

borders, in *Die leere Mitte* and temporal borders in *Good Bye Lenin* are the fissures that provide the leverage with which official histories can be cracked open. The search for difference and 'otherness' then becomes the key to a fundamental shift in historical analysis of the fall of the Wall. More generally, the idea of history as film is made productive by exposing the implications of the Deleuzian event. Within the logic of the event, the purpose of film analysis is to explore borderlines, examining moments where uniform meaning is impossible. History as film, then, allows us to expose the unceasing contestation between narrative totality on the one hand and multiplicity on the other.

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### 'Zungen,' Borders and Border Crossings: Özdamar's *Mutterzunge* as an Attempt to Deal with the Effects of Globalization

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The fact that Emine Sevgi Özdamar was the first non-native speaker of German to receive the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize win 1991 has two implications. It can certainly be read as an increase in the interest about literature written in German by non-native speakers of German; simultaneously, it can be viewed as a reaction to globalization. Though 'globalization' seems to be the buzzword of the 1990s and today, it is not really new, "but rather only a matter of scale and speed – old hegemonies in new forms. Globalization can be seen as an agent of imperialism and an updated version of the modernization which was directed through colonial conquest" (Amandiune 90). Based on this idea I will argue that in Özdamar's *Mutterzunge* globalization and its effects manifest themselves within such tropes as migration, political systems, and most importantly language.<sup>1</sup> After a short introduction to globalization, I will demonstrate how Özdamar deals with the problematic inferences as well as the chances implied in globalization specifically for migrant women, who are caught in the twofold peril of being female and a foreigner.

Globalization is a vast and complex field that has been discussed extensively and has a wide range of meanings. It usually stresses the international spread of Western economic, social, and political methods of interaction, norms, and values. Moreover, a focus on cultural and sociological aspects of globalization can be detected. It often acuminates in the notion of a 'McDonaldization' of culture.<sup>2</sup> James Mittelman's explanation goes further than this and helps to clearly define it:

The manifestations of globalization [...] include the spatial reorganization of production, [...] massive transfers of population within the South



as well as from the South and the East to the West, resultant conflicts between immigrant and established communities [...], and emerging world-wide preference for democracy. A rubric for varied phenomena, the concept of globalization interrelates multiple levels of analysis: economics, politics, culture and ideology. (qtd. in Marchand and Runyan 4)

This definition goes beyond common interpretations that primarily tend to focus on the economy and/or the nature of the relationship between markets and the state. For the purpose of this paper, the huge migration primarily from the South to the North, and the effects on social, cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, and national identities, roles, and relations are especially significant; they point to both the dangers and the chances accompanying globalization.

Feminist critics of globalization, for example Marchand and Runyan, have demonstrated that globalization tends to strengthen existing gender inequalities instead of overcoming them. Migrant women tend to remain in poorly paid jobs, without career opportunities and lacking access to social services. At the same time, the rise in the migration of women is unprecedented and one of the major impacts of global restructuring (Marchand and Runyan 17). Özdamar, however, establishes scenarios that can lead to a third possibility that goes beyond the binary opposition between complete freedom and strict gender inequalities. Additionally, she constructs a vision of cultural exchange in a globalized world. She does so through the trope of migration and the tension between the German and the Turkish heritage, which is explicitly stated in her handling of language.

Özdamar's heroine is genuinely troubled by the loss of her beloved mother tongue. The book starts with her claim to Turkish as her language, but it is done in German and simultaneously refers to a Turkish idiom: "In meiner Sprache heißt Zunge: Sprache" (MZ 9). This identification with Turkish is further emphasized when she states that "Zunge hat keine Knochen, wohin man sie dreht, dreht sie sich dorthin" (MZ 9). Thus, the first two sentences of the book underscore the importance language is granted, and point to what

