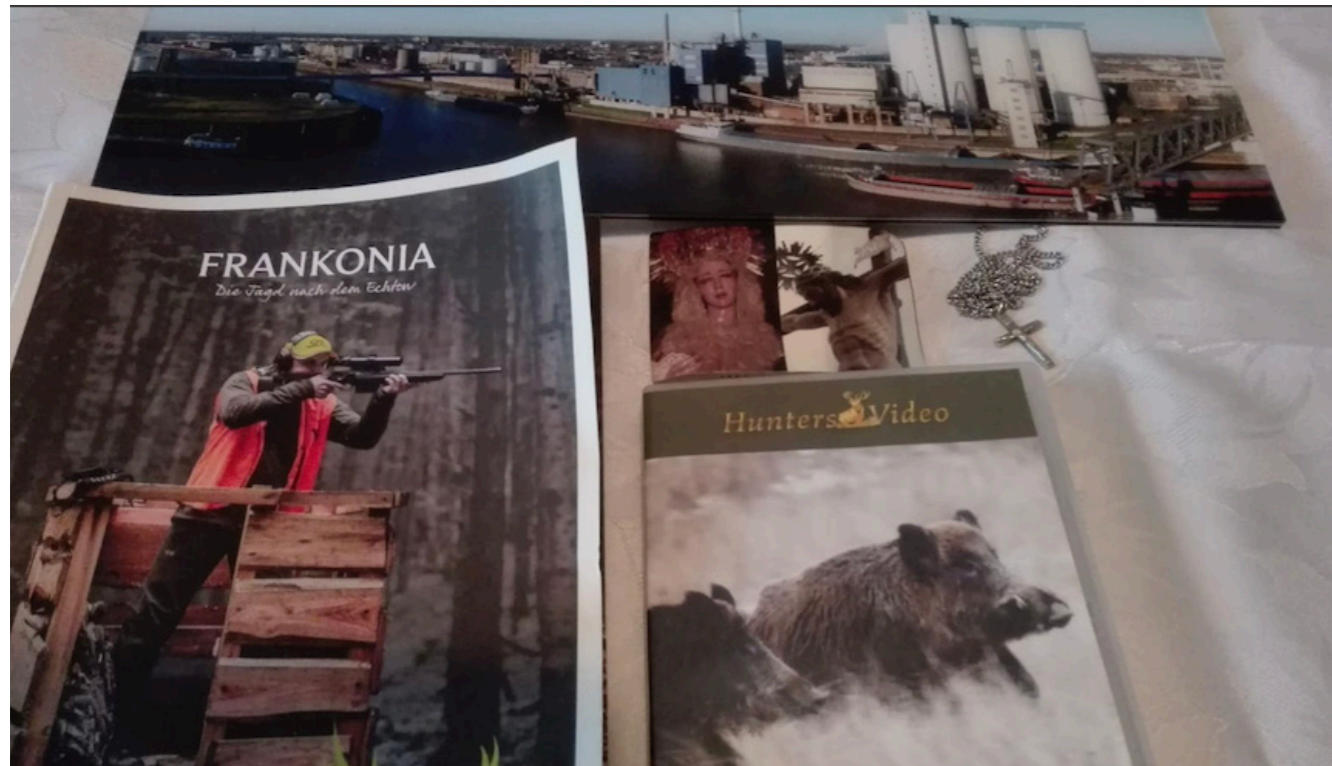
The miniature chair is very similar to the ones we had in Spain. In summer we used to take them outside to meet our neighbors in the evening and enjoy the fresher air together. The paint brush and the crochet needle represent my creativity and the creative work I love to make. When I am painting or crochet, it's the only time of the day that I can completely disconnect and relax. I have chosen the necklace because I am a bit coquettish as well.

The books show that I am a passionate reader. Finally, I chose the school book because I am very proud of my school performance. I couldn't complete my education because my help was required at home, but I really loved going to school.

