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Rewriting Home and Migration:

Spatiality in the Narratives of Barbara Honigmann and Emine Sevgi Özdamar

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the creation of a personal sense of home within the experience of migration in two semi-autobiographical trilogies by contemporaries Barbara Honigmann and Emine Sevgi Özdamar. The interdisciplinary literary analysis draws on the fields of Urban Studies, Gender Studies, and Human Geography to examine the interdependence between these seeming binaries – home and migration – in six works: Honigmann's *Roman von einem Kinde* (1986), *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* (1991), and *Damals, dann und danach* (1999), and Özdamar's *Das Leben ist eine Karawanswerei* (1992), *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* (1998), and *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* (2003). The dissertation begins with a discussion of scholarship on Özdamar and Honigmann, and on concepts of home, space, and place, migration, exile, and nomadism. Four central chapters examine each protagonist's critical engagement with and reinvention of the varied spaces she inhabits. The textual analysis explores physical, social, linguistic, spiritual, and gendered spaces as points of contact between home and migration. It demonstrates the ways in which artistic and literary spaces blur the boundaries between home and away, familiarity and foreignness.

In these texts, home and migration emerge not as static concepts, but as two very similar dynamic processes. Özdamar and Honigmann create new and particular perspectives that come out of allegiances to multiple localities, and from real and imagined "double locations." By taking these works out of their potentially competing fields of German-Jewish Studies and transnational studies and examining them instead through the common lens of spatiality, this dissertation challenges the discourse that locates Honigmann's and Özdamar's texts as marginal or "Other" in relation to the

German literary canon. The dissertation concludes with speculations on the term "cosmopolitanism," arguing that Özdamar and Honigmann rewrite the term cosmopolitanism as a highly personal and individual patchwork of allegiances to people, places, communities, and traditions. This dissertation extends existing ways of thinking about home, and migration, and cosmopolitanism and explores the permeability of boundaries, not only between these concepts, but between the disciplines of scholarship it draws upon.

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Chapter 1: Double Location: Linking Home and Migration

**"Man muß das Vaterland verlassen, an einen anderen Ort gehen,
damit man an zwei Orten gleichzeitig ist."**

– Emine Sevgi Özdamar[1]

Double Location: Linking Home and Migration

In the passage above, Emine Sevgi Özdamar speaks to the necessity of migration – of leaving home – to explore another location. The result, she says here, is literally locating oneself in two spaces, or creating a sense of "double location."[2] Philosopher Joan Cocks argues that this lens of "double location" colors a person's experience profoundly. She writes that "the consequence…of being located in one place and then another [is] achieving, through that double location, a clarity about home and inherited identity…" (151). In this dissertation, I examine the creation of "home" in the context of migration, asking how this concept of "double location" colors the notion of "home" in six contemporary novels.

Özdamar's recent semi-autobiographical novels *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei, hat zwei Türen, aus einer kam ich rein, aus der anderen ging ich raus* (1992), *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* (1998), and *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* (2003) trace a young female protagonist's journeys and coming-of-age, from a nomadic childhood of economic hardship in Turkey of the 1950s, to a life of mobility between Germany and Turkey as a young adult in the politically volatile 1960s and 1970s. German-Jewish

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[1] Angela Gutzeit. "'Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei…', Interview mit der Schriftstellerin und Schauspielerin Emine Sevgi Özdamar." *Annäherung an die Fremde.* Osnabrück: Rasch, 1992. 36-40. Here 39.

[2] "Double location" is Joan Cocks' term, which she uses in her discussion of Edward Said. See Cocks, 151 and Said, *Representations of the Intellectual,* 59-63.

writer Barbara Honigmann's recent semi-autobiographical novels likewise explore experiences of migration. Her *Roman von einem Kinde* (1986), *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* (1991), and *Damals, dann und danach* (1999) trace a German-Jewish protagonist's literary, artistic, spiritual, and very real journeys between East Germany and France. In both Özdamar's and Honigmann's trilogies, the protagonists engage actively and critically with the various Turkish, German, and French locations they inhabit, move through a number of social and romantic relationships, and use their processes of migration as a source of creative energy from which to develop their careers as literary, visual, and dramatic artists.

What links these journeys is an interdependence between concepts of home and migration, familiarity and foreignness. Each protagonist strives to create a sense of home within her experience of exile (in the case of Honigmann) and nomadism (in the case of Özdamar). Each does so by reinterpreting and personalizing new languages and images, by creating literature and art, by reconceiving her relationship to physical and social spaces, and by creatively negotiating gender and cultural roles. As migrants, the protagonists create a sense of home in their own bodies, in social relationships, in both real and imagined physical spaces. As artists, they create a sense of place through active engagement in creative work. In these texts, home is not portrayed as a static concept, but as a dynamic process very similar to the process of exile and nomadism. In this dissertation, I analyse the six texts, tracing each protagonist's active engagement with the spaces she encounters to create a sense of home in her life of motion.

This introductory chapter examines the methodology behind my literary analysis. I begin with a discussion of the two areas of scholarship – German-Jewish literature and

transnational literature – in which Honigmann and Özdamar have been studied. I argue for the usefulness of reading Honigmann's and Özdamar's narratives side by side, and speculate on the value of a dialogue between these two fields of study. I continue by exploring my central area of inquiry – home in the context of exile and nomadism – providing a theoretical framework for the literary analysis that follows in the four central chapters of this dissertation. I draw this framework from the field of human geography, linking the concept of home closely to the notions of space and place.

"Competing Narratives:" German-Jewish and Transnational Literatures

"Unification has fueled heated debates on the many 'competing narratives' of twentieth-century German history," writes Leslie Adelson in her article "Touching Tales of Germans, Turks, and Jews" (93).[3] Honigmann's and Özdamar's trilogies could potentially be seen as "competing narratives" of history from post-war to post-unification Germany, from a cold war Europe to a unified Europe. From their positions as an immigrant, emigrant, German-Jewish and Turkish-German – each protagonist involves herself in and comments on quintessentially German issues. Honigmann's and Özdamar's protagonists live through pre- and post-unification realities in Berlin and are active in the student movements of the late 1960s and 1970s; they comment on the German idea of *Heimat*, on the realities of exile and migration within Europe, and on relevance of German literary and artistic figures. To date, these competing narratives have been examined as part of separate fields – German-Jewish literature on the one hand and transnational literature on the other.

[3] Adelson borrows and reinterprets Erick Santner's term, which he uses to refer to the various significant narratives of November 9th, 1918, 1923, 1938, and 1989.

Since the 1990s, these two areas of scholarship have emerged as pivotal new fields within German Studies. It comes as no surprise that Barbara Honigmann's work has been studied primarily in the context of German-Jewish literature, while Emine Sevgi Özdamar's work has been situated within a discourse on what has been called migrants' literature, minority literature, and transnational literature. A great deal of valuable scholarship has been done in these areas. Since much of this scholarship informs my own analysis, it is worth examining here before I begin my literary analysis.

The study of contemporary German-Jewish literature and culture after 1945 has been closely tied to the writers' and narratives' relationship with the Shoah.[4] Based on the authors' biographies and dominant themes in their work, scholars have identified two generations of contemporary German-Jewish writers. The first generation bore witness to the Shoah – as adults or young adults they survived the concentration camps or went into exile or hiding. In the first decades after 1945, the majority of German Jews saw themselves having to make a choice between their German and Jewish identities. Few felt that they would be able to continue living in Germany as German Jews, a seemingly "impossible identity" (Bos 204). The dominant writers of the period wrote in German but lived outside Germany. Poets Paul Celan and Nelly Sachs, who proved that poetry can exist after Auschwitz, wrote from Paris and Sweden respectively. Jurek Becker wrote from within the GDR, portraying Ghetto life in his novel *Jakob der Lügner* (1969)

[4] In the introduction to their volume *Contemporary Jewish Writing in Germany*, Leslie Morris and Karen Remmler explain that the Greek word Holocaust – commonly used to describe the genocide of six million European Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II – refers actually to "a sacrifice consumed by fire." Following Morris' and Remmler's lead, I use the Hebrew term *Shoah* here. Shoah connotes a situation of "total destruction" and does not hold the problematic religious reference to sacrifice (Morris 30).

and writing a story of generational conflict surrounding *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in *Bronsteins Kinder* (1986). Grete Weil returned from Dutch exile after the war and wrote first-hand accounts of her exile experience. Ruth Klüger, who survived the concentration camps, emigrated to the United States, where she bore witness in her autobiography *weiter leben: eine jugend* (1992). While *weiter leben*, which "provides testimony while commenting on the impossibility of testimony," became a bestseller in Germany, Weil's seven publications did not sell as well (Bos 221). Both authors wrote explicitly for a German audience, yet this audience seemed more willing receive Klüger's testimony from abroad than acknowledge Weil's presence – and the continued presence of German Jews – in their midst.

In the mid-1980s and 1990s, German Jews became a larger public presence, and increasing numbers of publications appeared. Hendryk Broder's collection *Fremd im eigenen Land: Juden in der Bundesrepublik* (1979) and Lea Fleischmann's *Dies ist nicht mein Land: Eine Jüdin verlässt die Bundesrepublik* (1980) expressed to the German public that there were "*live* Jews in Germany who wanted to be known for who they were and what they were doing" (Zipes, "Fascination" 19). During the time when German Jews came together as a conscious minority in the 1980s, two journals dedicated to Jewish life and culture in Germany – *Babylon* and *Semit-Times* – made their debut. These journals contained discussions by German-Jewish intellectuals Hendryk Broder, Dan Diner, Marcel Reich-Ranicki, and others, whose voices made public the *living* presence of Jewish life in Germany (Morris 7). At the same time, political and cultural developments such as the Bitburg affair[5] (1985), the protest against the performance of

[5] On a visit to Germany, Ronald Reagen commemorated fallen German soldiers at Bitburg, saying that "the German soldiers…were victims of the Holocaust just as surely as the victims in the concentration camps"

Fassbinder's drama *Der Müll, die Stadt, und der Tod* (1985)[6], and the *Historikerstreit* contributed to an increasing dialogue on *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. After 1989, there was much debate on what it means to be German; increasingly, German Jews entered into this debate (Morris 6).

Scholars identify Barbara Honigmann, along with her contemporaries Katja Behrens, Maxim Biller, Esther Dischereit, and others as a second generation of German-Jewish writers who brought about a reemergence of German-Jewish literature after 1989. Leslie Morris and Karen Remmler argue that these four writers make a particularly important contribution because they do not define their Jewish protagonists solely in relationship to the Shoah, but seek to "break down the monolithic images of 'the Jew'" as created by the German reception of first-generation German-Jewish literature (Morris 2). Rather than writing from first-hand experience about the Shoah, "postmemory," that is, "memory [of the Shoah] that is mediated through existing representations – linguistic and visual" (Morris 1),[7] plays a large role in the work of these writers. Behrens, Honigmann, Biller and Dischereit "embrace a multitude of identities" and touch on the issues raised by inhabiting these multiple identities (Morris 2). To contextualize Barbara Honigmann's work within the field of German-Jewish Studies, it is worth taking a glance at the work of these three contemporaries.

Katja Behrens (b. 1942) is the author of novels, essays, translations, and short stories, including *Die dreizehnte Fee* (1994), *Die Vagantin* (1997), and *Die weiße Frau* (1994). Her short story "Authur Mayer oder Das Schweigen," a patchwork of fiction and

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(Hartmann xiv). This controversial comment sparked debate on proper remembrance of World War II and the Shoah.

[6] For a discussion of this controversy, see Lichtenstein.

[7] For a discussion of postmemory, see Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames*.

non-fiction, letters, interviews, details the "indeterminacy of place and identity in the post-Shoah landscape" (Morris 11). The narrative centers around a young girl who searches for the Jewish history of her town, only to be labeled herself as the "Jewish Other." Behren's use of only first initials to represent the names of people and places denies the reader any certainty about their fixity. Instead, both protagonist and reader "float endlessly on a sea of possibilities" (Morris 11).

Maxim Biller (b. 1960) is the author of numerous essays and short stories, including *Die Tempojahre* (1991), *Wenn ich einmal reich und tot bin* (1991), and *Land der Väter und Verräter* (1994). He writes with irreverent and biting satire about the present-day relationships between Germans and Jews. In his story "Harlem Holocaust," Biller raises questions on who can become an "authentic" spokesperson for the impact of the Shoah on the lives of Germans and Jews. This narrative follows a German-Jewish writer who writes in English, and his German translator, who struggles to enter a Jewish world while simultaneously resenting his own perceived victimization by this world. The "sacrilegious tone" of Biller's story with its many sexual references and scenes "counters…the expectation that stories by Jews about the Shoah should remain pious, respectful, and above all, devoid of references to sex" (Morris 5).

Esther Dischereit (b. 1952) also questions the notion of a "proper" discourse for representing the Shoah (Morris 5). Dischereit is the author of *Joëmis Tisch: eine jüdische Geschichte* (1988). The novel's numerous scenes are written with "halting speech and staccato rhythm" (Morris 4) which emphasizes the fragmented identities of her characters. Dischereit satirizes "self-absorbed Germans intent on establishing their victim status," interrupting these voices in her text with a "critical Jewish narrative voice"

(Morris 19). When a German father tells his young daughter that "Die Juden sind ja auch Menschen," for instance, the protagonist responds by satirizing her own identity as an "Auch-Mensch." Dischereit's texts do not dwell on her protagonist's position as "Other," but instead question the normalcy of the German culture in which she lives (Morris 20).

Stuart Taberner argues that the focus of many second-generation German-Jewish writers is the "negative German-Jewish symbiosis" (Taberner 169). Since Honigmann examines this issue in her texts, it is worth discussing briefly here. In response to the assumption that a positive German-Jewish symbiosis – a dialogue and sharing of ideas for mutual benefit – played a vital role in the flowering of German culture, Hannah Ahrendt first wrote in a 1946 letter to Karl Jaspers that the reality could be more accurately described as a "negative symbiosis" (Diner 185). Ahrendt identifies the Shoah as the defining factor of German-Jewish relationships. For generations to come, she predicts, Auschwitz will set the stage for a perpetrator-victim relationship characterized by guilt, shame, and anti-Semitism. She writes of the impossibility of dealing with the atrocities of Auschwitz: "Mit einer Schuld, die jenseits des Verbrechens steht, und einer Unschuld, die jenseits der Güte oder der Tugend liegt, kann man menschlich-politisch überhaupt nichts anfangen" (*Briefwechsel* 90). Dan Diner adopts and expands Ahrendt's term in his 1987 essay "Negative Symbiose." "Für beide, für Deutsche wie für Juden," he writes, "ist das Ergebnis der Massenvernichtung zum Ausgangspunkt ihres Selbstverständnisses geworden" (Diner 185). Diner suggests that the Shoah as memory, post-memory, and metaphor has become closely tied to the Western picture of Jewishness and of anti-Semitism.

From the postwar era to the present, however, other scholars have questioned and criticized the existence of any symbiosis between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans. In his 1976 essay "Against the Myth of the Jewish German Dialogue," Gerschom Scholem writes, "It takes two to create a dialogue, two who listen to each other." Scholem goes on to characterize one-sided Jewish attempts at communication with Germans as "a cry in the void" (Scholem 63). In a 2000 keynote address at a University of Minnesota conference, Katja Behrens called the German-Jewish relationship "a rift," and not a symbiosis. She describes her own relationship with her non-Jewish German friends as a crack which widens into a chasm. She argues that remembrance of the Shoah among non-Jewish Germans takes place on an official level, but not on a personal level. "Even a half-century afterwards, repression and denial are still predominant," she writes (Behrens, "Rift" 42). Karen Remmler identifies a methodological problem with the German-Jewish symbiosis when she asks if this symbiosis is an actual historical state, or a condition imagined in narrative. Remmler argues that the written page can serve as a mediator when face-to-face communication fails, seeing in narrative a possibility of stepping to the edge of the chasm between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans (Remmler, "Void" 3-4).

In addition to negative symbiosis, the concept of *Heimat*, which is central to Honigmann's texts and to an examination of Jewish writing in Germany, has been much discussed in German-Jewish literature of the second generation. In her essay "Abiding in a Haunted Land: The Issue of Heimat in Contemporary German-Jewish Writing," Anat Feinberg details this discussion. Rejecting the idea of *Heimat* as a single physical location, Henryk Broder, who himself commutes between Israel and Germany, embraces Heinrich Heine's "portable fatherland" and the idea that *Heimat* is a "spiritual state"

(Broder 84, 98). Richard Chaim Schneider agrees, writing "Why must I, as a Jew, define my homeland geographically?" (Schneider, *Zwischenwelten* 36). Other German-Jewish writers have rejected Germany as a potential site of Jewish *Heimat*: Robert Welsch writes that Germany "smells of corpses, gas chambers, and torture cells" (qtd. in Richarz 14), while Biller calls the country "a huge barracks" (Biller, "Wenn ich einmal reich und tot bin" 241) and Seligmann terms Germany "Naziland" (Seligmann, *Rubinsteins Versteigerung* 28). In practice, many German-Jewish writers have – like Honigmann – chosen to write about their German *Heimat* from afar: Hendryk Broder, Richard Chaim Schneider, and Katja Behrens commute between Israel and Germany; while Leah Fleischmann has settled in Jerusalem, writing that "[Deutschland] ist nicht mein Land" (Behrens, "Alles Normal" 7). Doron Rabinovici cites the Shoah as a defining and enduring dividing line between Jewish and non-Jewish Austrians; "like taut barbed wire," he writes, "history seemed to run between [Jews] and the rest of the city" (Rabinovici, *Papirnik* 145). Only the rare literary voice of the second generation – as with Seligmann's protagonist in *Rubinstein's Versteigerung* is able, after much anguish, to claim *Heimat* in Germany, to declare "Ich bin ein deutscher Jude" (Seligmann 70). It is this difficulty in negotiating between these identities that has been of primary interest to scholars and writers of German-Jewish literature.

I turn now to the debate on the literature of migration to Germany since the 1980s. This conversation has centered in large part around terminology, as scholars seek to categorize the literature of migration either within or outside of what is accepted as German

literature. Taking social and thematic criteria[8] as their starting point for a literary analysis, scholars created the genre "Gastarbeiterliteratur" to identify early works published by first-generation immigrants to Germany. In the 1960s and 1970s, and into the 1980s, writers who came to Germany as factory workers began to publish autobiographical accounts of the alienation they felt in Germany and the exploitation they experienced in the workplace. Gianni Bertagnoli's *Arrivederci, Deutschland* (1964), a combination of memoir and journalistic report, deals with the personal and universal difficulties of living and working in a foreign country. Aras Ören's narrative poem *Was will Niyazi in der Naunynstrasse* (1973), emphasizes the common plight of German and Turkish factory workers. In their *Soll ich hier alt werden?* (1982) and *Die Sehnsucht fährt Schwarz* (1988), Aysel Özakin and Rafik Schami continue the tradition of *Gastarbeiterliteratur* by illustrating how larger social problems, such as the marginalization of immigrants in German society, play out on a personal level. Coming together in 1981 to discuss their works, Franco Biondi and Rafik Schami suggested terming the works of fellow migrant writers "Literatur der Betroffenheit." After much debate, scholars and writers decided on connecting these works to the German socialist tradition of *Arbeiterliteratur*, terming this early literature of migration *Gastarbeiterliteratur* (Chiellino 389).

"Einsamkeit in der Fremde, Heimweh, Sehnsucht, Kälte, usw. All das kennen wir schon" (89), writes Alev Tekinay in a critique of the genre *Gastarbeiterliteratur*. With her short story *Es brennt ein Feuer in mir* (1990), she rejects the victimization she identifies as a characteristic of *Gastarbeiterliteratur*. Works published during the 1980s

[8] I am in agreement with scholars like Monika Shafi, who argues that literary and aesthetic criteria must come before social and thematic criteria (194).

and early 1990s by non-native writers in Germany are too numerous and diverse to discuss here.[9] The writers mentioned here, among others, were discussed by scholars as representative of the genre migrant literature because of the common themes in many of their works. Responding to the political debate over the so-called "Türkenproblem," satirist Şinasi Dikmen published *Wir werden das Knoblauchkind schon schaukeln* in 1983.[10] Herta Müller (*Reisende auf einem Bein*, 1989) and Zehra Çirak (*Fremde Flügel auf eigener Schulter*, 1994) wrote about the difficulties in negotiating an identity between two cultures. Meanwhile, Yüksel Pazarkaya wrote a hymn to the German language: "deutsche sprache / die ich vorbehaltlos liebe / die meine zweite heimat ist" in his collection *Der Babylonbus* (1989). Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Mutterzunge* (1990) also engages with the German language, focusing on the hybridity of language and culture. No longer closely connected to the genre *Arbeiterliteratur*, these first and second generation migrant writers root their protagonists in two cultures – the German culture and the culture of origin. Those works that came to the attention of publishers and scholars focused on identity, politics, negotiation between two cultures, identity issues, and language.

The debate on terminology among both scholars and writers became very lively during the 1980s and early 1990s. Harald Weinrich introduced the term "Deutsche Literatur von Aussen" (1983); Heimke Schierloh suggested that "Migrantenliteratur" would better emphasize the position of the authors and protagonists (1984). Suleman Taufiq and Zafer Şenocak offered "Literatur von Innen" (1985) and "Brückenliteratur"

[9] Chiellino's *Interkulturelle Literatur in Deutschland* provides an overview of the literature of migration to Germany before 2000.
[10] In his title, Dikmen humorously combines the expression "Wir werden das Kind schon schaukeln" with the stereotype of the garlic-eating Turk.

(1986) respectively, referring to the notion that this literature coming from inside Germany was serving to bridge two or more cultures. In 1992, Sargut Şölçün wrote about a "Literatur der multikulturellen Gesellschaft," and in 1995, Jose F. A. Oliver situated the literature of migration on the margins by calling it "Rand-Literatur in Deutschland" (Chiellino 389-390).

Though this debate was fruitful, the mistake, perhaps, of authors and critics alike has been the urge to homogenize and categorize. At best, they have tried to highlight commonalities based on the immigrant background of the authors; at worst, they have tried to create a homogenous literary genre whose function is to give an "authentic voice" to immigrant communities. Neither of these methods has been entirely successful in recognizing the artfulness and uniqueness of individual works and authors. In an effort to gain more recognition and legitimacy for the literature of migration, some scholars have turned to Deleuze and Guattari's idea of a "minor literature." Deleuze and Guattari define minor literature as "the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation" (18). This term, however, contains little opportunity for questioning the dichotomy between center and margins and the positioning of "minor literature" on the margins of the canon. Several scholars have recently argued against terms like minor literature, minority literature and migrant literature. Monika Shafi argues that the term minority literature evokes a center-margin dichotomy that is no longer applicable to our world. She writes that globalization and post-colonialism have disturbed the old "order" of center and margin (195). Werner Nell, in turn, argues that the term "migrant literature" is by nature incorrect, since citizenship and migration are not literary criteria (39). What is needed is a

shift away from social and thematic criteria as homogenizing lenses, and toward aesthetics and cultural criteria as analytical tools.

Azade Seyhan makes a useful contribution to the debate on terminology with her 2001 book *Writing Outside the Nation.* Comparing autobiographical narratives by Mexican-American and Turkish-German writers, Seyhan applies the ideas of philosophers, historians, literary critics, and the writers themselves to create an interdisciplinary analysis of what she calls "transnational narrative." She argues that transnational narratives are useful especially in the American college classroom, in "filling the gaps of our understanding of a culturally very complex world" (155). Seyhan's term "transnational" has proved useful for many scholars in pushing towards ideas of hybridity and cultural exchange. However, if its purpose remains to "fill the gaps," Seyhan's reading still keeps the literature of migration on the margin. In arguing for its sociological usefulness, she indicates that a given narrative voice may still be taken as an "authentic voice," as not an individual, but as one who speaks for the space of intersection between two nations.

From the mid-1990s until the present day, a wide variety of second and third generation writers – who by nature of German cultural and political custom were still termed migrants – came to the forefront of "transnational literature." Selim Özdogan's first work (*Es ist einsam im Sattel, seit das Pferd tod ist,*1995) was devoid of Turkish characters or references to multiculturalism; his 2005 *Die Tochter des Schmieds*, in contrast, tells the story of characters in an Anatolian village, and was billed by *Titel Magazin* as "Anatolien für Anfänger" (1). Feridun Zaimoglu, known as the 'enfant

terrible'[11] of the German literary scene, uses an abrasive, hip-hop inspired "DJ-style" of writing to present his fictionalized oral histories of Turkish-German men on the margins of society in his early compilation *Kanak Sprak* (1995). The title of Zaimoglu's book inspired one group of artists and activists, made up of both native and non-native Germans, to call themselves "Kanak Attak." Part of their philosophy reads: "we are not interested in questions of passport or heritage, in fact we challenge such questions in the first place" (www.kanak-attak.de). Other writers such as Yoko Tawada and Terezia Mora, though not part of this group, voice their resistance at being celebrated specifically as foreign-born writers, writing of "Ausgrenzung durch Anerkennung" (Tawada, personal interview; Mora, "Ausgrenzung" 1). While writers and activists challenge such questions intellectually, they also deal with these questions in a playful or satiric way. In her collection *Überseezungen* (2002), Yoko Tawada writes about her experience of the shifting, changing, and endlessly fascinating German language as it is used in Germany, in the United States and in South Africa. Wladimir Kaminer satirizes the "adventure" of immigrating to Berlin in his collection *Russendisko* (2000). This DJ-turned-writer skyrocketed to fame with numerous newspaper columns, books, speaking engagements, and his popular traveling dance party "Russian Disco."

In his essay "Literature – Nationalism's Other?" Simon During proposes that literature operates in different social spaces than does nationalism (138). Canonized texts, he writes, are precisely those that do not merely legitimize nationhood, but instead form a new cultural space he calls the "civil imaginary" (142). With During's work in mind, I choose the term "trans*cultural* literature" as an alternative to transnational literature. The term transcultural seems more accurate in pointing to the individual and

[11] Among others, Leslie Adelson uses this phrase to describe Zaimoglu. See "Touching Tales" 240.

nuanced nature of the works I examine. I argue that this does not spring primarily from the political construction of the nation, but instead stems from the individual's interactions with the linguistic, physical, and social spaces that join to create culture. A few thoughts on the definition of culture are useful in exploring the idea of transculturalism. Cultural anthropologist Regina Römhild writes in *Die Zeit*: "Kulturen lassen sich weniger denn je in Grenzen und Vorgaben pressen. Sie wandern und verändern sich mit den Menschen" (11). Römhild stresses the malleability of culture, and its resistance to what is expected; importantly, she links culture to moving and changing people. Former German minister of culture Michael Naumann writes:

> 'Culture' is never the center of power of so-called national normality. It is, on the contrary, the name for any form of doubt, for critical overcoming of any given normality, the name for spiritual innovation, for satirical laughter, for imagination, and for intellectual challenges... (165)

Naumann indicates that culture and nationality are not inextricably linked, that culture exists in the form of innovation, imagination, and challenge. In his definition, I see the possibility of an individual and personal interpretation of literature that goes beyond the confines of one or even multiple nations.

Monika Shafi writes that "In order to evaluate migrant literature as a constitutive part of contemporary German literature, it is therefore necessary to take aesthetic, not social criteria as a starting point" (194). I will use "transcultural literature" as a working term while striving for a thematic and aesthetic reading of the texts I examine. This approach may seem inherently flawed. The term transcultural still groups the literature of migration together, using the origin of the writers as starting point. At the same time, however, the definitions of culture above reinterpret cultures as flexible and shifting

entities, as things that can be created, invented, and interpreted differently by every individual.

As I will discuss in the central chapters in further detail, existing scholarship on Honigmann and Özdamar has focused heavily on personal and national identity, and on the negotiation between German and Jewish or German and Turkish. It is the border, bridge, or doorway represented by this hyphen that has been of primary interest to literary scholars. With this dissertation, I explore the permeability of this border, not only between German and Jewish, Turkish and German, but between two fields of scholarship. In my analysis of the novels, I foreground the protagonists' individual connections with aspects of a chosen culture. It is this individual approach that allows them to connect with existing cultures and reinvent them to create their own sense of place in the constantly changing world.

Home, Space, and Place

Using scholarship from the study of German-Jewish and transnational literatures as a touchstone, I push beyond these areas and into the fields of cultural studies and human geography to find spaces that unify and connect the texts I examine. In this section, I discuss my main area of inquiry – "home" – as a sense of belonging, and as a nuanced, malleable, and dynamic space. Engaging with the work of various scholars, I begin to describe this space of home and ask how it is created by the individual.

In their book *New Approaches to Migration*, Nadje Al-Ali and Khalid Koser write, "concepts of home are not static but dynamic processes, involving acts of

imagining, creating, unmaking, changing, losing and moving 'homes'" (6). Consider, for a moment, the space in which you live. It is probably a physical structure located at a certain street address. Lived in, it becomes a home filled with memories, sensations, images, smells and sounds associated with social communications and individual perceptions. Through interaction with its inhabitants, the lifeless structure of bricks and mortar becomes the object of emotions too complex, personal and nuanced to ever be fully conveyed except by those who live in it. Home is borne out of interaction, and the process of creating it is dynamic and different for each individual. In this dissertation's central chapters, I detail each protagonist's active creation of a sense of home.

In the context of migration, home is constantly changed, imagined and created. It is often not limited to a single physical structure, but is instead defined by a feeling, a "sense of place." In order to understand the complex and nuanced process of creating home, I turn first to this notion of "place." According to Christian Norberg-Schulz, place is the interaction between something local and tangible – a street, a house, a public square – and something intangible – human feelings. The creation of place comes from inside the individual, as human emotions both respond to and shape the physical world. John Agnew and Yi-Fu Tuan discuss place as an emotional attachment to a physical and social space, which results in a feeling of belonging and quality of life (Agnew, 163). Thus, a space described – a house, for example – is transformed into place – a home – as it acquires definition and meaning for the individual and becomes endowed with personal value. The process of place-making requires agency, creativity, and an intense engagement in the time and locality.

"Place" and "home" are not merely imagined concepts, but real experiences located in the physical world. Philosophers Gaston Bachelard and Henri LeFebvre have laid the groundwork for geographers' recent examinations of space and place. It is useful to pause a moment here to highlight their work. In his 1964 study *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard uses literature and psychology as the source material for his study of the value of spaces in which human beings live, which he defines as our "vital space" (4). He studies the ways in which human beings create our own little "corner of the world" (4). He writes that the spaces of our intimate lives – houses, rooms, drawers, corners, chests, and wardrobes – become "shells" that hold memories and emotions. "A house," he writes, "constitutes a body of images that give mankind proofs or illusions of stability" (17). Bachelard names this vital space "home," arguing that "all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home…we shall see the imagination build 'walls' of impalpable shadows, comfort itself with the illusion of protection" (5). For Bachelard, the notion of home involves an imagined sense of security, the construction of a room around oneself. This construction of home is a process that requires creative action from the individual, and interaction between the individual and his or her physical space. In the context of migration as seen through the lens of "double location," this room is made up of a flexible and often intangible sense of place and sense of security that is sometimes real and sometimes imagined. Bachelard's 'room,' for the migrant, is likely to be built out of materials from a multiplicity of locations.

The process of home-building relies on the interaction between physical space and the human environment. Philosopher Henri Lefebvre's exploration of the concept of "space" is key to understanding the creation of home. Any space, he writes, is not merely

a physical, mapable thing, but is a product of social activity. In an active process Lefebvre calls "spatialization," space is simultaneously created by social action and in turn reacts back on social action (Lefebvre 26). A space of home, then, is both a physical and social space that is continuously created and recreated by social action.

For the past decades, human geographers have expanded upon the work of Lefebvre to describe this concept of space. Edward Soja's engagement with Lefebvre's work and his development of the concept of "Thirdspace" is especially useful as I discuss the creation of home and sense of place. In his book *Thirdspace*, Soja creates a framework for understanding space that he terms "trialectics of spatiality." Soja argues that space can be understood in three ways. First, it is *perceived*, or directly experienced, mapable and physical. It can be read, explained, and described. Think back, for instance, on the house: it might be made or bricks and mortar, in a certain architectural style, located at a certain street address. This existing space, then, can be *conceived*, or imagined and created, symbolic and metaphorical. Conceived space is concerned with images, representations, and thought processes. The house, through interaction with its inhabitants, becomes a home filled with memories, sensations, images, smells and sounds associated with social communications.

Third and most importantly, space is *lived*. Inspired by Lefebvre, Soja introduces the concept of "Thirdspace" as a new way of looking at our world, one that pushes beyond a simple dichotomy of perceived and conceived space. Thirdspace, or lived space (Lefebvre's "espace vécu"), he writes, is complex and contradictory. It is simultaneously "oppressive and liberating, passionate and routine, knowable and unknowable, real-and-imagined, at the edge and at the center" (Soja, from *Human*

Geography 276). For Honigmann's and Özdamar's protagonists, interaction with space is conscious and unconscious, real and imagined. They locate themselves simultaneously at the center and at the margins, questioning this dichotomy as they create a space of home for themselves. Thirdspace points to the fullness of lived experience: "It can be mapped but never captured in conventional cartographies; it can be creatively imagined but obtains meaning only when practiced and fully *lived*" (Soja 276). Here, we return to the concept of the house that becomes a home only through individual imagination, creativity, memory, and social interactions. Thirdspace is nuanced, personal, and individual; Soja writes that this lived space has yet to be fully defined.