Azade Seyhan calls "acrobatic skill of expression" (244). She points out that "Zunge drehen [...]" is the translation of a Turkish idiom, *dili dönme*, often used in the negative as *dilim dönmüyor*, meaning I can't pronounce or articulate something" (244). Since Özdamar employs this expression in the positive, she emphasizes that her expression in her mother tongue would be infinite. This explains the frustration and confusion about the loss of her native language, her repeated: "Wenn ich nur wüsste, wann ich meine Mutterzunge verloren habe" (MZ 9). The narrator establishes a situation in which she claims a language to be hers, even though she no longer has a sufficient command over it. At the same time, she is able to use a foreign language very artistically, without claiming this language as hers. Thus, on the first page of the story collection, Özdamar's heroine uses language and the discussion about language to establish her personal conflict about her identity. In that context, it is especially relevant that she remembers her mother's sentences spoken in her mother tongue, Turkish, only in German: "Dieser Sätze [...] erinnere ich mich auch nur so, als ob sie diese Wörter in Deutsch gesagt hätte" (MZ 11). The Western/German language has taken over, has robbed her of something that had been significantly hers all her life. Therefore, the narrator expresses that deficit by repeatedly asking for the time and place of the language loss, e.g. "Wenn ich nur wüsste, in welchem Moment ich meine Mutterzunge verloren habe" (MZ 11; cf. MZ 9, 12, 13).

The loss of language is emphasized by the way it is described. This mother tongue appears to be something imaginary or floating, subject to change and chance: "Noch ein Wort in meiner Mutterzunge kam mal im Traum vorbei" (MZ 12). The narrator consequently has no control over this language, as it belongs rather to the realm of dreams than to reality. If her mother tongue manages to intrude into the actual German world, it is often linked to speed, e.g. in the dining-car of the train racing through the country (MZ 12). Thus, the issue of the mother tongue is associated with the world of the imaginary, suggesting a denial of its existence: it simply does not fit into the fast-paced world of everyday life in Germany.

In this context it is striking that Özdamar uses Turkish idioms in her German writing, not only the "Zunge drehen," but also, for example, in her description of her first Arabic lesson with Ibni



Abdullah. After they have talked about their past, their reasons for migration to Germany, and about the seven brothers the 'master' lost in a war, the author uses a figure in German, which is alien to the German language: "Eine Weile die toten sieben Brüder saßen zwischen uns in diesem halbschlafenden Moscheeschritzimmer" (GZ 16). Not only does she overthrow the German sentence structure, but she uses very strong images that have their roots in Turkish or Arabic, not in German. Thereby, she emphasizes one of the chances implied in globalization: the mutual exertion of influence on each other's languages. Specifically, she demonstrates how Turkish or Arabic can claim and retain distinctive features also in German, and how they can meet the challenge of being absorbed in a process of assimilation.

Simultaneously, Özdamar asks her (German) readers to dive into this other system of cultural signification. In order to comprehend Özdamar's text, one needs to be willing to delve into it on a multitude of levels: historical, political, social, and cultural. Thus, the author establishes a vision of a multicultural society, which, according to Seyhan, implies "not knowing the other and willingness to learn about the other" (246). This should be read as an attempt to deconstruct the homogenization of culture that accompanies globalization. Özdamar refuses to participate in a globalized jeans-T-shirt-and-sneakers-culture; rather, she attempts to retain her Turkish heritage while writing in German. And it is exactly this cultural mix of Turkish/Arabic and German that characterizes her prose. As Jankowsky points out, it therefore seems to be decisive to read "for 'intersections' of cultural influences from Turkey and Germany" (263). These 'intersections' signify spheres in which the cultures meet, and in which borders are crossed. Therefore, the crossing of the state line between East and West Germany in "Großvaterzunge" acquires a multitude of meanings. Özdamar asks us to ignore borders, so to speak, as her protagonist does when she exclaims that the same rain is falling in East and West Berlin. The overcoming of limitations is constructed as a natural process. It emphasizes the need to accept this kind of border-crossing as normal both on the side of the Germans as well as the Turkish or Arabs, assuming they want to learn from different cultures. Thus, according to Ackermann, "what is advocated is not integration, the

absorption of foreign elements in the German sphere, but a meeting of the cultures, a crossing of the borders" (249). Such a meeting of cultures and overcoming of borders seems to be a prerequisite for a fruitful collaboration in a globalized world.

