

## **HYBRIDITY IN CULTURE, LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE**

**HYBRIDITY IN CULTURE, LITERATURE AND  
LANGUAGE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF  
CONTEMPORARY CARIBBEAN CANADIAN AND  
TURKISH GERMAN WOMEN'S WRITING  
EXEMPLIFIED BY THE WRITERS M. N. PHILIP AND  
E. S. ÖZDAMAR**

By

SABINE MILZ, 1st and 2nd Staatsexamen

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AUTHOR: Sabine Milz, 1st Staatsexamen (Universität Koblenz-Landau)  
2nd Staatsexamen (Studienseminar Koblenz/RS Diez)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. D. L. Coleman

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## **Abstract**

The politics of writing of the Caribbean Canadian writer Marlene Nourbese Philip and the Turkish German writer Emine Sevgi Özdamar show a crucial concern for the development of serious multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual dialogue, a concern which will also be the focus of this thesis. The specific contribution this study of the two writers will provide to the field of ethnic minority and non-White women's writing in Canada and Germany consists of its comparative-interdisciplinary approach. Critical texts on the writings of Philip and Özdamar or on cultural, literary and lingual hybridity are numerous, especially in the areas of minority discourse, post-colonialism and feminism. However, linkages of these three components are very rare. A major emphasis of this work is to reveal the significant similarities – an approach still carefully attending to the context-specific cultural and individual differences – that exist in Philip's and Özdamar's writings and writerly positions and hence to motivate an intensification of comparative work and co-operation between the disciplines of Canadian and German literature.

The introductory chapter clarifies and explains the choice of literary theory and terminology that builds the framework for the comparison done here. This involves a critical discussion of the concepts of cultural, literary, and lingual hybridity as well as the workings of permanent and intermittent, imposed and

self-chosen salience in the process of identification. Chapter two compares Özdamar's and Philip's writings in relation to the women's historical, social, political, and legal positions in the German and Canadian models of the nation-state and immigration. Building on this context, chapter three then discusses their public and critical-academic reception in Germany and Canada, their exclusionary position within mainstream literature, and their politics of resistance as "ex-centric" German and Canadian writers. Chapter four is most text-related as it specifically relates to the writers' intersecting strategies of lingual hybridity, embodied language and body-memory in Mutterzunge and She Tries Her Tongue. The conclusion re-evaluates the writers' "ex-centric" and yet integral positions at the border of single-nation literary studies, positions from which Özdamar and Philip relocate literary, lingual, and cultural belonging in the German and Canadian nation-state respectively.

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## Chapter I – Introduction

### Critical Crosses: Hybridity in Culture, Literature and Language

Zunge hat keine Knochen, wohin man sie dreht, dreht sie sich dorthin...  
Meine Mutter sagte mir: 'Weißt du, du sprichst so, du denkst, daß du alles erzählst, aber plötzlich springst du über nichtgesagte Wörter, dann erzählst du wieder ruhig, ich springe mit dir mit, dann atme ich ruhig.'<sup>1</sup> (Özdamar, Mutterzunge 9)

she  
swung  
a skilled trapezist –  
no net  
below  
no one  
to catch  
her (Philip, She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks 40)

Sie sagte dann: 'Du hast die Hälfte deiner Haare in Alamania gelassen.'<sup>2</sup>  
(Özdamar, Mutterzunge 9)

one breast  
white  
the other black  
headless  
in a womb-black night  
a choosing –  
one breast  
neither black  
nor white (Philip, She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks 33)