It is precisely the undefinability of lived space – this malleability and individual nuance – that links Soja's discussion of space to my discussion of home and sense of place in Özdamar's and Honigmann's texts. Since home is based on an individual's interaction with space, the process of home-building *is* lived space – it is created and imagined by the individual. In the literary analyses that form the central chapters of this dissertation, I identify the spaces in which the protagonists create a sense of home, examining how each protagonist perceives, conceives, and lives chosen spaces. Both Özdamar's and Honigmann's protagonists perceive a multiplicity of spaces – I term this practice *collecting* spaces. Both protagonists conceive the spaces by *forming connections* between spaces, and between spaces and their own shifting identities. Finally, both protagonists live spaces by reinventing their function, by creatively imagining and *reinventing* them into spaces of home.

If home is a process of collecting, connecting with, and reinventing space, where are spaces of home located? Hamid Nacify writes that "home can be anyplace, can be

temporary and moveable, can be built, rebuilt, carried in memory and imagined" (Nacify 3). For Honigmann's and Özdamar's protagonists, home is both an imagined and a real space; it changes based on the experiences and creative engagement with the individual. Home is not always created in physical space. It can be formed out of social, sexual, or gendered space, and created from the interaction between people. It can be located in a literary, artistic, or theatrical space and borne out of engagement with texts, image, and performance. It can be political or spiritual space, linked to connection with religious practice and historical events. For the purpose of my literary analysis, I apply Soja's theory to an expanding notion of space as physical and social, sexual and gendered, spiritual and political.

Geographer Doreen Massey presents a new understanding of place which speaks to the connections made in order to create a sense of home in these various spaces: "Can't we rethink our sense of place? Is it not possible for a sense of place to be progressive; not self-enclosing and defensive, but outward-looking?" (Massey 147). Massey embraces the notion of a complex and nuanced sense of place that is created by linking a multiplicity of locations. "Instead, then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around," she writes, "they can be imagined as *articulated moments* in networks of social relations and understandings […] this in turn allows a sense of place which is *extroverted*, which includes a *consciousness of its links with the wider world*, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local" (Massey 155, my emphasis).

Massey's notion of home is constructed out of movement, communication, and social relationships. In this dissertation, I analyze these moments of home that are created in Özdamar's and Honigmann's novels, and identify and explore the links across

real and imagined borders that allow for a creation of a sense of home. In the context of migration, home has the potential to become a "material anchor for a sense of agency and a shifting and fluid identity" (Young 159). In my literary analysis, I examine this anchor that Özdamar's and Honigmann's protagonists create in a multiplicity of locations, and ask how identity shifts as a result. I examine the malleability of the concept of home, analyzing the shifts that take place in the interaction between the individual protagonist and the spaces she perceives, conceives, and lives.

Migration, Exile, and Nomadism

I discuss this central area of inquiry in my literary analysis – the creation of home – against the background of the lived experiences of migration. I use the term migration loosely to refer to the act of movement that takes place in both Özdamar's and Honigmann's texts. What is striking about Özdamar's and Honigmann's texts is that the protagonists reinvent a sense of home that is intimately linked and indeed *depends* on motion. When I write specifically of the protagonists' experiences of migration, I refer to this mobility as "exile" in Honigmann's case and "nomadism" in Özdamar's case. Exile is Honigmann's own term that she uses to refer to her protagonist's and her own experience of leaving Germany for France. I choose the term nomadism for Özdamar's protagonist to reflect the constant movement of her protagonist between various locations in Turkey and Germany. In what follows, I provide brief contextual background on traditional notions of the terms exile and nomadism as they are linked to Jewish and Turkish culture respectively. I then relate these ideas briefly to Edward Said's recent scholarship on exile. In the literary analysis that then constitutes the body of this

dissertation, I argue that the experiences of exile and nomadism are a necessary foundation on which the protagonists build their sense of home.

Exile is as central to Honigmann's three texts as it has been to Jewish reality in Europe over centuries. Honigmann's protagonist terms her relocation to Paris and then to Strasbourg as both a voluntary and necessary exile (*Damals, dann und danach* 15). Jewish history terms these practices *Galut* (voluntary exile) and *Diaspora* (forced exile). Honigmann's protagonist chooses to remove herself from Germany, all but forced to do so because of the impossibility of living a Jewish life there. The word Diaspora has been used, loosely, to describe members of a community whose identity is defined by their relationship to both a location of residence, and to a real or imagined home (Clifford 247). Home – whether it be a physical space in the Diaspora, an imagined space in text of the Torah, or a Passover hope for "next year in Jerusalem" – is central to an understanding of exile. For members of Diaspora communities, exile "explicitly invokes a home" (Peters 19), with its ability to produce fantasies, longings, and inspired creation and recreation of sense of home (Peters 19).

Historically, discussions of Jews living in Galut or Diaspora have often referred to the "wandering Jew;" it is useful to briefly discuss this concept here. Christian legend sees this idea of eternal wandering, of never finding a home, as the fate of Diapora Jews. The Legend of Ahasver, or the "ewiger Jude," appeared in early European folk tales and in the Volksbuch *Faust*. The wandering Jew embodied the idea of an endless journey; he represented the opposite of a domestic existence, and later a danger to the fragile German concept of *Heimat*. Without a home or family, the legendary wandering Jew lived in a no-man's land outside of society, never finding a home (Shahar 28-29). With her

construction of exile that is closely linked to a concept of home, Barbara Honigmann's protagonist does precicely the opposite: her creation of home depends on her chosen experience of exile. With her texts, Honigmann writes implicitly against the idea of the wandering Jew.

"The nomad is explicitly a hero of postmodernist thinking," argue Deleuze and Guattari (qtd. in Peters 33). Özdamar, with her texts, creates a literary nomadism that evokes both the historic nomadism of Turkish culture and the reality of migration to Europe. Nomadism can be a sign of privileged relationship to concepts of home: "In nomadism, home is always there, without any hope or dream of homeland" (Peters 20-21). Home, for the true nomad, can be located anywhere, and created out of the location that works best for the moment. As Rosi Braidotti argues, nomadism can imply not only the literal act of traveling, but also a "subversion of set conventions" (Braidotti qtd. in Peters 33). Cutting ties to the dominant sedentary society allows for the freedom to ignore or step outside of convention. Nomadism "expresses the desire for an identity made of transitions, successive shifts, and coordinated changes, without and against an essential unity" (Braidotti 22). For Özdamar's protagonist, with nomadism comes the opportunity to reinvent herself, her lived spaces, and her sense of home.

The protagonists in Honigmann's and Özdamar's novels choose exile and nomadism in order to develop personally, professionally, and spiritually. For these two rather educated and privileged protagonists, exile and nomadism are necessary for this development, but not forced by economic or political circumstance. In his book *Representations of the Intellectual*, Edward Said argues that this chosen mobility itself carries with it the potential for a broader view of one's self and one's surroundings. As a

"beginner in [her] circumstances" (59) – as one who is not yet accustomed to her surroundings – the exile or nomad can indulge in "unending self-discovery" (62) as well as "the pleasure of being surprised" (63).[12] Locating themselves outside of their culture of origin gives both protagonists the freedom to develop various chosen identities and create their own sense of place and home built on allegiances to more than one physical, social, literary, linguistic, and artistic space.

Conclusion

With the literary analysis that follows, I seek to destabilize the meaning of the terms home, exile, and nomadism and broaden the context for an analysis of Honigmann's and Özdamar's texts. In the four central chapters, I examine the creation of a sense of home in the context of exile and nomadism. I analyze the shifting, malleable, and nuanced spaces of home that the protagonists create. In chapters two and three, I focus on Honigmann's texts, exploring the physical, social, spiritual, linguistic, literary, and artistic spaces of home that the protagonist collects and reinvents. In chapters four and five, I focus on Özdamar's texts, discussing similar spaces – the physical, social, gendered, linguistic, artistic, and theatrical spaces of home that the protagonist perceives, conceives, and lives. In the concluding chapter, I examine the meaning of my analysis, linking the six texts together through direct comparisons. Finally, I speculate on the further implications of my analysis of home in the context of exile and nomadism by linking my arguments to recent scholarship on "new cosmopolitanisms."

[12] Joan Cocks quotes these passages from Said in her book *Passion and Paradox*. I owe much of my understanding of Said's work to Cocks' analysis.

Chapter 2: Literary and Artistic Spaces of Home in Honigmann's Trilogy

Ich schreibe nicht nur auf deutsch, sondern die Literatur, die mich geformt und gebildet hat, ist die deutsche Literatur und ich beziehe mich auf sie, in allem was ich schreibe."

– Barbara Honigmann[13]

Introduction

In her semi-autobiographical narratives *Roman von einem Kinde* (1986), *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* (1991), and *Damals, dann und danach* (1999), Barbara Honigmann often references German literary space. She engages critically with this and other artistic spaces and draws personal connections between her protagonist's life and existing literature and art. The texts in her trilogy trace a female protagonist's literary, artistic, spiritual, and very real journey between Berlin, Weimar, Paris and Strasbourg. Through engagement with people, places, religion, and literary and artistic endeavors, the protagonist creates layers of identity, gathers multiple allegiances, and creates her own highly personal patchwork of belonging.

After a bio-bibliographical discussion of Honigmann, I examine literary and visual art – autobiography and self portrait – as processes of creating a sense of home. I begin with a look at the autobiographical writing process, exploring Honigmann's creative process of autobiography, examining style and tone, and discussing the protagonist's comments on herself as a writer. I then analyze the protagonist's use of references to German-Jewish autobiographical traditions, Jewish sacred texts, and canonical German literary traditions. I conclude with an examination of Barbara

[13] Honigmann, Barbara. *Damals, dann und danach*. München: Hanser, 1999. 18.

Honigmann's work as a painter. I focus on three paintings, analyzing the interplay between painting and text as well as the critical references Honigmann makes to German Romanticism. With this analysis, I examine the sense of place Honigmann's protagonist creates in literary and visual space. To contextualize my analysis, I first provide background on Barbara Honigmann's work and a summary of recent Honigmann scholarship.

Barbara Honigmann's Trilogy in Context

Barbara Honigmann was born in 1949 in East Berlin and raised "in einem völlig unreligiösen Haus" (Thomalla, 1205). After their return from British exile in 1947, her secular Jewish parents chose to settle in the GDR in order to help build the new socialist state. Studying theater at the Humbolt University, Honigmann worked as an assistant at the *Volksbühne* and at the *Deutsches Theater* in Berlin. When, in 1975, she realized that the theater was "nicht meine Welt" (Grefe 37), she began to work as a freelance painter and writer. Honigmann has since published a number of dramas, essays, and novels, and is the recipient of numerous awards for her work, including the Aspekte-Literaturpreis in 1986, the Kleist-Prize in 2000, the Jeanette-Schocken Prize in 2004, and the Koret Jewish Book Award and Solothurner Literaturpreis in 2004 (Lermen 107-114).

The contents of many of Honigmann's texts parallel, in part, the author's own increasing engagement with her inherited Judaism and development of a hybrid Jewish identity. Like the protagonist in *Roman von einem Kinde*, Honigmann grew up in East Berlin and began to reconnect with her inherited Judaism after the birth of her first child in 1976. As in the text "Gräber in London," she married – in one of the first Jewish

ceremonies in postwar East Berlin – in 1981 (Lermen 109), and later settled in Strasbourg with her husband and two sons. Because of the autobiographical detail not only in her essays, but also in her fictional work, the trend in Honigmann scholarship has been to equate the author with her narrative voice. Many scholars, including Anat Feinberg, Christina Guenther, Petra Günther, Karen Remmler and Galili Shahar, though they mention that the texts are only semi-autobiographical, freely replace the terms "narrator" or "protagonist" with Honigmann's own name. Birgit Lermen goes so far as to use Honigmann's texts to provide the reader with biographical details of the author's life (Lermen 107-114). Guy Stern, in contrast, discusses autobiography as a selective and creative process, calling Honigmann's work "fictionalized autobiography" (Stern 329).

Though the author herself confirms that many of her publications are in large part autobiographical, she also problematizes and reflects on her own use of autobiographical material, as in an interview with Ariane Thomalla:

> Aber irgendwie möchte ich das nicht so autobiographisch verstanden wissen, was nicht heißt, daß ich's verstecken will. Für mein eigenes Schreiben möchte ich auch die Freiheit haben, das zu vermischen. Das ist ja das, was mich am Schreiben interessiert, daß ich mich von meiner eigenen Biographie auch lösen kann. Und daß es egal ist, ob es stimmt oder nicht stimmt. (Thomalla, 1206)

Honigmann reminds the reader that writing is both a selective and creative process, one that allows the freedom to change, reinvent, and distance oneself from one's own experiences. In an interview with Karin Grundler-Whitacre, Honigmann refutes the interviewer's assumption that she shares many intimate details of her life with the reader: "I am not very frank with my life. You only think I am. I volunteer some 'outer' details in my writings, but I think that is part of the narrative manner and style" (Grundler-

Whitacre 220).[14] *Die Zeit* paraphrases Honigmann's creative use of autobiographical material as follows: "Working with the moveable scenery of her biography – not in order to descend into self-analysis, but to ascend into flights of imagination" (Schneider 63). Schneider's use of the term 'scenery' indicates that autobiography is a performance whose details are controlled by the author.

Though the three texts I examine are structurally diverse, many "red threads" run through them, making them easily identifiable as a trilogy. *Roman von einem Kinde* (1986), subtitled "sechs Erzählungen," is made up of short, interrelated first-person prose pieces. The central text, *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* (1991), is a novella with a first-person protagonist. The texts in *Damals, dann und danach* (1999) are essayistic, each tackling a theme in the protagonist's life. Though the plots do not represent a seamless progression of events, the number of overlapping details in all three works is so great that the reader is inclined to interpret the narrative voices loosely as one and the same person. I assume, as Guy Stern does (Stern 331), that this is the case. In order to honor Honigmann's prose as literary creation, I choose the term "protagonist" (in the singular) to refer to the first person narrative voices in Honigmann's first two texts. Because of the strongly essayistic nature of the prose in *Damals, dann und danach*, I relate this first person narrative voice closely to Honigmann's own literary persona.

Christina Guenther identifies the three semi-autobiographical texts that I focus on in this dissertation as a "Trilogy of Diaspora." She convincingly argues that these publications "map coordinates" in a process of "claiming, and indeed reinventing, a particular Jewish German identity" (Guenther 215). From the first tentative explorations of German-Jewish identity in the narrative "Roman von einem Kinde," the protagonist

[14] Though this interview took place in German, it is only published in English translation.

goes through a period of exile, searching, and attempted new beginnings in *Eine Liebe aus Nichts*. The narratives in *Damals, dann und danach*, then, move toward the development of an active and dynamic religious identity creation. In my discussion of Honigmann's work, I adopt and expand upon Guenther's idea of a trilogy, examining the protagonist's engagement through all three texts with literary, artistic, physical, social, and spiritual spaces.

The following brief introduction to the works on which I will focus, followed by short mentions of Honigmann's remaining publications, serves as background for my analysis. Honigmann's first prose publication is the collection entitled *Roman von einem Kinde* (1986). Written as a *Briefroman*, the title piece in this collection traces the stages that led up to the protagonist's initial search – motivated by the birth of her son – for a sense of identity, origin, and belonging (Guenther 111). A number of scenes melt into one another: an idyllic winter scene in Russia, where the protagonist is forced to read the words of a Christian saint to a group of illiterate women; the birth of the protagonist's son, and the protagonist's own subsequent process of spiritual rebirth; interactions with friends that demonstrate both closeness and insurmountable barriers; a Passover service and Seder in a Berlin synagogue and the protagonist's first attempt to rediscover her connection to Judaism; and a difficult relationship with an unnamed man. Following the story "Roman von einem Kinde," both central texts in the collection describe journeys. In "Eine Postkarte für Herrn Altenkirch," the protagonist remembers the lonely old man from whom she rented a room and how she promised to write him postcards from her travels, but never did. "Wanderung" describes the protagonist's aimless trek through the Czechoslovakia with friends as a romantic journey. The last three texts in this collection

portray three Jewish worlds: the first, "Doppeltes Grab," describes the protagonist's connection to Gerschom Scholem as he visits his family gravesite in Berlin. "Marina Roža" tells of her husband's observations of an orthodox synagogue in the Soviet Union. Finally, "Bonjour, Madame Benhamou" traces the protagonist's engagement with her own Jewish community in Strasbourg. Taken together, these narratives are a collection of engagement with the people, places, and ideas she encounters on her journeys.

The central text in the trilogy and Honigmann's first novel, *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* (1991), charts the protagonist's process of migration and searching for a sense of home (Guenther 222). This narrative traces her journey from East Berlin to Frankfurt and then to her chosen exile in Paris, and back again to Weimar for her father's funeral. She explores Paris, searching both for a new world and for traces of her parents' journey to that city years ago; she describes her father's last residence in a crumbling Weimar museum; she wanders the streets of Berlin, feeling lost in her native city. The novel also traces an emotional journey, as the protagonist remembers her mother, her father, and painful love relationships. In a 1991 book review in *Die Zeit*, Manuela Reichart describes her journey as "Wegfahren ohne Ankommen und Zurückkommen ohne Wiederkommen" (Reichart 1). *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* is a novel of searching for a sense of place, of experiencing and collecting moments of belonging and creating an imagined *Heimat*. The protagonist remains a searcher and a wanderer in a state of physical, mental and emotional limbo (Guenther 222).

The title of Honigmann's collection *Damals, dann und danach* (1999) indicates a bridging of time, a uniting of past, present, and future, and a merging of multiple layers of identity. The nine essays in the collection include literary self-portraits of the author

as a mother, as a Jew, as a writer, and as a painter; in this collection, Honigmann's literary voice narrates and critically examines memories of her parents, her family history, and her relationships with her friends. From the first to the last narrative, this collection explores the protagonist's journey from a Shoah-based Jewish identity that is forced upon her in Germany ("Ich bin nicht Anne!"), through the process of reclaiming her inherited Judaism ("Selbstporträt als Jüdin"), to the complex and highly personal engagement with Judaism she develops in her chosen home of Strasbourg ("Hinter der Grande Schul" and "Meine Sephardischen Freundinnen"). On her journey toward a living and dynamic version of Judaism, this protagonist also explores her various identities as a mother ("Selbstporträt als Mutter") and as a writer in a long lineage of German-Jewish writers ("Von meinem Urgroßvater, meinem Großvater, meinem Vater und mir"). She explores her relationship to her ancestry in "Gräber in London" and "Der Untergang von Wien" and fills in the silences of history with her own voice. The collection ends with a solitary journey of self-representation as the protagonist describes the painting of a self portrait in "Ein seltener Tag." This text gathers together multiple identities, allegiances, and connections. From the first narrative to the last, *Damals, dann und danach* traces a journey from a tentative and negative imposed identity to an actively created sense of place.

In addition to this semi-autobiographical trilogy, Honigmann has published a number of award-winning novels, essays, and dramas. She began the transition from the stage to the writing desk by composing several dramatic works in the GDR. The children's play *Das singende, springende Löweneckerchen*, based on Jakob and Wilhelm

Grimm's tale by the same title, was written in 1981.[15] *Der Schneider von Ulm*[16], which tells the story of a tailor who thinks he can fly, and a retelling of *Don Juan* also appeared in 1981. Reality and fairy tale intertwine in early prose pieces like *Wir haben uns gesehen* (1985), in which the protagonist recounts a trip to a literary workshop in northern Germany. In *Die Schöpfung* (1986) Honigmann portrays the creator of all life as a Jewish woman. *Der Schneider von Ulm* and "Roman eines Kindes" were produced as radio plays in 1982 and 1984 respectively. Upon leaving the GDR, Honigmann began to write increasingly about Jewish spirituality and German-Jewish lives. Her radio play "Letztes Jahr in Jerusalem" (1995) explores the topics of emigration and loss of one's own language through the example of Else Lasker-Schüler's exile in Jerusalem.

A second novel and a collection of short essays appeared in the late 1990s. *Soharas Reise* (1996) was inspired by a newspaper article about a father who engages in corrupt moneymaking schemes and kidnaps his own children. This novel tells the story of Sohara, an Algerian Jew whose husband, discovered to be a con-artist, disappears with their six children. Left suddenly alone, Sohara is forced to reach out to the Jewish community in which she lives; she forms bonds with her neighbor, takes off her headscarf and goes out by herself for the first time. This narrative is both a physical journey towards reclaiming her children, and an emotional journey of self-discovery. Honigmann's collection *Am Sonntag spielt der Rabbi Fußball* (1998) features thirty-seven very short essays that were originally published in a regional edition of the *Baseler Zeitung* from 1991 to 1996. Many of these are sketches of Honigmann's family life, episodes from the lives of her husband and children, essays about local concerns in

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[15] This drama was performed in Zwickau (1981), Zittau (1982), Leipzig (1984), Münster (1984), and Aachen (1987).

[16] *Der Schneider von Ulm* premiered in 1984 at the *Theater am Turm*, Frankfurt.

Strasbourg, descriptions of neighbors and friends, portraits of vacations to Normandy and professional travel to the United States. Among the light, entertaining and often humorous commentary on everyday life are bits of sharp and subtle commentary. In the essay "Verwechselung," for instance, Honigmann points to the varied set of expectations her readers bring to her. "[J]edesmal werde ich als eine Andere eingeladen," she writes, "[mal] bin ich Frau unter Frauen […], Bei anderer Gelegenheit bin ich als Ostlerin gefragt. [...] Und dann trete ich ab und zu als Jüdin auf" (48).   She engages with and roots her narrative voice in this very patchwork of identities in her next collection of essays, *Damals, dann und danach*.

Honigmann's novel *Alles, Alles Liebe!* (1999) is written in letters between members of a bohemian circle of artistic friends in the GDR. The protagonist, Anna, voices her frustration at the limits on artistic and religious freedom in the GDR; she is also, however, a member of an international network of friends and artists, including those in Israel and the Soviet Union. Her most recent novel, *Ein Kapitel aus meinem Leben* (2004), describes the protagonist's mother's double life as a Jew and as a communist, living in Vienna, London, Paris and Berlin, surviving two world wars and three husbands. The protagonist discusses her own relationship to her mother, writing, "Sie hat mich geboren, und nun setze ich sie wieder als Legende in die Welt. Kurz hinter der Wahrheit und dicht neben der Lüge, so wie es ihr Credo war" (Honigmann qtd. in Kraft 2).

With her semi-autobiographical and fictional work, Honigmann tackles issues such as spirituality, identity, exile, and home in a way that creates a link between reader

and text. The trilogy that I examine in this dissertation approaches biography creatively to "ascend into flights of imagination" (Schneider 63) about identity and sense of home.

Honigmann Scholarship

Barbara Honigmann's work has been the subject of numerous recent scholarly studies, most notably within the context of German-Jewish Studies in the United States. Much Honigmann scholarship focuses on the conflict and potential reconciliation between German and Jewish identities within the texts. As I discuss in this section, I take my inspiration especially from the work of Anat Feinberg on *Heimat* and Christina Guenther on exile. I connect these two themes by examining the ways in which the protagonist engages with and connects herself to the various spaces she encounters, searching for and creating a sense of *Heimat* in her life of motion. With my analysis of Honigmann's trilogy, I seek to connect the potentially "competing narratives" of exile and *Heimat* to show how one relies on the other.

In her article "Abiding in a Haunted Land: the Issue of Heimat in Contemporary Jewish German Writing," Anat Feinberg argues that it is an engagement with often conflicting geographical and spiritual senses of *Heimat* that unites many contemporary German-Jewish writers in their diversity. She discusses Honigmann's work in the context of "inner geography," citing the Jewish tradition of education and literature as a journey inward toward a sense of *Heimat* (Feinberg 8). Feinberg writes that, for Honigmann, exile and a sense of her own foreignness bring with them a clearer recognition of a nuanced, individual, and living Jewish identity. Jewish identity gives her a "sense of belonging while acknowledging her otherness" (Feinberg 9).

As I have discussed, Christina Guenther identifies *Roman von einem Kinde*, *Eine Liebe aus Nichts*, and *Damals, dann und danach* as a "Trilogy of Diaspora" (Guenther 215) that begins with mapping the motivations for exile, traces the process of migration, and ends with hybrid identity creation. With these three texts, writes Guenther, Honigmann "maps the coordinates in her lifelong process of claiming, and indeed reinventing, a particular Jewish German identity" (215). I engage actively with Guenther in my own analysis of the protagonist's process of exile and reclaiming of Judaism in the chapter that follows this one.

Barbara Honigmann's work has most often been studied as part of the reemergence of German-Jewish literature in the 1980s and 1990s. Honigmann has been associated primarily with her second-generation German-Jewish contemporaries, those who did not personally experience the Shoah. A number of scholars have studied Honigmann's work in the specific context of German-Jewish women's writing, setting her into the company of Lea Fleischmann, Esther Dischereit, and Irene Dische. Other scholars engage with Honigmann's work thematically, analyzing the sometimes competing, often parallel themes of exile and *Heimat* in the larger context of German-Jewish literature. The following brief discussion of Honigmann scholarship can provide insights into the context in which Honigmann's work has been examined to date.

In her article "En-gendering Bodies of Memory," Karen Remmler sets Honigmann into a specifically female tradition of German-Jewish writing. She argues that the work of Esther Dischereit, Barbara Honigmann and Irene Dische "breaks down the monolithic images of the 'Jew,' examines the issues of femaleness and Jewishness, and "reassesses the parameters of German identity" (Remmler, "Bodies" 184). With their

work, these three authors are active in "recovering missing bodies of memory and locating them in the present-day experience" (Remmler, "Bodies" 187). Remmler paraphrases Hazel Rosenstrauch's essay "Verwurzelt im Nirgendwo," writing that "Jewish women are not searching for roots so much as establishing a place in the present from which to benefit from not having roots" (Remmler, "Bodies" 185). In my analysis of Honigmann's work, I focus on the protagonist's invention of such a place.

A number of scholarly studies examine Honigmann's texts based on the perceived success or failure in reconciliation between German and Jewish identities. Guy Stern's article "Barbara Honigmann, a Preliminary Assessment" (1994) summarizes, praises, and offers an analysis of Honigmann's work, including brief comments about her painting. Stern concludes that "exile extends into homecoming" for both the author and her protagonist (Stern 330). In his article "Hybrids and Mischlinge," (1997) Todd Herzog argues just the opposite, that Honigmann's protagonist in *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* is unable to create a hybrid sense of self, and unable to "reconcile Germanness and Jewishness in a neutral space" (Herzog 11). In my own analysis, I examine similar themes, focusing not on success or failure, but on the process of connecting German and Jewish identities, and spaces of home and exile.

Many studies provide bio-bibliographies of Honigmann's work. Birgit Lermen's article "In der Fremde der Heimat" (1998) equates the author and protagonists, supporting biographical statements on Honigmann with quotes from her essays and novels. In her 2002 dissertation, Karin Grundler-Whitacre summarizes the plots of Honigmann's work up to and including *Alles, alles Liebe!*, and briefly mentions her painting.

To my knowledge, no in-depth analytical work has been done on Honigmann as a painter. When examining the work of this *Doppelbegabung* who speaks in interviews of the simultaneous and complementary nature of these two artistic processes, I believe it is vital to look more closely at Honigmann's painting. It is no coincidence that Honigmann's self-portraits grace the covers of the three texts I analyse as a semi-autobiographical trilogy. In order to gain a clearer understanding of Honigmann's work as a writer, and to examine her vital engagement with visual space, I provide a "close reading" of three self-portraits in the final section of this chapter.

The largely positive reception of Barbara Honigmann's work focuses primarily on the simplicity and directness of her writing style, which Guy Stern describes as "sophisticated naïveté" (Stern 335). Marcel Reich-Ranicki, in a 1986 review of *Roman von einem Kinde*, praises the "kaum zu überbietende Schlichtheit" as "eine Naivität der höheren Art" (Reich-Ranicki 14). Walther Hinck writes of a "zweite Natürlichkeit," (Hinck 1) while Uta-Maria Heim, in an article entitled "Die Waffen der Einfachheit," praises Honigmann for "diese um sich selbst wissende Naivität" (Heim 2). Not only positive reviews, but also critiques of Honigmann's text focus on her writing style. Ursula Homann, for instance, dubs Honigmann's "künstliche Naivität des Erzählstils" as "allzu gewollt wirkend," (Homann 105). In part because of her simple and direct style, the tone of Barbara Honigmann's prose has been described as highly personal and "reckless[ly] frank" (Stern 336). She creates a perceived sense of openness and trust between protagonist and reader. As I discuss in the following section, Honigmann's simple prose is far from naïve. It creates a conversation between reader and narrative

voice that is informed by a close engagement with German canonical literary and artistic traditions.

Literary Spaces

In many of the texts in the trilogy, Honigmann engages directly with the process of literary creation. In her essay "Von meinem Urgroßvater, meinem Großvater, meinem Vater und von mir,"[17] (*Damals, dann und danach*), for instance, draws a connection between herself and a lineage of male ancestors through their common experiences as German writers. In this section, I examine the ways in which Honigmann writes about her own process of writing and references existing literature in her narratives. She critically engages with Jewish and non-Jewish German authors, and with canonical texts and styles, most notably with German Romanticism. In doing so, she draws connections between herself, her protagonist, and canonical and non-canonical German literary traditions, inventing and reinventing her sense of place within these traditions.

In her contemplative essay about the process of writing, Honigmann identifies writing as a space which contains characteristics of both exile and home. "Ich begriff," she writes, daß Schreiben Getrenntsein heißt und dem Exil sehr ähnlich ist" (*Damals* 47). She writes that – like her father, grandfather, and great-grandfather before her – she addresses her German audience from a space of exile, a space of separation she feels as a German Jew. As the fourth generation in her family to publish books in German, she is the first to literally choose a creative space of exile in Strasbourg, France: "Ich werde

[17] Since this essay identifiably addresses Honigmann's own ancestry and life as a writer, I connect the narrative voice closely with Honigmann herself. I do this – at the risk of falling into the same pattern as so many other scholars do – in order to highlight the directness and frankness of this essay, the almost seamless link between autobiography and fiction.

mich lieber trennen, beschloß ich, absondern, am Rande bleiben…nur in einer Nachbarschaft zu den Deutschen" (*Damals* 45). It was this location, outside of Germany but "nur drei Straßen hinter der Grenze" (*Damals* 46), she writes, that allowed her to become a writer who engages with her own Jewish German identity freely. The creative space she chooses "am Rande" becomes a space of power for Honigmann. In her article "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness," bell hooks, redefines the margins as a "site of radical openness and possibility" (209). Writing from her position on the edge of German society, Honigmann's protagonist gains the freedom to step back from a space where she was not allowed to tell her story (*Damals* 48), and where she felt restricted by her experiences of a negative German-Jewish symbiosis (*Damals* 16). With her arrival in Strasbourg, both writing and Judaism come to the center of her life (*Damals* 53). In her chosen exile in Strasbourg, she is able to engage with her own chosen pieces of German and Jewish culture in a deeply personal and nuanced way not possible in Germany.

"Vielleicht," Honigmann speculates in the same essay, "war das Schreiben aber auch so etwas wie Heimweh und eine Versicherung, daß wir noch zusammengehörten, Deutschland und ich" (46). Writing and publishing in German, she also engages closely with German literary traditions and with a German public. Literary space – the act of writing – stretches to contain the seeming binaries home and exile, homesickness and possibility. Honigmann points to the creativity that comes out of the link between home and exile: each depends on the other and cannot exist without the other. Out of the combination between the two comes a creative space of belonging. Speculating on the

location of this space, she quotes her husband, writing, “wir gehören eben an unseren Schreibtisch” (*Damals* 39).

Honigmann references and critically engages with both Jewish and non-Jewish German literary traditions. In her article “Eine ganz kleine Literatur des Anvertrauens,” she writes of one chosen literary tradition, namely autobiographical and confessional writing by Jewish women in Germany over the last three centuries, and sets herself into this tradition. Honigmann writes first about the 1645 memoir of Glückel von Hameln, who places herself and her experiences in the center of her own German-Jewish world. She then goes on to describe the 19th-century correspondence of Rahel Varnhagen, an assimilated German Jew, and the diary of Anne Frank. She terms the writing of these three women “Eine ganz kleine Literatur des Anvertrauens, in der uns die Autorinnen durch die Geschichte hindurch anzusehen scheinen, face á face, von Angesicht zu Angesicht” (“kleine Literatur” 843). Here, Honigmann seems to reference Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of “minor literature,” one that, among other things, “connect[s] the individual to political immediacy” (Deleuze 60). In telling personal histories, Honigmann writes, these writers create a close link between reader and protagonist, placing their protagonists in a position “zwischen Enthüllen und Verstecken” (“kleine Literatur” 844). This way, they are able to gain the trust of readers and connect one “small” autobiography to larger political and social realities. Honigmann places herself among these autobiographical and confessional German-Jewish women writers: “Alles vorbei also, und ich danach. Immer noch deutsch und immer noch jüdisch. Übriggeblieben. Frau und Schriftstellerin in einer eher schwierigen Gegenwart” (“kleine Literatur” 843). With the personal and at times confessional tone and the themes of

identity and personal development, she defiantly continues a tradition that has been seen to end with the death of Anne Frank. "Seht mich an," she writes "ich bin noch da, bin nicht zerstört, und nichts und niemand wird mich zerstören, solange ich schreibe" ("kleine Literatur" 845). By drawing a connection with a historically German-Jewish literary space, Honigmann writes herself into this space.