These border crossings correspond with the trope of migration in *Mutterzunge*. Particularly in this collection of stories, where Özdamar describes both the fact and its effect, migration should be viewed as an immediate effect of globalization. The presence of Arabs in Germany appears to be taken for granted, and they mainly become visible on the margins of society, especially in their own café: "Negercafé, Araber zu Gast, die Hocker sind zu hoch, Füße wackeln" (MZ 9). The description of the place with stools that are too high and that have wobbling legs underscores the insecure, shaky, and insignificant position of Arabs in German society. In "Großvaterzunge," Özdamar describes her heroine looking for Arabs on the "Kudamm" (GZ 21, 45),<sup>3</sup> visiting an Arabian restaurant (GZ 21), and looking for Arabian names on the doors of Berlin apartments (GZ 22). All of that is merely described, not appraised. This non-appraisal signifies the process she finds herself in, one in which she attempts to define a space where Arabic signs can acquire meaning within the German context.

Turkey, on the other hand, offers only one positive image that can be found in the family, specifically in the mother (MZ 9), and the grandmother, who is associated with sitting "in einem Diwan" (MZ 13) and with relaxation. At the same time, Özdamar hints at the difficulties with her home country: her heroine has to go to Turkey quietly and carefully: "Geh auf Fingerspitzen in die Türkei" (MZ 13). The choice of words alludes to the German "auf Zehenspitzen gehen," which implies creating as little noise as possible on one's toes in order not to disturb anyone else or draw attention to one's self. The 'Fingerspitzen' further accentuate this aspect: fingers produce even less sound than toes, and are therefore especially inconspicuous. Also, they are all the more vulnerable and consequently more likely to be injured than toes, thus emphasizing the heroine's vulnerability. Simultaneously, Özdamar's choice of words is reminiscent of the German "mit Fingerspitzengefühl," which points to the narrator's awareness of the necessity to move carefully in Turkey. Therefore, her rhetoric serves a double purpose: it elaborates on the narrator,



both on her character and on the limitations she finds herself surrounded by. And at the same time, the fact that she has to move so cautiously in her home country accentuates her difficulties with Turkey's biased and brutal political system.

In both stories, this system is negatively evaluated: the narrator describes the arbitrary employment of the death penalty, terror, and the absence of justice, particularly for anybody the government associates with communism (MZ 10, 12). The police depicted in Özdamar's stories do not serve the citizens of the country, but rather arrest them unwarranted and hand them over to judges who sentence them to death presumably without legal cause. In "Mutterzunge," Özdamar's narrator recalls the incident of a young alleged anarchist who was hanged (MZ 10-11); in "Großvaterzunge," she describes how she has lost her friends to terror and how they feared for their lives: "Ich sagte: 'So viele tote Freunde habe ich hinter mir in meinem Land gelassen. Siebzehnjährige haben sie aufgehängt, ich bin für meine Regierung Kommunistin'" (MZ 16). Through her repeated use of possessive pronouns, Özdamar's heroine stresses her affiliation with Turkey. Even though her actions against the regime put her in danger and cause a great deal of loss and pain, she refuses to renounce her home country.

The omnipresent terror is stressed further when her Arabic teacher Ibni Abdullah talks about his seven brothers who died in a war (GZ 15); it is strongly contrasted with the master's view of democracy in West Germany: "Hier in Deutschland aber kann ich in den Park gehen und meine Meinung laut sagen, hier gibt es Demokratie" (GZ 16). According to James Mittelman's definition of globalization quoted before, striving for democracy is considered to be as much a signifier for globalization as migration. By telling stories of those who suffered under the regime and therefore left Turkey, e.g. Ibni Abdullah and the narrator, Özdamar indicates in her writing that the lack of democracy in countries like Turkey is one of the reasons for migration. Still, she refrains from a simple adaptation of that view, but includes her critique of the capitalist system, which is expressed by her heroine in *Mutterzunge*: "Und wieviele Mal sind Sie in diesen neun Jahren in den Park gegangen und haben Ihre Meinung laut gesagt, das Geld hat keine Angst hier, es hat Zähne" (GZ 16). Here, the heroine unmasks Ibni Abdullah's bizarre notion

of democracy: as a Turk living in Germany, he does not have full civil rights. For example, he cannot participate in affairs of the country by exercising a right to vote. Whereas Ibni Abdullah seems to value the possibility to express his opinions publicly, Özdamar's heroine focuses on the facts and the limitations of that opportunity. She neither questions the value of a democracy, nor does she reflect on the origin for her own desire to engage in politics freely. Rather, she expresses her reservations about the teacher's peculiar view of democracy and shifts the center of attention onto capitalism and money, which is portrayed as both powerful and threatening. By employing the image of money that has teeth, she points to the connection between Western democracy and capitalism: both are concerned with making money, which in turn has the ability to eat one alive.

