To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Vera Irene Pantanizopoulos-Broux entitled "*Defying Gravity*: Redefining Cultural and Literary Boundaries in the Selected Works of Emine Sevgi Özdamar and Zehra Çırak." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in German.

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Defying Gravity: Redefining Cultural and Literary Boundaries in Selected Works of Emine Sevgi Özdamar and Zehra Çırak

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For Koudou

In memory of my Yia-Yiá Vera
and of those who are now listening to her read their *flitzania*

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Abstract

This thesis is an investigation of perspectives of Otherness in contemporary German literature viewed within the context of selected works by two women authors of Turkish heritage: Emine Sevgi Özdamar, actress, playwright, and prose writer, and Zehra Çırak, poet, performance artist, and short story writer. Both authors live and write in their *Wahlheimat*, Germany. The history of the *Gastarbeiter* immigrants to Germany, and in particular, of the emergence of their literary presence, as well as that of their second generation progeny, is discussed within the context of Özdamar's and Çırak's unique manipulations of the German language in redefining cultural and literary boundaries. The exploration of issues of diversity surrounding the analysis of each author's literary expression serves as a further reflection on the implications of current cultural and literary trends in Germany for future generations of children of multicultural and multiethnic heritage.

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INTRODUCTION
Borderlands of Identity

LÄNDERKUNDE

Ein gehend Stück barfüß
einlaufend fürbaß

Ein Wanderer
ein Wand er er
ein Wander er
Einwand erer
Einwander er
Einwanderer
Ein –
w
anderer

Zehra Çırak
Leibesübungen

I was born in Chicago Heights. My mother was American and my father Greek. I was American. We moved to Greece, and I was in Athens. My father was Greek and my mother an American in Greece. Then I was a little Greek girl. We returned to the United States. My father was a U.S. national, a Greek in America. I was a little American girl once again.

In sixth grade social studies class, we studied the geography of Greece. When the teacher asked a question about our readings, other students said, "You're Greek, you should know that." I spent the summers with my relatives in Greece. My cousin, dreaming of attending an American rock concert, said, "You're American, and you've never been to a rock concert? What? You've never met a star?" So who am I, really? Who are the Others? Who is not an immigrant or the descendant of a familial migration? Is the passport I carry with me across physical boundaries relevant to my identity?

Others question my loyalties without being able to define the source necessitating those loyalties. Why is the acknowledgment of and embrace with a multiple heritage discomforting for many? Am I perceived as a threat because I am crossing between the territories of the Mississippi, the Rhine, the Aegean, and the Gulf of Guinea, rivers and seas of identity that must be kept separate to be acceptable?

Fear houses the separation and challenges the possibility of entering into a fluid contract with the self and others, of throwing the heavy chest of neat categorical drawers into the straits of identity. Watch the drawers tumble into the salty waters of ambiguity, the papers floating, each with their title "Greek," "Turk," "German," "Ivoirian," "American," clinging to each other, torn apart by the legal undercurrents of nation-states. I was a U.S. citizen for two years in the file cabinets of the German authorities. Then I became a registered Greek, confusing an orderly environment in which I was "either one or the other," never completely nor more than both.

As the child of an immigrant parent, as a dual citizen, and as a past resident of other countries and cultures, I am particularly interested in the various manifestations of the immigrant experience in society. This thesis is an investigation of two women authors of Turkish heritage who live and write in Germany: Emine Sevgi Özdamar, actress, playwright, and prose writer, and Zehra Çırak, poet, performance artist, and short story writer. I have chosen to focus on two writers of Turkish heritage, as individuals of this cultural background constitute the largest ethnic minority group in Germany. The history of the *Gastarbeiter* immigrants to Germany and, in particular, of the emergence of their literary presence, as well as that of their second generation progeny, in German literature will be discussed in the context of Özdamar's and Çırak's respective works.

The writings of both authors reflect the experiences of the Other in Germany, the experience of those who are *de facto* and *de jure* German citizens but not yet fully acknowledged as such nor a truly integrated part of society, and the perspectives of women of Turkish heritage in Germany. I will compare their respective expression of these themes within the genres of prose and poetry. The primary works to be analyzed include two short stories from Özdamar's *Mutterzunge*, *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei hat zwei Türen aus einer kam ich rein aus der anderen ging ich raus*, and *Die Brücke vom goldenen Horn*, and several relevant poems from Çırak's books of poetry *Fremde Flügel auf eigener Schulter*, *Vogel auf dem Rücken eines Elefanten*, and *Leibesübungen*.

This thesis consists of six sections: an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion. An overview of issues of multiculturalism in German society--*de facto* versus *de jure*--as well as a brief introduction to the development and growing awareness of immigrant literature in Germany within the past three decades are provided in chapter one and placed within a broader European framework. Furthermore, the development of writers of Turkish heritage in Germany since the *Gastarbeiter* generation will be discussed. Particular themes, viewed within the context of Özdamar's and Çırak's writings, include how they represent Otherness and the perspectives of "culturally Other" women in Germany. Chapter two provides an introduction to and analyses of Emine Sevgi Özdamar's works *Mutterzunge*, *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei hat zwei Türen aus einer kam ich rein aus der anderen ging ich raus*, and *Die Brücke vom goldenen Horn*. An introduction to Zehra Çırak and analysis of selected poems from her books of poetry *Fremde Flügel auf eigener Schulter*, *Vogel auf dem Rücken eines Elefanten*, and *Leibesübungen* follow in chapter three. Chapter four offers a comparison of the

expression of themes associated with Otherness from first and second generational perspectives in Özdamar's and Çırak's selected works, respectively, and considers the question of *Eigenwahrnehmung*, particularly of the authors' literary self-perception, in contrast to how their works are perceived and received by the "dominant culture." The conclusion reflects on the implications of current cultural and literary trends in Germany for future generations of children of multicultural and multiethnic heritage.

CHAPTER I

Diversity and Immigrant Literature in Contemporary German Society

> "Deutsch" [. . .] im Mittelalter die "Sprache des Volkes" im Gegensatz zum Lateinischen, der Sprache der Gebildeten. Diese Sprache gehörte eigentlich vielen Völkern oder Stämmen, die sonst sehr verschiedene Traditionen und Bräuche hatten. Während "Deutsch" im Mittelalter ausschließlich die Sprache meinte, hat sich später, besonders seit der Verschränkung von Kulturbetrieb und Nationalismus im neunzehnten Jahrhundert, eine andere Auffassung von "Deutsch" mit besonderem Nachdruck durchgesetzt: "Deutsch" [. . .] hätte auf eine tiefe, oft mystische Weise etwas mit dem inneren Kern eines Volkes und eines Menschen zu tun. (Hasty, "Fremde Perspektiven" 59)

"'Heißt den Fremden willkommen, empfangt ihn als Gast mit hohen Ehren, denn er ist von den Göttern gesandt'" (Merten 70). This ancient Greek proverb has guided the spirits of *philoxenia* and *philotimo*--welcoming and honoring the Other--and continues to shadow the enlightened ideals of modern civilization. However, to mirror current sentiment and political practice, the proverb might be stated more accordingly as follows: Heißt Fremde willkommen, wenn sie keine besondere sozioökonomische Belastung an die Regierung und an die Staatsbürger sein werden und sich den bürokratischen und sozialen Voraussetzungen sowie kulturellen Traditionen des heutigen Staates anpassen.[1]

What is Europe? The new Europa, born of the post-war Phoenix and nestled on the threshold of the twenty-first century, carries the appearance and intentions of a society in which the temples honoring Mount Olympus and those housing the state operate separately. The gods have little or nothing more to do with human migration, nor with immigration and asylum laws. Zeus and his mythical entourage most likely did not foresee two World Wars, a divided Germany, the fall of the Iron Curtain, rising

[1] I have re-written the ancient Greek proverb in German--in strict reference to the proverb initially quoted--as a personal ironic reflection on current socio-political trends regarding immigration to and residence in Germany.

unemployment, or continuing political, religious, and ethnic persecution afflicting individuals from every region of the world.

The Federal Republic of Germany is of particular interest concerning the peculiar relationship between Us and the Other, especially within twentieth-century European political history. Within the past decade as a reunified state, Germany has experienced and continues to experience increasing internal tension, notably with regard to acknowledgment of its own cultural and ethnic diversity. Moving from the bitterness of the lost war and the Treaty of Versailles to the elected totalitarianism of Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime, from one World War to the next, from an East and West Germany to the fall of the real and virtual walls separating it from itself, Germany has not only served as a political haven for individuals and families from across the globe since the late 1940s but also as an exploitative host to another group of Others.