Honigmann connects herself not only with German-Jewish autobiography, but with the sacred texts of Judaism in her essays "Bonsoir, Madame Benhamou" (*Roman von einem Kinde*) and "Meine Sephardischen Freundinnen" (*Damals, dann und danach*). Here, she describes the engagement of the protagonist and her four closest friends with the Torah. By gathering to study and discuss this central text of Judaism, the women draw connections to two different traditions: first, the historically male domain of Torah study and interpretation, and secondly, the female Salon tradition. With their own Torah study and social group, they reinvent both traditions and endow them with personal meaning. Meeting weekly, the friends read, translate, and interpret Torah passages together, relating the texts to their own lives. They discuss the book of Exodus, for instance, comparing themselves to the elders traveling through the desert and sitting at the foot of the mountain waiting for Moses. The tropes of exile and home are central both in this text and in the lives of the women. They personalize the teachings of the sacred text: "wir streiten uns über Moses und Aron, als ob es heute in der Zeitung gestanden hätte" (*Roman* 112). The protagonist defines the centrality of the Torah to the everyday lives of Jews and to the lives of the protagonist and her friends: "Als wir diesen Satz gelesen und übersetzt hatten, waren wir wieder einmal froh, Juden zu sein und eine Religion zu haben, in der wir Gott nicht in der Askese und auch nicht in der Ekstase

suchen müssen, sondern im normalen Leben" (*Damals* 67). This pleasure in the relevance of the central text of Judaism indicates the close connection that the women form with their religion.

Honigmann herself discusses her close connection to the German literary canon in this chapter's opening quotation: "Ich schreibe nicht nur auf deutsch, sondern die Literatur, die mich geformt und gebildet hat, ist die deutsche Literatur und ich beziehe mich auf sie, in allem was ich schreibe" (*Damals* 18). Indeed, she references and critically engages with canonical German literature in a number of ways in her texts. First, she brings this literature into the center of her protagonists' own lives, relating the texts to their personal experiences. In "Roman von einem Kinde," while the protagonist is in labor, for example, she quotes a letter written by Kleist with humor and self-irony: "Heiter, wie in der Nähe der Todesstunde" (*Roman* 15). Through this hyperbole, the protagonist makes light of her own situation and personalizes the Kleist text she quotes from. In *Eine Liebe aus Nichts*, Honigmann includes quotations from canonical German literature to allow her protagonist and other characters to communicate something that they cannot express in their own words. Instead of a personal letter, the protagonist's father sends her a Hölderlin quote that tells all: "Trennen wollten wir uns, wähnten es gut und klug. / Da wirs taten, warum schreckte wie Mord uns die Tat. / Ach, wir kennen uns wenig" (*Liebe* 23). Literature takes the place of direct communication, as father and daughter communicate through Hölderlin. Here, the protagonist's father, an assimilated German Jew and writer himself, speaks through a German writer as though this is the only way to give himself legitimacy. A quote from Rilke later in the novel serves a similar purpose, introducing a thought that is on the minds of young East Germans: "und

fortzugehn: warum? Aus Drang, aus Artung, / aus Ungeduld, aus dunkeler Erwartung, / aus Unverständlichkeit und Unverstand" (*Liebe* 42). In these instances, German literature is personalized and taken out of context to comment on present-day situations. With this strategy, Honigmann draws a connection over time and over space. Inserting quotations from canonical texts into her own literary space allows her to recontextualize these texts and claim them.

Honigmann references German literature not only through direct quotation, but through critical engagement with styles and themes. With her writing style and themes, she connects herself most closely with German Romanticism. The title of *Roman von einem Kinde* references the early 19th-century Romantic writer Bettina von Arnims *Goethes Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde*. With this title, she – like Bettina von Arnim – sets her protagonist into the position of the (adult) child addressing her reader with confidences. Honigmann's novel is composed of a variety of interrelated texts, prefaced by Honigmann's own self-portrait on the cover; it includes essays, reflective prose, a novella made up of letters, and a 20th-century romantic journey set behind the iron curtain. This patchwork, this melting together or "Verschmelzung" of forms directly references Romantic writer Friedrich Schlegel's theory of the novel. Schlegel, with his idea of "progressive Universalpoesie" (progressive universal poetry) argued that great poetry should be a meeting of forms, not a finished product, but a constantly changing and dynamic process. Thus through the very form she chooses for her novel, Honigmann demonstrates her expertise and claims her place in the German literary canon.

Within this collection, Honigmann's text entitled "Wanderung" engages with German Romanticism in a particularly provocative way. The protagonist and her friends,

who live together in a loose community of artists that reminds the reader of the 19th-century Romantics, undertake a journey on foot, accompanied only by a copy of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Goethe's famous quest text that the Romantics themselves looked to for inspiration. Honigmann sets her female protagonist into the position of a typical male Romantic hero, wandering in search of a sense of self, a sense of harmony between herself and her natural surroundings. Inspired by that Romantic notion of *Fernweh*, the protagonist and her friends wander through 1980s Czechoslovakia. They get lost in the mountains, and brave storms; like adventurers they sleep in barns and on the banks of creeks; like fairy-tale heroes they encounter strange characters who help them. Instead of creating a purely Romantic text, however, Honigmann juxtaposes magical, fairy-tale-like description with heated discussion about twentieth century history among the group of friends: "Wir saßen in den Gärten mit sommerlichen Blumen und stritten über die Konzentrationslager, wir badeten im kühlen Fluß und stritten über Gottfried Benn, wir liefen im Morgennebel auf dem Kamm der Berge und stritten über den russischen Verrat am Warschauer Aufstand" (*Roman* 77). This juxtaposition between 19th and 20th century, between idyll and horrors indicates the centrality of both the legacy of Romanticism and 20th-century German history to the protagonist's own life. With her texts, Honigmann follows in the footsteps of the Romantics, but takes her own path, critically reinventing Romantic space to fit her own 20th-century reality.

The protagonist's style of journeying in *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* has also been inspired by the romantic idea of wanderlust. She travels to find herself and her family history, but does not have a specific aim in mind. Paris itself seems to be an imagined

destination, until she is surprised by its reality. When her protagonist arrives in the city, Honigmann's prose takes on a flavor familiar from Romanticism and from fairy tales:

> Irgendwohin mußte ich ja nun…gehen, doch ich hatte ja noch nie daran gedacht, daß ich in eine richtige Stadt käme, …und müßte mich entscheiden, wo entlang, und es wäre nicht ein Ball von Träumen, der vor mir springt, und ich liefe ihm nach und holte ihn mir. (*Liebe* 13)

With her use of the subjunctive and with images like "ein Ball von Träumen, der vor mir springt," the protagonist creates a set of expectations influenced by German Romanticism. These expectations are dashed, however, when she realizes that Paris is simply a city in which she will have to find her way. Here again, Honigmann engages critically with Romantic literary space, juxtaposing it and contrasting it to reality.

By drawing connections with German and Jewish literary and linguistic spaces, Honigmann engages critically with these spaces, drawing personal connections with Jewish women writers, with the Torah, and with German canonical works. She reinvents her own sense of place within these traditions, molding them into hybrid and personal literary spaces.

Artistic Spaces: Honigmann as a Painter

Artistic expression – literary, theatrical, and visual – is closely tied to expression and development of identity for Honigmann and her protagonist. In *Roman von einem Kinde* and *Eine Liebe aus Nichts*, the protagonist begins as an amateur painter and dissatisfied assistant in the theater in Berlin. Coming to Paris and attending art school, she begins to concentrate on her development as a painter. In the essays that make up *Damals, dann und danach*, Honigmann's protagonist unites the practice of literary and visual art in Strasbourg. The artistic development of the protagonist begins with public interpretation

of the work of others in the theater and moves toward the individual self-creation that is painting.

Like her protagonist, Barbara Honigmann is a *Doppelbegabung*. She continues in a long tradition of German writers – from Goethe to Else Lasker-Schüler to Günter Grass – who are also visual artists. With her brushstrokes as with her words, Honigmann creates highly personal scenes, self-portraits and autobiography. When asked about the creative processes of writing and painting, Honigmann replies, "Erst kommt das Wort. Wenn ich dann vom Schreiben erschöpft bin, greife ich als Befreiung zum Pinsel. Und nach einer Weile gehe ich an den Schreibtisch zurück" (Thomalla 1206). Given the simultaneity of these two creative processes, it should come as no surprise that the artist's painting and writing mirror and engage in dialogue with one another. "Du schreibst, wie du malst," observes painter Heinrich Bethke of Honigmann's work (Thomalla 1206). With her brushstrokes as with her words, Honigmann creates highly personal scenes that evoke a sense of intimacy between the viewer/reader and artist.

The subjects of Honigmann's paintings range from self-portraits to intimate still-lifes, to images of Goethe and Kleist that are as personal as her portraits of friends and family. Three exhibition catalogues (1992, 1997, 2002) from the Galerie Michael Hasenclever (München) provide an overview of the paintings and their connection to Honigmann's writing. The catalogues themselves are made up of painting and text: The first begins with the text "Selbstportät als Mutter," followed by twelve prints, and concluded by the essay "Selbstporträt als Jüdin." The second catalogue contains the essay "Ein seltener Tag," which describes the process of painting one of the self portraits displayed in the catalogue. Honigmann, who signs her paintings with her nickname

"Babu," conveys the same sense of intimacy and honesty with her painting as she does with her words.

The subjects of many of the paintings in the catalogues blur the lines between self-portrait and autobiography, between artistic and literary expression. The paintings "Goethes Gartenhaus" (1991) and "Mein Vater" (1987) directly reference the contents of Honigmann's novel *Eine Liebe aus Nichts*. German literary figures like Goethe, Kleist, and Lasker-Schüler are the subject of further portraits. Honigmann sets these canonical writers into personal, everyday scenes. In a 2001 painting entitled "Goethe mit Schürze," a kitchen scene – a refrigerator, a jar of wooden spoons, and an apron hanging from a peg – is completed by an image (perhaps a poster) of Goethe, half covered by the hanging apron. As she does with canonical writers in her texts, Honigmann sets this painted Goethe not onto a pedestal, but into private and arguably female space, firmly down on earth and into the center of everyday life. In her painting as in her writing, Honigmann personalizes literary figures and uses literary quotations in direct reference to her own life. She invents a shared literary and artistic space with these historical and canonical German writers.

In this section, I examine this artistic space by discussing three self-portraits which adorn the covers of *Roman von einem Kinde*, *Eine Liebe aus Nichts*, and *Damals, dann und danach*. I argue that the paintings, much like the texts they introduce, serve as spaces of critical engagement with the German cultural canon and with a living Jewish faith. To this end, I offer a "close reading" and interpretation of each painting, identifying for each points of critical engagement with German and Jewish cultural references.

A large oval face entitled “Selbstbildnis” (Figure 1) adorns the cover of *Roman von einem Kinde*, filling all but the very edge of the frame. The wide, dark eyes look slightly to the side, as if gazing inward or outward in a dream-like state. The delicate bridge of the nose leads to a small, red, expressionless mouth – nearly the only splash of bright color in the painting. The dark hair is parted to expose an ear, thereby completing the visual depiction of all five senses. The dark hair and background contrast with the pale color and creamy texture of the face.

Because of its size, centrality, and contrasting colors, the head – the seat of intellectual activity – remains the viewer’s sole focus. The wide eyes allow a deeply personal access to the figure’s emotions and thoughts. The deep, penetrating eyes bear a close resemblance to the self-portraits of Paula Modersohn-Becker, whom Barbara Honigmann references directly in her texts. In Modersohn-Becker’s “Selbstbildnis nach Halblinks mit Hand am Kinn” (1906) (Figure 2) as in Honigmann’s “Selbstbildnis,” the eyes draw the viewer in and point to the emotional and intellectual work being done. Honigmann’s self-portrait and the semi-autobiographical texts that follow locate the process of identity creation in intellectual activity, in deeply personal and individual engagement with literary and artistic spaces. By referencing Modersohn-Becker, Honigmann connects herself directly to a look inward portrayed by a German artist eighty years earlier.

Honigmann makes reference to Paula Modersohn-Becker, a mother and an artist like herself, in the essay “Selbstporträt als Mutter.” She writes, “Wieso ist Paula Modersohn-Becker gleich nach der Geburt ihres ersten Kindes gestorben? Ich weiß es. Weil man nämlich nur entweder Malerin oder Mutter sein kann” (*Damals* 85). Engaging

with Modersohn-Becker's autobiography, she describes her own life, narrating her own difficult yet successful balancing act between creative art and motherhood.

In the remaining texts that make up the collection *Roman von einem Kinde*, the protagonist explores her various identities as a German Jew, as a mother, a woman, and an artist. This exploration takes place emotionally and intellectually: through the writing of a letter in which the protagonist explores feelings, memories and family history; through the process of reading; through consideration of texts by Goethe, Kleist, and Nietzsche. Just as the head with its deep and thoughtful eyes is the focus of the painting, intellectual and emotional work remain the focus of this text. Both painting and text indicate a look inward rather than outward in the search for a sense of self.

On the cover of Honigmann's central novel *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* is a second self-portrait (Figure 3). Here, the head and torso of a woman at a window are shown from behind. A muted red oval of a hat tops the woman's bobbed hair. Her softly textured brown coat covers her back, abstracting the shape of the body. The shoulders droop slightly as the arms hang limply to the side, indicating perhaps a lack of energy, or a sense of exhaustion and hopelessness. This figure stands at a window looking out; the view from the two window panes reveals an abstracted industrial cityscape described in the text as "ein unruhiges und bedrohliches Meer" (41). The window handle juts out at a ninety-degree angle, indicating that the window is completely closed. The closed window, along with the two horizontal lines below, creates a barrier between the figure and the scene outside. Inside and outside spaces are separated, and the woman is allowed no access to the scene at which she gazes.

Honigmann's second self-portrait reminds of any number of "woman-at-the-window portraits" so common in western art.[18] This window scene closely parallels "Frau am Fenster," painted by Caspar David Friedrich in 1822 (Figure 4). In Friedrich's painting, the woman leans out of an *open* window, looking at the fresh green of poplar trees and the wide springtime sky. The cross of the window frame does not block the outside space, but instead may be a religious reference indicating an intact Christian value system so prevalent in Friedrich's work. Instead of acting as a barrier, Friedrich's window is a link between inside and outside space, between proximity and distance. Whereas Friedrich's figure takes on an eager stance, Honigmans's figure is resigned, cut off from the scene she looks at, separated from it by the closed window and horizontal lines.

With its reference to Friedrich, this painting introduces and problematizes the Romantic themes of *Sehnsucht*, *Fernweh*, and of searching for *Heimat* that remain the focus of the text *Eine Liebe aus Nichts.* The text inside charts the protagonist's physical, mental, and emotional process of migration and searching (Guenther 222). Instead of feelings of hope and expansiveness, Honigmann's protagonist in *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* describes her position as "wie im Gefängnis…und nicht in der neuen Welt" (12). With this painting – as with her text – Honigmann engages with Romantic notions critically and dashes Romantic expectations. She directly references Romantic space and then reinvents it almost beyond recognition, indicating her own conflicted relationship with this space.

[18] A glance at Eichendorff's poem "Sehnsucht" describes a similar yet very different scene: "Es schienen so golden die Sterne / Am Fenster ich einsam stand / Und hörte aus weiter Ferne / ein Posthorn im stillen Land" (Von Wiese 376). With this cover painting, Honigmann also engages with Romantic literary traditions in a critical manner.

The text of *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* begins to describe the protagonist's development as a painter. Her journey to Paris is a deliberate turning away from acting and directing, and towards painting. The protagonist gives up her life in the Berlin theater, repeating and interpreting the words of others, and enrolls at the École des Beaux Arts and begins to create her own world from a blank canvas. Painting represents the potential of transition from a passive to an active role: "Statt die Welle von neuem Leben einfach nur über mich hinwegrollen… [zu] lassen, wollte ich ihre Bewegung nutzen und selbst meinen Platz wechseln" (*Liebe* 52). Painting, an arguably personal and individual art form, allows the protagonist to begin to look toward something that is new and fully her own. She begins by painting self portraits "wie um mich zu vergewissern, daß ich noch da war" (*Liebe* 52), scenes from memory, portraits of writers "als eine Hommage und um ihnen zu antworten," and small still lifes. "Das Malen," she comments, "war eine Art Festhalten der Dinge, deren Nähe schwankend und ohne Sicherheit war" (*Liebe* 53). The process of painting allows her to capture and frame one moment in this stage of wandering.

Another window, this time a dark one, creates an intimate indoor space for the painting "Mes amis et moi" (1997)[19] (Figure 5) which is adorns the cover of Honigmann's collection *Damals, dann und danach*. This painting depicts a group of women sitting at a shared table, engaged in study of the Torah. The figures are painted in deep reds, blues, greens, and browns. Open books – an Italian-Hebrew dictionary and the Hebrew text of the Book of Exodus,[20] with commentary – share space at the table with mugs, a pitcher and a plate of cookies. In its depiction of the Torah and its readers, this

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[19] This painting hangs at Wellesley College, Wellesley Massachusetts.
[20] Special thanks to Laura Gutmark for translating the Hebrew text in this painting.

painting is itself a dialogue between visual art and text. Each woman engages differently with the text and with the viewer: one sits paging through a dictionary; another has her back turned to the viewer and sits bent over the text. A third looks out at the viewer, making a connection between image and viewer and inviting him or her into the image. Two others are turned to each other, perhaps engaged in discussion about the text. The viewer is drawn in by the contrasting splash of bright yellow above the figures, hanging at the center at the top of the image. The lamp – perhaps an indicator of the enlightenment that comes out of shared study – produces a soft glow, completing the intimacy of the scene.

The title of Honigmann's collection *Damals, dann und danach* (1999) points to a bridging of time, a uniting of past, present, and future, and a merging of multiple layers of identity. The nine narratives in the collection include literary self-portraits of the protagonist as a mother, as a Jew, as a writer, and as a painter. The cover painting closely parallels the essay inside the book entitled "Meine Sephardischen Freundinnen," which describes the protagonist's friendship with the four women she meets weekly as part of a Torah study group. In this text, Honigmann's protagonist switches from the pronoun "ich" to the plural "wir," emphasizing her identification with this group. The intimate feel of the painting is present in the text as well: the text completes the painting with personal details and histories of each figure, by describing their various national and cultural origins, by detailing the relationships between the women, and by relating the sacred texts to their lives. In the text as in the painting, Honigmann creates an intimate space, where Hebrew-Italian and German-French dictionaries share space at the table with the Hebrew texts, and the women sit in front of a mountain of sweets. As I will

discuss in the following chapter, the sacred texts are made relevant to the women's lives as the protagonist and her friends compare the mounds of sweets in front of them to the mountain in *Exodus* (*Damals* 67), themselves to the seventy elders (*Damals* 67), and the story itself to the day's news (*Roman* 112). The sacred text itself becomes the central link between literary and visual art and between the figures depicted. This painting functions as the corresponding text does: the intimate scene shows the protagonist's deeply personal engagement with Judaism as a religion. Her seat at the table offers the protagonist a possibility to invent for herself her own spiritual sense of place.

Honigmann's artistic self-invention stems not only from a creative conversation with and reinterpretation of these varied German and Jewish cultural references, but from a dialogue between painting and writing. In all three novels, Honigmann writes about painting as a process of identity creation. The final text in *Damals, dann und danach*, for instance, ends the trilogy with a description of the painting of a self-portrait. This final text describes painting as a process of multilayered identity creation. Just as the artist layers colors onto a canvas, the protagonist layers her identities on top of one another. Writing about painting completes the connection between the two art forms. Consider, for a moment, the progression of essays in Honigmann's collection *Damals, dann und danach*. In the first story, she presents a negative public representation of her protagonist's Jewish identity. Further stories explore various aspects of the protagonist's identity as a mother, as a Jew, as a writer, as a friend, and as a descendent of her great-grandfather and grandfather. The culmination of this highly personal journey is the painting of a self-portrait. Christina Guenther argues that this description of the process

of painting represents a "positive performative representation of identity" (Guenther 227).

Entitled "Ein seltener Tag," this final text is a celebration of solitude. Standing nude in front of a mirror, the protagonist begins to examine herself and draw her own figure in charcoal: "so bereitet sich die Schöpfung vor" (*Damals* 133). She describes the various stages of painting: the development of an idea, the mixing of colors, the changing light. As she paints herself, the colors are layered over one another. Painting is creation itself: when she steps back to look at her creation, she comments "daß alles gut werden wird" (*Damals* 135), perhaps referencing Genesis. As she thinks of her husband, her children, and her friends, all of her identities simultaneously merge and fall away. "im Kopf ist Tohu und Bohu und auf der Leinwand soll sich daraus Gestalt finden" (*Damals* 133). A sense of calm pervades the scene, as night descends and sounds from the street grow quiet. At the conclusion, the protagonist is left with "mein einzige[s] Leben" (*Damals* 135). Here, the process of painting is a process of self-creation. As Christina Guenther argues, the protagonist emphasizes with this painting process that she "cannot be predetermined" (Guenther 225).

Conclusion

With these three paintings, and with the interplay between painting and text, Honigmann engages critically with both the German artistic canon and Jewish sacred traditions. Referencing Paula Modersohn-Becker and Caspar David Friedrich, she makes connections to German artists and critically engages with their work, creating for herself a sense of place in the German artistic canon. Depicting the tradition of Torah study and

interpretation, she places the figures as the link between literary and visual art. The texts, in turn, illustrate the protagonist's intellectual and spiritual journeys, depict the creation of a sense of self and a sense of community, and engage critically with varied cultural and religious references. Barbara Honigmann's self portraits and autobiographical texts engage not only in a dialogue with one another, but also in a conversation with the German artistic canon and the sacred texts of Judaism. It is through these creative conversations that the artist invents herself and her sense of place.

Chapter 3: Spiritual, Physical, and Social Spaces of Home in Honigmann's Trilogy

"[Ich] saß da oder lief herum wie auf Ellis Island,
eine Einwanderin, eine Auswanderin, eine Spaziergängerin"

– Barbara Honigmann[21]

Introduction

In the central text of her trilogy, *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* (1991), Barbara Honigmann's protagonist identifies herself as a taker of walks, a wanderer and a searcher. She situates herself on an imagined Ellis Island, on the cusp between home and away, far from familiar spaces but not yet arrived in the foreign land. In this chapter, I trace the protagonist's process of searching for spiritual, physical, and social spaces of belonging. I begin by describing her struggle toward the creation of a spiritual sense of belonging in the Jewish religion in Berlin. I then examine her effort in collecting experiences and making connections in the physical and social spaces in her chosen exile in Paris. I link this central discussion to an examination of the concepts home and exile. Finally, I examine the protagonist's chosen home of Strasbourg as an empowering site that allows her to reinvent a sense of place in spiritual, physical and social space.

Spiritual Spaces

In Barbara Honigmann's trilogy, the protagonist's Jewish identity develops from a singular and static construct created by others into a hybrid, multi-layered process which she actively invents. In each of the three novels, Honigmann points to the impossibility for her protagonist of a Jewish life in Germany, and outlines the stages that led up to her

[21] Barbara Honigmann. *Eine Liebe aus Nichts*. Berlin: Rowohlt, 1991. 20.

exile in Strasbourg. The essays in *Roman von einem Kinde* and *Damals, dann und danach*, as well as the novel *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* trace the development and reinvention of the protagonist's nuanced and personal Jewish identity.

The collection *Roman von einem Kinde* begins with a narrative – entitled "Ich bin nicht Anne!" – in which others define the protagonist's Jewishness for her. Here, her drunken neighbor in Berlin repeatedly accosts her in the hallway, calling her "Anne" – the name of the young Jewish girl she sheltered during the Third Reich. After the protagonist's repeated insistence that she is not Anne, Frau Schulz accuses, "Aber du bist eine Jüdin, ich habe dich sofort erkannt!" (6). In the drama that ensues, the other tenants, who want to take the drunken woman to court for causing other disturbances, accuse her of calling the protagonist "Drecksjüdin." With this accusation, the protagonist is asked if she is really Jewish, a fact which she affirms. Christina Guenther terms this a "coming out" (Guenther 226); the protagonist is identified as "other" and her neighbors turn the cold shoulder on her. Here, she becomes a scapegoat not only to the drunken woman, but to all of her neighbors. In defining her religious and cultural affiliation based on stereotype and the legacy of the Shoah, the protagonist's neighbors attempt to take away her agency over her own identity-creation. Jewish identity becomes an "accusation" against her. Here, the protagonist's Jewish identity is not defined as a personal, religious and cultural identity, but is pared down to her perceived resemblance to "Anne" and defined through conflict and the legacy of the Shoah. Her repeated assertion "Ich bin nicht Anne" represents her steadfast attempt to dissociate herself from this narrow definition of identity. This assertion, as the title of the collection's opening text,

represents the beginning of defiance against a solely Shoah-based Jewish identity. It is a necessary step toward the protagonist's spiritual renewal and reinvention.

It is not only others who craft a Shoah-based identity for the protagonist: she herself internalizes this way of thinking. *Roman von einem Kinde* contains a brief yet disturbing identification with the experience of the Shoah: "Einmal hatte ich einen Traum. Da war ich mit all den Anderen in Auschwitz. Und in dem Traum dachte ich: endlich habe ich meinen Platz im Leben gefunden" (*Roman* 28). Here, the protagonist identifies a sense of belonging among the condemned and the dead of history. She places herself not in the present, but in the past. As we shall see, the protagonist actively works to replace this narrow, Shoah-based definition of Judaism with a nuanced individual engagement with a living religion.

These passages – the conflict in her Berlin apartment building and her own identification with the Shoah – seem to point to the impossibility of a living Jewish identity in Germany that is not defined by the Shoah and its legacy. As discussed in the introduction, this phenomenon, termed "negative German-Jewish symbiosis," has been the subject of much scholarship in recent years. With the narratives in *Damals, dann und danach*, Barbara Honigmann enters the debate on German-Jewish symbiosis on several levels. In her text "Selbstporträt als Jüdin" she engages most closely with Ahrendt's and Diner's ideas of negative symbiosis. Honigmann describes conversations she herself has had with non-Jewish Germans about things Jewish as "verkrampft" from her perspective and "quälend" from the perspective of her German conversation partner. She writes, "Es kommt mir manchmal vor, als wäre erst das jetzt die so oft beschworene deutsch-jüdische Symbiose, dieses nicht-voneinander-loskommen-Können, weil die Deutschen und die

Juden in Auschwitz ein Paar geworden sind, das auch der Tod nicht mehr trennt" (*Damals* 16). As Christina Guenther writes, the only way that Honigmann can explore her own Jewishness is by retreating to the "neutralizing foreignness of French exile" (Guenther 217). She cites as her reason for exile in Strasbourg the desire to engage in a "Gespräch über den Judentum jenseits eines immerwährenden Anti-Semitismus-Diskurses" (*Damals* 15).

Todd Herzog identifies the relationship between the protagonist and her non-Jewish German lover Alfried in *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* as a defining example of a negative German-Jewish symbiosis. He writes that "Alfried becomes a symbol for Germany and Germanness, which the protagonist simultaneously hates and loves, desires and pulls away from, yet cannot escape" (Herzog 10). Silence is the dominant characteristic of the protagonist's relationship with Alfried, as he avoids any discussion of the protagonist's Jewishness. Indeed, secrecy pervades the whole relationship – the two see each other only at night, write letters instead of talking, and rarely look one another in the face. Because of Alfried's silence, "The protagonist's identity is simultaneously visible and hidden, and always weighing heavily upon her" (Herzog 10). In this case, a negative symbiosis causes a rift between the two lovers, making it impossible for them to form a connection. The initial futility of connection with both Jewish spiritual space and with German social space gradually develops into a search for spaces of connection.

In the protagonist's journey from negative symbiosis toward a living Jewish identity, Honigmann's trilogy contains a number of "graveyard texts."[22] Four texts in the trilogy center around the protagonist's experience in a Jewish cemetery: including

[22] This is Petra Günther's term. See Günther, "Einfaches Erzählen?" 123.

“Doppeltes Grab” (*Roman von einem Kinde*), the opening scenes of *Eine Liebe aus Nichts*, “Gräber in London” and “Der Untergang von Wien” in *Damals, dann und danach*. At the beginning of her search for her own Jewish identity, cemeteries – in Weimar, Berlin, Vienna, and London—are both touchstones and history books for the protagonist.

The visit to the Jewish cemetery in Weimar for her father’s funeral in *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* illustrates the protagonist’s initial sense of disconnection from living Judaism. The opening setting of this text immediately reminds the reader of the disturbing reality that Judaism in Germany is so often confined to graveyards and memorials, instead of connected with real people and living religion. In this case, however, the cemetery is linked with the protagonist’s father and his request to be buried in Weimar’s all-but-abandoned Jewish cemetery. The funeral service is presented as something unfamiliar and foreign, even laughable for the protagonist:

> Der Kantor…der meinen Vater gar nicht gekannt und nie gesehen hat, fügte…an den entsprechenden Stellen des hebräischen Singsangs einfach den deutschen Namen und lächerlicherweise auch noch den Doktortitel ein, und er hat keine der endlosen Wiederholungen ausgelassen und nicht aufgehört, mit seinem sefardischen Akzent immer von neuem den Namen meines Vaters zu entstellen. (*Liebe* 7)

The cantor is unable to create a sense of true mourning and remembrance at her father’s funeral. His simple insertion of her father’s mispronounced German name – along with his title – into the Hebrew text creates an absurd and uncomfortable scene. By pointing to the awkwardness created in this mix of German and Jewish, the protagonist hints at her father’s spiritual disconnection from his Jewishness and the seeming incompatibility between things German and Jewish.

The protagonist's retelling of her visit to the Hessian cemeteries later in the novel contains a similar sense of disconnection. Here, she searches for the graves of her ancestors, but since she knows neither first names nor birth and death dates, she is unable to find graves or establish personal connections to the names she sees. "Meine Herkunft von dort war ganz unsichtbar geworden," she says, "Ich habe nichts finden können, keine Erinnerung, kein Zeichen, kein Andenken und keine Spur" (*Liebe* 69). In these scenes, cemeteries emerge as spaces of absence and disconnection from the protagonist's own past and her Jewish heritage.

In *Damals, dann und danach*, the protagonist describes her visits to London and Vienna cemeteries years later. This time, she comes prepared with names, birth and death dates, and the plot numbers of her ancestor's graves. In "Gräber in London," the search for her grandparents' grave reveals that the burial plot has no gravestone: "Da, wo er sein müsste, ist nur ein leerer Platz, eine Lücke zwischen den anderen Gräbern, nur Sand, Kies auf einem flachen Hügel, kein großer oder kleiner Stein, gar kein Stein, nur Erde mit einem bißchen Unkraut" (*Damals* 37). In the narrative that surrounds this scene, the protagonist fills the empty space of her grandmother's grave with her own story, tracing the development of her own Jewish identity. She confronts the legacy of silence and emptiness with action and narration, and so fills the empty spaces. The story "Der Untergang von Wien," which also appears in *Damals, dann und danach*, is the longest of Honigmann's graveyard texts. Here, a visit to her mother's gravestone in a Vienna cemetery sparks the retelling of stories: about her mother's and grandparents' life in Vienna, her mother's exile in London and life in Berlin, the last days before her mother's death, and about the protagonist's own life and the lives of her children. Past,

present, and future form a patchwork of connections as the narratives of her children, her own life, and the lives of her mother and grandmother intertwine. This visit to a cemetery allows for real-and-imagined connections within the social and spiritual space of family and ancestry.

The Jewish Cemetery in Berlin-Weißensee, with its endless paths and graves half hidden among vine-covered trees, overgrown with ivy and rhododendron, is the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe. In "Gräber in London," (*Damals, dann und danach*) Honigmann thinks back on this cemetery as the site of important revelations about her own connection to Judaism. It becomes a space in which the past is celebrated and plans for the future are made. This cemetery first serves as a space of reflection for the 15-year-old protagonist and her Jewish friends in East Berlin. As she and her friends reclaim and rediscover their inherited Judaism, it becomes a space of potential connection to a Jewish past. In the passage that follows, the protagonist describes the sense of belonging and connection she begins to feel while walking in the cemetery:

> Es schien mir, als ob auf diesem unübersichtlichen, halb zugewachsenen Ort, mit den labyrinthartigen Wegen, auf denen man sich immer verlief, mit seinen fremden Zeichen und immer wiederkehrenden Namen, Orten und Lebensaltern, ein Netz spannte, in das meine Eltern und Großeltern und auch ich selber verwoben waren, und daß wir vielleicht doch gar nicht so isoliert nur jeder für sich geboren waren, jeder ein einzelner, ganz wurzelloser Mensch. (*Damals* 28)

This space—though it is labyrinth-like, confusing, and filled with undecipherable symbols – forms a preliminary, imagined sense of community and history for the protagonist to place herself in. When she later revisits this cemetery with her husband, he points out his ancestors' graves and traces his family history back to

Heinrich Heine; still later, she is able to trace her own ancestry back to Heine as well. Here, real kinship takes the place of imagined connections.