The first is a picture of the factory, where I have been working since I arrived as a guest worker, 40 years ago. I arrived at the age of 17 and retired two months ago.

The cross as well as the pictures of the Virgin Mary and Jesus stand for my faith, thus I am Christian. I like to go hunting. It is my only hobby. My hunting rifles and my entire equipment is in our house in Spain, so I can only practice it when I am there. In fact, in Germany I don't even hold a hunting license. Since I can't go hunting in Germany, I use to watch documentaries or other films about boar- or hare-hunting – my favorite.

Family 1, First Generation, Spain to Germany, Male, Age 65, Migrated 1970, Father



Family 1, Second Generation, Spain to Germany, Male, Age 31, Migrated 1992, Son

The following objects represent best my identity: I love to listen and to play music regardless which genre and I even compose my own pieces now and then. I taught myself how to play all the instruments I master. It's one aspect of myself that I am especially proud of. On the picture it is represented by the AC/DC key chain (my favorite band), the headphones and by the Ukulele. I also chose the Ukulele because it resembles a Spanish Guitar. The later one is usually played in Flamenco. So, it stands as well for the traditional music of Andalusia, my homeland, which I consider my roots. I am very proud of being Andalusian.

My faith, represented by a cross and the rosary, is as important as my roots. I grew up in a Christian home and it influenced me heavily. I always intend to behave according to the guidelines of my church, for example I try to respect any kind of life, which is why I live vegan.

My profession is represented by the miniature truck. I work in the logistic and international trade department of a Spanish company.

The dumbbell, the book & the DVD, the Rubik's cube and the Dragon Ball Z key chain represent my hobbies. I consider myself a very active and vivid person - always seeking for distraction or interesting activities. Therefore, I love to read, learn new things I find interesting, exercise my mind and body, watch movies and do different sports activities, always with family or friends.

However, the most characterizing object is probably the last one: the multifunction tool. I always carry it with me, because I like to be prepared in case anything happens: "It's better to be prepared without reason than to face a problem and not being able to fix it."

I have selected this red water heater because i like drinking coffee. I Like this german Adler because it looks good, it just stand in the living room. And the “Fokus” is a cigarette box made of aluminum, where i put my cigarettes. I have also selected the lighter because I like smoking. And the loudspeaker, which i always put in the garden. I listen to music while working in the garden.



Family 2, First Generation, Polen to Germany, Male, Age 57, Migrated 1977, Father



I like playing PC, traveling and sports. For me, friends, family and work are important. I like to travel to friends and family. I talk to them a lot.

I need the suitcase to travel, and with my cell phone I make a lot of calls. With the glasses, I can easily see, and with the pen I write everything down.

With the key, I always come home :)

Family 2, Second Generation, Germany, Male, Age 30, Son

Chapter 3 After the Fall

THE FORMER SOVIET UNION TO GERMANY



Ethnic German repatriates – so-called Spätaussiedler – from republics of the former Soviet Union are one of the most important groups of immigrants in the Federal Republic of Germany. In total to date, approximately 4 million Spätaussiedler have migrated to Germany, principally from the former Soviet Union. Granted German citizenship based on ethnicity, German policy supposed fast and smooth assimilation.

The history of the German diaspora in Russia and Kazakhstan can be traced back to second half of the 18th century, when the Russian government of Catherine the Great invited southern German farmers to colonize and cultivate free territories in the eastern part of the Russian Empire. At the beginning of 20th century, in the course of the Stolypin land reform, a significant portion of these Germans resettled from Russia to northern Kazakhstan.

Official German policy conceptualizes the Russian Germans of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union as a German diasporic group, or “Volksgruppe,” one that, in the hierarchy of German belonging, falls under the rubric of “Staatsdeutsche” or Spätaussiedler. This legal and social status has enabled adult members of the German diaspora, scattered across the territory of the former Soviet Union, to gain automatic access to the privilege of German citizenship simply by applying for it at German embassies in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan or Russia.