During the years of *Wiederaufbau* following the Second World War, the West German government recruited myriad additional hands from other countries, especially from Southern Europe and Turkey, to rebuild a ravaged landscape and contribute to what was later defined as West Germany's "economic miracle." These laborers paradoxically, albeit unofficially, became known as *Gastarbeiter*, or guest workers. Carmine Chiellino writes to this effect:

> Die Genese des Neologismus 'Gastarbeiter' macht deutlich, daß der Begriff dazu geeignet ist, die geplante Nicht-Seßhaftigkeit der angeworbenen Arbeitskräfte zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Obwohl der Neologismus in kürzester Zeit "die

Bedeutung all dessen bekam, was ablehnbar ist und mit Menschen zweiter Kategorie zusammenhängt".[2] (286)

Franco Biondi and Rafik Schami declare with intended irony that "'die Ideologen es fertiggebracht haben, die Begriffe Gast und Arbeiter zusammenzuquetschen, obwohl es noch nie Gäste gab, die gearbeitet haben'" (qtd. in Chiellino 287).[3] Umberto Melotti insightfully describes reunified Germany as "deny[ing] its well-established status as an immigrant host country" in light of immigration statistics, which place it as a European country with the greatest "absolute number of immigrants" (80). In fact, Melotti writes that Germany's "ostrich policy" is one of continuing separation between what are considered ethnic Germans (*Deutsches Volk*) and Others, wherein immigrants are perceived as a "temporary presence" and thus seemingly forever categorized as *Ausländer* (82). Almost thirty years following the *Anwerbestopp* of foreign laborers to West Germany in 1973, it is clearly the case that not only migrants in search of work or political refugees but immigrants have found and made a life for themselves and their families in a new homeland. Their permanence is a direct challenge to the archaic *Ausländer-* and *Asylgesetze*. Their children and grandchildren live in a *de facto* diverse society, while in the process voicing their demands for integration--legal, economic, social, and otherwise--into all facets of life in Germany.

One such mélange of voices, which has established itself especially in the past two decades within a German literary context, emanates from authors of non-German heritage, markedly those of Turkish and Southern European background. As Azade

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[2] At the end of this passage, Chiellino cites Marios Nikolinakos, *Politische Ökonomie der Gastarbeiterfrage. Migration und Kapitalismus* (Reinbek: Rowohlt Verlag, 1973) 7-8.

[3] Franco Biondi, Rafik Schami, "Literatur der Betroffenheit. Bemerkungen zur Gastarbeiterliteratur," *Zu Hause in der Fremde. Ein bundesdeutsches Ausländer-Lesebuch*, ed. Christian Schaffernicht (Fischerhude: Atelier im Bauernhaus, 1981) 134.

Seyhan remarks, "[t]he cultural activism of Turkish and other non-German artists and writers is both a response, and a form of resistance, to the social intolerance and injustice that daily confront foreign residents of Germany" (*Writing Outside* 102). As members of the largest ethnic minority group in Germany, estimated at close to three million of approximately six million immigrant inhabitants (Seyhan, *Writing Outside* 99-100), writers of Turkish heritage have had a considerable impact on contemporary German literature since as early as the 1960s (Şölçün 136).

Sargut Şölçün chronicles the development of Turkish-German authors into literary phases by decade, beginning with themes of a migratory existence prevalent in the early works by Turkish authors--often translated into German from the mother tongue--as an attempt to reach "die deutsche Öffentlichkeit" and to make more accessible a "verhältnismäßig neue literarische Kultur" (Şölçün 137). Within this context, authors such as Yüksel Pazarkaya, Aras Ören, and Günay Dal are considered among the pioneers of Turkish immigrant literature in Germany. Toward the end of the 1970s and following the *Anwerbestopp* of foreign laborers in 1973, when immigrants were attempting to come to terms with a permanent life in West Germany and with what Şölçün calls their "Ausländerkomplex" while continuing to reside in a marginalizing environment, a newfound "Protestpotential" began to emerge from the immigrant consciousness (137-38). As culturally and ethnically motivated discrimination and *Ausländerfeindlichkeit* occurred with increased frequency during the 1980s--especially directed toward persons of Turkish heritage--the immigrant intellectual community responded with intensified mobilization and literary production. An example of such efforts to unify minority creativity against prejudice and to work toward political advocacy without "deutsche

Bevormundung" was the Polynationaler Literatur- und Kunstverein (*PoLiKunst*) which existed from 1980 until 1987 (Şölçün 141). Additionally, minority-owned publishing houses such as the Ararat Verlag and Dagyeli Verlag gained in prominence, supporting and furthering the advancement of journals, anthologies and varied genres of works by minority authors. Mainstream West German publishers like Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, Rotbuch Verlag, and Luchterhand Verlag also began to issue anthologies as well as selected works by renowned immigrant authors such as Aras Ören and Aysel Özakin. Şölçün writes of the 1990s: "In dieser bisher letzten Phase der türkischen Migrantenliteratur ist eine gewisse Ich-Erweiterung, eine egozentrische Perspektive in den literarischen Äußerungen als eine allgemeine Tendenz feststellbar" (142). A fundamental socio-cultural and linguistic shift from the "Begegnung mit der Fremde zur Selbstbegegnung in der Fremde," which is apparent, for example, in selected works of Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Zafer Şenoçak, Zehra Çırak, and Kemal Kurt, is a main component of literature written by minority authors within the past decade (Şölçün 142). The focus is no longer a confrontation with a strange and often hostile host land but instead a dialogue with the self and perspectives of Otherness in the context of another homeland, reunified Germany. Şölçün excellently articulates these new literary vantage points as integral factors in the objective to challenge perceived borders of language and society by transforming "die Sprache als Heimat und Fremde in literarische Normalität" (144).

CHAPTER II
Emine Sevgi Özdamar: *Wörtersammlerin*

> Ich sagte: "Was muß man machen, Tiefe zu erzählen?" Er sagte: "*Kaza gecirmek*, Lebensunfälle erleben". [. . .] Ich sagte mir, wenn du einen Menschen siehst, der wie ein Lebensunfall-erlebt aussieht, sprich zu ihm. (Özdamar, *Mutterzunge* 12, 47)

> "Was machen Sie in Deutschland?" fragte das Mädchen mich.
> Ich sagte: "Ich bin Wörtersammlerin." (Özdamar, *Mutterzunge* 48)

Born in Malatya, Turkey, in 1946, playwright and prose author Emine Sevgi Özdamar attended theatrical school in Istanbul from 1967 to 1970 after working in a West-Berlin factory as a *Gastarbeiterin* from 1965 to 1967. She returned to Germany, this time to the former German Democratic Republic, in 1976. Özdamar worked with Benno Besson and Mathias Langhoff at the Volksbühne in East Berlin and with Besson in Paris. Subsequently, she worked as an actress at the Bochumer Schauspielhaus and has since written and produced two of her own pieces, *Karagöz in Alamania* and *Keloglan in Alamania*, and has taken roles in films such as Hark Bohm's *Yasemin* and Doris Dörrie's *Happy Birthday, Türke* (Ackermann 79). In an interview with the *Kölner Stadtanzeiger* (1992), she states that her love for the German language has its foundations in the words of the German *Klassiker*, and that Bertolt Brecht's works were the impetus for her decision to return to East Germany (van Stein 34).

According to Sohelia Ghaussy, Özdamar's collection of short stories, entitled *Mutterzunge*, is an attempt "to understand her own Turkish language and identity, and her location as a speaker and immigrant, by probing the Koran's language and the Arabic roots of much of the Turkish language through German" (5). In the first story, "Mutter Zunge," Özdamar thematizes the loss of her "mother tongue" in Germany. The narrator,

a young woman who reflects on her native language, Turkish, nostalgically parallels her relationship to her native language with emotional-familial ties to her mother:

> In meiner Sprache heißt Zunge: Sprache.
>
> Zunge hat keine Knochen, wohin man sie dreht, dreht sie sich dorthin. Ich saß mit meiner gedrehten Zunge in dieser Stadt Berlin. [. . .] Wenn ich nur wüßte, wann ich meine Mutterzunge verloren habe. Ich und meine Mutter sprachen mal in unserer Mutterzunge. [. . .] Ich erinnere mich jetzt an Muttersätze, die sie in ihrer Mutterzunge gesagt hat, nur dann, wenn ich ihre Stimme mir vorstelle, die Sätze selbst kamen in meine Ohren wie eine von mir gut gelernte Fremdsprache. (*Mutterzunge* 9)

Kader Konuk writes that "gedrehte Zunge" is a play on the verb *çevirmek* in Turkish, meaning "turn," "transmit," or "translate" (146). Thus, the narrator's "gedrehte Zunge" is not her *Muttersprache* but her adopted language, German. Özdamar sends her narrator on a journey to recover the roots of her mother tongue, beginning with Arabic, the language of her grandfather, "um nach den Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschieden mit der türkischen Muttersprache zu suchen" (146). For Konuk, Özdamar's use of German is an example of her gradual linguistic displacement, the loss of her native language, and serves as a layer of literary expression in which multiple boundaries are explored and perforated; the narrator's voyage leads her along and through what Konuk calls "Trennungslinien," or lines of separation, which are constructed in language: lines between nations, languages, writings, generations, genders, and between lines separating "Orient" and "Occident" (147). The narrator sounds out through language exploration, for example, the various similarities and differences among the Turkish, Arabic, and

German; between her generation and her mother's and grandfather's; and between traditional values and practices and those of so-called modernity.