This implied danger in capitalist Germany leads to the narrator's difficult situation: she cannot completely identify with either Turkey or Germany; rather she appears to be lost and susceptible: "Ich bin ein Vogel. Geflogen aus meinem Land, ich war auf den Autobahnen am Rande der xy-ungelösten Städte" (GZ 27). The use of the possessive pronoun 'meinem' linked to her country of origin again points to the heroine's identification with Turkey. She still claims it, even though she was forced to leave it for political reasons. The image of the bird is also employed ambiguously: at first, this animal recalls freedom and the opportunity to move without restraint. But in connection with the next sentence, it already suggests trouble and menace. The 'geflogen' alludes to the minimal pair 'geflohen.' This bird had to leave the country, thus alluding to the notion of the German 'vogelfrei,' which implies that she is an outlaw in her country and has lost her rights as a citizen. Thus, Özdamar refers to the predicament of the migrant who cannot feel protected anywhere in a globalized world. Neither Turkey nor Germany, where the narrator presumably does not possess citizenship accompanied by civil rights, offers conditions enabling her to live freely. Simultaneously, the constellation of words very artistically emphasizes the resulting vulnerability. Her helplessness is accentuated by her position on the 'Autobahn,' which indicates the danger of cars running over her at high speed and injuring or even killing her. The "xy-ungelöste Städte," referring to the greater German cities full of unsolved crimes, clearly



underscore the feeling of imminent danger and threat.<sup>4</sup>

Even though Germany is obviously less dangerous for her than Turkey, the heroine feels intimidated and insecure in the culture unknown to her. As a single woman it is especially hard to find a suitable role under these circumstances. Thus Özdamar identifies the dilemma specifically affecting women who try to define their space in a globalized world, caught between different cultures. She consequently establishes the grounds for a deconstruction of the traditional roles of women by describing a Turkish woman, both in her country of origin and in Germany. This woman deliberately tries to fall short of both Turkish and German society's expectations in an attempt to meet her own potential. According to Brinker-Gabler and Smith, this is not unusual for a multicultural text that then can "become a site of social intervention in the oppressive practices against women in their home and host cultures" (21). Özdamar's protagonist is described in Turkey: she works for the "Kommunistische Commune" and is treated badly by the police for her behavior as a woman and her conduct with men (MZ 13). She has to leave her country precisely because she is not willing to live a life acceptable for traditional society. She stresses that she was the only female working at the communist center, thereby emphasizing both her vulnerability but also her insistence on being different from others, i.e. she did not get married to raise children. Contrary to traditional gender positions, she became politically involved, thereby embracing a more Westernized notion of femininity.

In "Großvaterzunge," however, the narrator is presented in Germany and explicitly situated in a transitional stage between modernity and tradition. This Turkish woman arrived alone, and this has significant consequences since as a woman and a foreigner she is twice as vulnerable. As Patricia Anne Simpson indicates: "The double jeopardy, both female and foreign, complicates the problem of establishing a stable self in the German context; of articulating the relationship between the fatherland and the mother tongue" (54). At times, Özdamar's heroine longs to be part of one of the Turkish families in Berlin: "Ich ging den arabischen Frauen mit Kopftüchern hinterher, ihre schwangeren Töchter neben ihnen, ich will unter ihre Röcke gehen, ganz klein sein, ich will ihre Tochter sein in Neukölln" (GZ 21-22). Here, the narrator expresses her awareness of the

advantages and disadvantages accompanying the attachment with a Turkish family: on the one hand, she would be protected by the other family members, would not be held responsible for herself and her actions any more, and could live as a child. Yet simultaneously she would be forced to adopt the traditional female role: marry, become pregnant, and raise children. While Özdamar's heroine plays with those thoughts, it becomes apparent that they can only be part of a process she undergoes. Eventually, she will emerge as a fairly strong and determined young woman. She is capable of serving as a role model precisely because she also illustrates the difficulties she encounters as a consequence of her refusal to follow the traditional paths of life.