Germany’s Spätaussiedler Law was passed in 1993, and a quota of 200,000 persons per year was established. Until 1996, when a language test was introduced, German descent had to be proven by showing personal documents listing German as one’s nationality along with a Germanic name. Subsequently, successful applications, leading to residence in Germany by the entire family, have usually required (in addition to language) demonstrating certain markers of cultural belonging and Germanness. This usually involves presenting evidence of ethnic and religious heritage, such as family bibles, German cooking recipes, singing German songs and documenting the observance of Christmas customs.

The recent Russian-speaking Spätaussiedler have been accepted by Germany under the terms of the 1953 German Federal Law on Expellees and Refugees. The idea behind this Law was to regulate the political consequences of the Second World War, in particular the expulsion of ethnic Germans from Eastern and Central Europe (Romania, Poland, Czechoslovakia).

In this chapter we will present two Russian-German Spätaussiedler families, one from Kazakhstan, the other from eastern Russia, who migrated to Germany after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.



Computer: Growing up in the digital age and therefore belonging to the technology and technology-conscious generation.

Vegetarian noodles: Since the age of 16 years, a meat-free diet maintained.

Tea: Interest in a conscious and healthy lifestyle and diet.

German book: current study for the realization of the role of a cultural mediator.

Passport: world citizen, travel for self-discovery and identity creation.

Hiking shoes: Identity as a nature-loving being.

Headphones: feel or sympathize with a particular generation or a specific zeitgeist.

As a child of German Spätaussiedler (Russian Germans), in childhood I experienced a “missing” sense of belonging: “German or Russian?”. Because of the lack of connection with hometown, I decided to study in another city and another state. I got inspiration through several trips, stays and international contacts abroad.

Family 1, First Generation, Kazakhstan to Germany, Female, Age 54, Mother

I came as a 16-year-old Russian Germans with parents to Germany. I chose the objects because I like hiking in nature, watching animals and birds. Get to know new cities. swimming, snorkeling, mushroom picking, love of animals, raised with animals, cat lover. Culture and tradition combined with countries of origin (Kazakhstan / Russia), Russian cooking, professional and private conversation with Russian language and cultivating cartoons, professionally related to all Eastern European languages and countries.



Family 1, Second Generation, Germany, Male, Age 27, Son

Family 2, First Generation, Russia to Germany, Female, Age 46, Migrated 2002, Mother



In my case some objects have more than one meaning. The “Matryoshka” and the Russian books on the one hand stand for my Russian origin. I only read books in Russian, as I don’t enjoy reading literature in other languages. My language is actually very important to me. Being able to communicate with others in Russian and to enjoy literature in Russian gives me strength and keeps me somehow alive.

As I said, some objects have got a double meaning. In the case of the books, they represent my profession as well: I am a librarian.

The books that are about baking and cooking stand additionally for my passion for baking and cooking. My further hobbies are represented by the knitting and crafting supplies. Skills I learned from my mum and grandmother and that are thus very important to me.

My dad is very important to me as well. Our bond is symbolized by the wood crafts since he makes toys out of wood. The wooden dwarfs along with the picture frame that says “family” represent the rest of my family and friends. Friends and family are also represented by “Carcassonne”, which is a board game I love to play in company. My photo also includes a tablet, which I mostly use to read e-books and to connect with the world via for example my Russian blog.

Finally, I chose a travel guide as a symbol for Germany. On the one side it shows, that I love traveling, on the other side that I love my current home.

Family 2, Second Generation, Russia to Germany, Female, Age 26, Migrated 2002, Daughter



I chose three travel guides to represent my identity in this picture. I have traveled to all these three countries, as traveling is one of my greatest passions. The books are the chosen symbol for this, since for me books are the best travel companions. Besides, I grew up surrounded by books as my mum is a passionate reader and a librarian. So, I have always been a part of my life.