The protagonist remembers a third significant visit to a the cemetery in Weißensee in the text “Doppeltes Grab.” The remembered visit takes place in the company of the writer Gerschom Scholem. The title of this story, “Doppeltes Grab” (*Roman von einem Kinde*), points to the fact that after Scholem’s death, he has two gravestones – one in Berlin and one in Jerusalem. This double grave spans space and culture as it connects East Berlin and Jerusalem, two politically and culturally significant spaces in Jewish history. The family grave site he visits with the protagonist spans physical space as it lists the locations of his family members’ deaths as Buchenwald and Australia, reminding the reader of the horrors of the Shoah and the realities of exile. Scholem emerges as a teacher in this story: he inspires the protagonist and her husband to further reading of Jewish history, and recommends that they leave Germany in order to lead a Jewish life. In the surrounding narrative, the protagonist and her husband form a friendship with Scholem. They discuss their shared connections to a Jewish library in Berlin, share meals and travel through the city together. Most importantly, they consider and eventually take Scholem’s advice to move away from Germany in order to explore their Judaism more deeply. Here, the cemetery bridges time and space, forges connections between people, and sparks action.

For Honigmann’s protagonist, a visit to a cemetery can indicate absence, loss, and separation from a Jewish identity; it can spark remembrance of ancestors and family members; finally, it can inspire the protagonist to take action, to fill in the empty spaces of remembrance with her own story. The cemetery, in Honigmann’s texts, is a hybrid

and multilayered space. It bridges the gaps between past, present, and future and emerges as a space of that allows the protagonist to connect with her family history, her ancestry, and her own living religion.

In the texts *Roman von einem Kinde* and *Damals, dann und danach*, the protagonist and her friends seek to reclaim a space for themselves in the Jewish religion, terming this process "Wiedereroberung unseres Judentums aus dem Nichts" (*Damals* 29). In the story "Roman von einem Kinde," the protagonist attends a Passover service in East Berlin's only synagogue, actually a tiny room located "in einem Hinterhof in der Mitte der Stadt, dort, wo sie wirklich am dichtesten und am schlimmsten ist" (*Roman* 23). There she sits through the short service among a "winziges Häuflein" people whom she refers to as "die Verstreutesten unter den Verstreuten, die Juden unter den Juden" (*Roman* 24). Though this space – as a starting point for reclaiming Judaism – leaves much to be desired, it allows her to engage directly with spiritual space, to connect her personal experiences of Berlin spaces with sacred texts. The protagonist compares her own experiences of this day with the Israelites' escape from Egypt. In the following passage, she equates the parting of the Red Sea with her own crossing of the Alexanderplatz on the way from the Passover service to the Seder:

> Der Alexanderplatz ist mir früher so schwer gewesen und stand mir immer als ein Hindernis im Weg [...] Aber seltsam, an diesem Tage...da wurde mir der Platz so leicht, sogar lächerlich...er öffnete sich vor uns wie das Rote Meer...und als wir uns umsahen, da stürmte es und tobte es, und der Alexanderplatz blieb hinter uns und holte uns nicht mehr ein und versank in Nebel und Regen wie Pharaos Heer. (*Roman* 24-25)

By setting her own experiences into the context of the Torah and participating in a living (if only barely living) Jewish present, the protagonist begins to actively engage and personalize Jewish spiritual spaces. This Passover celebration feels foreign to her and

leaves her with mixed emotions. "Ich fühlte mich fremd und fühlte mich doch willkommen" (*Roman* 24). On the one hand, she unexpectedly meets an old acquaintance and the two talk excitedly. Ultimately, however, she is unable to draw a connection between her physical and the spiritual space: "Elias oder Messias oder Gott – von denen kann sich keiner mehr hier blicken lassen" (*Roman* 26).

In "Selbstporträt als Jüdin" (*Damals, dann und danach*), the protagonist, at age fifteen, begins to meet with a small circle of Jewish friends who are beginning to reclaim their inherited Judaism. "Emigration, KZ, Widerstand, Jude waren die Paßwörter, um in unseren erlauchten Kreis Eingang zu finden. Aus diesen Wörtern leiteten wir unser ganzes Selbstbewusstsein ab," she says (*Damals* 27). Here again, the markers of common identity are not the Jewish religion itself, but the Shoah and its legacy. Lacking any real knowledge about their ancestors, their own origins seem mythical: "So war unsere Herkunft eher mythischer Art, ein Geheimnis, nichts jedenfalls, das mit einem normalen Leben…zu tun hatte" (*Damals* 27).

The protagonist's later meeting and marriage to her Jewish husband is seen by this small community as nothing short of a wonder: "Eine seltene jüdische Hochzeit an diesem verfluchten Ort. Einige glaubten, in diesem unwahrscheinlichen Ereignis sogar messianische Vorzeichen oder wenigstens ein Wunder entdecken zu können" (*Damals* 29). Along with her husband, she begins a reclaiming of spiritual spaces that ultimately comes together in Strasbourg. This initial engagement with Judaism in the GDR intensifies her feeling of exile and alienation within her native country. Eventually, it inspires her and her husband to undertake an exile in France that the protagonist sees as both voluntary and necessary.

Physical and Social Spaces

In her central text *Eine Liebe aus Nichts*, Honigmann foregrounds the protagonist's search for *Heimat* within her experience of exile. Her repeated use of the term *Heimat* carries with it the concept's long and troubled history. In the German cultural context, *Heimat* evokes not only notions of innocence and harmony, images of family and nurture, but a political and national message as well. Much work has been done on its use as a tool for nation building, and its subsequent misuse as part of the National Socialists' exclusionary and anti-Semitic politics. In her book *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Homeland*, Celia Applegate writes that "the history of the word…*Heimat* means the history of talking and thinking about German society and Germanness" (Applegate 5-6). The historical function of the ideology of *Heimat* has been to include and exclude selected groups from this definition of Germanness. Honigmann's German-Jewish protagonist searches for a sense of *Heimat* in exile, collecting spaces in order to problematize and reinvent this existing definition.

In this section, I briefly discuss the semantics and the changing use of the term *Heimat* and its use in a German national context from the19th century to the present, as a way of informing my analysis of Honigmann's central text *Eine Liebe aus Nichts*. At the turn of the 18th to the 19th centuries, German Romantics used the term *Heimat* to construct an unchanging, almost fairy-tale-like rural idyll to define for their readers the essence of Germanness (Wickham 65). Works like Arnim and Brentano's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* attempted to define for their readers something that was quintessentially German; their popularity attests to the wide

reach of these ideas. At the same time, Heinrich Heine, who lived in political exile in France, offered another, more flexible version of *Heimat*, claiming his as a "portable fatherland" (Heine qtd. in Broder 84). Both Heine and the Romantics stood at the beginning of a movement toward German nationalism. When Germany became a nation in 1871, the idea of *Heimat* was used politically as "a bridge between the new and artificial idea of a nation state and the palpable familiarity of locality" (Wickham 7). Just as Honigmann engages critically with German Romanticism in her writing and painting, she engages with the term *Heimat* in her protagonist's journey.

From the time of nation building through the Weimar Republic, *Heimat* was used as a prototypically German concept aimed to tie German-speaking people of varying regional and social backgrounds together and help them identify as German citizens. Those who were excluded from mainstream German society used the term *Heimat* to emphasize their Germanness and seek inclusion. German Jews striving to assimilate into German society without rejecting their Judaism did so by publicly proclaiming and even publishing statements on their sense of German *Heimat*.[23] The need to publish such a statement speaks to the exclusionary connotations of the term. In his 1923 essay "The Educational Value of *Heimat* Studies," Eduard Spranger defines *Heimat* as a "total connection to the soil" and a "spiritual sense of having roots" (qtd. in Wickham 7). This vocabulary formed the basis of the National Socialists' *Blut und Boden* and *Volk ohne Raum* ideology. Michael Geisler writes that "National Socialism was the greatest movement toward the destruction of 'Heimat' in German History" (qtd. in Henderson

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[23] A pamphlet issued at the turn of the 19th to the 20th centuries by a German-Jewish Anti-Zionist Society proclaims, "Jews have lived on German soil for more than a thousand years…German Jews are struggling for equal rights because they are not foreign elements but German citizens – by language, culture, education, and sense of *Heimat* (qtd. in Broder 86).

227). For the Nazis, *Heimat* came to mean the exclusion and eventual extermination of anything "un-German."

Henryk Broder writes that, in the aftermath of the Shoah, "Love of *Heimat* is a sort of house of horrors" (93). During the postwar period, *Heimat* was, with few exceptions, banned from the political discourse in what was to become West Germany.[24] Culturally, however, the term continued to prevail, most notably in the form of West German *Heimat* films, which offered escapist entertainment and portrayed a utopian, pre-war picture of a German *Heimat* (Wickham 11). In official rhetoric of the Soviet Occupied Zone, later the German Democratic Republic, the term was used in an attempt to create an emotional bond to socialism (Wickham 8).

It was not until the 1970s that the term *Heimat* experienced a political revival and redefinition in West Germany. In a 1973 speech, West German Chancellor Willi Brandt made a return to Romantic ideals when he defined *Heimat* not as a static location but as a social and spiritual place where "self-determination of the individual begins" (Wickham 16). In a 1975 article, literary scholar François Bondy used the term *Wahlheimat*, or chosen home, to lend a greater sense of rationality, consciousness and awareness to the term (Wickham 17). In the 1980s, there was a renewed interest in dialects and local culture that defined for many a sense of *Heimat*. Of current note is Edgar Reitz' popular *Heimat* Trilogy, which has enjoyed nearly 30 years of airtime on German television since 1984.

Since the early 1990s, scholars have begun to turn away from static, nation-based concepts of *Heimat* and begun to explore dynamic and flexible notions of the term.

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[24] One exception to this statement is the term *Heimatvertriebene*, used to describe those Germans fleeing from the former German Eastern territories.

Heimat, for Hendrik Broder, is a "spiritual state," (98) a concept in flux, a collection of memories, images, and experiences. Though his definition of *Heimat* is somewhat restrictive for my purposes in this dissertation,[25] Christopher Wickham's book *Constructing Heimat in Postwar Germany* provides effective tools for exploring and ultimately expanding the notion of the term *Heimat*. *Heimat*, he writes, could be used either as a political tool or as a "point of reference for individual social identity" (10). Wickham also observes a shift from the traditional to the contemporary use of the term *Heimat*. He writes that "the passive acceptance of being born to or "having" *Heimat* [has] yielded to an active involvement in creating *Heimat*" (Wickham 3). It is this shift from retrospective to forward-looking, from static to dynamic, and from passive to active that sets the discussion on *Heimat* into an arena of increasing flexibility and openness. At the same time, however, the word retains much of the negative flavor it gained as a result of National Socialism. "*Heimat* is always restrictive," writes Henryk Broder. "It fences people in, and therefore also fences people out" (Broder 91). It is against this cultural background that Barbara Honigmann sets her trilogy. When referring to the spiritual, physical, and social space that her protagonist strives for, Honigmann uses the term *Heimat* with noticeable frequency and clear reference to German history. In doing so, she pulls into her text the whole history of the term.

With her frequent use of the word *Heimat* in *Eine Liebe aus Nichts*, Honigmann directly references both German Romanticism and the problematic legacy of the term. The protagonist first makes mention of *Heimat* by relating it directly to the process of travel: "Es war so eine Idee gewesen, daß man immer wieder in ein neues Land, in eine

[25] Since the focus of his book is to explore German dialect poets and *Liedermacher*, Wickham's exploration of *Heimat* in a transcultural German context is limited.

neue Heimat aufbrechen müsse…" (*Liebe* 38). The juxtaposition of the terms *Heimat* and *aufbrechen* describe the protagonist's actions exactly. This longing for *Heimat* is a longing for an almost mythical concept that has been lost (Applegate 5). When the protagonist travels to Frankfurt to attempt to trace her ancestor's footsteps there, she remains disappointed: "Wollte ich mich etwa, bevor ich in die so ersehnte Fremde fuhr, noch einer Herkunft oder Heimat versichern?" she asks herself. "Aber ich habe nichts entdeckt," she concludes (*Liebe* 69). Here, a hope for *Heimat* fades into nothing, as this Romantic concept remains elusive. Yet the protagonist in *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* continues to be active, covering much physical and social ground in her search for a sense of *Heimat*. She remains a searcher and a wanderer throughout the text, always hoping to find the elusive sense of *Heimat* around the next corner. In this next section, I trace the protagonist's process of searching, and identify it as a necessary step taken to connect to and reinvent her own sense of place. I first examine the physical spaces in which she searches for a sense of *Heimat*, and then analyze the social connections she makes on this journey.

Though she has a close group of friends in her hometown of Berlin, the physical space of the city remains threatening to the protagonist and reminds her constantly of her "otherness." From her apartment window, she looks out on the *Straßenbahnhof* and the *Zentralviehhof*; shades of grey and the sight of factories and smokestacks dominate her bird's-eye view of the city. From her window, the city seems far away and she seems separate from it; she only engages with the spaces around her to complain of the stench of the animals being slaughtered. The protagonist describes her personal landscape of Berlin as "ein unruhiges und bedrohliches Meer" (*Liebe* 41). Returning to Berlin illegally after a

few months spent in Paris, the protagonist takes on the role of foreigner in her native city. She is unable to call up any connection to the physical space of Berlin: "selbst die Erinnerung, schien mir, konnte nicht wirklich an den Orten halten" (*Liebe* 105). She refuses to redraw connections to the social space of Berlin; she wanders the city and visits her old haunts, but avoids old friends and greets no one. The search for meaning and a sense of her own past in Berlin is futile; the protagonist is overcome with grief as she identifies a pointlessness that seems to emanate from the city: "Plötzlich, wie ich da vor den Häusern stand, ist mir aller Sinn abhanden gekommen von Weggehen und Wiederkommen and Freundschaft und den verschiedenen Orten der Welt" (*Liebe* 105). Berlin, for this protagonist, remains a space of fruitless searching. Only by going into exile is she able to establish a sense of connection with physical and social spaces.

Before embarking on her trip to Paris, the protagonist in *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* stops in Frankfurt, her father's birthplace, hoping, she says, to secure for herself a sense of *Heimat* before she sets out for foreign places. This search, however, is also futile. She wanders around the city unable to find a trace of her past. "Die Stadt blieb mir verschlossen," she says (*Liebe* 66), "meine Herkunft dort war ganz unsichtbar geworden" (*Liebe* 69). She takes a guided tour of the towns strung along the Rhine, where various ancestors had lived, and where the history of German-Jewish settlement dates back to the first and second centuries A.D. She remains disappointed, however, when the tour guide speaks only of Siegfried and the *Nibelungenreise*, and does not mention the German-Jewish history of the area.

The protagonist's time in Paris is both a voluntary and necessary exile; here, she defines herself as an immigrant and an emigrant, a wanderer and a searcher. Her

engagement with city spaces in Paris, though often unsatisfying, is an important stage in her journey towards an ultimately hybrid and multilayered identity. In choosing Paris for her escape from Berlin, the protagonist chooses the place her father and mother lived in exile some forty years earlier. She comments on the contradictory nature of her choice: "Mehr als von allem anderen bin ich vielleicht von meinen Eltern weggelaufen und lief ihnen doch hinterher" (*Liebe* 31). Because she cannot find her parents' old haunts in Paris, the city remains a location of hidden, elusive family history. At the same time, she hopes that her exile will be an escape from her own skin: "das Weggehen könnte auch so etwas wie ein Verwandeln sein, bei dem man die alte Haut einfach abstreifen würde…und alles finge noch einmal ganz von vorne an" (*Liebe* 48). This protagonist's process of finding a sense of place proves to be substantially more complex, however.

Upon arrival in Paris, the protagonist attempts to find a sense of home in the city right away. Even in the train station as she arrives, she looks around "wie in einer neuen Wohnung" (*Liebe* 12). Because of construction projects, she is unable find an entrance to the city. The exits are blocked, "als ob wirklich kein Zugang in diese Stadt hinein zu finden wäre" (*Liebe* 13). Paris is immediately characterized as a city in process, in flux, just as the protagonist's search for home there is a process she actively – though unsuccessfully – embarks upon. Honigmann's protagonist then begins to fervently explore the physical territory of the city in an attempt to find a sense of belonging. She walks for kilometers and kilometers, "als ob ich das Land überrennen und mir unterwerfen könnte" (*Liebe* 13-14). She begins a habit of going into apartment buildings and climbing the stairs, pretending to live there. In a sense, she tries on each of these as her home, but is ultimately rejected when people eye her suspiciously and ask if she is

looking for someone. In searching for a sense of *Heimat* in other people's homes, she only gains a sense of her own foreignness. This sense of wonder that other ways of living exist is also liberating for the protagonist, as in this passage: "plötzlich berührte mich ein ganz unbekannter Geruch, ein fremder, ohne Vergleich und ohne Erinnerung, als ob es vielleicht doch noch eine ganz andere Welt gäbe, in der nicht alles an alles erinnert" (*Liebe* 15). Honigmann's protagonist begins to collect physical spaces of possibility and moments of hopefulness in Paris. In this text, however, she remains a searcher and a wanderer through both physical and social space.

The protagonist attempts to find a sense of *Heimat* not only in physical space, but also in human relationships. Her problematic relationships with her father and with her lovers Alfried and Jean-Marc in *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* are emblematic of this process of searching. The protagonist in *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* describes her connection to her father as "eine Liebe von weit her…nur ein Einsammeln von Begegnungen und gemeinsamen Erlebnissen…und nie ein Zusammensein" (*Liebe* 24). This lack of intimacy between father and daughter is evident in the briefness and awkwardness of their last and only interaction in this text, a phone conversation shortly before her father's death. Though questions and conflicted thoughts fill the protagonist's head, she is only able to bid her father an awkward farewell: "'Na ja, … tschüs also'" (*Liebe* 84).

The primary communication between father and daughter is indirect, and mediated through the writing of letters. The first of these letters is brief and consists mainly of the text of a quote which appears in two Hölderlin poems entitled, significantly, "Die Liebenden," and "Der Abschied." The quote reads, "Trennen wollten wir uns, wähnten es gut und klug. / Da wirs taten, warum schreckte wie Mord uns die

Tat. / Ach, wir kennen uns wenig" (*Liebe* 23). The protagonist's father changes the emphasis in the poem by underlining the word murder, thereby characterizing the separation between father and daughter as a thing of violence. Another barrier between father and daughter is the protagonist's dissatisfaction with her father's silence on his own past. She comments:

> [meine Eltern] taten immer so… als hätte niemand jemals zu ihnen gehört, der im Getto verreckt oder in Auschwitz vergast worden ist…mein Vater sprach lieber von seinen Vorfahren an der hessischen Bergstraße... Und schließlich waren [meine Eltern] nach Berlin gekommen, um ein neues Deutschland aufzubauen, es sollte ja ganz anders werden als das alte, deshalb wollte man von den Juden gar nicht mehr sprechen. (34)

The relationship between father and daughter is characterized by silence, missed connections, and lack of intimacy. "Die Sehnsucht nach dem Zusammensein ist wie die Sehnsucht nach dem ewigen Leben: ein kindischer Traum" (*Liebe* 87).

The protagonist forms romantic connections with two men in *Eine Liebe aus Nichts*. In the case of her German lover Alfried, she uses the vocabulary of war, of the Shoah and its legacy, to define their relationship:

> Es ging immer um Gewinner und Verlierer, und zwar wetteiferten wir nicht um den Sieg, sondern um die Niederlage, jeder fühlte sich verloren und klagte den anderen als Gewinner an. […] Dabei haben wir uns nie richtig angesehen, nur verstohlen und verschämt von der Seite und von weitem, nie wirklich ins Gesicht, wie aus Angst nach einer schrecklichen Nacht, einer Bluthochzeit, am hellichten Tag danach. (47)

The protagonist and Alfried are not able to communicate directly. They communicate through notes slipped under one another's doors and meet at night and act like strangers during the day; he refuses to invite her to his home. The two avoid any talk about personal history, family history, or the past: "wir schwiegen über alles, als ob da nichts wäre; eine Anspielung war schon zuviel und jede Frage eine Zumutung" (*Liebe* 47). This

silence pervades every aspect of their relationship. The protagonist cannot bring herself to call Alfried by name, since his name sounds so Germanic, “denn ich konnte, wollte und durfte den Germanen nicht verzeihen, was sie den Juden angetan hatten” (*Liebe* 47). The protagonist’s relationship with Alfried remains an impossible struggle as the two are locked in a negative Jewish German symbiosis: “Denn wie gegen meinen Willen liebte ich ihn ja, und diese Liebe ist mir oft wie ein Zusammenhang oder gar Zusammenhalt vorgekommen, aus dem wir nicht heraus könnten” (*Liebe* 46).

The protagonist’s relationship with the Jean-Marc is similarly difficult. Their shared identities and contrasting experiences as Jews shape their romantic relationship. In contrast to her relationship to Alfried, here the main topic of conversation is the past, their family histories, the Shoah, and emigration of their parents. These stories are like “Legenden, tausendmal erzählt. Jetzt wiederholten wir sie uns gegenseitig, sangen sie fast im Chor, wie verschiedene Strophen ein und desselben Liedes” (*Liebe* 55). Jean-Marc, however, refuses to acknowledge the protagonist’s Germanness, and she finds herself defending her national identity to him. The ever-present, spoken and unspoken references to religious and national identity of the protagonist serve as a barrier between herself, her German lover Alfried and American lover Jean-Marc.

In her search for a sense of *Heimat* in physical and social space, the protagonist in *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* remains unsuccessful. Nevertheless, this search represents an important stage in the ultimate reinvention of physical and social relationships that acknowledge the protagonist’s multilayered identities. The process of exile that begins in this novel is a “theme and structuring trope” (Guenther 220) that runs through

Honigmann's whole trilogy, connecting the three texts and tracking a progression of events.

In *Roman von einem Kinde*, the protagonist "outlines the stages that led up to exile" (Guenther 221). In her native country, she already feels a sense of spiritual exile, faced with the fact that Jewish life is all but impossible in the GDR. This feeling of alienation forces the protagonist to consider exile as the only route toward a living engagement with her own Judaism. The protagonist's exile is both voluntary and forced: experiencing the impossibility of creating a sense of place for herself in Jewish spiritual space, she makes the decision to leave the GDR. Here, Honigmann introduces the theme of exile as an option with liberating potential. With her narrative, she intertwines Galut and Diaspora – voluntary and forced exile. From the beginning of *Roman von einem Kinde*, journeying takes on positive connotations, as in the following passage: "Manchmal habe ich einen Traum im Wachen, daß der Weg zu mir kommt und sich vor mich hinlegt und mit mir spricht und sagt: Komm, folge mir einfach, ich werde dich führen" (*Roman* 31). Here, the protagonist imagines travel to be effortless, and sees in the journey a sense of promise for the future.

Christina Guenther argues that the novel *Eine Liebe aus Nichts* "charts the process of migration" (Guenther 223). Here, the protagonist is in a state of limbo; she is a wanderer searching for a sense of *Heimat* that she ultimately is unable to find in real physical and social space. This protagonist hopes that a journey will spell transformation for her: "ein Verwandeln" (48), "ein Abenteuer und ein Versteck" (*Liebe* 60). In *Eine Liebe aus Nichts*, it becomes clear that the creation of a sense of place must be an active process in which the protagonist herself is the key player. Though the hoped-for

transformation and connection does not take place, the protagonist collects and begins to invent moments of imagined belonging. Unable to find *Heimat* in the real spaces she inhabits, the protagonist invents a home for herself: "Ellis Island ist meine Heimat" (*Liebe* 57). With this invented space, the protagonist links past, present, and future; she links hope with homesickness; she references both uncertainty and a sense of adventure. Anat Feinberg argues that the Ellis Island metaphor indicates "a fruitful tension between pleasure in the foreign and homesickness" (Feinberg 9). She goes on to argue that Ellis Island, as a metaphor, signals "provisional living as a human condition" (Feinberg 9).

Honigmann uses an island metaphor once again to refer to her ancestor's lives in *Damals, dann und danach*. As Jews, she writes, they lived on "Inseln im Meer des Exils" (89), moving from one island to another throughout their lives. The island metaphor indicates both openness to and safety from the larger world. Honigmann writes that these metaphorical islands would sink into the sea, forcing their inhabitants to move on. The island, thus, is a temporary space, a metaphor for constant motion. At this stage in the protagonist's journey, she invents her own version of an island metaphor on which to project her hope for a sense of place.

Reinventing Physical, Social, and Spiritual Spaces

Located just outside of Germany, and home to one of the largest Jewish communities in Europe, the city of Strasbourg is the physical, social, and spiritual space in which the protagonist begins to successfully create a sense of place. The final collection in Honigmann's trilogy, the essays in *Damals, dann und danach*, as well as the story "Bonsoir, Madame Benhamou" in *Roman von einem Kinde* focus largely on the

protagonist's life in her chosen exile in Strasbourg. In this section, I examine the city of Strasbourg as a hybrid and dynamic physical, social, and spiritual space of belonging for the protagonist.

Upon her arrival in this border city, the protagonist begins to make peace with the idea of her own perceived foreignness. Arriving in Strasbourg, she has cut off her ties to Berlin but is not yet familiar with the new space she inhabits. "Zuerst bin ich nur auf Zehenspitzen gegangen, so fremd war mir der Boden…" (*Roman* 113). She has trouble with the French language: "wie fremd mir die französische Sprache war… mit ihrem ewigen Nasalieren und all den fallengelassenen Endungen, und manchmal hätte ich sagen wollen: Sprich doch bitte wie ein normaler Mensch" (*Roman* 114). Fighting her way through these difficulties, the protagonist is forced first to consider her position as a foreigner, and then to accept and even embrace it. "Nun weiß ich endlich, was es heißt, fremd zu sein," she says, "Dieses vage schon immer anwesende Gefühl hatte sich hier in eine Wirklichkeit verwandelt. Es war das deutlichste auf der Welt: Ich bin eine Fremde. Und so schwer, wie es war, brachte es mir auch die Erleichterung, die eine klare Erkenntnis eben bringt" (*Roman* 114). As Christina Guenther argues, Honigmann's protagonist begins the process of "embrac[ing] self-imposed and empowering uprootedness – physical exile from her cultural and geographical site of origin – as a necessity for spiritual survival" (Guenther 222).

In Germany, the protagonist struggled with her position as an outsider, but did not have the agency to engage with this identity. In Strasbourg she struggles actively and thoughtfully with her own sense of foreignness. Though difficult and contradictory, she acknowledges the positive sides of being a foreigner in France. She gains a sense of

freedom through her position as “ein Zuschauer, ein Gast” (*Roman* 17). She feels free to define her own identity in France, instead of having others define it for her. “Schon deshalb war Frankreich also für mich das ‘Land der Freiheit’, weil hier niemand auf mich sah, und ich frei von Beobachtung und Beurteilung leben konnte, und nicht der Blick der anderen mir meine Gestalt gab” (*Damals* 53).

This sense of foreignness extends into a real-and-imagined homecoming for Honigmann’s protagonist. “Für mein neues Straßburger Leben hatte ich mir eine Legende zurechtgelegt,” she says “nach der ich nämlich gar nicht her-, sondern vielmehr hierher zurückgekommen bin” (*Damals* 59). She consciously decides to stop searching and remain in Strasbourg for as long as it takes to reconcile herself with her own sense of foreignness. “Ich will jetzt ununterbrochen hier bleiben, einfach hier sein, sozusagen meine Zeit absitzen, ohne immer wieder wegzufahren und zurückzukommen, und solange mit dem Fremden zusammensein, bis wir uns aneinander gewöhnt haben, das Fremde und ich” (*Roman* 114-115). Here, Honigmann’s protagonist reinvents foreignness for herself as something positive and freeing.

The physical space of Strasbourg is outside Germany, yet is also directly on its border and has been intimately connected to and hotly contested with Germany. The protagonist chooses to live in a house “drei Strassen hinter der Grenze” (*Damals* 46). In the story “Hinter der Grande Schul,” Honigmann describes Strasbourg’s lively and hybrid Jewish community. The title of this story refers to a synagogue called “Grande Choule” in her neighborhood, which Honigmann renames “Grande Schul” – no doubt to remind the reader of the German origins of the word. Her neighborhood is officially called the “quartier allemand,” but, because of its largely Jewish population, jokingly referred to as

the “quartier juif” (*Damals* 59). In emphasizing the hybrid Jewish-German-French nature of her chosen living space, Honigmann points to the inherent heterogeneity of the physical space. She goes on to explain that Strasbourg is home to a large and diverse community of Jews from all over the world: many languages are spoken in Jewish homes, and “die Herkunft [verzweigt] sich oft über viele Länder und gar Kontinente” (*Damals* 60). Paul Michael Lützeler argues convincingly that Honigmann values not only the spiritual community of Judaism in Strasbourg, but also the city as a multicultural space (Lützeler 16-17), and own her place within a community of immigrants. Thus the physical location of Strasbourg allows her to invent a new sense of place and sense of self.

The protagonist’s Strasbourg friends are a transnational group with their origins in Alsatian France, Libya, Algeria, and Morocco. The protagonist’s Moroccan friend Michou mourns for her late husband and their life together in Italy; she teaches Spanish and runs a charity organization for Mexican youth. Her Algerian friend Sophie refuses to go skiing with her Polish husband and children, preferring sun and ocean. The protagonist, in turn, writes in a language and claims a literary tradition that her friends shudder at. While each woman has a complex set of multiple loyalties to people, places, and nations outside of Strasbourg, each is also actively engaged in the community in Strasbourg. A shared sense of “double location” allows these women to create a strong friendship and deep connection. The protagonist’s friendship with these very different women is so close that it is described as almost a kinship: as she looks into their eyes, she no longer feels a sense of her own otherness, as she did with her German friends, but instead sees her friends as a “Vervielfachung und Verspiegelung meiner Selbst” (*Damals*

76). The physical and social space of Strasbourg – a site of hybrid histories – becomes a place of cross-cultural solidarity and a gathering place for a vibrant and transcultural Jewish community. Honigmann's protagonist includes herself in this real-and-imagined community: "Wie so viele Juden habe ich meine Herkunft aus fast allen Ländern Europas, und ich bin darauf manchmal ein bißchen stolz" (*Roman* 89). As Christina Guenther convincingly argues, the protagonist's Strasbourg is "a conceptualized world that extends beyond national borders" (Guenther 228). It is a dynamic hybrid space that contains room for both a sense of otherness and a sense of belonging, for multiple allegiances and loyalties.

The protagonist's move from Berlin to Strasbourg is also a move away from a Shoah-based Jewish identity and toward a dynamic and personal engagement with Judaism as a religion. Exile provides her with a context for a living Jewish identity and the distance to engage critically with the concept of a Shoah-based identity; it provides the separation necessary for a freer exploration of both Germanness and Judaism. In Strasbourg, she comments numerous times on her amazement at the sheer numbers of Jewish families and religious and community events taking place. Her sense of place, however, does not stem primarily from the already existing Jewish community. Instead, I argue, it comes from her own engagement in the smaller, hybrid community of friends that she is active in building.

In the story "Meine sefardischen Freundinnen" (*Damals, dann und danach*), the protagonist and four female friends create their own personal version of practicing Judaism by forming a Torah study group. In this narrative, Honigmann's protagonist switches from the pronoun "ich" to the pronoun "wir," emphasizing her identification

with this group. She and her friends meet weekly to read and interpret the Torah; the group also serves as a meeting of friends, a support group, a weekly ritual that is rarely missed. Text, interpretation and teaching – Torah and Talmud – lie at the heart of Judaism. In the Diaspora, it is the Torah that forms the central linking point between members of the Jewish faith, and the text that serves to unify Jews in their diversity. Here, the women enter into an ancient tradition of Torah interpretation, one that links them to generations of Jews. As women, they reinvent this historically male tradition for themselves.

The protagonist's Torah study group is made up of five women from five different nations who speak a number of different languages: "Unserer unterschiedlichen Lebenswege und Herkunft wegen schwirren mehrere Sprachen in Michous Küche herum" (*Damals* 66). This Torah study group becomes a hybrid space, a space where French is spoken with an accent, where Hebrew-Italian and German-French dictionaries share space at the table with the Hebrew texts, and the women nibble on Moroccan sweets. As Christina Guenther argues, cross-cultural solidarity emerges out of the shared study of the sacred texts (Guenther 228). They create dynamic and heterogeneous Jewish identities that are "Ever in flux, [and] hold the promise of continuous evolution and innovation" (Guenther 228).