The play with those two antipodal possibilities of traditional family life on the one hand, and the role of the entirely independent woman on the other, offers the heroine a chance to define a third space for herself where she is not forced to renounce her heritage but can alter it and thereby acquire more freedom than Turkish culture would traditionally have granted her. An example for that strategy can be observed in her firm decision to learn Arabic. Going back to her Arabic roots signifies her awareness of her heredity; at the same time, she finds her 'Meister' herself. In the description of the first meeting with the master, the heroine's roots become as visible as her willingness to overcome the limitations implied in her ancestry. She explains how the situation would have been altered by the presence of her father, but she does not offer an evaluation of that scene:

Wenn mein Vater mich in Ihre Hände als Lehrling  
gebracht hätte, hätte er mich in Ihre Hände  
gegeben und gesagt, 'Ja, Meister, ihr Fleisch gehört  
Ihnen, ihre Knochen mir, lehre sie, wenn sie ihre  
Augen und Gehör und ihr Herz nicht aufmacht  
zu dem, was Sie sagen, schlagen Sie, die Hand der  
schlagenden Meister stammt aus dem Paradies, wo  
Sie schlagen, werden dort die Rosen blühen.' (GZ  
15)

The father would have handed over the responsibility for his



daughter and her learning process. But as the owner of her body, he would simultaneously have relinquished parts of it as well. While the bones, her framework or scaffolding so to speak, would remain his, the flesh would be the master's.

The reader has to wonder if the heroine, too, is willing to hand over her flesh to the master. This sentence already foreshadows the sexual, very body-and-flesh-oriented love relationship in which the young woman and her teacher become engaged. Furthermore, it is striking that she emphasizes that her father would have allowed the master to beat her, thereby highlighting the difficult female role within this cultural setting. Without offering any statement about her own attitude toward that possibility, she simply lets her audience know that she is aware of the tradition. At the same time it becomes obvious that the heroine is in the middle of a process that has started with her denunciation of Turkish conventions by migrating independently, thereby embracing a chance that the globalized world offers. Thus, it appears likely that she would not be willing to allow anybody to chastise her, since her longing for independence has apparently started long ago in Turkey. This may be read as an indication for the influence Westernization has already had on the heroine's country of origin: it had begun with Turkey's vast colonial history, and was pursued in the 1920s with Atatürk's reforms.

However, in this episode with her Arabic master, the heroine adapts to his world from the beginning. In her desperate search for her Arabic roots through the "Großvaterzunge," she learns her new letters and slowly falls in love with Ibni Abdullah, all on his terms. From the start he defines the meaning of 'love' as well as the conditions for this love relationship: "[...] das ist die Liebe, du wirst bei mir bleiben, widersprich nicht, mein Gott, ich will nichts hören, du bleibst bei mir, ich habe gemerkt, daß du viele Schmerzen hast" (GZ 25). The master exclusively employs imperatives directed at his pupil and lover, thus manifesting his idea of a relationship between unequal partners. He does not tolerate objections, and she accepts his terms and the role he assigns her as one of the "Prinzessinnen in Arabien" (GZ 23). Consequently, she remains in his room in Wilmersdorf. Her submission to the world of the master culminates in her final inability to leave the room: "Ich konnte aus diesem Schriftzimmer nicht mehr raus" (GZ 26). Through the choice of

the modal 'können' it becomes unclear if he does not allow her to leave the room, or if she lacks the energy to get out of it. The fact that she remains in the room even when he goes out does not help to clarify the situation. Through the course of the story, she repeats the sentence using the modal 'können,' thus remaining in the realm of the established ambiguity: "Er ging weg, ich konnte weiter nicht raus aus dem Schriftzimmer" (GZ 40). It appears that the search for her Arabic ancestry through language has, one way or the other, immobilized her.