A thematic continuation of "Mutter Zunge," the story "Großvater Zunge" leads the reader from the narrator's East Berlin location into the room of Ibni Abdullah, a Palestinian refugee and scholar of Islam, living and teaching in West Berlin. The narrator seeks his guidance in her study of Arabic in order to probe further her connection to her grandfather's language and, in falling in love with her tutor, is again confronted with a third language--love--which ultimately leads to her flight from a religiously symbolic forty-day linguistic and spiritual prison cell represented by his room. The narrator reveals her almost unbearable passion for her lover, who demands a purely spiritual love from her, in an almost allegorical fashion: "Liebe ist ein Hemd aus Feuer. Drücke mir einen Stein auf das Herz. Mit welcher Sprache soll mein Mund sprechen, daß mein Geliebter es sieht, seine Augenbrauen haben mich verbrannt" (*Mutterzunge* 40). Because they do not speak each other's native language, student and teacher communicate in German, facilitating the exploration of similarities and differences between both Arabic and Turkish mother tongues. During one such discussion, the narrator reflects on and relates to her linguistic roots:

> Gottseidank ich gehöre noch zu einer Generation, die mit vielen arabischen Wörtern aufgewachsen ist. Ich suchte arabische Wörter, die es noch in türkischer Sprache gibt. Ich fragte Ibni Abdullah: "Kennst du sie?"
>
> *Leb* – Mund
>
> *Ducar* – Befallen
>
> *Mazi* – Vergangenheit

Medyun – verbunden

Meytap – Feuerwerkskörper

Yetim – Waise

"Ja", sagte: Ibni Abdullah, "es hört sich ein klein bißchen anders an."

Ich sagte: "Bis diese Wörter aus deinem Land aufgestanden und zu meinem Land gelaufen sind, haben sie sich unterwegs etwas geändert." (*Mutterzunge* 29)

As in "Mutter Zunge," boundaries in "Großvater Zunge" appear on multiple levels, exemplified in the Berlin Wall; the curtain separating Ibni Abdullah's room from his study; the separation between the living and remembrance of the dead family and friends lost in a time of violent political activism and repression in both the narrator's Turkey and Ibni Abdullah's Palestine; and in words from the Arabic which were officially purged from Turkish at the time of Atatürk after 1927.

Konuk notes that in Özdamar's text the acquisition of new languages is not only an enrichment but also an agent of loss (148). Though the narrator's relationship to her mother, that is, to her native language and culture, is inherently and painfully altered by her emigration, her forty-day spiritual battle with language and the self in her lover's room frees her and allows her to acknowledge and come to terms with a consciously multi-layered existence, defined by Ghaussy as a component in Özdamar's efforts toward a "hybrid nomadic language" (5). The author's appropriation of language is transformed into a "hybrid" through the narrator's awareness of her own path of re-creative language acquisition and can be understood as "nomadic" in that it "exhibit[s] no nostalgic desire for fixity and authority" (Ghaussy 1), thus serving as a "metaphor for a creative and dynamic process of becoming" (Ghaussy 3).

Özdamar's novel *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei hat zwei Türen aus einer kam ich rein aus der anderen ging ich raus*, first published in 1992, is a further example of her molding of the German language into a quilt of images, proverbs, and Turkish socio-economic and political history of the 1950s and 1960s, created within the semi-autobiographical epic narration of a nameless woman's life from inside the womb to early adulthood in Turkey. *Karawanserei* is a memoir of constant family relocation due to father Mustafa's sporadic employment in a time of economic instability, during which the narrator is taken along with her parents, grandmother, and brother from Istanbul to Bursa, Ankara, and again to Istanbul in the course of her childhood and youth. The narrative ends with the seventeen-year-old protagonist's train ride with other women from Turkey to West Germany to work as a *Gastarbeiterin.*

As in *Mutterzunge*, experimentation with the German language is central in the context of memory and serves as a vehicle moving through the narrator's personal experience and neutral narrative tone, documenting her grandmother's fairy tales and idioms, and retelling stories from the Koran and the Bible. By incorporating "the hegemonic German for her construction of a Turkish identity and past," Özdamar depicts "intercultural exchange as complex, ambivalent, and simultaneously freeing and dislocating" (Ghaussy 4). Furthermore, Ghaussy states,

> Özdamar illustrates the complexities of her hybrid novel as she carefully and artfully fuses classic Turkish literary traditions with the orality of folk and fairy tales, and intersperses into her nomadic narration episodes of anecdotal story-telling which, in their collage-like structure, are reminiscent of conventions of *Verfremdung* so typical for much of German modernism. (4)

Karawanserei is defined by Ghaussy as a *Bildungsroman* "invested in exploring the hybrid and in-between realms of language, voice, and identity," (1) thereby creating a "hybrid genre as well as a hybrid 'new voice'" (4). Through the medium of a hybrid language, which is shaped in part by the literal translation of Turkish idioms and utterances into German and which necessitates communication between literary form and content, Özdamar "transports" experiences in the form of "Sprachbilder" to the reader and infuses the images with the lives, culture, and history of the perceived Other (Vogel 146).

In contrast to Ghaussy, Gürsel Aytaç terms *Karawanserei* an *Entwicklungsroman* which is structured linguistically "wie ein türkischer Teppich mit farbigen Motiven" (174). According to Aytaç, Özdamar maintains her "türkisches Sprachgefühl" precisely by undermining "die Regeln der Übersetzung und des Schreibens in der Fremdsprache" (176) and infusing her texts with literal instead of figurative translations of thought and expression to create what literary critics have regarded as "de[n] sprachliche[n] Zauber des Werkes" (175). Perhaps the most efficacious and concise commentary on Özdamar's unique literary style is offered by Sheila Johnson, who writes that "[w]hat Özdamar has done in *Karawanserei* is to fill the *Bildungsroman* with the contents and narrative style of Turkish culture filtered through her individual artistry" ("Transnational" 50).

The title itself implies "movement and travel through the image of doors and the caravanserai (an ancient resting place for travelers and [camel] caravans), a labyrinthine doorless hotel" and serves as a metaphor for the narrator's migratory paths within Turkey (Ghaussy 1). Ghaussy states, moreover, that Özdamar's "use of German for the identity construction of her [. . .] narrator throws into crisis the notion of stable and separate

cultural systems in its creation of an intercultural alterity" (3). *Karawanserei* uniquely addresses

> strategic ways of imagining a different kind of movement than that traditionally represented within the dominant German discourses surrounding Turkish migration, which in their rhetoric stress the stereotype of the Turk as "Gastarbeiter," [. . .] who moves unidirectionally, from Turkey to Germany, in search of work and Western-style prosperity. (Ghaussy 3-4)

While Ghaussy approaches *Karawanserei* as "a re-writing of the 'Orient' from a non-Western perspective" (4), Konuk goes further by claiming that Özdamar's work signals a new beginning. She reads the text as a process of exploring multiplicities, both on linguistic as well as cultural levels, and as an appeal to part with the myth of linguistic and cultural purity (149).[4] In this context, Konuk very convincingly emphasizes the importance of seeing the author's words as images which have traveled with her in her native language and which have been transformed in the process of a linguistic immigration (149). In so doing, it is additionally of interest to consider how and to what extent Özdamar's texts can be viewed within a feminist framework.

Ghaussy emphasizes the importance of analyzing gendered hegemonic questions in relation to the term "nomadism" as seen from a feminist literary perspective, in order to avoid romanticizing and thereby minimizing or trivializing the "conscious political strategy" of Özdamar's texts (3). Özdamar employs "a particular angle of story-telling, which in *Karawanserei* highlights a 'feminine language' through the tactic of embodying language, stressing the position of speaking as a woman, and emphasizing a narration

[4] Konuk's original statement reads: "Die sprachlichen Eigenheiten in Emine Sevgi Özdamars Texten erproben die Bereitschaft der LeserInnen zur Aufnahme anderer sprachlicher Gestaltungsformen und die Bereitschaft, Abschied zu nehmen von dem Mythos der 'Reinheit' von Sprachen und Kulturen."

which fuses the Turkish idiom with a mother tongue to create a hybrid and 'creolized' language" (Ghaussy 2).[5] The novel reprocesses "representations of cultural, ethnic, and sexual identities" (Ghaussy 2) and repositions the *Löwentochter*'s narrative in the context of a deliberately "'embodied' text, [. . .] a text which acknowledges its own production through the body, as well as the concrete materiality of words" (Ghaussy 5). Özdamar simultaneously alienates and interconnects through language the processes shaping her narrator's identity; with the choice of a "narrative perspective [. . .] in which the inside penetrates the outside, chronology is handled with subjective sovereignty and portrayed as disjunctive" (Ghaussy 6). Margrit Frölich writes that Özdamar creates a literary environment in which "there is no firm distinction between the imaginary and the real, but rather a paradoxical inmixture of the one in the other" (62) and that each of her characters is the embodiment of "stories oscillating between fantastic and realistic representations" (63). The first words spoken by the narrator from within her mother's womb exemplify the fusion and simultaneous fluidity of movement and vision between these inner and outer, fantastic and real, spheres of her environment:

> Erst habe ich die Soldaten gesehen, ich stand da im Bauch meiner Mutter zwischen den Eisstangen, ich wollte mich festhalten und faßte an das Eis und rutschte und landete auf demselben Platz, klopfte an die Wand, keiner hörte. [. . .] Ich fiel in Ohnmacht und bin erst an einem Augusttag wach geworden und habe sofort geweint. Ich wollte wieder ins Wasserzimmer rein und den Film mit den Soldaten weitersehen. (9-11)

[5] When writing of "'feminine language,'" Ghaussy refers to the concept of *écriture feminine* within feminist literary theory and applies Deleuze and Guattari's approach to hybridity as "the articulation of a minority subjectivity, and the migratory position of a nomadic expression" in her analysis of Özdamar's texts (2).