In Strasbourg, the protagonist's Jewishness becomes an important and deeply personal dimension of her identity. Jewishness is presented as a flexible, dynamic, and emotional dimension of identity, as "etwas, das mehr wie Liebe ist, die einen reich macht und trotzdem weh tut" (*Damals* 17). This comparison between Judaism and love personalizes the protagonist's connection to her religion. Christina Guenther argues that

“Honigmann’s texts locate her on the nexus of two discourses of Jewish Otherness: the first a discourse defined in terms of victimization, genocide and loss, the second a discourse of an alternative culture, of cultural difference” (222). I suggest here that this second discourse is a hybrid and dynamic space that Honigmann’s protagonist creates herself out of connections and creativity.

Conclusion

Honigmann’s protagonist begins her journey on an imagined Ellis Island, as a wanderer and a searcher who collects moments of real and imagined belonging and connection. She wanders through the streets of Paris and Berlin, and searches for links to her ancestors and connections that will help her build her own future. She engages with ideas such as the negative German-Jewish symbiosis, Judaism both as a Shoah-based identity and as a living religion, and the German concept of *Heimat*. With links between herself and her friends, between past and present, between religious texts and her own daily reality, she creates a hybrid sense of place for herself out of multiple physical, social, and spiritual spaces. Homi Bhabha writes about hybridity as not as a goal, but as a starting point, a “third space which enables other positions to emerge […] and new sites to be opened up” (Bhabha, *Interview* 211, 216). With the connections she draws, the hybrid space of Strasbourg becomes a site from which this protagonist reinvents her lived space, creating a space of home that is dynamic and constantly in process.

Chapter 4: Linguistic, Literary, and Theatrical Spaces of Home in Özdamar's Trilogy

"Man sagt, die Zunge hat keine Knochen.
Ich drehte meine Zunge ins Deutsche, und plötzlich war ich glücklich"

– Emine Sevgi Özdamar[26]

Introduction

In the passage above, Emine Sevgi Özdamar writes about the intimate connection between language and experience. She creates a link between acquisition of language and gaining a sense of place within a foreign space: simply by "turning the tongue" into German, the speaker becomes happy. In this chapter, I discuss Özdamar's three novels *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei, hat zwei Türen, aus einer kam ich rein, aus der anderen kam ich raus* (1992), *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* (1998), and *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* (2003), focusing on the protagonist's active and critical engagement with linguistic, literary, and theatrical spaces. I examine the connections she forms with these spaces from her position of "double location." To contextualize my analysis, I first discuss Özdamar's bio-bibliography, and then I examine the ways in which Özdamar's protagonist engages critically with German linguistic, literary, and theatrical spaces. I analyze the ways in which she collects words, phrases, literary passages, and theatrical experiences. I demonstrate the ways in which she makes connections between these linguistic, literary, and theatrical spaces and her own cultural, gendered, and personal experience. Finally, I examine how the protagonist reinvents these canonical spaces in order to create a sense of place for herself within them.

[26] Emine Sevgi Özdamar. "Meine deutschen Worte haben keine Kindheit." *Der Hof im Spiegel*. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2001. 129.

Emine Sevgi Özdamar's Trilogy in Context

I first contextualize my analysis of Özdamar's trilogy with a discussion of the author and her work. Born in 1946 in Malatya, Turkey, Emine Sevgi Özdamar began an acting career at the Bursa Children's Theater while she was still a child. She first came to Germany in 1965 as a "guest worker,"[27] in order to earn the money she needed to attend acting school. After studying drama in Istanbul in the late 1960s, she worked in various theaters and became politically active in Turkey. Returning to Berlin in 1976, she worked as a production assistant to Benno Besson at the *Volksbühne* in East Berlin. From 1980 to 1986, Özdamar performed on stage at the *Schauspielhaus Bochum*. Since then, she has appeared in various films, most notably in Hark Bohm's *Yasemin* (1988) and in Doris Dörrie's comedy *Happy Birthday, Türke* (1992) (Chiellino 152, 468). Since the early 1990s, her focus has shifted towards a literary career.

Emine Sevgi Özdamar is the author of numerous essays, dramas and semi-autobiographical novels. Her dramas, entitled *Karagöz in Alamania* (1984) and *Keloglan in Alamania, Die Versöhnung von Schwein und Lamm* (1991) reference the Turkish satirical tradition of *Karagöz*, which highlights humorous interactions and misunderstandings between characters of different nationalities. Özdamar is perhaps best known for *Mutterzunge*[28] (1990), her first prose collection. In the central narratives "Mutterzunge" and "Großvaterzunge," she traces the journey of a young woman in

[27] Özdamar repeatedly emphasizes the oxymoronic nature of the term "guest worker" (Reading, Bücher am Nonnendamm, Berlin, February 10, 2005). In Turkey, she says, a guest is someone who is welcomed, taken care of, and served, and certainly never expected to work.
[28] This text is available in English translation: Emine Sevgi Özdamar. *Mother Tongue*. Trans. Craig Thomas. Toronto: Coach House Press, 1994.

Germany trying to locate her identity and roots within German linguistic and cultural spaces, in her native Turkish language, and in the old Arabic writing her grandfather had used. The protagonist calls herself a "Wörtersammlerin," (48) and the text focuses on the connections and contradictions between the German, Turkish, and Arabic languages and cultures. With this collection of short prose, Özdamar begins to work with the tropes she expands upon in her trilogy of migration.

Mutterzunge is followed by what Özdamar identifies as three semi-autobiographical coming-of-age novels.[29] Since each novel continues describing the development of the protagonist where the last one left off, and since the novels reference one another in numerous identical characters and plot details, I identify these works as a trilogy and interpret the protagonist loosely as one and the same person. The trilogy begins with *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei, hat zwei Türen, aus einer kam ich rein, aus der anderen ging ich raus* (1992)[30], which has been the subject of a number of scholarly studies on cultural and linguistic hybridity. This text, woven artfully together out of mythology, memory, and fantasy, is told alternately as a fairy tale, a myth, a personal and national history, and a *Bildungsroman*. *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei* describes the female protagonist's nomadic childhood and youth in Turkey – her family relocates numerous times out of economic necessity – and ends with her emigration to Germany. The text often takes on the tone of magic realism as the protagonist negotiates between ancient traditions, modern life, and her own physical, emotional, social, and sexual development. *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei* sets the scene for the remaining two

[29] Reading, Bücher am Nonnendamm, Berlin, February 10, 2005.
[30] This text is available in English translation: Emine Sevgi Özdamar. *Life is a Carawanserai has two doors I came in One I Went out the Other*. Trans. Louise von Flotow. London: Middlesex University Press, 2000. I will henceforth refer to the text by its shortened title, *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*.

works in the trilogy, introducing the themes of nomadism and home, and placing the protagonist in creative engagement with her linguistic, physical, social, sexual, and gendered space.

Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn (1998) goes on to trace the travels and coming-of-age of the young protagonist in her native Istanbul and West Berlin, during the 1960s and early 1970s. The text describes her initial exploration of the city of Berlin, her adventurous travels between Berlin, Paris, Istanbul and rural Anatolia, her involvement in socialist movements, her employment in various factories, her development and work as an actress, and her exploration of friendship, love and sexuality. In this text, the protagonist begins to make connections and form a personal sense of "double location." She engages most closely with physical, social, and bodily/gendered space in this novel. The trilogy ends with *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* (2003), which describes the protagonist – now in her late 20s – and her work as an assistant to Benno Besson at the *Volksbühne* in East Berlin, her life in Wedding and Pankow of the 1970s, and her friendships and relationships on both sides of the divided city. In this text, Özdamar foregrounds the protagonist's engagement with physical, literary, and theatrical space, demonstrating how she inhabits and claims these German spaces.

Emine Sevgi Özdamar is the winner of numerous literary awards, including the 1991 Ingeborg-Bachman Prize for *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*, and the 1999 Chamisso Prize and 2004 Kleist Prize for her literary contributions in total. The debate on the Germanness of German literature that was sparked by her victory in the Bachmann Prize competition, and the debate that surrounded the inception of the Chamisso Prize are revealing of critics' reception of her work. Özdamar was the first non-native speaker of

German to receive the Bachmann Prize, which is given as the result of a three-day conference of German-language writers in Klagenfurt, Austria, and is one of the highest literary honors in the German-language literary scene. Instead of using Özdamar's victory as an opportunity to call for an expansion of the German cultural canon, many critics responded by orientalizing Özdamar's text and emphasizing her position as a "foreigner" to the German literary and cultural scene. Newspaper headlines declared: "Interessante Stoffe kamen von Ausländern" (Gruber 1) and "Zuwandrer beleben die deutschsprachige Literatur" (Sträter 1). The debate that followed the awarding of the Bachmann-Prize positioned Özdamar as the "Turkish Other," all but ignoring her longtime engagement in both East and West Germany and the range of "German" and "Turkish" literary strategies and cultural references in her text. The Chamisso Prize that followed for Özdamar in 1999 is given by the *Bayrische Akademie der Schönen Künste* to non-native writers "deren Werke von ihren Themen und Adressaten her der deutschsprachigen Literatur angehören." (Chiellino 441). The title of the prize references the central place that Chamisso, among numerous other non-native writers, has in the German literary canon. However, the prize, given on the basis of literary merit and a background of migration, is often seen as an official German stamp of approval for non-native writers. Thus the Chamisso Prize creates a contradiction that is still perceived as necessary in the German literary world, highlighting the Germanness of works while grouping their authors together as migrants.

Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei became the subject of debate in June 2006, when, because of similar plot details, Feridun Zaimoglu was accused – by a Germanist who wished to remain anonymous – of plagiarizing his novel *Leyla* from Özdamar's

Karawanserei (Weidermann 1). Özdamar herself ultimately refuted this accusation of plagiarism. This discussion brings to light yet again the difficulty caused by grouping writers together based on their direct or indirect experiences of migration. In response to the Zaimoglu-Özdamar scandal, Zafer Şenocak writes "In der Vorstellungskraft der deutschen Literaturkritik gibt es kaum noch den einzelnen Türken. Vielmehr hat sich eine Sehweise etabliert, die aus einzelnen Biografien heraus eine Typisierung des Türken distilliert. "Der Türke" oder "die Türkin" kommt von der Stange, er oder sie ist Massenware geworden" (Şenocak 1). Şenocak provides a useful critique about the generalizations made in the field of German Studies about Turkish-German literature and autobiography.

Outside of these discussions, Özdamar's work has been positively received by German readers, and praised by critics. Early reviews focus largely on Özdamar's use of language, and on her role as "eine Wanderin zwischen Orient und Okzident" (Bielefeld 1). *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* has been termed "ein weiblicher Abenteuerroman" (Fessmann 1) and "ein moderner Schelmenroman" (Bielefeld 1). Of *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*, Christoph Bartmann writes: "Alle reden vom Berlin-Roman. Hier ist einer" (Bartmann 1). Özdamar is well-received internationally by students and scholars from Turkey to the United States, where her books are the subject of numerous articles and top the reading lists of many graduate and undergraduate seminars on migration.

Özdamar Scholarship, Autobiography, and *Bildungsroman*

Özdamar's work, most notably *Mutterzunge* and *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*, has been the subject of a number of recent studies emerging out of German Studies in both

North America and Europe. The bulk of this work has focused on the hybridity of language and culture in Özdamar's texts. A number of scholars write on Özdamar's innovative use of the German language, mètissage (mixing of Turkish and German in the same text), and direct translation of Turkish idioms into German. Sohelia Ghaussy uses the term nomadism as a metaphor to describe Özdamar's embodied, physical, and hybridized German prose in *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei* (Ghaussy, "Nomadic Language"). Bettina Brandt discusses the role of Arabic as a mediator between Turkish and German in *Mutterzunge* (Brandt, "Childhood Memories"). Azade Seyhan writes that Özdamar's work "challenges the reader to engage in a genuine conversation of cultural bilingualism" (Seyhan, "Scheherazade" 247). Özdamar's protagonists have been examined by various scholars as cultural performers. In her latest book *The Turkish Turn in German Literature*, Leslie Adelson writes that Özdamar's work portrays "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live" (Adelson 33). B. Venkat Mani writes about Özdamar's critical engagement with both Turkish and German traditions of performance, and notes that she employs the idea of cultural performance to escape the writing of a victimized narrative (Mani, "Good Woman of Istanbul"). My own work builds most closely on the work of Adelson, Ghaussy, and Mani. I seek to deepen the focus on language and culture by treating language and culture themselves as not merely hybrid, but as malleable, constantly changing spaces. I examine the multiplicity of factors involved in connecting oneself to and reinventing language and culture into a personal space of home.

Further studies have examined the role of gender in Özdamar's texts. Scholars identify her as a feminist writer who challenges "the logic of [her] own cultural history as

well as the myth of western notions and practices of women's liberation" (Seyhan, "Scheherazade" 236). Sohelia Ghaussy discusses Özdamar's prose as corporeal, arguing that this "highly embodied prose…remains in flux, creating shifting and contingent meanings which decenter authoritative masculinist discourses" (Ghaussy, "Nomadic Language" 9-10). Monika Shafi discusses the protagonist's performance of gender identity as a critical engagement in locality (Shafi, "Joint Ventures" 193-214). My own work on gender builds closely on Shafi's work, on bell hooks' notion of the chosen margin as a site of power (hooks, *"Margin"*), and on Judith Butler's idea that the body is a fluid and constantly changing space (Butler, *Bodies*). Again, I treat the sexual, gendered body as a fluid space over which the protagonist has agency.

Özdamar's work has also been the subject of comparative studies on both national and transnational literatures. Karen Jankowsky discusses the debate on national and canonical literature that surrounded Özdamar's historic victory in the Bachmann Prize competition (Jankowsky, "'German' Literature Contested"). Moray McGowan analyses the creation of a European identity in Özdamar's texts (McGowan, "'Fractured Gaze'"). Azade Seyhan makes an important contribution with her book *Writing Outside the Nation*. Comparing Mexican-American and Turkish-German literatures, Seyhan examines the works of Özdamar and others to create an interdisciplinary analysis of what she calls "transnational narrative." Scholars have also examined the ways in which Özdamar's texts engage in a personal way with the historical and political events in Germany and Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s. Mahmut Karakuş, for instance, studies the the international student movement as portrayed in Özdamar's *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*. Instead of analyzing Özdamar's protagonist in relation to one or the other cultural

context, I engage with the idea of "double location" in my analysis, placing the protagonist in a multiplicity of cultural and national contexts.

Though I look to this important scholarship from the field of transnational literature, my own research pushes beyong this field, using spatiality as a starting point for my analysis and drawing connections between two fields – German-Jewish literature and transnational literature. With the following chapters, I seek to broaden the focus of Özdamar scholarship by reaching outside of German Studies, outside of transnational studies, and looking instead to scholarship from the field of human geography and cultural studies to guide my literary analysis. As I examine how the protagonist collects spaces, makes connections, and ultimately reinvents language, literature, theater, physical, social, and bodily space, I engage especially with Edward Soja's theory of "Thirdspace" and the work of Henri Lefebvre on social space. I refer to the work of Yi-Fu Tuan on place and Gillian Rose on social and corporeal space. Nadje Al-Ali, Homi Bhabha, Vilem Flusser, and Christopher Wickham inform my discussion of the link between spaces of migration and home.

"A story is a tightrope between two worlds" writes Jeanette Winterson in her text *night screen* (141).[31] The idea that a narrative itself is a space of connection between differing perspectives, cultures, or worlds is useful to an understanding of Özdamar's texts. Her texts are spaces of connection: between national histories and transnational experiences; between the universal and the individual; between the author's imagination and the reader's perception; between memory and creative license. Özdamar's presentation of

[31] Leslie Adelson references this quote in the context of literature of migration in her 2005 book *The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature*.

semi-autobiographical material allows her narratives to become sites of connection between her own experience, her memory, and her creative license, between memoir and fiction, and also between reader and text. She uses the arguably German national genre of *Bildungsroman* to frame stories about a protagonist expert at navigating between cultures, one who carves out her own unique cultural space for herself. In what follows, I examine the use of these genres in the context of Özdamar's trilogy.

Özdamar herself refers to *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*, *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn,* and *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* as semi-autobiographical novels. While she relies heavily on details from her own biography, the author emphasizes her use of creative license, mythology, and magic realism (Özdamar Reading, February 10, 2005). Her mix of autobiography and fiction creates a sense of personal connection between the German reader[32] and the Turkish protagonist. Özdamar's readers are invited to participate actively both in experiencing the protagonist's life and, importantly, in relating it to their own lives. The novels archive recent history by recounting the protagonist's personal experiences with economically difficult times in Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s, her clashes with Turkey's oppressive regime in the early 1970s, her activity in the international student movements of the 1960s and 1970s, and her close observations of both sides of the divided city of Berlin. By drawing the reader into an individual story, the text sets up a relationship between individual and historical circumstances that is personalizing, not generalizing.

Özdamar's protagonist is not a heroine on a pedestal: instead, she connects her life closely with the lives of others. Though clearly an individual with a strong sense of

[32] As scholars like Karen Jankowsky have pointed out, Özdamar's intended and actual audience is composed mainly of native speakers of German (269).

agency, she is also family member, a member of a group of Turkish guest workers, an actress who defines herself through her work, and a woman who forms her identity through friendships and romantic relationships with people of a variety of nationalities. Especially in the study of transcultural literature, autobiographical voices such as this one often run the risk of being interpreted by mainstream critics as representatives of cultural and historical circumstances about an entire migrant population, playing the role of "authentic voice" or "native informant" (Mani 29). Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak argues that a term like "native informant" crosses out the possibility of a personal identity; instead, the native informant serves simply as a signifier of cultural or historical circumstances (6). B. Venkat Mani argues that situating a protagonist as a "native informant" or "authentic voice" often serves to create a narrative of victimization. Sigrid Weigel and Leslie Adelson write that authors who portray their protagonists as authentic voices run the risk of situating their texts as sociologically useful case studies meant to inspire pity in the reader (Weigel 223; Adelson, *Feminism* 306). I agree with Weigel and Adelson that the interpretation of the "native informant" in autobiography, though at times useful in documenting real circumstances, also pushes Turkish-German literature into a category of "Other" that marginalizes these works of literature.

With her use of autobiography, Özdamar's intention is clearly not to provide the German reader with the "truth" about her own life or the lives of Turkish migrants to Germany. Neither Özdamar nor her protagonist claims to be an objective source of truth about Turkish migration to Germany. Özdamar's protagonist is not merely an "authentic voice" or a "native informant." Instead, she draws energy from a critical engagement with both Turkish and German cultures, from playing with language and cultural gender

roles, and from actively shaping her physical and social spaces. This protagonist ultimately emerges as a cultural performer who creates a personal, hybrid space to inhabit, a third space that welcomes the reader in and resists victimization.

I turn now to Özdamar's use of the genre *Bildungsroman*. To send a young protagonist away from home on a *Bildungsreise* has historically become a way to illustrate his coming of age as a modern individual. Countless writers – Novalis, Thomas Mann, and Günter Grass, to name a few – have taken Goethe's 1796 novel *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* as a model to either follow, criticize, or reinvent. In this sense, Özdamar's novel is a classic example of the genre. The similarities between Özdamar's *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* are striking in that they show an established national formula creatively used to describe the transcultural journey of a modern individual. Özdamar sends her young female protagonist on a coming-of-age journey between her native Istanbul and West Berlin, to Paris, and through poverty-stricken eastern Turkey. Like Wilhelm Meister, this protagonist deliberately puts herself through a process of self-education through theater, through literature, through a series of teachers, and through love relationships. She chooses teachers, mainly older Turkish men; she reads texts by Marx, Engels, Kafka, Brecht, and Nazim Hikmet; she involves herself in leftist politics and in the Brechtian theater; she explores love, sexuality, and human relationships.

Uwe Spörl's definition of the genre highlights two differences that make Özdamar's novel into a reinterpretation of a *Bildungsroman*. Spörl defines the genre effectively when he writes that such a novel concerns itself with "Bildung einer

Hauptfigur zu einer selbstbestimmten Individualität im Einklang mit seiner gesellschaftlichen Umwelt" (Spörl 288). As I will demonstrate in my textual analysis, agency (*Selbstbestimmtheit*) is the key Özdamar's protagonist's process of education. This protagonist, however, instead of positioning herself "im Einklang mit [ihrer] gesellschaftlichen Umwelt," engages critically with this environment in order to reinvent it for herself. She creates a highly personalized sense of place that relies on multiple allegiances and a sense of "double location."

After a 2005 reading of *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*, audience members – mainly German women of the author's approximate age – responded to the text by excitedly relating events from their own lives in 1970s Berlin. Lively storytelling about personal experiences continued after the discussion period, as this roomful of readers had engaged personally with Özdamar's text. Through semi-autobiographical writing, she gives readers direct access to the personal perspectives of a transcultural performer. She constructs her novel as a site of contact between reader and text, and between a German national genre and a transcultural narrative.

In the discussion that followed this literary reading, Özdamar said that migration and cultural hybridity have figured as prominently in her own family history as they do in her literary work. Her grandfather had three successive wives, she told the audience, and so she had both a Turkish grandmother, an Anatolian grandmother, and an Armenian grandmother. Her parents, in turn, migrated from Anatolia to Istanbul, embracing an increasingly westernized lifestyle. In her novels, essays, and in her public persona, Özdamar emphasizes her own migration as a deeply valuable experience. "Deutschland

ist für mich wie eine Tür," she said. What interests her most, she then related, is how language changes when a person enters that door (Reading, 10 February 2005).

Linguistic Spaces

In this chapter's opening quote, Özdamar points to the physicality of language by relating spoken German words to the physical organ of the tongue. The protagonist in Özdamar's trilogy "turns her tongue" into German, collecting linguistic experiences in German to create a sense of place. She mixes German and Turkish, and uses a creatively hybridized form of German as a tool to make connections between cultures, to forge an identity, and to reinvent the linguistic space she inhabits. In this section, I trace this process of engagement with linguistic space.

The trilogy's central text, *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, traces the protagonist's process of German language acquisition. Her first contact with the German language is through newspaper headlines she doesn't understand, and through memorized poetry and songs. In the following analysis, I examine the passage below, which illustrates the migrant protagonist's creative collection and reinvention of words and phrases in German:

> Ich konnte kein Wort Deutsch und lernte die Sätze, so wie man, ohne Englisch zu sprechen, "I can't get no satisfaction" singt. Wie ein Hähnchen, das Gak gak gak macht. Gak gak gak konnte eine Antwort sein auf einen Satz, den man nicht hören wollte. Jemand fragte zum Beispiel "Niye böyle gürültüyle yürüyorsun?" (Warum machst du soviel Krach, wenn du läufst?), und ich antwortete mit einer deutschen Schlagzeile: "Wenn aus Hausrat Unrat wird." (*Brücke* 11)

By using words and phrases deliberately out of context ("Wenn aus Hausrat Unrat wird"), Özdamar's protagonist not only injects humor into the text, but privileges the sound and

texture of the words over their meaning. The protagonist delights in the way the sound of German rolls off her tongue. Placing so much importance on creation of words in the mouth – and on their sound to the ear – points to the physicality involved in speaking and listening. Words become bodies, as in the following passage, where the protagonist observes three men conversing loudly while crossing the street: "Wenn sie eine Straße überquerten, überquerten sie sie nicht, um in eine andere Straße zu gehen, sondern, weil ihre lauten Wörter in der Luft vor ihnen hergingen" (45-46). Words alone seem to walk across a street, pulling people along behind them. In an essay, Özdamar writes, "…meine Erfahrung mit deutschen Wörtern ist ganz körperlich. Die deutschen Wörter haben Körper für mich. Ich bin ihnen im wunderbaren deutschen Theater begegnet" (Özdamar, "Kindheit" 131). The corporealization of language and emphasis placed on the sound and texture of the language allows the migrant protagonist to remove words from their original context and re-embody the German language to make it her own.

As the protagonist plays with and learns the German language, mimicry serves an important function in the text. At first, she speaks without understanding, "Wie ein Hähnchen, das Gak gak gak macht" (11). Her lack of understanding, instead of rendering her helpless, allows her to collect bits and pieces of German, play with the language, and recontextualize it to use it for her own purposes. Before she knows their meaning, the protagonist uses these memorized lines as kind of protection and assertion of her identity against that of her mother and other authority figures. In arguments, or when she doesn't want to answer a question, she simply responds with a memorized line. Thus, when she does learn German, the protagonist has already collected words and phrases, played with

the language, adopted it physically, and reinvented it. Mimicry becomes a technique for understanding and claiming the language.

Özdamar often practices mètissage, or mixing of languages, inserting Turkish words and phrases into her German text ("Niye böyle gürültüyle yürüyorsun?" (Warum machst du soviel Krach, wenn du läufst?)). She discusses this in an interview: "Zwei Sprachen sind wie zwei Geigen…Ich möchte, daß die deutschen Leser erst die Musik ins Ohr kriegen, und dann können sie die Übersetzung lesen. Ich wollte ihnen diesen musizierenden Moment schenken" (Özdamar qtd. in Gutzeit 39). In mixing and connecting two languages, Özdamar allows her reader to experience the sound and feel of the language before having access to its meaning; she invites the reader to experience just what her protagonist experiences with the German language. Özdamar often uses onomatopoeia to imitate sounds in the text: "wenn der Bus kam und die Tür aufging tisspamp" (*Brücke* 24) and "so küssten sie sich matsch matsch und liebten sich" (*Brücke* 23). Here again, words are grounded in the physical world. By imitating the body and the physical world, language itself gains a body. Language, for this protagonist, is so much more than meaning: it has a physicality on its own, a texture and sound that becomes personalized.

Language is a fluid and constantly changing entity over which Özdamar gives her protagonist agency. In the first sections of *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, Özdamar's Turkish-speaking protagonist encounters spaces and corresponding words in a city and language that are foreign to her. Her new place of residence in Berlin, for example, is called *Frauenwohnheim*; both the concept of a dormitory and the word for it are unfamiliar. The protagonist responds by giving the German word *Wohnheim* a Turkish

spelling – *Wonaym*. Connecting two languages – one familiar and one foreign – into wordplay gives her a sense of agency over a new and uncertain situation. It helps her claim foreign spaces such as the women's dormitory and project upon them a flavor of home. In another instance, the protagonist renames physical spaces completely, calling the broken-down train station that she and her friends visit "beleidigter Bahnhof." Since the Turkish word for "broken-down" also means "beleidigt," the protagonist explains, this train station becomes "unser beleidigter Bahnhof" (34). By drawing creative connections between German and Turkish, by modifying German words and renaming physical spaces, she not only makes these words her own, but takes possession of foreign concepts and physical places.

"Özdamar denkt auf Türkisch und schreibt auf Deutsch," writes Kader Konuk, "damit integriert sie ihre Muttersprache in das Deutsche und löst sie darin so auf, daß Spuren ihrer Migration auf stilistischer Ebene sichtbar bleiben" (150). One technique Özdamar uses throughout her trilogy is to translate Turkish graphic idioms literally into German. In *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*, for example, she translates the idiom "kurtlarini dökmek" ("to let it all hang out", "to have a good time") word for word as "seine Würmer ausschütteln" (Ghaussy 7). This picture jumps out at the German reader, seems comical and perhaps bizarre. This practice of connecting languages literally allows Özdamar not only to push beyond the borders of the German language, but to create a unique hybrid language, injecting her German prose with a freshness and unexpectedness for the reader. Sohelia Ghaussy refers to this connection as the creation of a "nomadic narrative voice," one that "exhibits no nostalgic desire for fixity and authority" (1). Ghaussy suggests that Özdamar's literal use of metaphor and her direct translation of

idioms puts the reader into a position of a child learning to make sense of language, learning to connect language with the physical world. Both the author and the protagonist act as cultural translators, negotiating easily between two languages in order to connect the familiar and the unfamiliar, home and migration.

In *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei,* Özdamar uses the German language to write about three generations of Turkish women. From generation to generation, language shifts and changes in this novel: the protagonist's grandmother speaks an Anatolian dialect, her mother speaks an Istanbul dialect, and the Turkish-speaking protagonist relates this all in German. Sohelia Ghaussy writes that "[Özdamar's] use of German for the identity construction of the narrator throws into crisis the notion of stable and separate cultural systems in its creation of an intercultural alterity" (3). This description of Turkish lives in German represents a connection between two cultural systems, a code-mixing that reinvents both the language and the lives being described.

Özdamar points directly to lived linguistic spaces with the full title of the trilogy's opening text, *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei hat zwei Türen aus einer kam ich rein aus der anderen ging ich raus*. She describes a carawanserai – an ancient resting place for nomads and their caravans – this way: "eine Karawanserei ist ein altes Hotel, sie ist aus Stein, und es gibt kein Licht, und es gibt auch keine schließbaren Türen. Es ist ein bißchen wie ein Labyrinth" (Özdamar qtd. in Wierschke, "Selbstbehauptung" 249). With her title, Özdamar uses language and syntax to introduce the themes of movement (*aus einer kam ich rein aus der anderen ging ich raus*), and rest (*Karawanserei*), of literal and metaphorical nomadism. Linguistically, the slow-paced beginning of the title, *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei* indicates a temporary moment of rest, but this is quickly followed

by a waterfall of words indicating restlessness: *hat zwei Türen aus einer kam ich rein aus der anderen ging ich raus*. As Kader Konuk argues, the syntax and choice of words in this title implies that life is a "Momentaufnahme einer dauernden Bewegung" (Konuk 145). Choosing to place this prose – in bright red – as the centerpiece on her novel's cover, Özdamar foregrounds the importance of words and language in her text. With her title, she situates the speaker on the cusp between restlessness and rest, between motion and a sense of place.

By becoming fully bilingual in *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, the protagonist reinvents herself and her relationship to physical, social, and gendered space. After commenting on her ability to speak German as well as Turkish, her father says about the protagonist, "Sie ist als Nachtigall nach Alamania geflogen und dort ein Papagei geworden, sie hat die deutsche Sprache gelernt. Jetzt ist sie eine türkische Nachtigall und zugleich ein deutscher Papagei" (179). Her father's interpretation of bilingualism does not hold entirely true for the protagonist, however. Instead of being two birds at once, one who sings and another who imitates words, this protagonist engages with and becomes fluent in both languages and cultures. As we have seen, she mixes the Turkish and the German languages together expertly to create a hybrid, personal language that helps her make sense of her experiences and create a sense of belonging. The protagonist's bilingualism privileges her in practical ways as well. She is aware of this privilege and uses it to her advantage. Her role as a translator, for example, puts her in a position of authority and allows her to stand outside both German and Turkish cultural and gendered spaces. She is able – simply with her words – to defend a woman from being physically harmed by a group of men for "forgetting her sense of honor" as a

Turkish woman. Because of her bilingual and bicultural role as a translator, her words take on a greater authority than those of the other Turkish women in the dormitory, and she becomes a leader of sorts. Her bilingualism allows the protagonist to carve out a niche of her own, and to go places she couldn't go and say things she couldn't say when she was monolingual.

In *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*, the protagonist ultimately elects – both voluntarily and by necessity – to return from Istanbul to Berlin. Her decision is based on what she equates with a flight from the Turkish language:

> Ich bin unglücklich in meiner Sprache. Wir sagen seit Jahren nur solche Sätze wie: Sie werden sie aufhängen. Wo waren die Köpfe? Man weiß nicht, wo ihr Grab ist. Die Polizei hat die Leiche nicht freigegeben! Die Wörter sind krank. […] Wie lange braucht ein Wort, um wieder gesund zu werden? Man sagt, in fremden Ländern verliert man die Muttersprache. Kann man nicht auch in seinem eigenen Land die Muttersprache verlieren? (*Sterne* 23)

The protagonist's native language is tied to images of violence: it has become sick. Thus migration and the use of another language is necessary for the protagonist to regain a sense of health. Unhappiness in the Turkish language becomes a metaphor for her unhappiness in physical space. As in this section's opening quote, a move toward the German linguistic and cultural context comes with an expectation of happiness.

The protagonist's process of collecting words and phrases, making connections between German and Turkish, and reinventing language parallels her process of creating a home for herself. Language, in this novel, is as physical and tangible as the spaces that make up the protagonist's home. By engaging her protagonist in mimicry and word play, by foregrounding the sound and texture of language, by inserting Turkish language passages into the German text, and by commenting on the privileged position the

protagonist's bilingualism brings her, Özdamar allows her to claim a sense of place in the German language. The protagonist creates a space in the German language that is distinctly personal. This complex and contradictory space allows for playfulness, for both mimicry and hybridization, for both comfort and a way to describe new experiences. Throughout life of motion, the protagonist carries with her a sense of home, comfort, and groundedness in the form of her own hybridized German language.

Literary and Theatrical Spaces

In *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*, the protagonist takes a book about Benno Besson with her on the train to Germany. Observing her as she devours the text, her seatmate comments, "Schönes Mädchen, machst du Liebe mit diesem Buch? Deine Augen glänzen, deine Brust geht hoch, wenn du es liest" (30). Texts, both literary and non-literary, serve as the guide for the protagonist. Özdamar makes numerous German literary references in her novels, signifying their importance in the life of her protagonist. This protagonist places the work of canonical literary and theatrical figures firmly into the center of everyday life. Whether she is playing Kurt Weil records to her grandmother in Turkey, or asserting to the East German border patrol that she loves Brecht, the protagonist creates a personal relationship with the literature she reads. In all the central and final texts of the trilogy, Özdamar's protagonist engages critically with German and western literary and theatrical canons. With expert knowledge of canonical literature and drama, she recreates literary and theatrical space, weaving her own story into the German cultural canon. In this section, I examine the ways in which these literary and theatrical spaces are perceived, conceived, and lived.