I consider myself determined and freedom loving, so traveling is my passion. The journeys abroad were thus very special to me and I am very proud of having achieved traveling to these countries. For this reason, the books as they stand for my travels also symbolize the goals that I have achieved in my life: I learned German and made new friends when we started all over again in Germany seeking a new future - which we eventually found, I moved alone into a foreign city to start my studies and lived completely autonomous, I succeeded in my studies, I studied a semester abroad and traveled to South Africa and Thailand.

Finally, on a different level the books also represent internationality, which I consider an important part of my identity.

Chapter 4

Miscellaneous

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In addition to the aforementioned simplified historical contexts of migration, an innumerable multitude of possible reasons for migration also exist. Amongst our respondents alone, the stated rationales for migration have ranged from pursuit of educational, religious, professional or personal opportunities. Motivations rarely fall into the clearly delineated, reductive categories upon which researchers love to rely on so much. There are myriad push-pull factors in play within each individual case. However, a common trend is that migration often occurs for the simple fact that people are trying to provide a better life for themselves, or their families, than that which they perceive to be available to them in their homelands. At its root then, migration is a tool which enterprising problem solvers have been using since time immemorable, which is now referred to as international or transnational, but which in fact is an intrinsically human phenomenon that predates the nation-state.



Family 1, First Generation, Germany to Mexico, Female, Age 56, Migrated 1986, Mother

As background, a typical, embroidered with cross stitch, blouse. This flowered style is from the Yucatan Peninsula. The blouse is the biggest item on the table and witnesses my 15 years in Yucatan and growth of my children in this beautiful state of Mexico, where peace, security and neighborhood are still to be found.

In the middle are three photos of my children, which are most important to me.

On the top left are two bottles of essential oils, which are a part of my job as a massage therapist.

Over it are shells collected by the children on the beach of Isla Mujeres, which connects me to our common past.

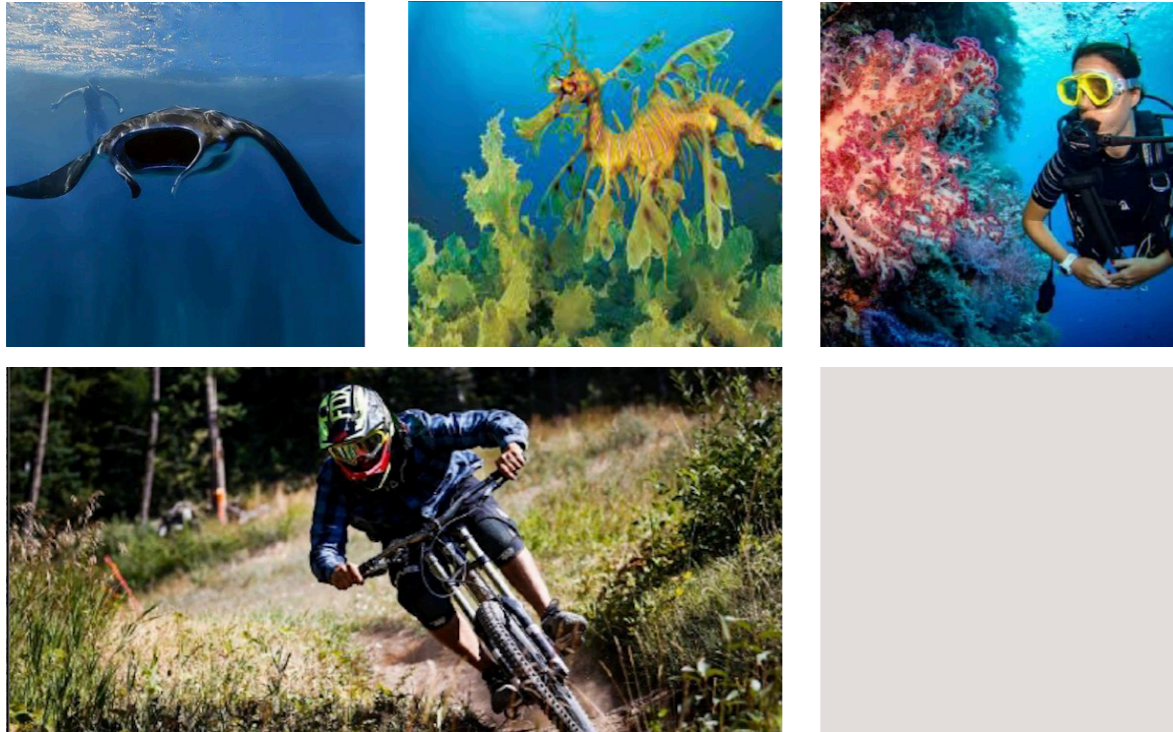
On the left is a blooming orchid whose color reminds me of Mexico.