Surprisingly, in a 1993 interview with Annette Wierschke, Özdamar herself indicates that "she is not concerned with uncovering or constructing a feminist history, aesthetic, or didactic" (Ghaussy 9). She is much more involved with individual characters in her texts, asserting that "'im Alltag gibt es natürlich diese kräftige Frauenwelt, wie es eine Männerwelt gibt, gibt es auch eine Frauenwelt und irgendwie ist das ja auch ein Matriarchat. Aber man kann die Differenz von zwei unterschiedlichen Erfahrungen nicht diskutieren'" (qtd. in Ghaussy 9).[6] However, as Ghaussy persuasively concludes, Özdamar's thematic and stylistic choices render "a text whose feminist stance can be located within its highly embodied and consciously corporeal material of her prose itself" (9).

When considering the author's comments on her own literary intentions, one must reflect on the integral influence of the narrator's paternal grandmother upon her conceptual perceptions and personal development as well as upon the fabric of Özdamar's textual constructions. The figure of the *Löwentochter*'s vividly blue-eyed grandmother, Ayse, is central as "Hauptträgerin der Volksmentalität, des Aberglaubens, der Volksweisheit" (Aytaç 173). She is the voice of an ancient and rich oral literary tradition and culture, carrier of Turkish fairy tales, songs, and especially of proverbs and a religious belief system--Islam--which seem inherently interconnected. She represents cultural traditions which are in direct conflict with the efforts toward westernization which occurred in Turkey during the 1950s and 1960s. For example, when thematizing questions of material wealth and poverty, Özdamar presents the reader with a conversation of proverbs between Ayse and her son:

[6] Annette Wierschke, *Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung* (Frankfurt: IKO, 1996) 259.

Meine Großmutter sagte: "Mustafa, große Männer geben auch große Backpfeifen! [. . .] Im Topf von Fremden kann man nicht kochen!"

Mustafa sagte: "Bevor das Feuer das Dach erreicht muß ich Hilfe holen!"

Ayse sagte: "Mit dem Seil der Reichen kann man nicht den Brunnen runterklettern."

Mustafa sagte: "Wer im Meer fällt und nicht schwimmen kann, muß die Schlange umarmen."

Großmutter sagte: "Das Geld der Reichen macht die Zunge der Armen nur müde."

Mustafa sagte: "Die Reichen werden ihr vieles Geld nicht in ihrem Sarg in die andere Welt mitnehmen." [. . .] Mustafa ging Geld borgen. (*Karawanserei* 77-78)[7]

Death and remembrance of the dead permeate the thematic foundations of *Karawanserei*. During the socially, politically, and economically tumultuous period in early post-World War II Turkish history--a period in which Turkey's "first experiment with a properly democratic regime [. . .] ended in the military putsch of 1960" (Seyhan, "Lost in Translation" 420)--the child narrator is confronted with news of death and stories of illness and misery, herself experiencing bouts of delirium in the course of life-threatening battles with parasites and tuberculosis:

Meine Großmutter lief hinter mir her, [. . .] [.] Die arabischen Gebete kamen aus ihrem Mund, ich sah alle diese Wörter als Vögel zwischen zementierten Wänden, sah ihre Köpfe an die Wände stoßen, hin und her fliegen. Ich wiederholte ihre

[7] It is interesting to note that Özdamar uses "Großmutter" and "Ayse" interchangeably within the same conversation; this repetitive lexical technique, which appears at other intervals in *Karawanserei* as well, offers additional insight into the rhythmic quality of Özdamar's language and literary style.

Gebete, die Vögel werden immer mehr und mehr, alle fliegen über mir, vor mir, hinter mir, vor meinen Füßen. Großmutter gab mir ihre rechte Hand zum Beißen. Ich biß in ihre Hand, die Vögel gingen weg, ich zog meine Zähne aus ihrer Hand zurück, die Vögel kamen wieder. Großmutter, Kopftuch gelöst, schrie: "Eilt, eilt, ihre Seele geht aus ihrem Mund raus, sie stirbt." (*Karawanserei* 113)

She turns on many occasions to her grandmother, who personifies "eine Art Lebensweisheit als Lebenserfahrung" (Aytaç 174). The wisdom symbolically represented in Ayse's presence in her granddaughter's life is exemplified in the following discussion--filled with proverbs and life lessons--between the narrator and her grandmother:

Großmutter hatte mal gesagt: "Der Tod ist zwischen Augen und Augenbrauen, ist das weit weg?"

"Sagt der Tod, daß er kommt, Großmutter?"

"Ja," sagte Großmutter Ayse, und zählte auf, wie der Tod sagt, daß er kommen wird:

Wenn zu Hause die Türen quietschen.

Wenn zu Hause das Holz am Boden knarrt.

Wenn ein Hund gegen eine Tür heult.

Wenn ein Storch mit seinen Füßen weiße Sachen bringt.

Wenn die Krähen zu lange schweigen.

Wenn in der Nacht eine alte Frau an der Tür klopft.

Wenn [. . .]. (*Karawanserei* 87-88)

Death as a theme is intrinsically connected to spirituality within the narrator's environment. One of the most frequently recurring religious expressions in *Karawanserei--Bismillâhirahmanirrahim*, meaning "'in the name of Allah, the compassionate and merciful'" (Ghaussy 10)--is taken from the Arabic and manifests itself on various levels of understanding. The narrator is introduced to Islamic prayers by her grandmother, although she does not comprehend at first but merely repeats the words and phrases that Ayse speaks. She is, however, acutely aware of the elemental nature of spirituality fused into the motions of her everyday life:

> Das Wort Bismillâhirahmanirrahim kam aus den Mündern von vielen Menschen. Man mußte, wenn man ins Haus trat, mit dem rechten Fuß auftreten und dabei Bismillâhirahmanirrahim sagen. Wenn man sich wusch, mußte man mit der ersten Tasse Wasser, die man über die Haare gießt, Bismillâhirahmanirrahim sagen, wenn man das erste Stück Brot am Morgen in den Mund nahm, mußte man auch Bismillâhirahmanirrahim sagen, Kleider zog man an und aus mit Bismillâhirahmanirrahim [. . .]. (*Karawanserei* 55-56)

Ghaussy indicates that Özdamar's depiction of Islamic spirituality as "learned, repeated, and transcribed into Turkish phonetics" represents Islam "as a process of a highly individualized education and socialization rather than as part of a religious indoctrination process--which is the view most commonly held within the German rhetoric surrounding Islam" (10). Özdamar thus suffuses her text with Turkish proverbs, mystical superstition, Islamic spirituality and orality, particularly embodied in the figure of Ayse, while stressing the communicative value thereof in the narrator's relationship to other characters. Through such vivid imagery and "repeated [. . .] ritualized expressions,"

Özdamar moves her reader through multiple layers of thematic consciousness which "continually transgress and trespass each other's borders" (Ghaussy 7).

Özdamar's most recent novel, *Die Brücke vom goldenen Horn*, can be understood as a continuation of *Karawanserei* with respect to content as well as style. Dreaming of saving enough money for acting school in Istanbul, the narrator steps off the train in West Berlin with fellow countrywomen to work as a *Gastarbeiterin* in a Telefunken factory. The reader ventures along with the protagonist upon a new journey of (self-)discovery in the context of a foreign (German) culture and language. She and her co-workers, possessing little or no German language abilities, initially move between the realms of "Wonaymtür, Hertietür, Bustür, Radiolampenfabriktür, Fabriktoilettentür, Wonaymzimmertisch und Fabrikgrüneisentisch" (Kübler 56).[8] Özdamar applies her self-defined role as "Wörtersammlerin" (*Mutterzunge* 48) in describing the narrator's new audio-visual environment with a hybrid "re-membering" of words to create neologisms, as heard from and utilized by the Turkish newcomers to West Germany.[9] Konuk points out that "[i]n ihren Werken beleuchtet Özdamar Identitäten und Kulturen von Randgruppen in der Türkei wie auch in Deutschland" (144). She thus refers to the author's characters as marginalized both in their "homelands" (socio-economically) and in their new role as foreign workers in Germany (culturally).

[8] Özdamar refers here to "Wohnheimtür" (the women's dormitory in which laborers lived); "Hertietür" (Hertie is a German department store); "Bustür" (bus which takes the laborers to and from the factory); "Radiolampenfabriktür" (entrance to the Telefunken factory); "Fabriktoilettentür" (restroom where the narrator and her co-workers enjoy secret smoking breaks); "Wohnheimzimmertisch" (neologism referring to the dormitory kitchen table); "Fabrikgrüneisentisch" (table at which laborers worked in the factory). Each word represents the isolated initial living and working environment of the narrator and her co-workers.

[9] The term "re-membering" is borrowed from Azade Seyhan's article "Lost in Translation: Re-Membering the Mother Tongue in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*" in *The German Quarterly* (Fall 1996); while re-membering the German language with a Turkish subtext--for example, in the literal translation of idioms and fairy tales--Özdamar remembers Turkish social and political history through the voice of a child/adolescent narrator, thereby fragmenting and recombining linguistic displacement to mirror the narrator's own migratory paths within mid-twentieth-century Turkey.