A skilled trapezist springt über nichtgesagte Wörter, is caught between mother and father tongue and culture, no net below; she is neither black nor white; she is neither German nor Turkish; sie hat die Hälfte ihrer Haare in Alamania gelassen. The Afro-Caribbean Canadian woman writer Marlene Nourbese Philip – who was born in Tobago in 1947 and emigrated to Canada in 1968 – is such a “skilled trapezist” that jumps over “unspoken words.” And likewise is the Turkish German<sup>3</sup> woman writer Emine Sevgi Özdamar, born in Anatolia in 1946 and resident in Germany temporarily from 1965-1967 and permanently since 1976. Having left the homeland and settled in a new country and culture, both writers live and write between cultural traditions and languages. The quotations above, which are taken from their works – the German ones are taken from Özdamar’s prose-drama collection Mutterzunge and the English ones from Philip’s prose-poetry cycles in She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks – clearly show that, for the immigrant, belonging and identification are multiplied at the convergence of the home culture and the cultural influence of the host country. The Turkish German woman narrator of the quoted story, “Mothertongue,” can identify neither as a “real” Turk nor as a “real” German; metaphorically speaking, she left half her hair in Germany (sie hat die Hälfte ihrer Haare in Alamania gelassen). Torn between the African, Caribbean,<sup>4</sup> and Canadian cultures, the narrator of Philip’s poetry collection experiences a similar displacement. There is no way for her to choose between a Black and a White<sup>5</sup> breast, which means between the African Caribbean heritage and the culture on

offer in the new country, Canada; she belongs to all of them or none. Though my own situation as a German “visa” student in Canada is by no means as drastic as Philip’s and Özdamar’s experience of migration and transculturation, I have come to realise a certain cultural ambivalence in the development of my literary-academic interests as well. While I concentrated on the field of Canadian literature when I still studied in Germany, my studies in Canada have engendered recognition of and growing attention towards the field of German writing and literary criticism. I could convince myself now that this sudden awareness of my home literature was coincidental: It gradually developed during a course on Canadian ethnic minority writing, in which the discussions we led on the conceptions of Canadian multiculturalism and nationality, and on the asymmetrical literary reception of White and non-White Canadian writers reminded me of similar controversies and discussions in the German context. This way I eventually decided to evolve my first random comparisons of the similarities and divergences between the areas of Canadian and German ethnic minority literature more thoroughly within their ethnic, cultural, social, political, economic, lingual and gender contexts in my M.A. thesis. As already indicated, I believe that my choice to do this particular comparative study has a deeper significance than mere coincidence. It reflects my own (then still unconscious) positioning between German and Canadian cultures, literatures/literary studies, and languages. In the course of this thesis, I have become aware that my experience as a kind of mild and perhaps only temporary Canadian German

“hybrid” who first focused her studies on the issue of transcultural Canadian literature consequently had to lead to the comparative approach I have chosen and hope to further intensify.

The objective of this thesis is to open possibilities of mutual dialogue and co-operation between the Canadian and German fields of literary postcolonial and feminist study. Through my study I want to draw attention to the rich comparative potential that waits to be recognised and worked on by both disciplines. Though Özdamar’s and Philip’s narrators, like the writers themselves, have very different ethnic-cultural backgrounds and live in different cultural, national, and lingual environments, the experiences they undergo as non-White women in a dominant White western society show significant similarities. Being displaced through language, body, race, gender, and place, belonging and identification is problematic for each one of them. The question at stake for many immigrants like Philip and Özdamar is whether it is possible at all. Which markers should they adhere to? To the geographic, the cultural, the racial, the sexual? To none of them or to all at the same time? The answers Özdamar and Philip give in Mutterzunge and She Tries Her Tongue communicate the same message, while the two writers’ approaches and tactics vary in the distinct Turkish-Arabic-German and African-Caribbean-Canadian contexts. Both writers present narrators/characters who simultaneously live in several cultures and languages, which they constantly code-switch between. In this process, each one of them develops her/his own peculiar way of seeing the world, of belonging and being. The cultures,

literatures, and languages Özdamar and Philip create in their writings are hybrid constellations. They reflect their own personal experiences and positionalities as migrants between cultures.