The pillow with the inscription: "Behind every great woman is Herself!" Is my motto and I have also passed it on to my children.

The two Langenscheidt Lexicas: Spanish - German and English - German were my constant travel companions when I traveled through the USA and Mexico, before I set up. They are and will remain my link to Germany.

Next to it is a nest that the children found in a palm leaf. It is artistically "sewn" into the leaves. I love it because it is a symbol of nature, family and security.

On the right are three instruments. One is a replica of a pre-Hispanic flute and the other is two painted pods of a local tree (Flamboyan), which we use as "maracas". With those you can keep a good rhythm. The ceramic flute makes the music from the past, which is still alive here today. The last object is a hand-bound book with a picture of Frida Kahlo on the lid. It symbolizes for me the colorful and sometimes shocking world of art.



Family 1, Second Generation, Mexico, Female, Age 30, Daughter

I think my passion to the following four things characterizes me best:

First thing is diving. I grew up on an island, so I love the sea and I spent the most part of my life in the water. I didn't choose to study marine biology, because the university was too far away and too expensive as well. Instead I decided to make the most out of my linguistic capabilities and pursue diving just as a hobby. If I return to Isla Mujeres in peak season however I usually work in this and it helps me economically.

Sea animals are my favorite because they represent a certain level of freedom I can't find anywhere else. Rays are big, whale sharks are big as well and docile, and the sea dragon symbolizes a phase of transition and defiance in my life, which is why it became my first tattoo.

Riding the bicycle is a passion I share with my uncle and my favorite mode of transportation. It helps me to clear my head. I once had the chance to travel by bike through Germany accompanied by my uncle, which is something I always love to remember. One day I would like to practice cyclocross or another similar sport.

Last but not least, there is the martial arts or contact sport. At the age of 8 I started in Germany with Tae Kwon Do, which is a Korean martial art. Long after, I started with the Thai martial art, Muay Thai, which I have been practicing for several years now.

Family 1, Second Generation, Mexico, Female, Age 27, Daughter

I chose the following objects to reflect my identity to show the duality that formed my way of being and of thinking. For since I was little I sensed I was two different things, but none of them entirely, saying that I was half Mexican and half German to describe myself.