As the novel progresses, the reader follows the narrator across time and between two countries and cultures--Germany and Turkey during the late 1960s and 1970s--into a growing awareness of her surroundings, her acquisition of the German language, her passion for theater and acting, her sexual awakening in her desire to rid herself of her "Diamant,"[10] and her interest in socialist ideology and political activism juxtaposed with the daily realities of human necessity. Gunhild Kübler characterizes Özdamar's depiction of the immigrants' lives as a "Prozess der Akkulturation" (56), a mechanism eliciting the modification of identity, particularly of cultural identity, through contact with the culture of the Other. Konuk defines Özdamar's literary expression as "sprachlich gesehen ein palimpsestartiges Gewebe, in dem die türkische Sprache den Subtext für den deutschsprachigen Text bildet" (49). Turkish subject matter is cloaked in German language, effecting distance, yet seeking it out and reacting with it to bridge a unique amalgam of culture and poetry.

[10] In *Die Brücke vom goldenen Horn*, the narrator is surrounded by discussions about, warnings against, and expressions of female sexuality following her arrival in West Berlin. Although she is warned by female compatriots in her living environment to protect her "Diamant"--a term literally translated from the Turkish--or virginity and family honor, she is determined to free herself of her "diamond" throughout the novel. Özdamar's neutral depiction of the narrator's gradual sexual awakening further deconstructs gendered hegemonically determined notions of physical (self)discovery.

CHAPTER III

Zehra Çırak's Hybrid Wings: Transversing *Einordnung* and *Wiedererkennung*

SICH WARM LAUFEN

Weil man weiß daß auch Brücken ein Ende haben
braucht man sich beim Übergang nicht zu beeilen

doch auf Brücken ist es am kältesten

Zehra Çırak
Vogel auf dem Rücken eines Elefanten

Referring to various interpretations of the word *Heimat*, Konuk asserts: "Das Konstrukt 'Heimat' hat für Menschen mit einer Migrationsgeschichte eine besondere Bedeutung. Die immer wiederkehrende Frage 'Wann kehrt ihr in eure Heimat zurück?' hat mir seit meiner Kindheit signalisiert, daß ich nicht hierher 'gehöre'" (144). She reflects on her own childhood in Germany as the child of Turkish parents, distinguishing between the relevance of place of birth and that of ethnic or cultural origin as defined by a "German" environment. Konuk highlights, furthermore, generational influences upon individual definitions of "home":

> Durch Migration kann sich in der ersten Generation zwar ein 'Heimatgefühl' verstärken, in den nachfolgenden Generationen kann sich allerdings auch das Gefühl entwickeln, nirgendwohin zu 'gehören' [.] [. . .] Dieses gebrochene Verhältnis formt gleichzeitig ein weitergehendes kritisches Bewußtsein gegenüber Kategorien wie 'Rasse' und 'Ethnie', die im weitesten Sinne mit 'Heimat' assoziiert werden. (144)

When analyzing the implementation of this "critical consciousness" with respect to ethnic and cultural determination in German literature, Marilya Veteto-Conrad emphasizes that

> writers of the second generation view themselves as at home in Germany[.] [. . .] They do not see themselves as *Gastarbeiter*, and hence do not see any need to address themselves to this issue, at least not as directly as their predecessors. For them, the issue is not whether they belong in Germany, but how to adjust to the fact of belonging. (*Finding a Voice* 1996, 49)

Themes prevalent in the literature of the second generation focus more on varying interpretations of Otherness rather than on the realities and repercussions of *Gastarbeiter* life in Germany. As Veteto-Conrad states, "[t]heir nerve center [. . .] is less which *language* is theirs, but which *identity*" (*Finding a Voice* 1996, 49).

Poet Zehra Çırak belongs to this second generation. Born in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1960, she joined her family in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 1963. Following secondary school, Çırak studied to become a cosmetologist and moved to Berlin in 1982. She is a poet and performance artist and continues to practice as a cosmetologist (Ackermann 129). Çırak's first collection of poetry, *flugfänger*, was published in 1987 and followed by the collections *Vogel auf dem Rücken eines Elefanten* (1991), *Fremde Flügel auf eigener Schulter* (1994), and *Leibesübungen* (2000). Veteto-Conrad writes of Çırak's adopted homeland of Germany "[as] the country that she has chosen to call home and in which she has made a home for herself on both the personal and literary levels" ("Zehra Çırak" 335). Çırak has more recently begun to thematize and to include more intensively in her texts socio-political issues in Germany, especially in response to an increase in prejudice toward and violence against immigrants and other "non-Germans" within the past decade. Confronted with what Karein Goertz defines as "the discrepancy between self-representation and representation by others" (79), Çırak, like Özdamar,

"experiment[s] with German syntax and semantics as a means of transcribing [her] own experience of displacement," thereby reinventing meaning within what became her native language of German (Veteto-Conrad, *Finding a Voice* 1990, 81-82). Poems are organized into a variety of thematic groups within each collection, offering reflective free-form structures full of what Harald Hartung terms the interaction of "Fabulierlust und Sprachspiel," while allowing the reader to concentrate on the individuality of a particular text as well (25). In writing deliberately toward a "universality" of being, Çırak implicitly politicizes language by "re-order[ing] the semantic codes within that language and [giving] it new life" (Veteto-Conrad, *Finding a Voice* 1996, 39, 50).

Çırak refuses to be neatly compartmentalized or, as she calls it, "verschubladisiert" in the realm of what has been defined in German literature as the *Betroffenheitsliteratur* of writers of the first generation of *Gastarbeiter* (Veteto-Conrad, *Finding a Voice* 1996, 74). She is not primarily concerned with the plight of foreign guest workers, as she experienced it indirectly in her own life through her parents. She is part of the next generation, which is clearly no longer temporarily present, possesses a new self-awareness, and seeks to confront a wider variety of issues, both as individuals and as a group in general in contemporary German society. Klaus Farin describes Çırak's *œuvre* as "Gedichte [die] sich eindeutigen Zuordnungen [entziehen], sie sind teils autobiographisch, teils surreal verfremdete Beobachtungen ihrer Umgebung" ("Utopie" 19). At the Friedrich-Hölderlin-Preis award ceremony in 1993, in which she received the *Förderpreis*, the jury lauded Çırak's poetic expression as "'voll melancholischen Charmes und sensibler Subjektivität'" ("Förderpreis" 19). Veteto-Conrad views Çırak's literary perspective as

> not hampered by her irrefutably displaced status. Rather, her art is made possible by the very element in her existence that [. . .] should cause her the most distress. [. . .] [She] decline[s] even to see herself as displaced[.] [. . .] In rejecting the conventional, that is, negative, definition of displacement for her own, Çırak interprets it in a positive manner and construes from it a state of liberty rather than of isolation. Accordingly, she displaces herself purposely and revels in that status and in the artistic license it affords her. (*Finding a Voice* 1996, 74-75)

Çırak is a poet surrounded by a generation of literary critics like Raoul Schrott who ask, "Was sollen Gedichte überhaupt noch?" (8). Caught between questions of marketability and an apparent public preference for prose and blockbuster films, German-language poetry seems a doomed genre (Schrott 8). By poetically re-membering German words and phrases and thereby creating new "Bildwelten" (Drawert 12), Çırak answers with what Jürgen Serke terms "Wort-Bruch," mirroring in the process of literary creativity the internal "Vereinzelung, Aufsplitterung, Isolation" which Serke attributes to "Erfahrungen des Fremdseins," or experiences of Otherness (10).

Çırak addresses issues and perceptions of Otherness in an "inclusive, hybrid [. . .] rather than [in] an exclusive [environment] rooted in a homogeneous notion of nation and race" (Goertz 68). Within this "borderland," the author "not only play[s] with the German language to make it strange unto itself through puns and linguistic experimentation, [she] also bring[s] [her] particular experiences of non-German language[ ] and culture[ ] into [her] texts" (Goertz 83). Consequently, the "German-speaking reader finds language set on its edge, reoriented [. . .], and the resultant shift in perspective leaves the reader with a slightly befuddling, but all the more refreshing,

impression of being realigned in relationship to one's own native tongue" (Veteto-Conrad, *Finding a Voice* 1996, 77).

A compelling example of such a "linguistic experimentation" and "reorientation" is the poem "Länderkunde":

LÄNDERKUNDE

Ein gehend Stück barfüß
einlaufend fürbaß

Ein Wanderer
ein Wand er er
ein Wander er
Einwand erer
Einwander er
Einwanderer
Ein -
w
anderer (*Leibesübungen* 96)

The title foretells a new lesson in regional studies. The first two lines immediately uproot the reader with the linguistically playful image of a barefoot onward movement. The eye and mind move initially from "gehen" and "laufen" to semantically significant variations of the root "wandern." Certain political factions within the German state, a *de facto* multicultural society, continue to shout, "Deutschland ist kein Einwanderungsland!"[11] Çırak responds with the word *Einwanderer*, or immigrant, juxtaposing it with itself, separating and redefining its essence according to syllabic reconstructions. The meaning inherent in each line places one word onto multiple levels of interpretation and representation. "Einwanderer" is transfigured, for example, into the images of

[11] This common expression evolved from a conservative political statement made to the German public in the early 1990s and has since become a well-known phrase. In conjunction with the challenges facing a reunified Germany along with increased violence against "foreigners" in Germany within the past decade, the seemingly historically ingrained perception of transient "guests" engenders a standard set of questions which residents of Germany, whether permanent or not, are often asked in casual conversation: Woher kommst du? Was machst du hier? Wie lange bleibst du? Wann gehst du nach Hause?

"Wanderer," "Wand," and "Einwand." Çırak provokes the reader with the last three lines "Ein - /w/anderer" (*Leibesübungen* 96) twisting perception with irony, the immigrant as the Other, while focusing the reader on the sense of constant movement, from a physical to a mental migration, throughout. Ultimately, the reader is forced to consider who the Other really is, asking if everyone is not in some sense an immigrant.