This ambiguity is characteristic for her relationship with the 'Meister,' which is also described in terms of love and love-making. On the one hand one might argue that Özdamar employs the concept of 'love' to mask the unequal power relations that exist *per se* between master and learner, but also in the relationship the two genders engage in. On the other hand, her narrator refers to the problematic nature of love relationships and therefore demonstrates her awareness for what is going on between her and Ibni Abdullah: "Die Liebe ist ein leichter Vogel, setzt sich leicht irgendwo hin, aber steht schwer auf" (GZ 36). Again, the metaphor of the bird is employed ambiguously. The tiny animal evokes airiness and ease, but also violability. Furthermore, it hints at volatility since it has the capability to move freely and at any time. Therefore, it becomes a metaphor for the problematic and multifarious relationship the narrator and her teacher engage in: What started out as an easy romance for the young woman, turns out to weigh heavily on her and complicates her life to a great extent. Thus, she connects falling in love with her teacher, whom she refers to as her 'Großvater,' (GZ 46) with "Lebensunfälle erleben" (GZ 46). This reference to her grandfather indicates the patriarchal structure of the love relationship, language, and culture. She eventually experiences Ibni Abdullah's 'love' as suffocating and sickening. It causes her pain (GZ 31-32), and she is under the impression that his Arabic words which she longed to learn serve as wardens, which cause her fear (GZ 44). Her final departure from the room is of great relevance: "Ich warf jemandem den Schriftzimmerschlüssel in den Hof, er machte die Tür auf. Ich ging zum ersten Mal aus diesem Zimmer raus" (GZ 44). Again Özdamar's account is vague: on the one hand the young woman has a key in her room, but on the other hand



she is obviously unable to open the door from the inside. Thus the decision to use the key is hers, while at the same time she still has to rely on another person to take that key and free her from the room. This highlights the uncertainty of the position she finds herself in as a single woman and migrant in Germany: while she longs to be free and independent, she simultaneously emphasizes the implied limitations and her dependence. Thus the reader becomes aware of the complicated situation the heroine is caught in as well as her struggle to define a space for herself.

Nevertheless, leaving the room is highly significant, and Özdamar's protagonist stresses the impact of this event by emphasizing the forty days she spent in the room: "Ich war genau vierzig Tage im Schriftzimmer" (GZ 44). This symbol is prevalent in the part of the Bible Christians refer to as the "Old Testament," where the roots of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism can be located: Moses spent 40 days on Mount Sinai (2nd Moses 24, 18); the Israelites spent 40 years in the desert (4th Moses 32, 13); and the Flood lasted for 40 days (1st Moses 8, 6).<sup>5</sup> Thus, one might suggest that the heroine has located a hybrid space that those cultural realms have in common. Concurrently, the number forty generally indicates a space of time which signifies change and new beginnings, but also flight, expectation, and preparation. Özdamar's heroine has prepared for forty days in Ibni Abdullah's room; with the knowledge she has gained she also readied herself for a new start. At the same time, her departure from the room echoes escape: from her master, but also from everything Arabic. Therefore, she throws her Arabic words onto the Autobahn after the forty days: "Ich ging [...] in die Nähe der Autobahn. Ich warf die Schriften auf die Autobahn" (GZ 44). She allows German cars, representing an icon of present-day German culture as well as globalized economy, to run over them and thus over her origin. Furthermore, she decides to add up the Arabic people on the 'Kudamm' again: but this time she counts them backwards, so that she can end with zero (GZ 45). The implications of her actions are obvious: in the globalized world she lives in, characterized by the dominance of Western culture and the capitalist economic system, it is difficult to define a space for her where the Arabic language and the culture she has tried to embrace have a chance to survive.

At the same time, in her description it is West Berlin that affords the opportunity to find her Arabic roots. In "Großvaterzunge" it is stressed that only West Germany as a democracy offers the possibility to learn and speak Arabic (GZ 16). On the surface at least, it is not the capitalist society, but Atatürk who is responsible for the loss of the Arabic heritage. While the protagonist emphasizes her love for him, she regrets that he introduced the Western alphabet into Turkish and prohibited the use of the Arabic language: "Dieses Verbot ist so, wie wenn die Hälfte von meinem Kopf abgeschnitten ist. Alle Namen von meiner Familie sind arabisch: Fatma, Mustafa, Ali, Samra" (GZ 29). It appears that the protagonist not only loses her cultural heritage because of the dominant mainstream German culture, but also because of the Westernization of Turkish culture under Atatürk. With the proclamation of the Republic in 1923 and after the process of national integration in the period between 1923 and 1928, the subject of adopting a new alphabet became an issue of utmost importance. I would argue that this should be read as one of the first effects of globalization or Westernization, since Atatürk made the Turkish adopt the Latin alphabet used in the Western World. Thus, as Jankowsky points out, "Özdamar presents the colonializing influences that accompany her country's modernization and opening toward Western Europe" (266). For the protagonist in *Mutterzunge* that change signified the loss of her heritage rather than a benefit. Yet, this story is not just about an individual, but should be read in a larger context, in which the irony of this globalized world becomes apparent. On the one hand, the heroine needs to migrate to a Western country, Germany, to learn Arabic and to find her cultural roots. On the other hand, in this globalized world, Western culture is dominant to the extent that it is virtually impossible for another culture to survive without being assimilated. However, the heroine is brave enough to open herself up to a process of finding and defining a space for herself, even though it is very painful.