After taking her first degree in Economics at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad in 1968, Philip emigrated to Canada where she did her law degree at the University of Western Ontario and then practised immigration and family law (Morrell 97). In the eighties, she gave up her career as a lawyer in order to be able to devote herself fully to writing. Since then she has broadly published her fiction, poetry, and critical work in literary magazines, journals, and newspapers in Canada and the Caribbean. In 1980, her first book of poetry, Thorns, was issued and in 1983 and 1989 the collections Salmon Courage and She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks followed respectively. Apart from these books of poetry, she has written the young adult novel Harriet's Daughter (1988), the allegorical quest-narrative Looking for Livingstone: An Odyssey of Silence (1991), and the two essay collections Frontiers: Essays and Writings on Racism and Culture (1992) and A Genealogy of Resistance and Other Essays (1997). Besides writing, Philip has taught courses in creative writing and women's writing at several universities in Ontario. Together with other women writers of colour (such as Dionne Brand, Makeda Silvera, and Lillian Allen) and members of the multiracial group of artists called Vision 21, she leads a politically committed life in Toronto. Her writing and criticism are provocatively overt – sometimes even radical or insurgent – in their censure of the issues of

racism and sexism, and the resulting social, economic, and political discriminations non-White Canadian women like her face in Canadian society.

Özdamar's writing consists of a distinct social-political dimension as well. When Özdamar first came to Germany in the sixties, her ambition was not only to find any kind of work as a contracted temporary worker but to perform in Brecht's theatre, the renowned Marxist-socialist Berlin Ensemble in East-Berlin (Horrocks and Kolinsky 45-46; Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 160-161). However, her wish was not fulfilled until 1976. After working in a factory in West-Berlin from 1965-1967, she returned to Turkey where she went to drama school for three years and then worked as an actress. In 1976, she eventually got an engagement as a pupil of the acclaimed director Benno Besson at the Berlin Ensemble. Her acting career in Turkey at a standstill because of her leftist political orientation, she eventually came to settle down in Germany. Since her first engagement with Besson, Özdamar has gained a sound reputation as an actress and (assistant) director working at the major German theatres in Berlin, Munich, Frankfurt, Bochum, and Düsseldorf. In 1986, she stage-directed her first play Karagöz in Alamania, which she later transformed into the third story of the prose-drama collection Mutterzunge / Mothertongue (1990). Keloglan in Alamania, her second play, was staged in 1991. Shortly afterwards, in 1992, her much-acclaimed first novel Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei: hat zwei Türen, aus einer kam ich rein, aus der anderen ging ich raus ("Life is a Caravanserai: Has Two Doors, I Entered Through One of Them, I Exited Through the Other"; my

translation) was published. Its success paved the way for an impressive, versatile career as actress, stage director and writer. In 1998, Özdamar's second and most recent novel, an autobiographical narrative titled Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn (which could be translated as "The Bridge at Golden Horn"), was issued as she was stage-acting under the management of Matthias Langhoff in France. Besides being a writer, director and stage-actress, Özdamar has also appeared in several films, of which the best-known ones are Yasemin directed by Hark Bohm, Happy Birthday, Türke directed by Doris Dörrie, and Tödliche Rettung directed by Matti Geschoneck. The versatility of Özdamar's artistic abilities is amazing. And yet, it is significant that each one of her own productions presents Turkish and/or Arabic narrators and characters who are torn between different cultural influences as they move between places and languages. Like Philip, she manifests the immigrant's process of identification as a painful and still powerful act of transculturation. In her narratives, transcultural and translingual interaction and communication are framed in complex contexts that often coincide with her own: Özdamar is at the same time artist, woman, Turk, Arab, German, Turkish German immigrant, writer, ethnic minority writer in Germany, woman writer, feminist, and subtle critic of the racist, sexist and classist assumptions underlying the patriarchal western and Islamic discourses she is constrained by.

\* \* \*

With the creation of new transcultural forms, the artists Philip and Özdamar connect with the theory of **cultural hybridity** that has become widely employed