In "Kein Sand im Rad der Zeit," Çırak reflects upon and confronts the realities of "xenophobia, of home, of the Other" in Germany (Veteto-Conrad, "Zehra Çırak" 355):

KEIN SAND IM RAD DER ZEIT

Ich stehe in der U-Bahn an die Wand gelehnt
schweigend schaukle ich in der U-Fahrt
fünf Jungs und zwei Mädels kommen auf mich zu
schwankend im Laufe der Geschwindigkeit
festen Blickes fixieren sie mich
und grinsen sich immer näher
ich versuche die sieben zu ignorieren
die anderen Fahrgäste sind alle
mit sich selbst beschäftigt
die sieben stehen nun
kaum noch einen Schritt vor mir
der eine und die andere holt aus
zum Schlag
noch einmal noch mal
die anderen johlen begeistert
jetzt bin ich Neger – Jude – Ausländer
Penner – oder anderswer
nein sie sehen nicht was ich wirklich bin
jetzt nur noch ein geschlagenes Ding
ich höre noch ein kleines Kind
das ängstlich Mama ruft
und die anderen Fahrgäste machen sich
bereit zum Aussteigen
ich falle um
ich bin ein Fahrrad
mein Besitzer ist
ein Neger – ein Jude – ein Ausländer
der mit Vorausahnungen
schon eine Station früher ausgestiegen war
von nun an bin ich

nicht mehr – nur ein Fahrrad (*Fremde Flügel* 44-45)

The intertextual title is taken from Bertolt Brecht's poem, "Kein Sand im Getriebe der Zeit," and integrates his "ideal of political and social friction as a means of curing society's ills" into Çırak's representation of the Other's victimization (Veteto-Conrad, "Zehra Çırak" 355). The text can be understood as a critical appeal. The metaphor of a speaking bicycle representing the victims, "Neger – Jude – Ausländer / Penner – oder anderswer" (*Fremde Flügel* 44), in the images of a brutal subway attack reinforces its theme. Çırak thematizes the objectification of the Other in society by depicting the personification of a bicycle as victim--"nein sie sehen nicht was ich wirklich bin"--in an ironic interplay with its owner who, "mit Vorausahnungen / schon eine Station früher ausgestiegen war" (*Fremde Flügel* 44). It can be argued that objectification in this sense actually strengthens the personalization of the experience and intensifies the author's call for a re-evaluation of complacency in "the cogs of German society" entwined in "ignorance, [social] myopia, [and] ethnocentrism" (Veteto-Conrad, "Zehra Çırak" 355, 357).

Çırak's "Fragebogen" is an expansion of the ironic politicization of language embedded in various traditional forms of fortune telling:

FRAGEBOGEN

Warum sollte ich lügen
beim Lesen aus dem Kaffee-Satz
und nachtragen
ob es irgendeiner Wahrheit entspricht
warum nachfragen
woher der Kaffee stammt
und was er kostet und wie er mundet
wenn ich von den Lippen ablesen kann
wie lange er schmeckt

seit wann ist Mystik im Spiel
wenn Staaten sich ihre Karten zustecken
offen und durchsichtig für jedermann
wo ist die Hand
aus der man sprachlos lesen könnte
und wie rund die Kugel
die gläserne
worauf wir stehn

Warum sollte jeder sich sorgen
um jedermanns Frage
und warum sollen Blinde
nicht am Hellseherkongreß teilnehmen? (*Vogel auf dem Rücken* 13)

The poem exemplifies Çırak's unique style of "subtle intimations and obliquely articulated thoughts when offering her political opinions" (Veteto-Conrad, "Zehra Çırak" 351). Through the use of vivid imagery, the prophetic symbolism inherent in each line metaphorically uncovers the author's statement about international politics. The narrator begins in the first stanza by reading coffee grounds, twisting prophecy with "the taste" of reality and questioning the unknown--fortune--in relation to the symbolic concrete--coffee. The second stanza moves the reader's perception from mystical coffee grounds to the transparent interplay of nation-states. Again, modes of prophecy such as palm reading and gazing into a crystal ball--symbolizing the earth--appear and serve as metaphors for the futility of claiming ignorance when faced with "Staaten [die] sich ihre Karten zustecken / offen und durchsichtig für jedermann" (*Vogel auf dem Rücken* 13). The narrator asks sarcastically in the last stanza, "Warum sollte jeder sich sorgen / um jedermanns Frage" (*Vogel auf dem Rücken* 13) and responds, in turn, with the question of why the blind shouldn't also participate in the fortune-tellers' congress. Çırak provokes the reader with the succinctly ironic dryness of her final statement, implying, according

to Veteto-Conrad, that "whoever does not learn from history is doomed to repeat it" ("Zehra Çırak" 352).

KULTURIDENTITÄT

Ist das etwas, womit ich mich wiedererkenne, oder ist das etwas, womit andere mich einordnen können?

Ich bevorzuge weder meine türkische noch meine deutsche Kultur. Ich lebe und sehne mich nach einer Mischkultur. Zwangsweise lebe ich so, weil ich weder in Alaska in einem Iglu noch in Anatolien tief in einer Hütte lebe. Es gibt Kulturgegenstände, die ich trotz meiner – (Zitat: Strauß) "Zugehörigkeit zum europäischen Hygienekreis" – verweigere. Z.B. Fernsehen. (Als Kind und Teenager blieb mir nicht viel anderes übrig als fernzusehen. Die TV – Serie "Dallas" lernte ich einige Zeit, bevor sie in Deutschland gesendet wurde, in der Türkei kennen.
Berauschen lasse ich mich aber lieber von anderen Kulturen, z.B. durch Musik von Bach und Mahler, durch Filme von Tarkowski oder Buñuel oder Akira Kurosawa.

Ich erkenne mich wieder.

Also würde ich am liebsten japanisch aufwachen auf einem Bodenbett in Räumen mit transparenten Scheintüren. Dann würde ich gerne englisch frühstücken, danach mit fremder Gleichgültigkeit chinesisch arbeiten, fleißig und eifrig. Am liebsten möchte französisch essen und tierisch satt römisch baden, gerne will ich bayerisch wandern und afrikanisch tanzen. Am liebsten würde ich russische Geduld besitzen und mein Geld nicht amerikanisch verdienen müssen. Ach, wie möchte ich gerne einen Schweizer Paß, ohne in den Verdacht zu geraten, Inhaber eines Nummernkontos zu sein. Am liebsten möchte ich indisch einschlafen als Vogel auf dem Rücken eines Elefanten und türkisch träumen vom Bosporus.
Will ich also etwas, womit ich mich wiedererkenne, oder etwas, womit andere mich einordnen können? (*Vogel auf dem Rücken* 94)

In her text "Kulturidentität," Çırak begins with the question, "Ist das etwas, womit ich mich wiedererkenne, oder ist das etwas, womit andere mich einordnen können?" (*Vogel auf dem Rücken* 94). This question is answered in the author's constant efforts toward a "hybrid culture [. . .] which privileges neither her Turkish nor her German

culture, but rather draws on the best aspects of cultures from all around the world" (Goertz 77). She continues by recognizing herself, for example, in the following: "Also würde ich am liebsten japanisch aufwachen [. . .] französisch essen [. . .] römisch baden, [. . .] gerne will ich bayerisch wandern und [. . .] mein Geld nicht amerikanisch verdienen müssen" (*Vogel auf dem Rücken* 94). Cultural stereotypes are transfused and manipulated to form "her desired cultural identity," not confined by what Goertz calls a "binary structure of the European and non-European" and instead incorporated into a more holistic socio-cultural entity (78).

In reflecting on personal cultural displacement in "Istanbul," Çırak further deconstructs internal versus external self-representations by juxtaposing the inner self with its assumed geographical origin, which is embodied in the city of Istanbul, Turkey:

> ISTANBUL
>
> Von Istanbul bis Istanbul
> ist weit
> ist weit geworden
> mein Weg wohin nach Istanbul
> ist schmal ist breit wie Istanbul
> und Bosporus fließt in mir
> in meinen Adern nur Blut
> salzig und ohne ein Blau wie das Meer
> die Windmühlen drehen sich nicht mehr
> in Istanbul ist
> Windstille
> in mir ist weit geworden
> Istanbul
> wie Sonnenblumenfelder
> sich der Sonne zuwenden
> drehe ich mich im Kreise
> und suche Istanbul (*Vogel auf dem Rücken* 89)

The first three lines set the rhythmically introspective tone for the rest of the poem. Istanbul the city is estranging as a word and, more importantly, as a broader cultural

concept in the narrator's understanding of her own identity. Ironically, Veteto-Conrad seems to undermine her efforts toward presenting Çırak's work as reflecting the strengths in a multifaceted identity when she writes that Çırak's "relationship to her actual home is distant and even strained [;] [. . .] [s]he knows her native country and home town as vacation destinations only" ("Zehra Çırak" 346). What represents her "actual home" and "native country," however, is neither obvious nor clear, for as Çırak has stated on numerous occasions and in various interviews, she longs for a "Mischkultur" (Farin, "Utopie" 19) and asserts, "'Ich brauche keine Schublade für mich'" (Farin, "Ganz freihändig" 8). The poem "Istanbul" seems to affirm definitively that Çırak no longer understands Turkey as her "actual home" or "native country" and that, perhaps her *Wahlheimat* is not even Germany, but somewhere else altogether. Although she lives and writes in Berlin, Çırak's "home" is perhaps one housed in reflecting on the paradoxes of an individual and communal existence while dreaming of the possibilities a life "in den Lüften"[12] may offer (*Fremde Flügel* 98).