The very title *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* is an excerpt from an Else Lasker-Schüler poem entitled "Liebessterne." In the novel's opening paragraph, the protagonist recalls memorized lines from the second stanza of this poem to calm herself during a sleepless night. Recalling the Lasker-Schüler texts, as she relates, inserts beauty into the banality of everyday life. Lasker-Schüler is not simply quoted in Özdamar's novel, however; Özdamar models some aspects of her literary persona on Lasker-Schüler. Both writers merge their various chosen identities to create for themselves hybridized and often exoticized literary personas. In the early 20th century, Lasker-Schüler strode around Berlin dressed as the "Prince of Thebes;" in her work, she explored her connection to that city, to her Jewish religion, and to what she called the "Orient." As an actress, Özdamar's protagonist plays a variety of roles both on and off stage. In her texts, she explores her connection to the cities of Berlin and Istanbul; in her social circle, she enjoys being called "Schönheit des Ostens." Both Lasker-Schüler and Özdamar create dreamscapes in their writing, mixing mythology and everyday description. Özdamar perceives and understands her surroundings clearly, while also conceiving and reimagining them into a creative narrative.

The second half of the novel *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* is a diary of the protagonist's involvement in the *Volksbühne* in East Berlin as a production assistant, researcher, and chronicler. She creates detailed sketches of scenes and costumes, labeling them in Turkish and in German, and giving them a central and frequent place in the text (Figure 6). She sketches key figures in the East German drama scene, such as Heiner Müller (Figure 7). In this instance, a sketch of Müller's face is framed by a text that describes the protagonist's personal and professional development as a dramatist:

> Zum ersten Mal sah ich Heiner Müller. Er hat einen schönen Kopf, eine breite Stirn, und sein Gesicht sieht aus wie ein eingedrücktes Haus, tiefe, graue Augen. Ein kleiner Mann mit einem großen Gehirn. Er kam später in die Probe, die heute vom Fernsehen gefilmt wurde. Auch meine Zeichnungen. Nach der Probe gingen alle mit Heiner Müller in die Kantine. Er schaute auf meine Füße. Ich hatte pinkfarbene Schuhe an. Ich will viel über Geschichte lesen. Morgen werde ich den Film *Kuhle Wampe* von Brecht und *Rom, offene Stadt* sehen. Vor Glück kann ich nicht schlafen. Als ob man diese Filme extra für mich spielt. Es lebe Berlin. (109-110)

By juxtaposing details (Heiner Müller/pinkfarbene Schuhe), by humanizing stars (sein Gesicht sieht aus wie ein eingedrücktes Haus), and by personalizing the canon (Als ob man diese Filme extra für mich spielt), the protagonist places herself firmly within the German theater scene.

The diary entries that comprise the second half of *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* alternate between detailed description of theater productions in italics, commentary about these productions, illustrations of the characters in the form of labeled sketches (these are Özdamar's own sketches from this time), and short descriptions of life outside the theater. Toward the end of the novel, the illustrations become more frequent – once a three-page sequence is taken up solely by sketches. Özdamar privileges the illustrations toward the end of her novel in order to underline the increasing importance of her protagonist's theater life.

One entry, for example, begins with the protagonist's notes on the rehearsal of a scene from Goethe's *Der Bürgergeneral*. This, then, is followed by an illustration of the scene just described, labeled in Turkish and in German. The accompanying text serves as a validation of the protagonist's work. As he looks over the protagonist's shoulder, Matthias Langhoff says to her, "Brecht hätte gern eine Mitarbeiterin wie dich gehabt"

(151). Here, the interplay between image and text serves to complement, connect, and validate.

Living in West Berlin and commuting daily to the East, the protagonist becomes a "Brecht-Pendlerin zwischen West und Ost" (Bartmann 1). Her personal and professional connection to the Volksbühne – a showcase of the GDR frequented by East and West Germans alike – and to stars like Heiner Müller, Benno Besson, and Matthias Langhoff allows her a privileged position and unique sense of place in relation to the East-West border. At the checkpoint, the protagonist professes her love of the German theater to border patrol agents, telling them, "Ich liebe Brecht" and "Ich gehe zu Besson." At the Volksbühne, Heiner Müller flirts with her and Benno Besson praises her work. The protagonist turns the validation of her work by key players in the theater and East German authorities into her own personal transcultural project. When the GDR National Theater Association buys her scene drawings, she uses the money to write a drama she calls *Hamlet Ahmet*. "*Hamlet* ist eine türkische Dorfgeschichte," she explains, "Hamlet ist ein türkischer Bauer…" (194). Here, the protagonist reinvents existing canonical literary space.

As an actress both on and off stage, Özdamar's protagonist is a skilled and playful performer. Monika Shafi writes that the protagonist in *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* has a "theatrical, performance-based approach to identity" (195). Performance of identity allows each of Özdamar's protagonists to engage critically with her varied physical and social surroundings. In what follows, I examine how this act of performance shapes the texts and the protagonist, and speculate on the ways in which performance helps the protagonists create a sense of engagement and belonging in her surroundings.

B. Venkat Mani argues that Özdamar uses performance and humor in order to escape a victimized narrative. He writes that the protagonist draws ammunition from the world of comedy and from a picaresque tradition, and so avoids the victimization that has the potential to characterize a narrative of migration. Mani points specifically to the Turkish tradition of *Meddahlar*. Tracing their origins back to the 14th century, *Meddahlar* were eulogists, "master[s] of speech, witty and clever impersonator[s], who narrated with dramatic gestures and voice-modulation to suggest more than one character" (35). Mani argues that Özdamar's protagonist becomes a *Meddah* in numerous situations. As we have seen, she is a master of the German language, playing with it, combining it with Turkish, and reinventing it. She is an impersonator in numerous instances, using quotations as ammunition in arguments with her mother and mimicry to resolve arguments between herself and the other women in her dormitory. When she and the other women in the dormitory go through a period of conflict, they split into cliques called "Kinder," "Zuckers," "Esels," and "Huren."[33] To make fun of the others, they employ mimicry:

> Alle Frauen machten die Gesichtsausdrücke, die Handbewegungen und die Dialekte der anderen nach, man machte sich darüber lustig, wie sie liefen, wie sie aßen, und so fingen die Frauen irgendwann an, sich wieder ähnlich zu sehen. [...] Zuckers wohnten jetzt in Kindern. Kinder wohnten in Huren und Eseln, und sie fanden sich wieder zusammen. (43)

Eventually, by impersonating multiple characters like a *Meddah* would, the feuding women place themselves in the position of the others and are able to come to an understanding.

[33] The male dorm supervisor, whom the protagonist admires greatly, applies these gendered labels to the women. During the course of the novel, Özdamar's protagonist critically engages with these terms as a limiting range of roles available to women.

Before she learns German, the protagonist recites lines of text in German, employing comedy to help her lighten her first days in Berlin. On their first shopping trip to Berlin, for example, the protagonist and her friends ask for sugar, salt, and eggs with dramatic gestures and imitation:

> Um Zucker zu beschreiben, machten wir vor einer Verkäuferin Kaffeetrinken nach, dann sagten wir „Schak Schak“. Um Salz zu beschreiben, spuckten wir auf Herties Boden, streckten unsere Zungen raus und sagten: „eeeee“. Um Eier zu beschreiben, drehten wir unsere Rücken zu der Verkäuferin, wackelten mit unsere Hintern und sagten: „Gak gak gak“. …So waren meine ersten deutschen Wörter Schak Schak, eeee, gak, gak, gak. (19)

Instead of reflecting on the difficulty of being in a foreign country and not knowing the language, the protagonist makes fun of herself and emphasizes the comedy in the interaction. Özdamar uses humor to place her protagonist on center stage in a comedy, instead of allowing her to play the role of victim.

Regula Müller interprets the characters in *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei* as actors and the action as theater: “Die Autorin stellt das Leben der Protagonistin weniger als individuellen psychischen Entwicklungsprozess denn als Theater dar,” she writes (136). Müller further argues that Özdamar models her characters on the traditional *Karagöz*, or Turkish shadow play. In Karagöz, the cast, traditionally made up of typecast members of Turkey’s diverse ethnicities – Armenian, Turkish, Greek, and Jewish – plays out stories from behind a curtain onto which their shadows are projected. I would argue that Özdamar does not adopt Karagöz directly, but plays critically with the genre. Though many of the novel’s characters at first seem to represent specific types, they break through these stereotypes as well. The protagonist’s grandmother Ayşe at first seems to represent tradition and religion. She is also, however, a feisty old woman who talks

openly about sex and bodily functions, and defends the protagonist against the pressure to conform to gendered cultural roles. Other women, such as her mother, her neighbors, and the lively cast of characters the young protagonist looks up to, defy stereotype as well. Mixing and intertwining of cultures and types creates confusion, humor, and absurdity in Özdamar's novel as it does in the Karagöz tradition.

In *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, the Karagöz tradition is mentioned directly in the text. In one instance, the protagonist compares the scene in her dormitory kitchen – the women cooking, speaking in their different dialects, and misunderstanding one other – to Karagöz. Indeed, these women who at first seem to have little in common find their lives overlapping and intertwining, just as shadows do. Throughout the novel, Özdamar's protagonist seems to perform various cultural roles herself. She never refers to herself as either Turkish or German; instead, she slips into and out of various cultural roles, creating her own personal performance through a critical engagement with both cultures.

Özdamar's novel references numerous dramas from the western canon, most notably those of Shakespeare and Brecht. In the first pages of the novel, the protagonist uses quotations from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as ammunition in arguments with her mother. Monika Shafi argues that this play – in which nothing is as it seems – serves as a Leitmotiv for Özdamar's novel (204). While I do not agree that the comedy is a Leitmotiv, I do see numerous important similarities between the two works. First, irrationality and confusion encountered by the characters in Shakespeare's play create a comedy that drives the plot forward. In Özdamar's narrative, as I have argued, comedy is central to the protagonist's ability to connect her experiences in several cultures and form

a hybrid identity. Özdamar's protagonist exhibits many of the virtues of a comic character of the western canon: she is quick-witted, practical, and able to adjust quickly to new situations.[34] Instead of becoming a victim of new and unfamiliar situations, she makes fun of herself in order to master these situations.

A further similarity to Shakespeare's text is that Özdamar's narrative, like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is multilayered. The text often shifts between realistic description and dreamscapes in which the reader is unsure what is reality and what is fantasy. "Are we awake?" asks Shakespeare's Demetrius, "It seems to me / That yet we sleep, we dream" (Act IV, Scene I). Özdamar's reader could pose the same question when reading the love scenes in *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, in which Özdamar juxtaposes dreamscapes with realistic description. In arguments with her mother, Özdamar's protagonist performs several of Shakespeare's characters, including Helena, Titania and Demetrius, both in Turkish and in German. The quotes she uses are out of place and meant only to confuse and annoy her mother. It is significant, however, that she recites the lines of several characters, thereby alerting the reader to the fact that she is willing to perform different roles on the stage as in life. In her performance, she connects herself directly and personally with the western cultural canon.

Quotations from Brecht's texts accompany the protagonist throughout *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*. B. Venkat Mani argues that Özdamar's protagonist "shows a Brechtian awareness of herself as a cultural performer" (51). Because of her role as a traveler, she is able to subvert both German and Turkish gender expectations, picking and choosing, and creating her own gender and cultural roles. Awareness that she is acting a role, for example, allows her access to the all-male world of the restaurant "Kapitän."

[34] For further explanation of the characteristics of a comic character, see Preminger 145.

"Ich liebte es, zwischen diesen bärtigen und nichtbärtigen Intellektuellen als einziges Mädchen zu sitzen. Es war wie eine Hauptrolle, und die Männer waren meine Zuschauer" (217). She gains access to this world by drawing attention to – and making fun of – the fact that normally the only women who sit down at the tables are prostitutes. She introduces herself to them as an actress playing a role. "Ich bin als Konsumatristin [Hure] gekommen," she says before taking a seat (217). With this line, she voices the fact that women are not normally included in male public space, and she does so with humor. This acting-with-awareness and awareness-of-acting draws both laughs and respect from the men around her. By situating herself as a performer, the protagonist literally creates a place for herself at the table.

In his article "The Good Woman of Istanbul," B. Venkat Mani points to details in character development and plot in Özdamar's *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* that run parallel to Brecht's *Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan*. He argues that – like Özdamar's protagonist – Brecht's main character Shen-Te is able to mold cultural traditions to her own advantage. Her mixing of eastern and western cultural traditions allows her to rise from her role as a prostitute and become a tobacconist, and later – in disguise as Shui-Ta – a factory owner. Mani argues that Shen-Te profits from her "critical treatment of the old eastern traditions and her functional adaptation of the new western traditions" (29). As we have seen, Özdamar's narrator also uses her engagement in two cultures, and her ability to make connections and to reinvent cultures for herself as a source of constructive energy.

In *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*, the protagonist repeatedly observes theater mirroring life, and life mirroring theater. In a performance of *Die Bauern*, for example,

she comments that the proletarian characters are being played by East Germans "die hierhergekommen sind, um sich selbst zu spielen" (81). She relates the slow and deliberate movements of the actors to the movement of her grandmother in Istanbul (82). By engaging with the drama, the protagonist not only makes connections between drama and her own observations of reality, but she makes comments about and connections between cultures as well.

Just as the dramas performed at the *Volksbühne* are personalized and made relevant to her life, this protagonist observes life around her in Berlin with the eyes of a dramatist. She describes her first impressions of her West Berlin apartment like the opening scene of a drama. The scene begins with sound: the loud closing of the iron door, the click of a typewriter, and voices from the distance. Then, the seven characters – the inhabitants of the WG – enter individually, each with a distinct costume and physical characteristics. Sitting down at the table and listening to the protagonist – who is standing on the other side of the table – tell a story of her grandmother, the actors become her audience. Commenting further on the work routine of the seamstresses in her building, the protagonist says, "Es war immer die gleiche Szene. Keiner schrieb neue Dialoge für sie" (61). She looks back on six months spent in East Berlin this way: "Als hätte ich sechs Monate im selben Stück gespielt, und jetzt ist das Stück abgespielt, und ich schaue das leere Bühnenbild an" (165). All the world's a stage for this protagonist, who takes on a central role in the drama that she herself invents.

By setting her narrative into both western and Turkish dramatic traditions, Özdamar becomes a cultural translator who creates a zone of contact for her reader. Through conscious acting and humor, her protagonist engages critically with her different

cultural surroundings, makes connections, and creates a unique and hybridized sense of place for herself. Monika Shafi argues that "The protagonist escapes from a restrictive social code by voyaging and performing, engaging in a playful, but powerful subversion of the binary worldview she was taught to embrace" (206). Özdamar's protagonist uses performance to make connection with German cultural canon and everyday life, and to place herself on center stage in Germany from the time before she speaks the language to the time she works as an assistant to Benno Besson.

Conclusion

Özdamar's protagonist not only acquires language, but plays with it, reinvents it, and lives it. She not only reads German literature, but references and reinterprets canonical texts and authors. She not only acts in dramas, but integrates performance into every aspect of her life. Language, literature, and theater become malleable spaces that shift and change as the protagonist masters the German language and develops as an artist. She collects impressions, words, and phrases; she mixes and connects them with her own life; she reinvents them. With these creative processes, Özdamar's protagonist creates spaces that are nuanced, personal, and completely her own. In doing so, she develops a clear sense of place for herself within German linguistic, literary, and theatrical spaces.

Chapter 5: Physical, Social, and Gendered Spaces of Home in Özdamar's Trilogy

"Berlin war für mich wie eine Straße gewesen. Als Kind war ich bis Mitternacht auf der Straße geblieben, in Berlin hatte ich meine Straße wiedergefunden."

– Emine Sevgi Özdamar[35]

Introduction

With her semi-autobiographical trilogy, Özdamar creates narrative spaces in which home and migration are intimately linked. In the passage above, Özdamar's protagonist uses a metaphor crafted out of a childhood memory to create an image of the sense of place she feels in the city of Berlin. By equating Berlin with a familiar street, the protagonist connects a foreign city – something large and impersonal – with the characteristics of intimacy, security, and home. 'Away' becomes 'home' as this foreign social space is endowed with value for the protagonist.

Through active engagement with her various physical, social, and gendered spaces, Özdamar's protagonist creates a hybrid and personal sense of home within her experience of migration. In this chapter, I demonstrate the ways in which the protagonist's engagement with physical, social, and gendered spaces allows her to make connections and create a new sense of home within her experience of migration. These spaces emerge as sites of dialogue between home and migration and as sources of energy and creativity for the protagonist. Both home and migration become dynamic processes,

[35] Emine Sevgi Özdamar. *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1998. 193.

involving acts of changing, creating and imagining.[36] Though the creation of home and place is central to her novels, it is important to note that Özdamar never uses the word "Heimat" in her text. This choice takes the reader out of a purely German national frame of reference, placing the discussion into an individual and transcultural context. In this chapter, I first examine the ways in which the protagonist connects physical space to invent a sense of place in her life of migration. I then analyze historical, political, and social spaces of engagement. Finally, I examine the connection between the sexual, gendered body and a sense of place. I argue that – with her interpretation of these spaces – the protagonist's idea of home becomes as flexible, changeable, and malleable as she herself becomes.

Physical Spaces

"Jeder hat in einer Stadt seine persönliche Stadt" writes Özdamar in a short prose piece entitled *Der Hof im Spiegel* (17). She recounts a story in which several people are asked to draw up personal maps of a city; each map is distinctly different, highlighting the places that hold meaning for the individual. I begin my examination of the physical spaces Özdamar's protagonist encounters, engages with, and recreates for herself with a study of her initial experience of physical space in Berlin in *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*. In this novel, Özdamar's protagonist creates her own personal topography of the city of Berlin, weaving the geography of selected physical spaces she inhabits into her own identity, and connecting her own life with her physical surroundings. In doing so, she creates a sense of place in the foreign city spaces she encounters.

[36] I refer here to Al-Ali and Koser when they write that "conceptions of home are not static but dynamic processes, involving acts of imagining, creating, unmaking, changing, losing and moving 'homes'" (6).

I return here especially to Soja's concept of Thirdspace, the idea that each individual lives space and creates a nuanced sense of place that is "real and imagined." In my examination of spaces, I analyze how space is perceived and conceived, and conclude by speculating on how it is lived. By rooting herself firmly in the present, by living space instead of just observing it, and by employing agency and creativity in her interactions with new spaces – as I will demonstrate – Özdamar's protagonist begins to build a strong sense of place for herself in the city of Berlin.

Özdamar's first novel, *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*, introduces the themes of migration and nomadism which are central to the two novels that follow. From the train she rides while in her mother's womb in the opening scene, to her family's economically-driven moves from Istanbul to Bursa and Ankara and back to Istanbul, to her stays with her family in small towns in Eastern Anatolia, this young protagonist is always in motion. By ultimately deciding to migrate to Germany, she continues what has become a family tradition. Her grandmother's interpretation of her motives indicates that she understands the necessity of this decision: "'Ihre Füße sind von der Erde weggeflogen. Sie muß fliegen, sonst kommen ihre Füße nicht mehr zurück auf die Erde'" (370). Physical space comes alive only through the actions of people. In *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*, objects and physical spaces are personified and literally given a voice:

> [Man] hört…Pfannenstimmen, Öl redet, Kinder bringen die Fensterscheiben zum Sprechen, die Holzlatschen machen aus den Häusern Echos, Gabeln, Teller reden aus den offenen Fenstern, Radios erzählen laut von den schönen Augen einer Frau, wegen der ein Mann in Elend gefallen ist. (120)

With passages like these in her first novel, Özdamar sets the scene for an exploration of the interaction between physical and social space and the creation of 'place.' This text also introduces the processes of migration that take place in the two texts that follow.

As *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* opens, the protagonist observes, imagines and recreates the unfamiliar physical spaces she encounters. One of the first of these spaces is the railroad car on the night train she rides to Germany. The narrative is framed by rail travel; both the protagonist's first journey and her ultimate return to Germany are by train. In literature as in life, trains have often served as signifiers of societal or collective transition. Even as the traveler is given a pause, a time for reflection, she cannot stop the train from speeding mercilessly toward an uncertain future. With this first train scene, Özdamar sets her protagonist, the individual traveler, into a collective migration, that of Turkish workers to Germany. This railroad car is a dimly lit, enclosed space filled with strangers. Mourning the loss of her old home, the protagonist connects her observations of the traveling strangers to memories of her mother, and the train car to the front hallway in her parent's apartment. In one instance, she notes, "Eine [Frau] hatte Fersen wie meine Mutter" (14-15). The protagonist, though she misses her mother, exhibits no desire to return to her old home. Instead, her detailed description of the faces, bodies, and gestures of the strangers around her takes on a closeness and intimacy that indicates a desire for familiarity with the present space. The protagonist places herself firmly within this space, rooting herself in the present and living the space around her. Thus the space of the railroad car becomes one in which the boundaries between the familiar past, the uncertain present, and the unknown future are ruptured.[37] The railway car, a moving

[37] Homi K. Bhabha writes that migrants themselves are "marks of the shifting boundary that alienates the frontiers of the modern nation" (DissemiNation 315).

space which is only temporarily inhabited, becomes a first, if inadequate, substitute for home. It is a space of transition, a space of *becoming*. From the novel's beginning, familiarity and foreignness, home and movement are closely connected. With this opening, Özdamar introduces the theme of home in the context of migration, and indicates that the very concept of home is undergoing a process of transition.[38]

The protagonist first describes her perception of the physical space of Berlin as small and confining. "In den ersten Tagen war die Stadt für mich wie ein endloses Gebäude," she says, alluding to her repeated path from the dormitory to the bus to the factory and back (18). The dormitory itself, inhabited only by female Turkish workers kept sequestered from the outside world, is a Turkish microcosm within a German city. B. Venkat Mani writes that the dormitory functions as an ironic, modern version of an Ottoman harem, an all-female space secluded from the rest of society (Mani 40). Gradually, however, the protagonist resists this seclusion and begins to gather experiences from outside and bring them inside. First, she and her friends turn on the television, beginning a habit of dressing up at night to go down to the common room and watch TV. By dressing up as if to go out, they treat the semi-private space of the common room as a public space. This action allows them to imagine an expansion of their inhabited spaces. As the weeks pass and the protagonist places herself in the city, the physical space she describes expands further. She and her friends leave the dormitory at night to visit an *Imbißwagen*. They begin to explore the city: "Wir brachten…neue Adressen aus Berlin mit: KaDeWe, Café Keese, Café Kranzler…" (41). Before actively placing herself in the city, the protagonist gradually gathers up these images of Berlin

[38] These ideas were sparked by my reading of Simon Ward's article on trains in Post-1989 fiction. See Ward, " 'Zugzwang' oder 'Stillstand.'"

spaces to take home to the dormitory with her. Before fully immersing herself in the new city, she becomes a collector of city spaces. She creates a real-and-imagined patchwork of familiar and new, of outside and inside spaces to wrap herself in. With this collection, she begins to make connections between her own identity and city spaces, reinventing both her identity and the function of the spaces around her.

The protagonist's increased interaction with the new spaces around her is a performance that she herself conceives and reconceives. Vilem Flusser writes of migration as just such a performance, as a "creative endeavor" (17). Finding a home in her life of motion is a creative process that involves a reinterpretation of the protagonist's surroundings. Using her own creativity, she transforms the image of unfamiliar spaces in order to inhabit them. Her sense of place is rooted in the visual. Her description of the factory where she works, for example, is detailed, creative and personal: "Während der Arbeit wohnten wir in einem einzigen Bild: unsere Finger, das Neonlicht, die Pinzette, die kleinen Radiolampen und ihre Spinnenbeine…Wenn die türkische Dolmetscherin kam und ihr Schatten auf dieses Bild fiel, zerriß das Bild wie ein Film, der Ton verschwand, und es entstand ein Loch" (17). Here, the factory workstation, an otherwise public and generic space, becomes personal.[39] The protagonist recreates her workplace as an image, a single frame in an otherwise constantly moving film. She stops time for a moment and imagines herself inside this frame, simultaneously inventing and inhabiting the new space.

During the protagonist's first months in Berlin, she repeatedly explores groups of buildings and a train station that have been ruined in the fighting of World War II. Her

[39] Henri Lefebvre argues that space can be a product, that can be reproduced exactly through the repetitious gestures of workers (26, 70, 74).

exploration of and continued return to this architectural space links the tropes of migration and home in the text. As she and her friends return day after day to these ruined spaces, the city seems to be claiming them: "Die Berliner Straßen hatten viele Lücken, hier stand ein Haus, dann kam ein Loch.... Wenn wir in den Nächten in den Berlinlöchern herum liefen, verloren wir unser Leben" (59). As they lose themselves in the war ruins, the girls' identities seem to merge with these city spaces. Their ventures into the ruins – sometimes daring, sometimes fearful – always represent another step in their process of coming-of-age. In another instance, the protagonist and her friends claim the ruins of a train station as a space of their own. They call the broken-down *Anhalter Bahnhof* "unser beleidigter Bahnhof" – a Turkish-German word play (34).[40] In both instances, the protagonist connects her own life to her architectural surroundings.

From their position as newcomers to German society, the protagonist and her friends reinvent the function of this train station. It is no longer a place to begin and end journeys, but a destination itself, a space to be explored and claimed. Özdamar's protagonist later returns to this ruined train station whenever she misses her family, as if this physical space allows for a connection of past and present, of home and away. As a ruin, the old Anhalter Bahnhof gains an inadvertent social function: it becomes a space of solitary contemplation for the young protagonist. This once public space becomes a private, individual, and transcultural space. Its decay reminds us of the temporariness and malleability of physical structures. Here, architecture is a body with which the girls are in dialogue. It is a process: originally created by humans, its form has been changed by social action (war); as a ruin, it is reclaimed by a young protagonist who seeks a place

[40] The protagonist explains that the word for "broken-down" also means "offended" in Turkish; thus, the train station is renamed "beleidigter Bahnhof." For a more extensive discussion of word-play, see the section on linguistic space in the previous chapter.

of contemplation. bell hooks writes that a space on the margins of society – like the space that the protagonist and her friends hold as newcomers – has the potential to become a creative space of "radical openness and possibility" (hooks 209). In the case of Özdamar's protagonist, this creative space can simultaneously house the past and the present, home and away. This position allows her the freedom to reinvent spaces, redefine their function and make them her own.

This protagonist's encounters with new physical spaces go from being passive to becoming active. She gives strangers in a train car characteristics of familiarity; she anchors herself in her dormitory and place of work through a reinterpretation of language and image; she connects her own life with the architecture she explores. She is at first an observer and gatherer of images, and then gradually becomes actively engaged in the spaces around her, drawing connections between her own life and these spaces she experiences. She ultimately reinvents Berlin as an intimate, private and hybrid space. She reinvents individual spaces for herself, claiming them and allowing the inhabited space to merge with her own identity.

This chapter's opening quote, and its connection between the memory of Istanbul and a new experience of Berlin creates a sense of "double location." The migrant protagonist, as a traveler, is "socially and geographically situated" (Robbins 2) in Berlin, yet her experience of these new spaces is informed by her memories of Istanbul. Her sense of place, then, is not single, but multiple: it is made up of ties to several locations. In what follows, I explore the protagonist's experience of a second city – Istanbul – in *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*. At her initial return to her native city, the physical space of her Istanbul seems foreign to the protagonist. Thus far, the young protagonist

has begun to develop her own identity partly in her interaction with physical spaces in Berlin. Returning to Istanbul, she finds herself homesick for Berlin. She mourns, seeing Berlin in each object she takes from her suitcase. During her first days in Istanbul, the narrative focuses on the physical space of her parents' home. The protagonist perceives this space as static, close and oppressive. Everything has remained the same since her departure several years before:

> Als ich vor zwei Jahren nach Deutschland gegangen war, hatte die Glühbirne am Hauseingang gezittert. Sie zitterte immer noch…Der Kühlschrank in der Küche machte immer noch die gleichen lauten Geräusche. Die Nachbarin mit ihrer Katze saß immer noch auf dem gleichen Stuhl unter unserem Balkon. (177)

Though oppressively familiar, the protagonist's parents' home feels foreign to her at the same time. She calls her father "ein Mann," and her mother "die Frau, die meine Mutter sein sollte" (175). She feels trapped, pacing in the courtyard "wie in einem Gefängnishof" (184).

The protagonist's time spent in Berlin is characterized by contemplation and detailed attention paid to her physical environment. Her time in Turkey, by contrast, is characterized by motion. The text focuses on her daily trip across the Bosporus to the European half of the city to attend acting school there. "Die asiatische und die europäische Seite in Istanbul waren zwei verschiedene Länder" (222). The space of the moving ferry is calming for the protagonist. It is while traveling from one place to another, while aboard the moving and swaying ship, that she is first able to think clearly and make important decisions.

The protagonist literally becomes an explorer in her native land, when she travels to eastern Anatolia to report on the poverty there for a socialist newspaper. Hitchhiking,

riding on donkeys and hay-wagons, and relying upon the kindness of strangers for food and money, the protagonist travels easily through a series of threatening situations, seeming almost invincible. She passes seemingly static images: a woman weaving a carpet, groups of dust-covered children, a starving farmer carrying a heavy load. She connects socially with people she encounters there, but she does not hold onto these images as she did the images she encountered in her travels to Berlin; instead she is impatient to keep moving. Emboldened by her journey, the protagonist gains a seriousness and a deep distrust of an increasingly violent and politically volatile world.

The protagonist's father expresses his uneasiness with his daughter's constant motion when he says to her, "Meine Tochter, du drehst dich wie die Welt im All, hoffentlich gehst du nicht im Himmel verloren" (221). The protagonist, by contrast, finds a new sense of purpose and belonging in her movement through Turkey. Movement represents a regaining of agency over her own decisions and actions. With this agency emerges a new space of belonging for the protagonist, one that is rooted not in a single physical space, but in motion through a variety of spaces. The sense of place the protagonist creates does not require her to be sedentary, but depends on motion and is even sought through motion. Thus the protagonist's path takes on many of the same characteristics as 'place.' Yi-Fu Tuan notes that "the path [can] acquire a density of meaning and a stability that are characteristics of place. The path and the pauses along it constitute a larger place" (Tuan 182). As I will demonstrate in the section on social space, Özdamar's protagonist develops a larger, more flexible and inclusive sense of 'place' that allows her to find a sense of home within her life both in Turkey and in Germany.

The protagonist builds a sense of place for herself both in city spaces of Berlin and in motion in Turkey. In Berlin, she critically engages with the new physical spaces around her. She collects chosen spaces to inhabit, forms personal connections to these spaces, and reinvents ways of inhabiting them. The protagonist recreates these Berlin spaces for herself, claiming them and allowing the inhabited space to merge with her own identity, forming a sense of place. Her sense of place in Turkey comes to depend on movement through space; as she explores, her path itself becomes home. Throughout the novel, the protagonist has a strong sense of agency over her movement in space and her interactions with space. She creates a hybridized sense of home that is neither comfortable nor safe, but contains the potential for openness, flexibility, adventure, and for joining the notions of home and migration.

Historical and Political Spaces

"Istanbul, laßt mich in Ruhe in Berlin!" the protagonist exclaims during a period of homesickness (123) in Özdamar's third novel in the trilogy, *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*. The sights, sounds, and smells of Berlin remind her viscerally of Istanbul spaces. The Berlin rain (163, 213), a crookedly-shaped tree (187), branches tapping against a window pane (55), and a bird sitting on a branch (213) all remind her of similar scenes in Istanbul. Pear trees remind her of her grandmother's garden (98); the clicking of forks and knives remind her of Istanbul (109); *Unter den Linden* reminds her of the linden trees in her yard there (95). Here, her sense of "double location" creates rare moments of nostalgia in a life that is otherwise firmly rooted in the present. Özdamar's choice of the two cities situated on a border between East and West is particularly significant. In both

cases, the protagonist is a privileged border-crosser: the border is advantageous to her on a practical level. Her crossing of the border between European and Asian Istanbul in *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* allows her time to think clearly and a way to escape the closeness of her parents' home. In what follows, I focus on her relationship to the border between the two Cold War Berlins.

The protagonist's experience of Berlin spaces in *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* is characterized by border crossing. She crosses between West Berlin, where she lives, and East Berlin, where she works, as part of her daily routine. As a Turkish citizen, crossing the border is relatively uncomplicated for her, as the novel's opening scene illustrates. Annoyed by a barking dog outside her West Berlin apartment, the protagonist crosses into East Berlin to escape the noise. "Keiner fragt mich 'Was ist der Grund Ihrer Einreise?'" she says, "Ich hätte sagen müssen: 'Hundegebell'" (18). The novel's opening pages establish – with humor – the privileged position she holds in relationship to the East-West divide. Aware of her privileged position, the protagonist likens her border crossing to a fairy tale: "Jetzt bin ich in Ostberlin, ich habe mich vor dem Hundegebell gerettet. Wie in einem Märchen, hinter dir die Riesen, wirfst du den Kamm, und es entsteht ein Meer zwischen dir und den Riesen" (18).