and disputed in contemporary critical-academic discourse, especially in the fields of post-colonialism and feminism, but also in the scientific, philosophical and sociological disciplines. The person who most decisively shaped the present conception of cultural hybridity is the post-colonial critic Homi K. Bhabha. In his analysis of the interrelations between coloniser and colonised, he comes to the conclusion that any cultural identity in the “contact zone” of intercultural relations is constructed in a hybrid-transcultural space, which he calls “the Third Space of enunciation...[that] may open the way to conceptualising an *international* culture, based on...the inscription and articulation of culture’s *hybridity*” (The Location of Culture 37-38). He coins the term **in-between** to characterise the “Third Space [as] the inter – the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between*...that carries the burden of the meaning of culture” (Bhabha, “Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences” 206). Living “in-between” cultures – in the transcultural space – does not suggest a mere exchange between cultures; it rather aims at the creation of new cultural forms (Bhabha, The Location of Culture 86-88; “Cultural Diversity” 206). The post-colonial critics and collaborators Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin speak of “a continual process of movement and interchange between different cultural states” in their analysis of the issue in Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies (130). And Marie Louise Pratt emphasises the transcultural space as an ambivalent **contact zone** that, on the one hand, offers perspectives of “copresence, interaction, interlocking understanding and practices” (Pratt 7). Yet, on the other hand, these points of cultural



intersection are tense areas where “disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other.” And these tensions are increased by the “often highly asymmetrical relations of dominance and subordination” existing in the social spaces in-between cultures (Pratt 7).

Philip’s and Özdamar’s lives and writings are set in such socially ambivalent contact zones of possible cultural encounter and unequal distribution of power between dominant White and non-White ethnic minority culture. Chapter one will offer a contextualised, comparative analysis of both women’s – and more generally the Canadian and German immigrant’s – national, social, cultural, political, and economic being and belonging in the Canadian and German nation-states with their highly ambiguous, even paradoxical conceptions of multiculturalism. In both countries, the concept of the multicultural nation-state is based on the ideal of an equal treatment of all its members. However, theory and practice diverge considerably as neither Canadian politics of multiculturalism nor German integration policy provide the necessary support that would translate this ideal into action. It instead serves the purpose of maintaining the myth of ethnic-cultural and lingual homogeneity in the invented national community called the “nation-state.” Özdamar’s Mutterzunge and Philip’s She Tries Her Tongue challenge this myth of “purity” or “authenticity” with its notion of fixed history and linear ancestry by re-performing the German and Canadian nation-states respectively as culturally heterogeneous, composite communities whose histories, literatures, languages, and national conceptions are not static but constantly re-

invented as mutable, multicultural blends. The approaches they choose acknowledge that it is impossible to resist dominant culture from somewhere “outside” its boundaries. The space “outside” does not exist for cultural “hybrids” like Özdamar and Philip who reject both an assimilation to the supposedly homogeneous western culture of their country of immigration and a calling back of an “authentic” home culture. For them, effective resistance can only be articulated from within the cultures they are influenced by. As argued in the following chapters, they create hybrid spaces in-between cultures (see chapter two), literatures (chapter three) and languages (chapter four) that are predicated upon the continual interrelation between the different cultural traditions of the motherland and the country of immigration. Unlike some critics and writers who have misrecognised and/or misused the post-colonial notion of the hybrid space in-between cultures as a means of whitewashing cultural differences, Philip’s and Özdamar’s writings do not make this mistake (Ashcroft et al, The Post-Colonial Studies Reader 184; Key Concepts 119). Both writers clearly dissociate from the term’s historical-colonialist, racist connotation of “de-historiciz[ing] and de-localat[ing] cultures from their temporal, spatial, geographical and linguistic contexts” (Key Concepts 119). Quite on the contrary, their texts expose and exhaust the full transcultural, translingual, and re-contextualising potentiality and efficacy of the term’s current understanding (most decisively shaped by Bhabha) by creating their own forms of hybridity that are located within the multicultural, multilingual space of which they are themselves part.

In spite of my argument in favour of Bhabha's idea of hybridity, I at the same time recognise a significant complication or predicament underlying the conception with respect to its discourse of spatiality. Bhabha's spacial metaphors of centre, margin, and in-betweenness turn out to be problematic insofar as they run the risk of re-configuring existing power structures when centre and margin are simply interchanged. Relating to Bhabha's notion of the spatiality of national narrative, Hiltrudis M. Arens (144), who works in the field of German studies, interprets the process of displacement described by him in the following quotation as a process of moving ethnic minority writing from the cultural margin to its centre: "Where, once, the transmission of national traditions was the major theme of a world literature, perhaps we can now suggest that transnational histories of migrants, the colonized, or political refugees – these border and frontier conditions – may be the terrains of world literature" (12). Like Bhabha and Arens, the majority of (not only postcolonial) literary theorists and critics use spatial metaphors to describe the workings of resistant as well as mainstream national narratives; the discourse of spatiality seems to be a common and seemingly unavoidable constituent of literary theory and criticism. While the Canadian critics Linda Hutcheon and Joseph Pivato, too, assert the ethnic minority writer's marginal or, as Hutcheon calls it, "ex-centric" position with regard to central or dominant culture, they at the same time attribute a positive, powerful ambivalence to this "ex-centricity" (Hutcheon, The Canadian Postmodern 3; Pivato 73-74).<sup>6</sup> Pivato poignantly explains the benefits of this two-edged writerly position: "It is