The repetition of the word Istanbul throughout the text evokes a wave of self-examination, guiding the reader first to the city's concrete geographic location, then almost suddenly destabilizing the reader's cultural perceptions of the narrator with "mein Weg wohin nach Istanbul / ist schmal ist breit wie Istanbul" (*Vogel auf dem Rücken* 89). The Bosporus Strait, separating the European from the Asian shores of Turkey and connecting the Sea of Marmara with the Black Sea, flows through her; yet she reminds the reader that she has "in meinen Adern nur Blut" (*Vogel auf dem Rücken* 89), thereby

[12] In her poem "Fremde Flügel auf eigener Schulter," Çırak equates the ability to fly with the "Möglichkeit [. . .] all unsere Wünsche zu erfüllen" (Hasty and Merkes-Frei, "Werkstattgespräch mit Zehra Çırak" 78) and ponders the danger two lovers might encounter of destroying each other in the air. Longing and danger are prevalent themes in Çırak's texts and seem often to exist dichotomously within the realm of her symbolic imagery and self-representation.

minimizing and ultimately challenging imposed cultural preconceptions of self. The narrator feels removed from this outwardly perceived essence of Istanbul, almost whispering from her inner self, "in Istanbul ist / Windstille / in mir ist weit geworden / Istanbul" (*Vogel auf dem Rücken* 89). In the last four lines, Çırak leaves her reader with her unfinished and, in many ways, never ending search for an unattainable Istanbul, another distant sun, which, like the sunflower, she can never claim completely as her own.

Although Çırak has traditionally addressed more exclusively existential themes such as personal development, inner growth, and human relationships, she is increasingly vocal in her works about "issues of xenophobia" and culturally and ethnically motivated violence toward perceived Others in Germany (Veteto-Conrad, "Zehra Çırak" 358). Veteto-Conrad emphasizes that Çırak

> [n]o longer [. . .] speak[s] to topics that are exclusively personal nor even exclusively German. [. . .] Her scope, though it takes its origins from her special circumstances as a Turkish woman in Germany, reaches beyond the national level that spawned it to a universal message. Çırak will not use her textual wings to take flight from or hover above the destructive politics of nationalism; rather, she has truly gone *über Grenzen*, beyond the borders of her personal history and her homeland, whether Turkish or German, to make a statement about the world. ("Zehra Çırak" 358)

In moving beyond borders, Çırak "revel[s] in the act of playing with and recombining sounds, meanings, and associative words" (Goertz 80). Goertz maintains that "[l]anguage, like identity, is hybrid, born from the arbitrary reshuffling of letters" (80);

precisely in this realm of hybridity, Çırak dialectically seeks out the various dichotomies of identity evident in her environment and remolds the German language accordingly in order to mirror "previously hidden associations," while constantly confronting societal phobias by restructuring ideas of multiplicity in identity construction and encouraging (self)reflection in her audience (81).

CHAPTER IV
Two Voices, Two Generations Embrace Multiplicity

> "'Alles hängt ab von dem Rahmen, in dem verglichen wird, ändert sich mit dem Hintergrund, vor dem die Identität gesehen wird, und folgt dem Spiel der Interessen, das Identitäten einbindet und belebt.'" Clifford Geertz[13]

To which and within which literary framework are minority authors in Germany compared? What is the background before which they stand and are analyzed? And which interplay of interests bonds with and influences their construction(s) of identity? How do these authors view themselves in the context of their works and station within German literature and society? Both Emine Sevgi Özdamar and Zehra Çırak are contemporary German women authors of Turkish heritage who have been active writers and performers in Germany for more than a decade. Each author transcends the boundaries of identity set by bureaucratic records as well as societal expectations and perceptions of homogeneity, as is evident in their respective literary experimentation with the theme of foreignness, or Otherness, in society. Both authors redefine cultural and literary confines prescribed by the "dominant culture" by incorporating a unique manipulation of the German language into their *œuvres* and thereby freeing meaning on multiple levels of poetic representation. The absence of pathos inherent in the voices of their texts intensifies the confrontational character of each author's words. By unsettling thought with an objective tone yet ironic and, at times, humorous subtext, Özdamar and Çırak present their audiences with reflective journeys in search of various definitions, syntheses, and transfigurations of identity within the vivid imagery evoked by their prose and poetry. However, each author's literary perspective and choice of subject matter can

[13] *Welt in Stücken: Kultur und Politik am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Wien: Passagen Verlag, 1996) 79. (qtd. in Förster 172)

be differentiated, for example, in relation to generational and geo-cultural influences; Özdamar and Çırak vary, moreover, in their use of the German language when experimenting with (de)constructions of identity.

While Özdamar first migrated to Germany as a *Gastarbeiterin* in the late 1960s and thus can be understood as an author among immigrants of the first generation, Çırak spent the first three years of her life in Turkey and was subsequently raised in Germany by parents who were *Gastarbeiter*; thus, her literary expression essentially reflects a second-generation perspective. Faruk Sen and Andreas Goldberg write that although "'die' typische Vertreterin der zweiten Generation," or for that matter, a representative of the first or third generation, does not exist, women of Turkish heritage in Germany are often perceived as a dependent homogeneous group which stoically adheres to the traditions passed on to or imposed upon it by families, husbands, and the ethnic community (63). Sheila Johnson goes further in addressing inadequate and even misleading perceptions of the literary production of minority women authors in Germany when she brings attention to the "Tendenz, die deutschsprachige Literatur von Frauen, die in Mitteleuropa ethnischen Minderheiten angehören, eher als kulturelle Dokumente und als Spiegel für die größere Gesellschaft denn als dichterische Schöpfung zu behandeln" ("Von 'Betroffenheit' zur Literatur" 153). Considering current challenges facing literary scholarship, Veteto-Conrad rightfully maintains that it is perhaps useful to view the interplay of ethnicity and aesthetics as a "pendulum swing," whereby the goal of analyzing minority literature is "neither to exclude nor to make exclusive either ethnic origins or literary aesthetic" ("'Innere Unruhe'?" 60).

When asked in an interview how she views herself in relation to other writers of the *Gastarbeiter* generation in Germany, Özdamar ironically remarks, "Dazu muß ich sagen, daß mir das Wort 'Gastarbeiter' sehr gefällt. Ich sehe immer zwei Personen vor mir, die eine ist Gast und sitzt da und die andere arbeitet" (Wierschke 258). In the same interview, Özdamar answers, furthermore, that she would categorize her writing as German literature, although she makes clear that she might have written in French if she had been living in France, thereby pointing to the seeming randomness of location in her perspective (258). Germany happens to be her place of residence and German the language in which she chooses to write and to perform. She explains to Gabriele Schoder that German, "'das von der Bühne und das von der Straße,'" is the language in which she thinks and expresses herself (qtd. in Schoder 8). Yet Aytaç insightfully adds that "sie nicht wie eine Deutsche, sondern stets wie eine Türkin denkt," her literary style consistently reflecting this "deutsch mit türkischem Sprachgefühl" (176). In 1996 Özdamar became a German citizen; she writes in a contribution to the *Frankfurter Rundschau* that a German passport facilitates her travel to other countries while Turkish citizenship continues to be a limiting factor in the flexibility of mobility ("Die neuen Friedhöfe" ZB 2). However, she emphasizes the fact that possessing German citizenship does not necessarily influence continuing dominant perceptions and marginalization of the Other based on cultural and ethnic profiling. She goes on to suggest, "Vielleicht müßten alle Menschen auf der Welt mindestens neunzehn Pässe haben. [. . .] es müßte morgens im Fernsehen nach der Staumeldung die Paßmeldung kommen: 'Heute mit welchem Paß in welches Land?'" ("Die neuen Friedhöfe" ZB 2). Although Özdamar considers her nationality and citizenship, in general, as arbitrary as physical location, it

nevertheless cannot be ignored that the focus in her literary production thus far has been on issues of displacement, particularly within an amalgam of both Turkish and German socio-historical contexts.

Similar to Özdamar, Çırak regards the Turkish and German influences in her life as a "set of tools she has been handed arbitrarily, a set no more or no less significant than the manner in which she internalizes her external circumstances" (Veteto-Conrad, "Innere Unruhe?" 66). A German citizen as well, Çırak explains her understanding of her own identity as an author and her relationship to the German language as follows:

> Puisque je n'écris qu'en allemand, je ne veux plus, comme cela a été fait souvent et de façon erronée, être appelée une auteure turque, mais plutôt "auteure de langue allemande d'origine turque". Ceci afin de ne pas créer de faux espoirs auprès d'un public turc, et d'éviter de me faire classer par ceux qui s'étonnent de ma maîtrise de l'allemand. Je n'ai pas appris l'allemand comme langue étrangère, mais je l'ai assimilé en parlant et en chantant à la maternelle de Karlsruhe. Malheureusement, ma langue maternelle ne s'est pas plus développée que celle d'une jeune adolescente. ("De l'Orient-Express" 128)

As opposed to Özdamar, who first learned German as an adult worker in West Berlin and whose native language is Turkish, Çırak is a child of the Turkish diaspora, raised in Germany and educated in German schools, and admits that her limited Turkish language abilities are equivalent to those of a young adolescent. On the one hand, for example, Özdamar consciously and deliberately embraces grammatical errors made while writing in German and insists that her works be published unedited in order to reflect her identity and to remind her readership of the continual development, body, and life of her words

(Bakirdögen 18). Çırak, on the other hand, writes in German because it is simply *de facto* her native language and experiments with words in the dialectic style inherent in her lyrical "texts," as she terms them (Veteto-Conrad, "'Innere Unruhe'?" 62).