To this protagonist, crossing Berlin's border means an expansion of opportunity. Crossing into East Berlin, she is able to fulfill her dream of working with Benno Besson at the *Volksbühne*. Doing so daily, the protagonist joins a community of daily border crossers. She gets to know the border guards, as she jokes with them daily, and becomes familiar with a group of Turkish men who have East German girlfriends. Their border-crossing routine is described as follows:

> Türkische Männer arbeiten im Westen, dann Feierabend, dann ein Bier, eine Zigarette, 19 Uhr über die Grenze nach Ostberlin zur Frau. Suppe trinken, dann ins Bett, um 23 Uhr über die Grenze zurück in Westen, dann 24 Uhr wieder Grenzübergang, Geld wechseln, einreisen nach Ostberlin. Frau wartet drüben vor der Grenze, dann wieder ins Bett, sechs Uhr morgens wieder über die Grenze in den Westen, dann an die Arbeit." (70)

With these stories and with her protagonist, Özdamar provides an alternative East-West narrative, a different perspective on the Cold War. While experiencing the `68 generation of student and community life in West, she also plants roots in the East German Theater scene, forming connections to stars like Heiner Müller, Monika Maron, and Benno Besson. Özdamar reinvents the wall – a symbol of restriction for East Germans – as a symbol of opportunity for her protagonist.

Though she easily crosses this border, the protagonist is aware of the deepness of the gulf between the two parts of the city: "Jedesmal, wenn ich hierherkam [in den Osten], vergaß ich den anderen Teil der Stadt, als ob tatsächlich ein großen Meer diese beiden Teile der Stadt voneinander trennen würde" (18). She demonstrates a visceral awareness of the divisions. Traveling the three S-Bahn stops from East to West, she exclaims, "Hier regnet es ja wie im Osten," remaining surprised each time (40).

The East-West setting of *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* is established by the novel's subtitle: "Wedding – Pankow 1976/77," which thrusts the protagonist into the center of the "deutscher Herbst." The repeated listing of newspaper headlines establishes the exact time and lends a documentary authenticity to the text. "In meinen drei Romanen ging es um Zeitabschnitte, in denen eine Geschichte zu Ende gelebt war," says Emine Sevgi Özdamar in a 2004 interview with the *FAZ*. "Nun konnte man von ihr erzählen. Wie im Märchen: Es war einmal die Achtundsechziger Bewegung. Es war einmal die Mauer. Es hat mir sehr gut gefallen, über solche Zeiten zu schreiben. Das ist

auch notwendig: Wenn man es verpaßt, bleiben nur Statistiken übrig" (2). *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* has been praised primarily for its documentation of the time period, and for its unique perspective on German history from the outside. The protagonist's initial views of Berlin introduce the reader to both the tone and feel of the city and the time period: "Der Novemberhimmel hing wie eine schmutzige Fotokopie eines Himmels über Berlin, in einem Westberliner Kino lief *Die verlorene Ehre der Katharina Blum*. In der S-Bahn niesten die Westberliner" (32). The protagonist herself is a keen observer of German history, showing a somewhat detached awareness of the socio-political events in Germany at the time.

The protagonist's private social spaces – her apartments in West and East Berlin – are iconic of her lived experiences of the city. Each apartment becomes a microcosm of her physical and social experience of the divided city. The protagonist's West Berlin WG, a factory floor so huge that its inhabitants ride their bikes to the kitchen, is overstuffed with every object imaginable. Broken typewriters share space with toasters; shoes, newspapers, crumbs, and cigarette ashes litter every surface; a Ping-Pong table and a three-legged bathtub complete the scene. "'Da gibt's feministische Kontrolle,'" her friend tells her, "Nagellack ist nicht erwünscht. Aber keine Sorge, stell dir einfach vor, es ist eine Theaterbühne" (48). Indeed, the description of this WG is like the description of a stage set. The reader is first introduced to the sounds of the apartment: the loud closing of the iron door, the click of a typewriter, and voices from the distance. Then, the seven inhabitants of the WG make their entrance: Janosh types, Susanne and Peter play ping pong in the living room; Inga and Barbara share a bath while Jens and Reiner use the toilets. The protagonist repeatedly describes this apartment as chaotic, and its seven

inhabitants a lively group of *Achtundsechziger* who discuss issues such as feminism, capitalism, the Nazi past, and the *RAF*. The protagonist's engagement with German historical and political spaces relate mainly to individuals: she listens to her roommates' discussions, to the conversations of war widows, and to stories about the *RAF* members from those who knew them. With these stories and observations, Özdamar's protagonist personalizes political situations, giving the reader a micro-historical perspective on macro-historical events.

Her engagement with East German political and social realities is equally personal, nuanced, and individual. The protagonist's lived space in East Berlin – a white-curtained apartment wallpapered with patterns of cats, balloons and butterflies – exudes a sense of calm for her that she perceives in the whole of the eastern city. She lives with Katrin, the daughter of Jewish intellectuals, in a small apartment in a Plattenbau. Her roommate is always sitting at the kitchen table studying Italian: "Ich weiß, ich werde Italien wahrscheinlich nie sehen, aber ich muß etwas tun..." (80). Sitting in her bedroom at night, she comments, "Die Nacht ist so ruhig hier. Ich schaue nicht einmal aus dem Fenster. Ich weiß, daß ich die Pappeln sehen würde. Aus den Vorhängen, die aussehen wie die Vorhänge der Nachbarfenstern, kommt die Ruhe, wie in ein allmählich warm werdendes Zimmer" (87). Both physical spaces are iconic of the protagonist's perception the two halves of the city. From her position on the margins, she observes East and West Berlin with a keen interest, collecting experiences. She engages with physical and social spaces, reinventing their meaning for herself.

A trip to Weimar with the actors of the *Volksbühne* shows a connection between the protagonist and German history. The lines "Wir besuchten Goethes Winter- und

Sommerhaus, auch die Särge von Goethe und Schiller" are juxtaposed with "Ich habe in den Wald gepinkelt, dabei hatte ich Angst, daß eine Schlange das Geräusch hört und herankommt" (140). Goethe and Schiller are brought into the present time and space: "Jena. Straßen, Straßen, mehlige Lichter, jetzt wird Goethe gleich hier vorbeigehen" (141). The protagonist's social space is also populated by a number of high-profile artists: she interacts with Matthias Langhoff, Heiner Müller, Monika Maron, and Benno Besson. Listening to a conversation on political events, she relates, "Wenn Müller, Maron, und [meine Mitbewohnerin] Gabi sprechen, fühle ich mich wie in einem Fremdsprachenkurs" (202). With a detached interest, she relates the contents of their political discussion. She adds to political discussions by personalizing events: by telling of her conversations with West Berlin prostitutes, or by relating stories of an individual prisoner in Turkey. Listening and observing political spaces, she connects herself personally with key players in these spaces. She lives these spaces in her two separate apartments, which become microcosms of each respective half of Berlin. With its personalized historical and political documentation, *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* emerges as an ode to 1970s Berlin by a protagonist who stands both on the inside and on the outside.

Social Spaces

Eduard Soja's concepts of perceived, conceived and lived space would be impossible without this interconnection between physical and social space. In this section's opening quote, Özdamar's protagonist equates the bodies of her Turkish friends with a map of Berlin. Connecting physical and social space, she also links familiarity and foreignness

in her lived space. In this section, I focus on *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, discussing social space as a dynamic process, and the protagonist as the key player in the reinvention of her own social spaces.

As the protagonist first explores Berlin in *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, social relationships are the driving force of the narrative. Upon her arrival, her interaction with fellow migrants and her identity as a member of a group is especially vital in her search for a sense of place in the new city. Beginning with the train scene early in the novel, Özdamar sets her protagonist, an individual traveler, into a collective migration, that of Turkish workers to Germany. As soon as she arrives in Germany, the first person narration changes from singular to plural, from individual to collective, from "I" to "we," indicating the importance of her membership in a group. This, then, is a story of an individual whose identity is developed through connections made in social space.

The protagonist experiences new physical spaces through engagement with the people around her: interactions with other Turkish workers help her bridge the initial gap between familiarity and foreignness. "Wir Frauen suchten in den anderen Frauen die Mütter, die Schwestern oder die Stiefmütter," she says (36). At first, she and her friends conjure up images of the people they left behind so actively that these people seem to be physically present. There is so much talk about fathers and brothers in Turkey, for instance, that the protagonist comments, "…die Sätze über die Brüder und Väter webten ein Spinnennetz, das das ganze Zimmer und unsere Körper bedeckt" (33). In mixing social spaces – family with new friends – the women draw connections over distances, forming multiple allegiances and creating a sense of "double location."

Using physical spaces as a source of connection over distances, the protagonist and her friends treat an outdoor phone booth as an imagined link between themselves and their mothers. They make a point to speak loudly in the presence of the phone booth, imagining that their mothers in Turkey can hear them. With increasing connections to the social and physical spaces around them, however, the girls begin to whisper around the telephone booth, as if hiding their new desires and connections from their mothers: "Wenn wir drei Mädchen auf die andere Seite der Straße gegenüber unserem Wonaym zu unserem beleidigten Bahnhof gingen und bei der Telefonzelle vorbeiliefen, sprach ich jetzt nicht mehr laut, sondern leise, in der Angst, daß meine Eltern mich in Istanbul hören könnten" (34). As they increasingly claim new physical and social spaces (*unser* Bahnhof, *unser* Wonaym) and reinvent their own identities, the protagonist and her friends feel the need to hide from this connection over time and space, and soon forget about the phone booth altogether.

As time passes, the protagonist and her friends build social relationships that help them navigate and claim the foreign space of Berlin. Older Turkish men play a central role in making the protagonist feel at home in Berlin. Two men, one of whom the protagonist calls "unser Hirte" (36) are instrumental in guiding her and her friends into the city. As they follow the two around Berlin, the protagonist notes: "[Atamans] Gesicht hatte die Farbe der Berliner Straßen" (59) and comments, "Ihr Rücken war unser Berlin-Stadtplan" (72). By drawing this relationship between social and physical space, the protagonist is able to form a connection to the physical spaces she encounters on her journeys. These same friends, mainly older Turkish men, introduce the protagonist to the German language, to the Brechtian theater, and to political discussion groups she

eventually becomes active in. The words of these men take on a weight and physicality that help her orient herself in her new space. Later the protagonist adopts these words and uses them to give voice to her own political consciousness and developing identity.

As discussed earlier, the protagonist's physical and social space of origin – that of her parents' home in Istanbul – begins to feel foreign to her. In response, she spends very little time in her parents' house and instead seeks out new social interactions and relationships over which she feels a greater sense of agency. One important setting of social interaction is the restaurant "Kapitän," where she joins a leftist political discussion group. The protagonist builds both a sense of belonging and a sense of political awareness not through ideology, but through the social interactions that take place there. The male intellectuals who meet there and accept her into their group discuss everything from socialism, to leftist European films, to 700 year old Turkish erotica. The protagonist feels a sense of comfort through this social interaction:

> Wir saßen da in den Armen des Meeres und der warmen Nacht, und die Welt schrumpfte auf dieses Restaurant, es war, als ob ich mit allen diesen alten und jungen Männern dort geboren und am Ende der Nacht dort sterben würde, und inzwischen würden wir uns viele Geschichten anhören. (221)

The restaurant stretches to become a whole world for the protagonist, and a whole lifetime. She has a sense of being cradled by the nearby ocean and the night; the social interactions she has there stretch to become her family and their stories her sense of home.

Most of the "stories" – the discussions the protagonist is a part of – are political in nature. The protagonist's active political engagement forms a social space that helps her find a sense of belonging in Istanbul. Again, this engagement is driven by social

interaction and relationships, not by rhetoric. Indeed, she becomes increasingly critical of political rhetoric. In the following instance, the protagonist compares a political discussion to a word-game played with paper and scissors:

> …wenn einer einen Satz sagte, ging ein anderer in diesen Satz hinein wie eine große Schere, schnitt den Satz in der Mitte durch und vervollständigte den Satz selbst. Dieser Satz wurde wieder von einer anderen Schere zerschnitten. Plötzlich saßen zwanzig große Scheren am Tisch, die sich nach links und rechts drehten. (231)

Frustrated by what she identifies as mere words, the protagonist leaves the social scene in Istanbul and takes action by traveling to Anatolia to report on the poverty and drought there. On her way, she interacts with local farmers, workers, military officials, and socialist party members. The protagonist's social interactions with those she meets on her trip allow her to collect experiences and form connections.

The section in which the protagonist travels to Anatolia is entitled "Wir konnten den Mond mit dem Getreide füttern." This title conveys the protagonist's perceived social role as a "modern woman" in Turkey, as one who will solve the country's problems and westernize the nation. The ever-present moon in this section serves both as a symbol of traditional Islamic Turkey and as a constant source of discussion about the Americans' recent landing on the moon, a reminder to the locals of perceived "western progress" and "Turkish backwardness." This discussion is juxtaposed with the reality that, in eastern Anatolia, people are starving because there is not enough grain from which to make bread. Everywhere the protagonist goes, people tell her they expect her and her friends to bring Turkey towards modernity. They tell her and her friends: "Ihr seid Märchenhelden" (280) and "Ihr seid die Ehre des Landes" (276). The protagonist's social position here is one between east and west; she is seen as both Turkish and as a

representative of the west. The protagonist herself rarely identifies with a national identity. Instead she negotiates between and mixes her identities with humor and ease.

Özdamar's protagonist finds a sense of belonging in the social interactions she chooses in Berlin and in Turkey. In Berlin, she allows fellow migrants from Turkey to comfort her and guide her into the city. In Istanbul, she takes comfort in the social scene at the restaurant Kapitän; in Anatolia, her interactions with people are the force that drives her. Moving through social space as she does, Özdamar's protagonist is herself "the mark of the shifting boundaries" (Bhabha 315) between past and present, home and away, and – as we shall see – between gendered cultural roles. Her social space is one of cultural negotiation over which she claims the agency. By forming social relationships, she remains firmly rooted in locality and able to engage critically with her surroundings. Through this engagement with people around her, Özdamar's protagonist creates for herself a shifting, flexible, and personal sense of home.

Body, Sexuality, and Gender as Spaces

Geographer Gillian Rose argues that space cannot exist without bodies. She sees space as "the articulation of collisions between discourse, fantasy, and corporeality" (247). In this section, I discuss the body itself as space that can be perceived, conceived, and lived. As a constantly changing, fluid space, her body is the only constant that Özdamar's migrant protagonist carries with her. In these three texts, the protagonist's body is not only a site of mediation between a subject and her physical surroundings, it is a multilayered space itself, one that links cultures, gendered expectations, and sexual

interactions.[41] It is a concrete physical space of flesh and bone, and also a space transformed by culture, all the while housing a personal identity and subject position (Hooper qtd. in Soja 273). Özdamar's protagonist shows a great awareness of her body as a site of sexual exploration, and as a site of creative negotiation between various gendered cultural roles. As I will argue, through travel, migration, sexual experience, and gender performance, the protagonist shapes her own body into a personal space of home.

Physicality is central to all three of Özdamar's texts. *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei* opens with the unborn protagonist in her mother's womb: "...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" (9). Traveling with her mother by train, the protagonist already has a voice with which to comment on the bodily space carrying her. Like Oskar Matzerath in *Die Blechtrommel*, the fetus in the womb and the infant immediately take control: she is already aware of and ready to comment on the soldiers that share the train car with her mother. This female voice provides her own story and her own subjective history of her nation.

In the opening paragraphs of *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, the protagonist recounts her first experiences of Berlin as mediated through the senses. "Es war schön, in diesen Brotladen hineinzugehen, weil man das Wort Brot nicht sagen mußte, man konnte auf das Brot zeigen. [...] Ich drückte das warme Brot an meine Brust und meinen Bauch und trat mit den Füßen wie ein Storch auf die kalte Straße" (11). Lacking a language with which to express herself, the protagonist's first encounters with this new physical space are mediated here through smell and touch. From the beginning of the

[41] "Multilayered space" is geographer Barbara Hooper's term. See Hooper, "Bodies, Cities, Texts."

novel, Özdamar's text emphasizes physicality in the protagonist's experience of the world.

Gendered physicality is central to the language and metaphor of *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei*. Özdamar creates in her text the intensely physical world of children with descriptions of bodily functions, urination, bowel movements, "Schachteln" (vaginas), and "Ware" (penises). The child and teenage protagonist expresses fascination with her little brother's penis, her sexual experiences with young girlfriends, and later the physical changes of her own puberty. When adults enter this world, it is to instruct the child protagonist on gender roles associated with these physical changes. In the following passage, the expected actions of boys and girls are linked to their bodies.

> [Meine Mutter] sagte: "Ein Mädchen muß über ihrer Schachtel sitzen und arbeiten."
> "Und die Jungs?" fragte ich.
> "Die Jungs können ihre Ware spazieren führen." (220)

By running around on the streets – taking her "Schachtel" along with the rest of her body into public space – the protagonist subverts the gender roles that are expected of her: "[Meine Mutter] sagte, ich würde warscheinlich keine Frau, sondern nur ein Weib, weil ich nicht nähen, kochen und häkeln würde, und meine Augen sähen nur nach draußen. 'Du führst immer deine Schachtel spazieren', sagte sie" (220). The body is a vehicle for the protagonist, something she takes with her on her journeys from a very young age. She invents its function herself, and subverts expectations.

The female body has historically been the site of home, shelter and nurture, as well as a symbol for nations, landscapes, and vast stretches of unconquered land. This female body has long housed the meeting of two worlds, of home and vastness, of family and nation, of familiarity and foreignness. "[Woman] is in effect home itself," writes

Karen Lawrence, "for the female body is traditionally associated with earth, shelter, enclosure" (x). Lady Liberty, Mother Russia and Delacroix's "Liberty Leading her People" are familiar images connecting the female body with the concept of nation. Heinrich Bünting's 1588 map entitled "Europe, the first part of the earth in the form of a virgin" (*Europa prima pars terrae in forma virginis*), shows a picture of Europe – her head is Spain, and her skirts stretching toward Russia (Pelz 173). Here, the European land mass is personified and woman literally becomes mapped territory; the female body is equated with earth and geography. It is significant that the mythical figure of Europa, by her very origins, personifies both home and exile, and contains within her a sense of place and movement.[42] She embodies both a sense of home and a sense motion, the seeming binaries that Özdamar's protagonist so gracefully connects.

The body is both home and geography in Özdamar's texts, but these concepts are transformed as the aforementioned gendered expectations of female body as home and geography are reinterpreted. In *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, for example, the *male* body becomes a site of femininity and home. When she first arrives in Berlin, a group of Turkish men comfort and nurture the protagonist and her friends. The protagonist's description of these men as mother figures plays with traditional notions of gendered bodies:

> In manchen türkischen Arbeitern fanden wir drei Mädchen unsere Mütter wieder. Sie kochten für uns. Wenn diese Männer sprachen, kamen die Stimmen ihrer Mütter aus ihren Mündern. Ich liebte diese Mütter, und wir konnten diese Mütter oder ihre Großmütter an den Körpern der Männer sehen. Es war schön, den Körper eines Mannes zu sehen, in dem viele Frauen wohnten. (51)

[42] In the ancient Greek myth, Europa, daughter of the Phoenician kind Agenor, is robbed by Zeus and is taken by the Phoenicians to Krete. There, she gives birth to three sons whose offspring will populate Europe (Lavielle 23). Having been taken from her homeland, Europa herself is a both a figure in exile and one who creates a home and family of origin for others (Pelz 170).

Here, the male body houses familiar women; traditional gender roles are subverted as men come to embody home. Whereas women's bodies are often equated with landscape, man equals landscape in this text. Remembering her ex-husband in *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*, the protagonist says: "Ich wollte ein kleines Tier sein, mich auf sein Gesicht setzen, dort gibt es Flüsse, Täler, Berge, Brunnen, Äcker. An allen diesen Orten wollte ich auf eine Reise gehen und mich dann auf seine langen Haare legen und schlafen" (29). Here, a man's body takes on the traditional role of a woman's body, becoming a metaphor for the vastness and possibility of journey, as well as providing comfort and a sense of place. Özdamar's protagonist rewrites male and female gender roles in all three texts: men who are cooking become women, while women who inhabit public spaces become men.

The protagonist's own female body is connected with mapping, geography, and travel in *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*. The protagonist's experiences in Europe, for instance, change her so much that they seem to be identifiably written on her body. When she returns to Turkey, her body is perceived as different because she has been to Europe. A group of women in Anatolia invite her to the public baths with them, declaring, "'Wir wollen sehen, wie der Körper eines Istanbuler Mädchens, das Europa gesehen hat, aussieht'" (268). Along with this changed body comes the expectation that the protagonist is "a modern woman." The protagonist, however, resists this notion with humorous comments on the absurdity of the Europe-worship going on around her. "Europäisches Aspirin heilte Herzkrankheiten," she comments, "Europäische Schuhe konnten nie kaputtgehen. Europäische Hunde hatten alle in europäischen Hundeschulen

studiert…" (250). Using humor and satire, the protagonist subverts perceptions of her body as European. Hers is a traveler's body, a site of both motion and a sense of place.

As she grows up, sexual experience comes to be a vehicle for personal identity creation away from the traditional notions of family and nation. *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei* sets the scene for this claiming of sexual experience. The protagonist's childhood and teenage experiences of sexuality often fall outside the realm of perceived "normality," foreshadowing her desire for sexuality as self-empowerment outside of the traditional space of marriage. Sexuality and physicality are out in the open: just as the narrative often mentions and comments on bodily functions and sexual organs, descriptions of sexual excitement, and descriptions of childhood sex games between the protagonist and her male and female friends are frequent in the text. The protagonist's family comments openly on her budding sexuality: "Sie ist unbändig geworden. Ihr Feuer sollte jemand löschen, vielleicht der Neffe des Obstladenbesitzers" (330). The protagonist does not accept marriage, however, but instead takes her own path toward a development of her sexuality.

B. Venkat Mani argues that, for the protagonist in *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, "sexuality becomes a turning point for the registering of personal history" (41). Monika Shafi argues that the protagonist's sexual desire is a driving force of her migration (203). The protagonist's process of coming of age sexually is also a process of connecting herself to new physical and social spaces. Losing her virginity is the express goal of her second trip to Germany: "Ich wollte Deutsch lernen und mich dann in

Deutschland von meinem Diamanten befreien, um eine gute Schauspielerin zu werden" (108).[43] Sexuality and professional development are closely linked.

Throughout *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, Özdamar's protagonist seeks to change and shape her body through sexual experiences. Berlin becomes a sexually liberating zone, one which will allow her to lose her diamond and become a better actress. As she chooses a man for her first sexual experience, the protagonist links this experience with freedom from potentially restrictive gender roles: "…wenn du dich nicht heute Abend von deinem Diamanten befreist, wirst du dich nie retten, dann wirst du als Jungfrau heiraten und dich als Jungfrau einem Mann verkaufen" (162-3). With sexual experience and a change in her body, the protagonist hopes to mold herself into an independent and modern woman, "ein Mädchen mit Bewußtsein" (217).

The gaining of sexual experience is one driving force for the protagonist's constant movement and migration. Sexual intimacy, however, functions as a point of rest in her life of motion. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan writes that our bodies, as they move through space, chose specific points of rest to focus on. These pauses in movement, these objects, relationships, and experiences that come to the forefront of our senses, take on an increased weight and personal value. A point of rest, Tuan writes, helps us to develop a sense of place (Tuan 6, 36). In Özdamar's novel, expression of sexuality represents a moment of rest in the protagonist's life of motion: the sexual relationships she has with various men allow her to center herself in the body that is otherwise always moving from one place to another. This change is evident in the tone of the narrative. When she stays in a room with a lover for three days, for example, the pace of the narrative slows. In contrast to the relatively realistic descriptions in the rest of the novel, the love scenes

[43] Here the diamond refers to the hymen; freedom from the diamond refers to a loss of virginity.

evoke magic realism: the protagonist and one lover's skins grow together; another comes to pour great quantities of fruits and flowers onto the bed with her; she and one lover have bodies that seem to multiply, and suddenly there are two of each of them. Here, the very boundaries of the body are fluid as the two bodies literally grow together or multiply. Judith Butler questions the idea that the body is a fixed identity, and argues that "this movement beyond boundaries, a movement of boundary itself, appeared to be quite central to what bodies 'are'" (*Bodies* ix). The protagonist's sexual body is a fluid and changing space.   Sexual expression, for her, is both motion and pause in motion. It holds the potential for an expansion of a professional and personal identity, for a grounding of the self in intimate space, and for the invention of a space where migration and home meet.

The protagonist in *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei* begins to play with and subvert cultural assumptions about gender, a process that is continued in the other two texts. By choosing role models and reinventing her own role in gendered spaces, the young protagonist claims these spaces. Though she lives in an environment with clearly gendered expectations, the young protagonist's attention focuses on a world populated by women living outside of traditionally gendered roles. The narrative foregrounds female voices: it is primarily the voice of the protagonist, her grandmother, her mother, and the voices of other women who drive the novel's plot. The protagonist expresses her love for the "Geschwister ohne Männer" in her Istanbul street (32) and mimics the facial expressions of a single woman known as "verrückte Saniye" (218). Her admiration of prostitutes borders on worship and envy: "[Die Hure] stieg in eine Kutsche, ohne Schleier, und der Kutschwagen spritzte Strassenschmutz auf uns verschleierte, und ich

schwor mir, eines Tages so wie diese Hure zu werden" (52). Taking on these women as role models of a sort, the protagonist transcends traditional gender roles and avoid gendered expectations like marriage, staying inside the house, and learning household skills: " 'Ich glaube, ich habe sie ohne es zu wissen, als Jungen geboren,'" her mother says, "'Sie hat nur eins im Kopf: Straße'" (218). The protagonist's desire to inhabit public space of the street rather than remain in the house is gendered as masculine, and ultimately accepted by her mother, who encourages her to go to school rather than marry.

In her book *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler discusses the idea of gender identity as a performance (65). Gender is acted out through a stylization of the body and through culturally specific gesture and speech. Özdamar's protagonist in *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* proves to be an excellent performer. Her perceived subject position as a Turkish woman in Germany and a Europeanized woman in Turkey allows her great liberty, creativity, and agency in the gendered roles she chooses to play. The protagonist embraces this "in-between" subject position and uses it as a site of power. Her gender position outside the center of either Turkish or German society allows Özdamar's protagonist to access spaces she wouldn't ordinarily have been admitted to: as discussed in earlier sections of this chapter, she gains access the all-male political discussion group in the restaurant Kapitän by joking that she has come as a whore; she befriends prostitutes in Istanbul and talks to starving farmers in eastern Turkey, who talk to her specifically because she is a "modern woman." The protagonist negotiates multiple cultures, gendered spaces, and physically dangerous situations with apparent ease. Her strong sense of agency and her use of her position on the margins is key to her success in negotiating these situations.

Özdamar's protagonist in *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* effectively plays with and subverts expectations of gendered public and private spheres. She comments on the private sphere with a sense of irony and allows her protagonist to inhabit public spaces with unusual ease. The protagonist's first inhabited space is the all-female worker's dormitory in Berlin. B. Vankat Mani suggests that the *Wonaym* calls to mind a Turkish harem, in the sense that women live communally, sequestered from men and secluded from the rest of society. The decadent beauty baths and sweet fragrances of a harem, he writes, are replaced by long lines at the communal showers and the smells of cheap soap mixed with and boiling potatoes from the kitchen (40). Thus women's dorm, a potentially oppressive and restrictive female space, is reinterpreted through irony and humor.

With the exception of the *Wonaym, Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* focuses on the public spaces the protagonist inhabits. The protagonist ultimately lives her life not 'at home' in her dorm room, but in the factory, on the streets of Berlin and later Istanbul, in late-night political discussion groups in cafes, on trains and busses, at friends' apartments, and later on stage in the theater. This female protagonist inhabits the public and traditionally male domain with unusual ease. She is often the only woman in a group of men; she travels alone with a male friend through a volatile area of Anatolia; she deals easily with any difficulty or disadvantage she encounters as a woman inhabiting public space.[44] This protagonist gains the courage and energy from outside spaces that others would associate with inside spaces, as in the following instance: "Ich merkte, daß ich am Telefon mit meiner Mutter leichter sprechen konnte als zu Hause. Das Telefon stand auf der Straße, und die Straße gab mir Mut" (194). It is not only the distance that makes it easier to speak with her mother, but the outside public space in which she does it. As

[44] For more on gender, public spaces, and situational disadvantage, see Gardner.

mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, it is the image of playing out in the street as a child that the protagonist uses as a metaphor for the comfort and sense of home she feels in Berlin.

In Turkey, the protagonist's independence is gendered as masculine and attributed to the fact that she has lived in Europe. She spends so little time at home that her father comments, "Meine Tochter, du bist ein Mann geworden. Du hast aus Deutschland eine neue Mode gebracht. Du kommst in der Nacht nach Hause" (221). Even when given the opportunity, this protagonist never seeks refuge in enclosed spaces, never looks for a sense of home in the private domain. Instead, she creates her identity and her sense of place, through interactions with public spaces. Mary Morris writes about her own creation of home in the context of travel. For Morris, as for this protagonist, home is "not an enclosure, but a way of going outside" (Morris 386).

The protagonist's mother recognizes the advantage and freedoms her daughter gains by being fluent in two languages and two cultures. "Du kannst Deutsch sprechen," she says to her daughter, "warum willst du heiraten?" (194). Özdamar's protagonist is acutely aware of culturally gendered roles both in Germany and in Turkey. She creates her own way of navigating and subverting these roles to gain advantages for herself in each respective culture. She uses her initial position on the margins of both societies as an advantage; it allows her to invent her own cultured gender identity, to move freely in public space, and to reinvent her body and her sexuality as a site of both migration and home.

Gender, sexuality, and ethnicity are intimately linked in *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde*. The protagonist is continually labeled in a positive way by her ethnicity. Her

lover from her West German commune refers to their affair as “Entführung aus dem Serail”[45] and the others whistle the “Turkish March” (57). Her colleagues in the theater greet her with “Guten Tag, Schönheit des Südens” (104) and call her “türkischer Flieder” (105). In her relationship with Graham, a British man, flirtation and ethnicity are thematized in a playful way. Waking up together, the two greet one another with “Good morning, Türkei” and “Liebes England.” (128). Here, national identity is reinvented as a part of flirtation. In the theater in East Germany, the protagonist enjoys her exoticised position and uses it to her advantage.

Conclusion

In all three narratives, Özdamar’s protagonist experiences the world through a fluid and changing body over which she has a strong sense of agency. She collects experiences through her senses, makes connections, and reinvents her body as a space where home and motion meet. In this chapter, I have examined various physical, social, corporeal, sexual, and gendered spaces which Özdamar’s protagonist perceives, conceives, and lives. In each text, the protagonist engages personally with these spaces in order to connect home and migration, creating for herself create a hybrid and flexible sense of place. The protagonist engages creatively with the new physical spaces she encounters, collecting impressions, making connections to form a sense of “double location,” and reinventing them as spaces of her own. By forming social relationships, she roots herself in a multiplicity of physical and social spaces, and is able to engage actively and critically with her surroundings. In political and historical space, she uses her position as a

[45] Here he references Mozart’s opera. Serail – Turkish Seray – is a term for an Ottoman palace.

privileged border-crosser to form personal connections with political realities. The body she inhabits is a fluid and constantly changing space that houses her own invented sexuality and gender performance.

In this chapter's opening quote, Özdamar's protagonist reduces her personal city of Berlin to a single street: "in Berlin hatte ich meine Straße wiedergefunden" (193). She places her sense of belonging within a connection made between these two locations. Her new and particular perspectives come out of allegiances to a variety of spaces, and from real and imagined "double locations" such as this one. In her engagement with these spaces, Özdamar's protagtonist links her experiences of migration and home in a way that highlights the highly personal, malleable, and multilayered reality of "double location."

Chapter 6: Conclusion: Rewriting Cosmopolitanisms

"the practices of literary culture…are practices of attachment."

– Sheldon Pollock[46]

Introduction

In the passage above, Sheldon Pollock argues that the creation and consumption of literature has the potential to create attachments to large worlds or small places. As exiles and nomads, and as creative individuals, the protagonists in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's and Barbara Honigmann's novels engage with a multiplicity of spaces. They create attachments to people, places, and issues in multiple localities. In this dissertation, I have examined the sense of "double location" that is created as a result of these varied allegiances. I have demonstrated the ways in which each protagonist forms a patchwork of belongings out of chosen spaces, perceiving these spaces through the lens her own experiences. I have discussed how each protagonist draws connections between spaces, reconceiving them in order to endow them with personal meaning. I have examined the ways in which each reinvents and claims chosen spaces, actively shaping them into spaces of home within their experiences of migration. Though the situations and results are different, Özdamar's and Honigmann's protagonists' processes of reinventing lived space are strikingly similar.