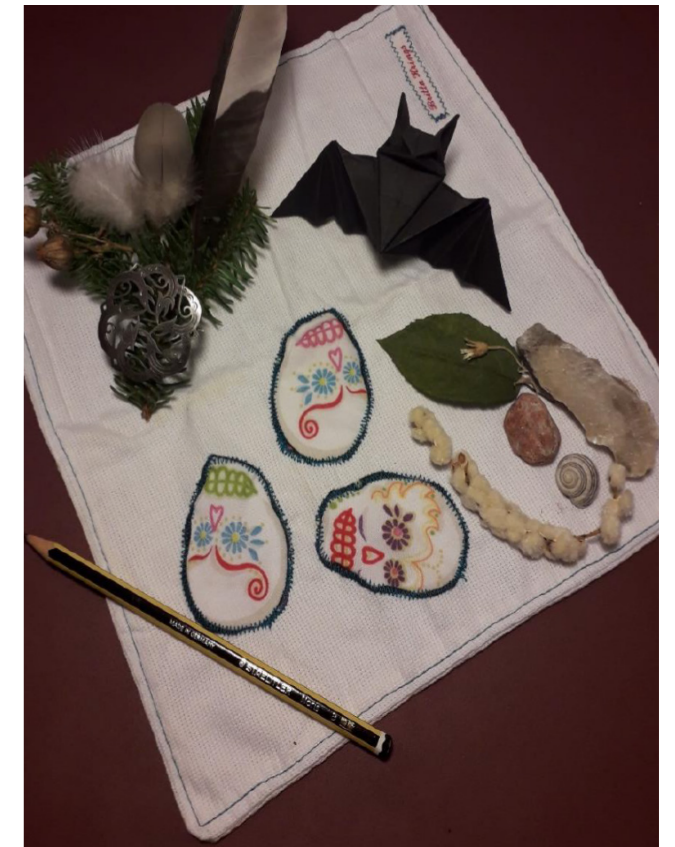
The handkerchief in the style of the Mexican festivity, El Día de los Muertos, represents one of the most important Mexican traditions. It also stands for the half of me that is Mexican. It is the culture I grew up in and to which I can most relate. She builds the foundation for the rest, which is why all the objects are placed on the handkerchief. In Mexico I never felt truly Mexican. I first realized how Mexican I am when I arrived in Germany.

The name of my mother is embroidered in the upper-left corner. This embroidery symbolizes my German side. My mother taught my sister and me to speak German and most of the things we know about Germany, so that I didn't experience a culture shock when I traveled to Germany. I really admire my mother.

I chose the pen because I like writing and to drawing. I placed it in a way so that the inscription "made in Germany" is visible, since I am continuing my education in Germany.

The stones, feathers, leaves, branches and the snail are objects I like to collect due to their texture, color, shine, form or feel. They are like a treasure to me because they awaken my imagination and help me create and remember.

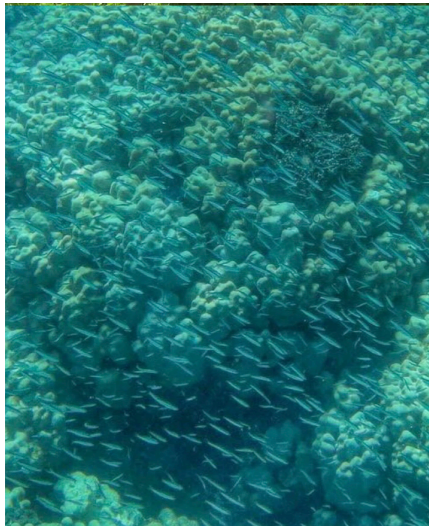
The silver pin with dragon heads, whose bodies are intertwined to form the infinite sign symbolize the magic and the creative power, who is always present in my way of seeing things. The origami bat symbolizes my favorite animal. In addition, it also stands for my love for crafting, origami in special. When I was a child I heard a story about a war between birds and monsters. In this story there was a bat that neither the birds nor the monsters could assign to one of the sides due to its odd appearance. I felt like that because I didn't belong to one side nor the other completely. That's why I started liking animals that others considered ugly, odd or bad, especially bats.





*Family 2, First generation,
Mainland China to Germany,
Age 68, Mother,*

I have planted the apples in the photo, because I like to eat natural products.