Although both Özdamar and Çırak uniquely thematize Otherness in their writings, as discussed in chapters II and III, each author's generational and cultural perspective influences her choice of subject matter and the way in which she manipulates language to move beyond ordinary cultural and literary borders. Whereas Özdamar confronts the reader with German-language prose texts and dramas cloaked in an essentially, albeit "unconventional," Turkish subtext and frame of reference throughout, Çırak approaches identity constructions from a more overtly universalist perspective, as reflected in German-language constructions underlined by more fundamentally philosophical questions and poetic expression of an essentialist nature.

Through what Johnson refers to as a unique "Ästhetik des türkischen Alltags," which is especially the focus in *Karawanserei* and which can be applied broadly to the author's unique style in her other works, Özdamar seeks to document the land of her youth and experiences in the *Randgruppen*--among them, workers, communists, refugees, and actors--within Turkish and German societies ("Transnational" 49). While Özdamar seems to be in a deliberate dialogue with her experiences in both Turkey and Germany of the twentieth century, allegorically retracing her Turkish heritage and life in a new homeland, Çırak inundates her audience with an existentialist free-verse poetry "mit virtuoser Leichtigkeit und schnoddriger Ironie vorgeführten dadaistischen Sprachspielereien" (Farin, "Utopie" 19).

Özdamar and Çırak present their readership with two voices of transnationality, uniquely distancing themselves from the *Betroffenheit* of earlier minority literature in Germany. Their reception within the German literary industry serves to underscore the certainty that "traditional categories, such as origin and national borders, can no longer be regarded as the primary determinants in defining the parameters of 'German' literature" (Kuhn 253). Each author has been awarded coveted German-language literary prizes within the past decade, Özdamar the Ingeborg-Bachmann-Preis (1991) and Çırak the Friedrich-Hölderlin-Förderpreis (1993), marking what Anna Kuhn justly discerns as a "watershed in contemporary German letters" (247). A singular rise to individual freedom, while acknowledging the multiplicity of identity, moves through each author's texts and inspires their audiences to a similar self-questioning and reflection on their own positions in greater society. Through vivid and often allusive imagery created in experimentation with the German language, both Özdamar and Çırak assume new contexts within which the literary aesthetic is and should be validated as a rightful component of postcolonial, postmodern German literature.

CONCLUSION

Voices of the *Morgenland*: Reflections of the Present and Directions for the Future

> [D]ie Ambiguität zwischen den politischen, kulturellen und sprachlichen Bedeutungen des Adjektivs "deutsch" erlaubt keine scharfe Grenzziehung zwischen Einbeziehung und Ausschluß. Dennoch verlief die Entstehung literarischer Kanons in der Geschichte parallel zu der Herstellung von Kanonen, und die Diskussionen um Einbeziehung und Ausschluß drückten und drücken immer noch nationale Interessen aus. (Boa 115)

In an interview with *Spiegel* magazine last year, author Feridun Zaimoglu, a provocative voice of second-generation Germans of Turkish and other heritage, states:

> Kultur wird [. . .] in Deutschland immer eindimensional verstanden. Sie wird eingeteilt in Kulturblöcke, jeder Block ist eine Art Selbstbedienungsladen, und der türkischstämmige Deutsche ist eine Art zwei Öltanks. Ich habe mich nie als ein Pendler zwischen zwei Kulturen gefühlt [.] [. . .] Ich wusste vielmehr, dass es nicht eine deutsche, sondern viele Realitäten gibt. ("Dies ist unser Land" 68)

He claims that, especially faced with increased Rightist violence against foreigners and other minorities in Germany, "kommen die Biedermänner und Brandstifter," parlamentarians who bypass issues relevant to the xenophobic reality in a filibuster of conflicting rhetoric (70). In a 1993 newspaper article, essayist Zafer Şenoçak underlines this political aspect of actual and perceived cultural realities within a literary context: "'Betrachtet man die mangelhafte Rezeption der Kunst von Einwanderern durch deutsche Medien, dann fällt auf, daß die deutsche kulturelle Szene ein Spiegelbild der politischen ist, wenn es darum geht, die Anwesenheit von Einwanderern in Deutschland zu ignorieren'" (qtd. in Schott 24). Precisely in the aforementioned socio-political climate, exclaims Zaimoglu, "platzt die Debatte um die so genannte deutsche Leitkultur," or

dominant culture ("Dies ist unser Land" 70). Minh-Khai Phan-Thi, actress and video jockey, states, "Die reden immer von deutscher Kultur, ohne dass klar ist, was das eigentlich ist" ("Dies ist unser Land" 72). What is "German culture," and of whom is it comprised?

One answer to this question can be found in *Morgenland: Neueste deutsche Literatur*, an anthology of German-language texts by second- and third-generation authors of non-German heritage. In its afterword, Jamal Tuschick states, "Am Anfang war das Wort, das man nicht kannte, "referring to the linguistic struggles of the first generation, the *Gastarbeiter* (289). He moves from the roots of the immigrant legacy in prior literature by non-German authors in Germany to the assertion that authors of the second- and third generations are "Träger wichtiger Zukunftsinformationen. Ihre persönlichen Verhältnisse antizipieren gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse [.] [. . .] Diese Avantgarde hat[ ] sich der Mehrheitsgesellschaft zugewandt. Dort sucht[ ] sie ihre Chancen, dort [besteht] sie auf Veränderungen" (284). It is precisely there, in the "Mehrheitsgesellschaft," i.e. *im Morgenland des Abendländischen*, from which the authors of this anthology proclaim their literary expression. Their voices represent a revolutionary child no longer in the throes of an affected *Ausländerkultur*.

In their introduction to the anthology *Other Germanies: Questioning Identity in Women's Literature and Art*, editors Karen Jankowsky and Carla Love emphasize the activism of "minority citizens and residents [. . .] [who] are articulating their relationship to or are redefining a core culture in Germany" (3). Therein, a new canon of diversity is emerging from and dismantling the realities of twenty-first century German literature. Leslie Adelson astutely observes to this effect that "there can be no single category that

could account adequately for the multiplicity of differences that clamor to be heard and read," pointing to the danger of relying on "'fixed categories'" like *MigrantInnen-*, *Ausländer-*, *ImmigrantInnenliteratur*, which "preclude rigorous analysis of the construction of differences in their social, historical, political, and cultural specificity" (220).

Bernd Graff's recent provocative article, "Rein darf, was rein ist," addresses debates about whether German language skills examinations should be required of prospective citizens and serves as a further criticism of forced concepts of German cultural and ethnic homogeneity and the fear of losing that identity. With the approaching disappearance of the coveted Deutschmark and entrance of the Euro into the economies of European Union countries, Germany seems to be clutching all the more tightly to assimilationist policies in order to preserve a concept of purity founded only in myth. The irony and wit of Graff's words best convey continuing sentiments toward the Other:

> [Man brauche] jene Pflicht-Sprachkurse [. . .] eben deswegen [. . .] um als Ausländer in diesem Land 'bestehen' zu können. Das kann man auch so. So geht es der Sorge also nicht um den Einwanderer, sondern vielmehr um sich selber. Im Wunsch, das Fremde generell auf das Deutsche zu vergattern, scheint jener verklemmte Wille zur Identitätswahrung auf, der [. . .] das Andere nur dann zuzulassen vermag, wenn es sich bis in den Zungenschlag hinein unkenntlich macht, also aufgibt. (15)

The sentence on the back cover of the *Morgenland* anthology calls out its challenge to contemporary German literature and society, to whom the authors are largely unknown:

"Sind sie zu fremd, bist du zu deutsch." Even here, however, the question "was ist 'deutsch'?" remains unanswered. What is "German," and to whom does it and will it refer? When Jankowsky and Love's "other Germanies" and Zaimoglu's "viele Realitäten" become truly recognized and integrated components of a diverse German culture remains a continuing process of societal self-discovery to be seen, heard, and read.

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Vita

Vera Irene Pantanizopoulos-Broux was born a midnight Gemini in Chicago Heights, Illinois, in 1971. She has lived between the *New World* and the *Old Countries* across the Atlantic for the past thirty years. After attending public schools in the United States, Switzerland, and Greece, Vera studied cultural anthropology as an undergraduate at the University of Tennessee; lived as an exchange student for one year in Bonn, Germany, during that time; and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in May 1993. In fall of 1993, she returned to Bonn as the recipient of a post-undergraduate Fulbright Fellowship. Following her Fulbright year, Vera decided to remain in Germany and worked as an English tutor, translator, Cologne Expo hostess, and bartender until 1999 when she and her husband, Koudou, decided to venture a move to the United States. In fall of the same year, Vera began the Master of Arts Program in German at the University of Tennessee. After graduating in August 2001, Vera plans to pursue doctoral studies in modern foreign languages and literatures with a first concentration in German.