The competition of cultures also plays a key role in the mother-daughter relationship in "Mutterzunge" and is emphasized by the mother's statement about the loss of hair: "Du hast die Hälfte deiner Haare in Alamania gelassen" (MZ 9). Life in Germany is associated with loss: of hair, femininity, and the past. It changes the daughter's attitude and customs, since she is cut off from her Turkish family.



The loss of her "Turkish eyesight," which leads to the heroine's question "warum Istanbul so dunkel geworden ist" (MZ 9), further stresses this. Her mother provides the explanation: "Istanbul hatte immer diese Lichter, deine Augen sind an Alamanien-Lichter gewöhnt" (MZ 9). Germany's bright lights have decreased the daughter's ability to see clearly in Turkey. She has been colonized by capitalist society and as a result lost the ability to function in her own heritage. Whereas 'light' in Western thought is associated with the enlightenment and rationality, here it is portrayed as causing blindness. The different value systems clash, and from the heroine's mother's point of view, her daughter's adaptation to the Western world clearly hints at inferiority. The deficient eyesight therefore can be read as an inability to view her heritage culture for what it is.

The daughter in the story seems to be aware of the threat associated with her partial loss resulting from the influence the capitalist West has had on her. She tries to protect herself from (further) loss by closing her eyes in extremely precarious situations, such as being forced to look at impressive and intimidating German buildings. She refuses to look at the cathedral in Cologne and closes her eyes before she can be confronted with the sight of the building. Once she kept one eye open, and she had to pay for it with loss and pain: "einmal machte ich ein Auge auf, in dem Moment sah ich ihn, der Dom schaute auf mich, da kam eine Rasierklinge in meinen Körper rein und lief auch drinnen, dann war kein Schmerz mehr da, ich machte mein zweites Auge auch auf. Vielleicht habe ich dort meine Mutterzunge verloren" (MZ 12-13). The cathedral in Cologne, one of the icons of German mainstream culture representing Christianity in Germany, hurts her to a degree where the pain cannot be felt any more. Its killing force finds its way through the entire body and self, possibly even destroying the protagonist and her heritage. The end of the feeling of pain may also be read as its ceasing: it may have been so tremendous, and the experience of seeing the gigantic symbol of Christianity so traumatic that the pain virtually died away, which resulted in the loss of the mother tongue. By using the most prominent Christian/Catholic building in Germany to inflict the pain described on the heroine, Özdamar also points to tensions arising from different religious practices, particularly Islam and Christianity. Due to the connection with

the loss of the mother tongue, the problem of the 'Other' and its assimilation into the dominant culture is strongly linked to the issue of language. The very expression of pain that cauterizes, which is not a typical experience for Christian-Germans in their own culture, forces the (German) reader to cross the border to the 'Other.' The writing underscores this by using cultural practices and images original to Özdamar's heritage culture.

The author repeatedly shows that she is aware of the difficulties arising during the process of shaping a multicultural notion of culture and literature: one neither wants to annihilate, nor to exceedingly highlight differences between the cultures. Her protagonist is continually forced to cross borders, especially in her attempt to find her Arabic roots. She is unable to use another language but German to talk with her teacher in "Großvaterzunge." She can only convey her feelings and ideas in German, which feels offensive for her: "Es ist eine Gemeinsamkeit, mit einer Orientalin in Deutsch zu reden, aber momentan haben wir ja nur diese Sprache" (GZ 15). Here, the problem of language as well as identity becomes evident again. In claiming to be 'oriental,' she clearly illustrates the conquest of her own individuality: she uses a Western concept to define her own identity, and she is forced to use the German language. She appears to be misplaced, with no space to call home: neither linguistically, nor physically. This can be read as an effect of the homogenization of culture and of globalization. And in her attempt to overcome German as her only means of communication, she simultaneously struggles to prevail over the effect globalization and Westernization have had on her personal life. At the same time, the reader cannot help but realize how her writing in German is characterized precisely by the concurrent presence of German, Turkish, and Arabic. Thus, she uses language to maintain her ideal: a place for Turkish and Arabic in German and in Germany.