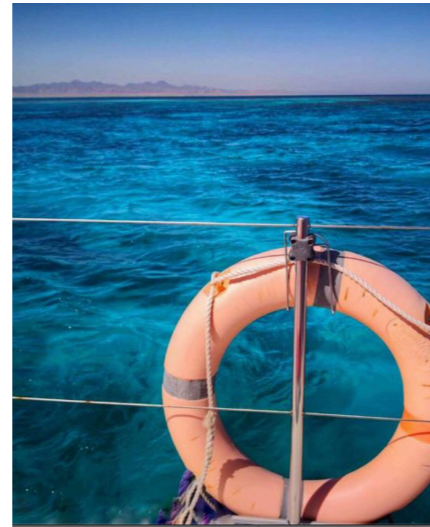


In offshore areas in China, such fish stocks can not be seen. I wish that human beings protect the oceans.

I was born in China and went to the elementary school and middle school in Shanghai. I was in Jiangxi Province for the Down to the Countryside Movement. I studied in Shanghai and then worked in Textile Research Institute. After that I started to study again in Germany and founded my family here.



I saw such beautiful corals for the first time, I hope they are protected and not destroyed.



The sky-blue sea and the sky bring me a lot of joy.

Here, one book for each language (Chinese and German). They are a symbol of literary socialization, because I grew up with both languages and therefore have a connection to the German and Chinese literati or language + culture. The books stand for my bilingual education and my interest in language and literature.

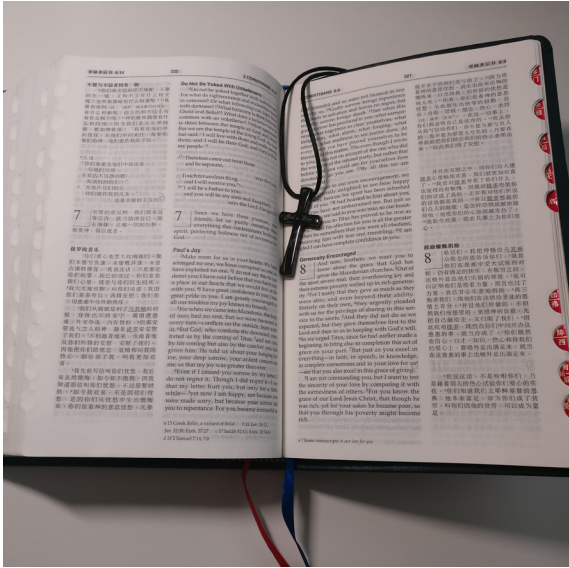
The sunglasses are a symbol of serenity and tranquility, perhaps also of optimism (coolness).

The headphones are a symbol of music and stand for relaxation, emotions, feelings and romance. Fashion is also a hobby of mine, so the sweater.

And the Panda just stand for the childish side in me. And maybe for animal love.

Family 2, Second Generation, Germany, Female, Age 24, daughter





Family 3, First Generation, China to America, Male, Age 64, Migrated 1990, Father

My family moved from China mainland to Taiwan in the era of War. At that time, they had their religious faith in Christian when I was only 4 years old. I can memorize few things before that. So I was influenced deeply with my religion faith. After I graduated from University, I began to doing business in Taiwan. However, I willed to devoted myself to church. After I made this decision, I began to seek my doctor degree in theology, and I became a clergy. During my study in the divinity school, I met my wife. We thought of establishing a church in U.S. I finally immigrated to U.S, became a pastor and served our God. I have worked as a clergy for more than thirty years. The bible and the cross are the two most important items in my life. They always company with me.

Family 3, Second generation, America, Male, Age 25, Son

Born and raised in LA, I grew up in a Christian family and spend a significant amount of my free time on weekends at church. In addition to my religious roots, my identity is also grounded in a mix of traditional Chinese and popular American cultures.

Culturally, I appreciate Chinese history and music, but I also enjoy top 40s US pop songs and Hollywood movies. I'd like to think that I have the best of both worlds, being able to appreciate and associate with multiple cultures. Sometimes there is a sort of identity crisis in which I can't fully immerse myself into one specific culture.

The Bible represents my religious upbringing. It defines my values. Furthermore, the piano represents my interest and love for music, which has been a big part of my life.