In this chapter, I draw direct comparisons between the ways in which these two protagonists engage with the spaces around them and create a sense of "double location." With these comparisons, I demonstrate the ways in which both perceive a multiplicity of

[46] Pollock, Sheldon. "Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History." *Cosmopolitanism*: Public Culture 12/3 (2000): 591-626. Here 594.

spaces – physical, social, linguistic, and literary – by *collecting* spaces. I then examine how both protagonists conceive the spaces they inhabit by forming *connections* between spaces – physical and social, bodily, spiritual, linguistic, literary, and historical. Finally, I examine the ways in which both protagonists live spaces by creatively imagining and *reinventing* them into spaces of home. I use these terms – collecting, connecting, and reinventing – as a parallel to Soja's perceived, conceived, and lived spaces. I choose verbs as opposed to Soja's adjectives to emphasize the creation of home as an active process of engagement with space.

Collecting, Connecting, and Reinventing Spaces

Both Honigmann's and Özdamar's protagonists explore new physical and social spaces by choosing and collecting locations. Honigmann's protagonist encounters the city of Paris as a wanderer and a searcher. The city is a space of transition, a meeting space for past and present, and for speculations on the future. In Paris, she tries on these various locations for size and allows memory and storytelling to color her experience of city spaces. The protagonist emerges as a collector of moments: she collects memories and stories of her parents and her own childhood, impressions of train stations, neighborhoods, houses, and rooms. She collects moments of hopefulness and moments of real and imagined belonging. Taken together, these moments form a patchwork of her initial experience of the city. This patchwork represents a stage in her journey toward reinventing and claiming spaces.

Özdamar's protagonist encounters the foreign city of Berlin as a keen and thoughtful observer. Like Honigmann's protagonist, she explores chosen urban spaces, collecting them and quite literally, as the text states, taking them back home with her.

She collects snapshots of spaces – of her workspace, her social spaces, of train stations and ruins – and integrates them into her own identity. She uses memories to ascribe value to new spaces she encounters. Both protagonists choose a multiplicity of locations as ground for planting roots and forming allegiances.

Before making connections to social space, both protagonists collect social experiences that form the basis for their development of a sense of place. Honigmann's protagonist speaks of these connections as an "Einsammeln der Begegnungen" (*Liebe* 24). In her relationships with lovers, she tries on and becomes increasingly aware of her own relationship to her German and Jewish identities. For Honigmann's protagonist, social space extends into spiritual space: initial experiences with Jewish friends in Berlin inspire her to action and development of a connection to her Jewish religion. Özdamar's protagonist chooses friends to help her form a sense of place in a foreign city and develop her personal and professional identities. She chooses intellectuals with whom she aligns herself politically. She chooses men for her first sexual experiences, seeking to change and shape her body and her identity as "ein Mädchen mit Bewußtsein" (*Brücke* 217).

Each protagonist collects linguistic, literary, and artistic spaces on her journey. Language acquisition is a process of collecting for Özdamar's protagonist, as she memorizes phrases and text passages independent of their meaning. Both protagonists collect literary spaces: all six texts contain collections of quotations from and engagement with the works of various German and non-German authors. Honigmann's protagonist begins to collect artistic spaces when she studies painting, creating small scenes from the city of Paris as if to capture a small sense of place within the large city. As keen observers, both protagonists collect the chosen physical, social, literary, and

artistic spaces that provide the settings for the six texts. Their strong sense of agency in their perception of space extends into an ability to form connections and reconceive these spaces.

By making connections between past and present, and between home and away, both protagonists blur the boundaries between these very terms. Their understanding of the present is intimately linked to an understanding of the past, and extends toward speculations about the future. Making connections across time and space, they are able to personalize and enhance their understanding of the new spaces. The very title of Honigmann's collection *Damals, dann und danach* points to the centrality of memory as a ground from which to develop a shifting identity and create a sense of place in new physical spaces. The texts inside emphasize memory as a point of connection between past and present, inspiring actions and storytelling. In Özdamar's novels, the connections between past and present, home and away increase the protagonist's understanding of the value of new spaces. By telling stories of her grandmother to her Berlin roommates, by equating Berlin with the Turkish street of her childhood, by renaming German spaces with her own invented Turkish-German words, and by forming friendships and relationships, she increases the value of new spaces and endows upon them a sense of home.

The protagonists form connections most strongly in social and spiritual space. Honigmann sets her literary persona into a family line of Jewish writers, thereby drawing social and professional connections between past and present. She forms connections to a group of German-Jewish friends in Berlin and to a transcultural Jewish group of friends

in Strasbourg. In Strasbourg, the protagonist explores aspects of herself through connections made in this social space. With her Strasbourg friends, she links her own life to the lives of figures in the Torah, connecting social and spiritual spaces of belonging. Özdamar's protagonist creates a link between physical and social space; she forms a personal topography of the city of Berlin by mediating her experience of the city spaces through her chosen circle of friends. She makes social and intellectual connections in Berlin, in Istanbul, and in various other locations. These connections allow her to root herself in a multiplicity of spaces.

For Özdamar's protagonist, forming connections – real or imagined – with women and men in non-traditional gender roles allows her to begin the process of inventing her own gendered cultural roles. While others link her body with the European landmass, the protagonist connects her own experience of Europe with the bodies of Turkish friends, men who cook for her and lead her around the city, to form an initial sense of place in Berlin. Development and practice of sexuality, initially a way of collecting experience, ultimately becomes a space of connection for the protagonist, a space of rest, a pause in motion that allows her to ground herself.

Both protagonists draw connections to and personalize linguistic space, and literary and artistic texts and figures. Özdamar's protagonist mixes languages, renaming German spaces to create a connection to these spaces. She translates idioms literally from Turkish into German, code-mixing to connect the two cultural systems that form her reality. With her writing style and her protagonist's actions, Honigmann critically engages with German Romanticism. Honigmann's literary persona links her own life closely with present-day scholarship on the negative German-Jewish symbiosis.

Özdamar engages with Lasker-Schüler, Brecht, and with various canonical German dramatists. In her development as an actress, her protagonist juxtaposes descriptions of encounters with these dramatists with a discussion of her own professional development. In her life outside the theater, she engages with various Turkish traditions of performance as survival techniques in her new German environment. In the cover paintings that preface her texts, Honigmann makes reference to and connects herself with Paula Modersohn-Becker and Caspar David Friedrich. Both protagonists use their position on the margins of Germany as a creative space from which to engage with a variety of traditions and form a multiplicity of connections.

Özdamar's and Honigmann's protagonists collect experiences of space, piece them together into a patchwork, and endow them with value by drawing connections over time and space. From their individual transcultural locations formed out of multiple connections and allegiances, each protagonist reinvents the spaces she inhabits, endowing them with deeply personal meaning. Through a reinvention of physical space, each creates a unique and nuanced sense of place. Özdamar's protagonist claims public spaces such as the abandoned train station as her own, and reinvents their function. Public spaces such as a chosen street become a source of comfort and contain a feeling of home. Honigmann's protagonist first reinvents the space of Ellis Island as a real and imagined space of belonging, as an imagined home from which to embark upon her journey. Her arrival in Strasbourg allows her to actively invent a social space. Her encounter with this city, which is itself hybrid by nature, allows considerable freedom for self-invention and invention of space. Both protagonists are privileged border-crossers who are able to

reinvent the meaning of the East-West German border. For Özdamar's protagonist, crossing the Berlin Wall represents an opportunity for professional development. For Honigmann's protagonist, crossing from East to West represents an attempt to reinvent herself. Her ability to cross back over this border with relative ease allows her to maintain a connection with the past.

Social and spiritual spaces are sites of active reinvention for both protagonists. Özdamar's protagonist reinvents her position in relationship to the public male domain of intellectual discussion. She claims a position for herself within this gendered social space, and endows this position with a feeling of comfort and security. In her performance of gender identity, Özdamar's protagonist subverts traditional roles, taking her position on the margins as a site of power. Emphasizing the hybridity in her Strasbourg circle of friends, Honigmann's protagonist reinvents the city as a space to "come back to," as both a chosen home and space of reconciliation with her own sense of foreignness. Strasbourg becomes a space of active spiritual renewal: she and her friends reinvent the male tradition of Torah reading and interpretation by forming their own group and by connecting their own lives, on the most basic level, to the sacred texts they read. Reinterpreting their gendered cultural roles, both protagonists reinvent their own positions within the physical and social spaces they inhabit.

Özdamar's protagonist reinvents linguistic space, renaming physical spaces such as the *Wonaym* and the abandoned train station in order to claim them. She reinvents the function of the German language itself, translating Turkish idioms literally in order to change the language into a space of home. Through these actions, she reinvents her own position in relation to the German language and German physical spaces. Both

Honigmann and Özdamar, through the connections they draw, reinvent their own sense of place in relation to chosen literary traditions. By creating self-portraits, Honigmann reinvents herself in layers of paint.

Through highly personalized engagement with people, spaces, and issues of locality, these protagonists create a sense of place within their experiences of migration. A multiplicity of locations – perceived, conceived, and lived – extends into a feeling of home that links the individual and the transcultural. From their position both inside and outside German culture, on the margins and in the center, Honigmann's and Özdamar's protagonists actively collect, connect with, and reinvent the spaces around them. As each protagonist perceives the new spaces around her, she collects experiences in chosen spaces that, taken together, form her personal sense of place. Their processes of conceiving these spaces are processes of drawing connections between foreign spaces and home spaces. Living these spaces, they reinvent them, plant roots, and create a sense of home in their multiplicity of chosen spaces. Created out of the perspectives that stem from a sense of "double location," this sense of home is nuanced and complex, both transcultural and personal.

Challenging a Discourse of Marginality

These six narratives and the voices of their two protagonists have been located by many critics as "on the margins" of German literary culture. Scholars have often treated Honigmann's and Özdamar's works as "competing narratives," studying them through the respective lenses of German-Jewish or Turkish-German. With this dissertation, I draw connections and explore the permeability of the boundary between these

"competing narratives." In the four central chapters, my analysis has centered on the protagonists' individual and nuanced ways of engaging with similar spaces, whether physical or social, spiritual or artistic. Examining the works side by side in the previous section, my focus has again been on similarities and points of contact, rather than on the differences between the works.

By focusing on points of contact – between German, Turkish, French – I challenge the discourse that locates Honigmann's and Özdamar's texts as marginal, or "Other" in relation one another and in relation to German literary culture. By examining these works through the common lens of spatiality, by discussing similar ways of engaging with space, I question the usefulness of treating Özdamar's and Honigmann's novels as "competing narratives." Arguing against a process of "Othering," bell hooks writes, "Often…speech about the 'Other' is…a mask, an oppressive talk hiding gaps, absences, that space where our words would be if we were speaking" (*Margin* 208). I argue that terms such as "margins" or "Other," while useful to describe cultural and socioeconomic realities, are counterproductive to an understanding of literary texts. Created by a perceived center, and imposed upon a perceived margin, the term "Other" is a space that lacks the potential for meeting, for conversation, for expanding understanding or for finding common ground. With their narratives, Özdamar and Honigmann write against the process of "Othering." Instead of accepting an imposed position on the margins, these texts reinvent and question both margins and center. Taking inspiration from the narratives themselves, I seek also to demonstrate the possibilities that emerge through an interdisciplinary examination of works that are often set firmly within their fields of study.

Instead of situating my analysis within a discourse of “Other,” of German-Jewish or transnational literature, I choose spatiality as my area of inquiry, asking how each protagonist creates a sense of home in her life of motion. Through my analysis, I have found that this creation of a sense of home is not a process that can reach completion, but a dymanic, challenging, and ongoing process. In order to create this outward-looking sense of home, I argue that the two protagonists draw creative energy from their chosen “double locations.” As both insiders and outsiders, Honigmann’s and Özdamar’s protagonists locate themselves both in the center and at the margins of the cultures in which they immerse themselves. Each invites the reader into a new, reinvented center, allowing exploration of narrative space as a process created out of individual and nuanced relationships to a variety of locations. In doing so, each redefines the center and the margins, at once responding to and challenging the discourse on the “Other.”

By pushing beyond boundaries and reinventing spaces in their processes of migration, these protagonists create a challenging and risky space to inhabit, a space “filled with contradictions and ambiguities, with perils but also with new possibilities” (Parmar 101). This space is a source of power and creative energy for both protagonists as they reinvent a sense of home. bell hooks writes about this space of challenge in her article “Choosing the Margins as a Space of Radical Openness.” She redefines the term “marginal” to describe those individuals who push beyond cultural, economic, and intellectual boundaries to “re-vision” existing space (203). Narrating her crossings between physical, cultural, and social spaces, hooks redefines the margins in this way: “I am located on the margin. I make a definite distinction between that marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as a site of resistance

– as a site of radical openness and possibility" (209). Honigmann's and Özdamar's protagonists push for this "radical openness," challenging themselves with constant motion, choosing to reinvent space and to be active in recreating the margins and drawing them into the center.

In this radical openness lies a potential for a new, unique and redefined sense of home. bell hooks writes that "home is no longer just one place. It is locations. Home is that place which enables and promotes varied and everchanging perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality" (205). Honigmann and Özdamar have created narratives in which the protagonists choose the openness and possibility of their lived spaces, in which they question the center-margins dichotomy, and embrace the ever-changing perspectives of "double location" in order to invent a sense of home for themselves. These six narratives advocate a complex, sometimes contradictory, always onward-looking sense of home that includes both an engagement with locality and "a consciousness of … links with the wider world" (Massey 155).

Rewriting Cosmopolitanisms

Where does this questioning and peeling away of categories lead us? German-Jewish, transnational, discourses on the 'Other,' or a center-margins dichotomy seem inadequate spaces for a discussion of the nuanced and multilayered spatiality of Honigmann's and Özdamar's texts. In a final section, I speculate on the historically contested but perhaps more flexible term "cosmopolitanisms" as a possibility for more openness in understanding the texts and connecting them with the world beyond. In this section, I experimentally link the term "double location" with the term "cosmopolitanism" as a way

of linking the narratives to the broader context in which I understand them. I first examine historical perspectives on the term cosmopolitanism, and then discuss the recent scholarship of geographers and philosophers on the term. I conclude with a series of speculations. I ask: Are Honigmann's and Özdamar's educated, transcultural, intellectually engaged migrant protagonists cosmopolitans? Assuming that they are, what characterizes the cosmopolitanism that Özdamar and Honigmann create with their novels? What do the texts contribute to a broader understanding and rethinking of this term?

The origins of the word cosmopolitanism come from the Greek "order, world" and "citizen" (Malcolmson 233). In the fourth century B.C., the Cynics coined the expression "citizen of the cosmos," one who is at home not on a street or in a city, but in the universe (Appiah xiv). Historically, the term cosmopolitan has been understood as an allegiance to humanity as a whole, rather than loyalty to a particular nation or culture (Nussbaum 4). The term seems destined for paradox: it originated out of a very particular and privileged form of citizenship – citizenship in the *polis*, or Greek city-state – only open to non-enslaved men of a particular class, yet evolved to describe not particularity, but universalism.

The link between the "cosmos" and "polis" – the natural and political order – was explored by the Stoics in the third century BC. The Stoics equated the ideal of cosmopolitanism with both universalism and reason: a bond between all human beings, regardless of location, that is based on the ideal of reason. "Whether a man's lot be cast in this place or in that matters nothing," wrote emperor Marcus Aurelius in his

Meditations, "provided that in all places he views the world as a city and himself as a citizen" (157). Over a millennium and a half later, with his essay "Perpetual Peace," Immanuel Kant outlined his ideals of legal, political, and moral cosmopolitanism, which, if realized, he dreamed would lead to world peace. Christoph Martin Wieland wrote that "Cosmopolitans…regard all the peoples of the earth as…branches of the same family" (107). Under a constitutional government, with universal adherence to the rule of law and reason, Enlightenment philosophers argued, human beings who subscribed to the ideals of cosmopolitanism could live in perpetual peace.

Since the Enlightenment, the term cosmopolitanism has been used to refer – both in a positive and a negative sense – to aristocrats, Jews, intellectuals, merchants, and travelers. The assimilated German Jew of the Weimar Republic has often been defined as the quintessential cosmopolitan, a construction which is laden with both philo-Semitic and anti-Semitic connotations. With the 19th and 20th century's increased turn toward nationalism, the ideal of cosmopolitanism was looked upon with increasing skepticism, and often fell to the wayside in favor of patriotism and – in some cases – fascism. As both Hitler and Stalin launched campaigns against "rootless cosmopolitans," anti-cosmopolitanism became a euphemism for anti-Semitism (Appiah xvi).

In recent scholarship on cosmopolitanism, there has been a noticeable silence on the usage of the term in the German-Jewish context. At the same time, the nostalgic desire to revive a Weimar-era German-Jewish symbiosis coincides with the desire to "reinstate a cosmopolitan notion of German identity" within Europe (Remmler 5). Cosmopolitanism here becomes an alternative to nationalism or regionalism; rejecting

primary identification with the German nation allows, for better or worse, a distance from the shadow cast by the Shoah.

The historic ideal of cosmopolitanism indicates universalism as opposed to nationalism (Robbins 4), detachment as opposed to rootedness (Rabinow 258), and spectatorship as opposed to participation in history and culture (Robbins 4). At best, this ideal of cosmopolitanism has seemed to be "a luxuriously free-floating view from above" (Rabinow 258), and at worst, a chain of "privileged and irresponsible detachments" (Robbins 4). One is led to wonder if such an ideal can or should exist in reality, if such privileged detachment is desirable or even possible. "Is one really supposed to abjure all local allegiances," asks Kwame Appiah, "in favor of the vast abstraction of humanity?" (xvi).

Is such disengagement with locality in favor of universalism desirable, or even possible? Appiah's provocative question indicates that it is the particularities of cosmopolitanism that beg to be explored, reinterpreted and redefined. Özdamar and Honigmann may provide one answer. Their protagonists promote not an abstract cosmopolitanism of "being at home in the world," but a very real and highly personalized engagement with the people, spaces, and issues of locality (Shafi 206). In Özdamar's and Honigmann's texts, the protagonists engage more often with the particular, personal, and individual, rather than the universal and abstract. For both writers, new and particular perspectives come out of allegiances to multiple localities, and from real and imagined "double locations." With their novels, Özdamar and Honigmann create a rewriting of the term cosmopolitan that parallels scholarly and political debate on so-called "new cosmopolitanism."

In our increasingly mobile world, write scholars, cosmopolitanism is a reality for millions of people, both privileged and unprivileged. "Immigrant life" writes Scott Malcolmson, "is a model of cosmopolitanism" (239). Indeed, who must become more conversant in the different languages and cultures of the world than migrant laborers, modern-day adventurers, refugees, or international students and scholars? Cosmopolitanism's "cast of characters" has expanded to include "North Atlantic merchant sailors, Caribbean au pairs in the United States, Egyptian guest workers in Iraq…" (Robbins 1) and a host of other participants in our increasingly globalized world. If Enlightenment cosmopolitanism is the ideal, today's cosmopolitanisms form the realities. Today's cosmopolitanism is something that is acted upon by an endless variety of people engaging in our increasingly multicultural and globalized localities, regions, nations, and world.

In recent years, a number of scholars have argued for a rethinking of cosmopolitanism that embraces variety, difference, and particularity. In his article "Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism," Bruce Robbins engages with this relationship between the particular and universal, a phenomenon that Edward Said terms "new cosmopolitanisms." Said's use of the plural form points to the multiplicity and uniqueness of lived cosmopolitan experiences. He argues that cosmopolitans, instead of being citizens of the world, might be citizens of a number of specific localities. Moving between these localities, a cosmopolitan's view is colored by engagement with the particulars of each location. It is precisely this sense of "double location" – connecting German and Jewish, Turkish and German, individual and transcultural, migration at home – that Honigmann and Özdamar portray in their novels.

Kwame Appiah, whose own cosmopolitanism extends from his native Ghana to England, to the United States and a variety of other locations, writes, "I have always had a sense of family and tribe that was multiple and overlapping: nothing could have seemed more commonplace" (xvii). He describes this sense of having multiple allegiances and identities as a sense of having several souls (xvii). A number of scholars of new cosmopolitanism have defined this sense of multiple allegiances. Bruce Ackermann and Mitchell Cohen use term "rooted cosmopolitanism," indicating that actually existing cosmopolitanism is "socially and geographically situated" (Robbins 2-3). "Rooted cosmopolitanism," writes Cohen, "accepts a multiplicity of roots and branches and…rests on the legitimacy of plural loyalties" (262). Rooted cosmopolitanism lays claim to the multiplicity of locations, experiences, relationships, and identities inherent in cosmopolitan lives. Paul Rabinow redefines cosmopolitanism as "an ethos of macro-interdependencies, with an acute consciousness…of the inescapabilities and particularities of places, characters, historical trajectories, and fates" (258). Thus this new, rooted cosmopolitanism represents a union of the universal and the particular, of the global and the individual.

"The myth of globalization," writes Helena Norberg-Hodge, "is that we no longer need to be connected to a place on the earth" (20). In order to describe this connection, and the relation of an individual connection to a universal world, Homi K. Bhabha coins the term "vernacular cosmopolitanism" – a seeming oxymoron. In order to "grasp the unity of mankind," he writes, we must "work through the relation of the part to the whole" (194). Examining Adrienne Rich's poem "Eastern Wartime," ("I'm a canal in Europe where bodies are floating / I'm a mass grave I'm the life that returns / I'm a table

set with room for a stranger…" (197)), Bhabha writes of the necessity in retaining singularity and specificity of events. Rich's repeated "I'm…" is an illustration of double location, of rootedness in multiple times and spaces. "Vernacular cosmopolitanism," as he terms it, is "Committed to the specificity of event and yet linked to a transhistorical memory and solidarity" (196). In actually existing cosmopolitanism, multiple allegiances take the place of no allegiance at all, identification with specific physical and social spaces take the place of abstract universalism. Instead of discounting the importance of community and sense of place, actually existing cosmopolitanisms are made up of a highly personal patchwork of places, communitites, and allegiances. It is not an ideal, but a reality; not theory, but practice; and not a static concept, but a dynamic process.

Kwame Appiah defines cosmopolitanism as a *conversation* with a variety of people from a variety of different places and walks of life (xxi). A striking metaphor, conversation is an active process, one that requires the engagement of all participants. With their narratives, Emine Sevgi Özdamar and Barbara Honigmann enter into this cosmopolitan conversation. In their semi-autobiographical trilogies, migration and home are closely related, and migration emerges as a necessary step in the creation of a sense of place. For both Özdamar and Honigmann's protagonists, active engagement with new spaces is vital to the creation of a hybrid and dynamic sense of home and sense of self. This hybrid sense of self is shaped by friendships, intimate relationships, and reinterpretation of physical spaces; it is influenced by an engagement with and reinvention of language, literature, theater, and art; it is enriched by a deepening connection to religion and thoughtfulness about ancestry and family. Each protagonist's identity and sense of belonging is a patchwork created out of active and personal

engagement with a variety of individuals and localities. The insights each protagonist gains from her unique experience of migration come out of this deeply personal engagement.

These two writers create, with their narratives, a rewriting of the very term "cosmopolitanism." For both writers, new and particular perspectives come out of allegiances to multiple localities, and from real and imagined "double locations." Their new cosmopolitanisms are processes that are vital in shaping identities and sense of place. These narratives of motion rewrite cosmopolitan identities as multi-layered and malleable realities, adding to the cosmopolitan conversation. Like the process of building a sense of home within an experience of migration, this new cosmopolitanism requires active engagement with and creative reinvention of inhabited spaces. As a dynamic process, writes Kwame Appiah, "Cosmopolitanism is the name not of the solution but of the challenge" (xv). With their trilogies, Honigmann and Özdamar take on this challenge.

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Appendix

Figure 1:
Barbara Honigmann. "Selbstbildnis." *Roman von einem Kinde*. München, dtv, 2001.

Figure 2:
Paula Modersohn-Becker. "Selbstbildnis nach Halblinks mit Hand am Kinn." Deutsches Historisches Museum, Lebendiges Museum Online.
www.dhm.de/lemo/objeckte/pict/paubild4/index.html.

Figure 3:
Barbara Honigmann. Untitled. *Eine Liebe aus Nichts*. Berlin: Rowohlt, 1991.

Figure 4:
Caspar David Friedrich. "Frau am Fenster" (1822). from Koerner, Joseph Leo. *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape.* New Haven: Yale U P, 1995. 154.

Figure 5:
Barbara Honigmann. "Mes amis et moi." (1997). *Damals, dann und danach*. München, dtv, 2002.

Figure 6:
Emine Sevgi Özdamar. *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde.* Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2003. 110-111.

sah ich Heiner Müller. Er hat einen schönen Kopf, eine breite Stirn, und sein Gesicht sieht aus wie ein eingedrücktes Haus, tiefe, graue Augen. Ein kleiner Mann mit einem großen Gehirn. Er kam später in die Probe, die heute vom Fernsehen gefilmt wurde. Auch meine Zeichnungen. Nach der Probe gingen alle mit Heiner Müller in die Kantine. Er schaute auf meine Füße. Ich hatte pinkfarbene Schuhe an.
Ich will viel über Geschichte lesen. Morgen werde ich den Film *Kuhle Wampe* von Brecht und *Rom, offene Stadt* sehen. Vor Glück kann ich nicht schlafen. Als ob man diese Filme extra für mich spielt. Es lebe Berlin.

14. Mai 1976
Am Morgen fror ich. Ich verstehe nicht, was seit zwei Tagen mit mir los ist. Wenn ich aufwache, laufe ich wie eine alte Frau zur Toilette, wenn ich mir vor dem Spiegel das Gesicht wasche, sehe ich den Tag nicht. Ich male mir die Lippen an, aber ohne Lust. Ich bin allein und habe mich an das Alleinsein gewöhnt wie eine alte Frau. Bei den Proben bin ich sehr konzentriert, aber meine Augen und meine Haare glänzen seit zwei Tagen nicht. Ich denke an die Jahre mit meinem Mann. Ich war schön durch Liebe. Das sind jetzt vergilbte Bilder. Damals war ich eine Frau, jetzt bin ich eine Kurzfassung davon. Ich habe Kopfweh. Ich gehe zum Theater. Katrin übte heute: »Il mare è un traditore.«

Probe Bild »Dorfkrug« →
Der kommunistische Landrat tritt auf. Die beiden Fdfler aus dem Dorf verdächtigen ihn, ein Spion zu sein. Die Szene soll spannend wie ein Krimi werden. Der Landrat genießt die Situation, er weiß ganz genau, daß die beiden ihn

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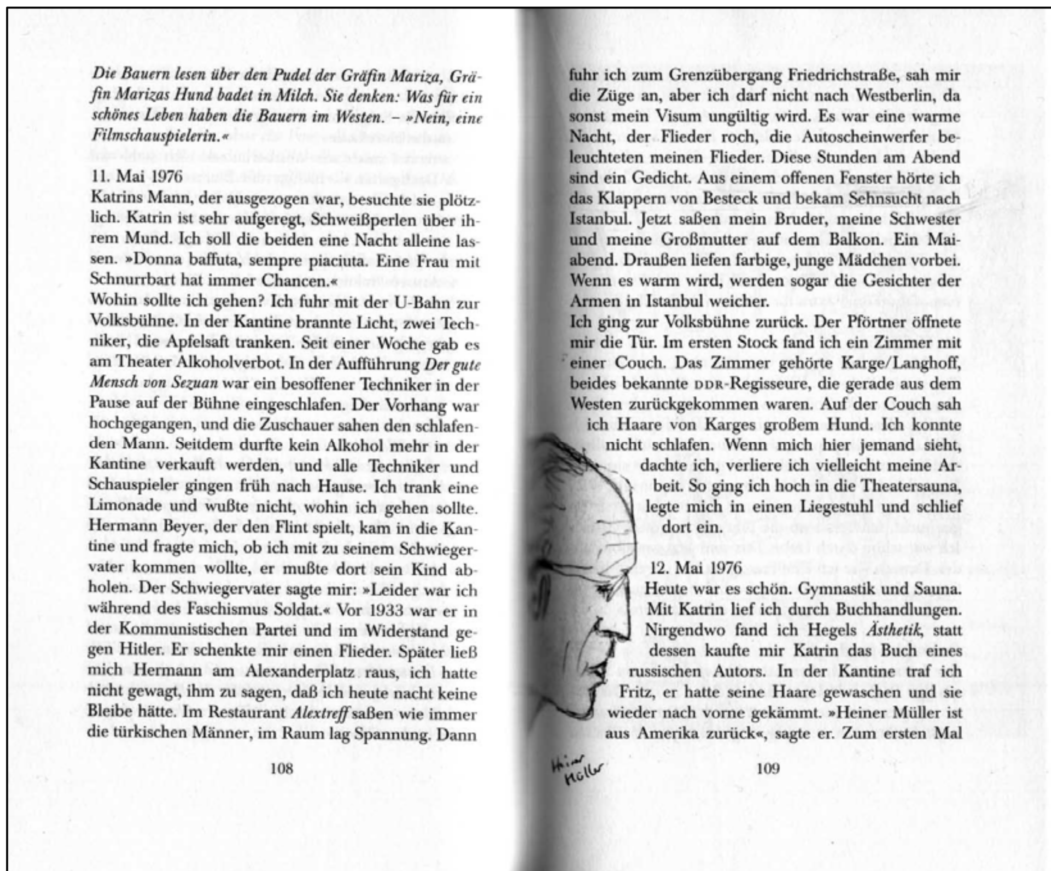
Figure 7:
Emine Sevgi Özdamar. *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde.* Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2003. 108-109.



Die Bauern lesen über den Pudel der Gräfin Mariza, Gräfin Marizas Hund badet in Milch. Sie denken: Was für ein schönes Leben haben die Bauern im Westen. – »Nein, eine Filmschauspielerin.«

11. Mai 1976
Katrins Mann, der ausgezogen war, besuchte sie plötzlich. Katrin ist sehr aufgeregt, Schweißperlen über ihrem Mund. Ich soll die beiden eine Nacht alleine lassen. »Donna baffuta, sempre piaciuta. Eine Frau mit Schnurrbart hat immer Chancen.«
Wohin sollte ich gehen? Ich fuhr mit der U-Bahn zur Volksbühne. In der Kantine brannte Licht, zwei Techniker, die Apfelsaft tranken. Seit einer Woche gab es am Theater Alkoholverbot. In der Aufführung *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* war ein besoffener Techniker in der Pause auf der Bühne eingeschlafen. Der Vorhang war hochgegangen, und die Zuschauer sahen den schlafenden Mann. Seitdem durfte kein Alkohol mehr in der Kantine verkauft werden, und alle Techniker und Schauspieler gingen früh nach Hause. Ich trank eine Limonade und wußte nicht, wohin ich gehen sollte. Hermann Beyer, der den Flint spielt, kam in die Kantine und fragte mich, ob ich mit zu seinem Schwiegervater kommen wollte, er mußte dort sein Kind abholen. Der Schwiegervater sagte mir: »Leider war ich während des Faschismus Soldat.« Vor 1933 war er in der Kommunistischen Partei und im Widerstand gegen Hitler. Er schenkte mir einen Flieder. Später ließ mich Hermann am Alexanderplatz raus, ich hatte nicht gewagt, ihm zu sagen, daß ich heute nacht keine Bleibe hätte. Im Restaurant *Alextreff* saßen wie immer die türkischen Männer, im Raum lag Spannung. Dann

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fuhr ich zum Grenzübergang Friedrichstraße, sah mir die Züge an, aber ich darf nicht nach Westberlin, da sonst mein Visum ungültig wird. Es war eine warme Nacht, der Flieder roch, die Autoscheinwerfer beleuchteten meinen Flieder. Diese Stunden am Abend sind ein Gedicht. Aus einem offenen Fenster hörte ich das Klappern von Besteck und bekam Sehnsucht nach Istanbul. Jetzt saßen mein Bruder, meine Schwester und meine Großmutter auf dem Balkon. Ein Maiabend. Draußen liefen farbige, junge Mädchen vorbei. Wenn es warm wird, werden sogar die Gesichter der Armen in Istanbul weicher.
Ich ging zur Volksbühne zurück. Der Pförtner öffnete mir die Tür. Im ersten Stock fand ich ein Zimmer mit einer Couch. Das Zimmer gehörte Karge/Langhoff, beides bekannte DDR-Regisseure, die gerade aus dem Westen zurückgekommen waren. Auf der Couch sah ich Haare von Karges großem Hund. Ich konnte nicht schlafen. Wenn mich hier jemand sieht, dachte ich, verliere ich vielleicht meine Arbeit. So ging ich hoch in die Theatersauna, legte mich in einen Liegestuhl und schlief dort ein.

12. Mai 1976
Heute war es schön. Gymnastik und Sauna. Mit Katrin lief ich durch Buchhandlungen. Nirgendwo fand ich Hegels *Ästhetik*, statt dessen kaufte mir Katrin das Buch eines russischen Autors. In der Kantine traf ich Fritz, er hatte seine Haare gewaschen und sie wieder nach vorne gekämmt. »Heiner Müller ist aus Amerika zurück«, sagte er. Zum ersten Mal

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