As has been demonstrated, Özdamar's "Mutterzunge" and "Großvaterzunge" are more than metalinguistic commentaries: Partially veiled, they tell a story about history, cultural identity, modernity and tradition. Those issues are linked by the fact that in this particular case, they can all be viewed as consequences of that latest form of imperialism that we have come to identify as "globalization." I questioned whether Özdamar attempts to deal with



the effects of this phenomenon in her stories. I think it is fair to say that she very artistically points to the predicament, and particularly with regard to female roles she offers a possible alternative to the uninformed and stereotypical image we tend to have of immigrant Turkish women in Germany: that they are exclusively uneducated, oppressed wives of their immigrant husbands. Özdamar constructs a new role for a Turkish woman in Germany: her heroine is no longer somebody's daughter or wife, but she handles her life herself. She neither behaves the way a German nor a Turkish woman customarily would; rather, she tries to deal with those two culturally different expectations and the resulting clash of tradition and so-called modernity by attempting to find her own way.

Furthermore, Özdamar's writing celebrates both linguistic and cultural differences and forces us to question our understanding of 'Otherness.' It is exactly in this challenge to participate in what Seyhan calls "cultural bilingualism" (247) as well as in Özdamar's insistence on trying to map a space in which Turkish women can find and define their existence that I consider her writings a contribution to an approach that deals with the effects of globalization.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Because of the importance of language in this context, the analysis will deal exclusively with the stories "Mutterzunge" and "Großvaterzunge," in which this topic is most central. All references marked MZ or GZ correspond to "Mutterzunge" or "Großvaterzunge" respectively, and refer to the edition specified in the "Works Cited."

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Karam 195; Marchand and Runyan 3-4.

<sup>3</sup> Unusual spellings like 'Kudamm' for 'Kurfürstendamm' as well as a variety of grammatical particularities, e.g. the usage of prepositions, are part of the author's style and therefore correspondingly incorporated in this paper.

<sup>4</sup> Özdamar obviously refers to a popular German TV series the ZDF has broadcasted since October 1967. Its basic idea is the involvement of the viewers who help the police with unsolved crimes by identifying unknown criminals and detecting felons.

<sup>5</sup> To my knowledge, the number 40 has neither a specific symbolic

meaning in Islam, nor in Turkish or Arabic culture.

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## The Cultural Hyphen: Transgression and Translation in the Narratives of Self of German-Speaking Exiles to Canada

Patrick Farges

The language of translation envelops its content like a royal robe  
with ample fold [...] and thus remains unsuited to its content,  
overpowering and alien.  
Walter Benjamin (75)

In March 2003, I met Willie G. at the Canadian Jewish Congress Archives in Montreal. Willie G. was born in 1921 in Fürth, Germany. Although his family had been living in Germany for at least two generations, all members of the family carried a Polish passport, which had to be renewed regularly at the Polish Consulate in Munich. The family was Jewish, although not religiously observant, and the children grew up speaking only German: an example of "assimilated Jews"? After Hitler came to power, living conditions changed dramatically for Willie G.'s family, and after 'Kristallnacht,' leaving Germany became imperative. Just before the outbreak of the war, Willie G. was granted a visa to join his father in England, and eventually joined the Polish Army in exile, though he did not speak a single word of Polish. After the war, the Canadian government offered to take approximately 4,000 Polish war veterans to be employed as farm labor, and so Willie G. came to Quebec. His story is one of displacement and uprooting, of crossing borders and cultures. One of the most visible markers of displacement in Willie G.'s life seems to be his struggle with language. As he puts it:

As far as that goes, it's very interesting with languages: I'm a hybrid. German is my mother language, I spoke English in England, then I had to learn Polish in the Army, then I spent a year on the farm speaking a fairly good French already. And so,