the paradox of the ethnic writer that he or she has a central role in our culture by speaking from the margins” (73-74). Hutcheon and Pivato both blame mainstream criticism for misrecognising the margin as a negative, painful place of transgression rather than a vital place of possibility or, in Hutcheon’s words, as a “frontier” (The Canadian Postmodern 3). According to them, this misconception decisively contributes to the prevalent margin-centre dilemma. In the more recent work “Postcolonial Crosses: Body-Memory and Inter-nationalism in Caribbean/Canadian Writing” by Michael A. Bucknor, a more radical notion than that of “ex-centricity” is set forth. Bucknor calls for the racial-ethnic inclusion of the ethnic minority writer as an integral constituent of national narrative, a step that would decentre and thus subvert the present margin-centre binary altogether. In spite of the different approaches that have been undertaken by Hutcheon and Pivato in the late eighties and beginning nineties and very recently (in 1998) by Bucknor, both methods aim at developing concepts that can offer a viable alternative to the problematic usage of spacial metaphors in contemporary literary discourse. Yet, as the discussion shows, it is an alternative that – for all the influential efforts already made – has yet to be found, supported, and generally accepted. The arguments and discussions of this thesis consequently/inevitably are led with the help of spatial metaphors; yet, the discourse of spatiality is applied with the awareness of the dangers it bears.

\* \* \*

Determined by their distinct ethnic-cultural, historical contexts, She Tries Her Tongue and Mutterzunge reveal different, to some extent even contrasting, attitudes towards the issue of cultural, literary and lingual centrality, marginality and in-betweenness. In the search for a postcolonial, autonomous identity – for ethnic-cultural, national, historical, and sexual/gendered being and belonging – language plays a crucial role for both Philip and Özdamar, and more generally for ethnic minority writers and literary critics. Chapter four will compare the strategies Philip and Özdamar employ in She Tries Her Tongue and Mutterzunge to denounce the asymmetrical relationship between the dominant father tongue, the English and German standard code respectively, and the oppressed, silenced mother tongue, the Caribbean and Turkish language respectively. Their resistance against cultural oppression is led through language, and specifically through the generation of **lingual hybridity**, which re-vocalises the muted mother tongue in the translingual space of hybridity. Philip creates a heteroglossic language continuum at the intersections of english and English;<sup>7</sup> and Özdamar constructs a hybrid, polyphonic language in-between Turkish, Arabic – which she calls the grandfather tongue – and German. Both concepts of lingual hybridity re-connect the axes of language, body, and memory strictly separated by dominant western discourse. In Mutterzunge and She Tries Her Tongue, Philip and Özdamar challenge and disrupt the English and German standard code respectively by remembering the silenced mother tongue and female body -- a much discussed strategy in body-relevant theories such as the feminist and the post-colonial. They

✧ intersperse elitist English and German with re-membered, ancestral words, images, sounds, and rhythms, which together constitute the oral-corporeal quality of the mother tongue (and grandfather tongue). It is only through these processes of embodied language and memory that they are able to create their own and their characters' fluid identities in the lingual-cultural space of hybridity.

With the creation of a heteroglossic language continuum at the intersections of mother and father tongue, Özdamar and Philip write themselves into “visibility,” which means into existence in a literary community that is still very much based on the traditional notion of a homogeneous German and Canadian literary canon respectively. As discussed in chapter three, public and critical reception in Germany and Canada shows an evident inclination to belittle and ghettoise the writings of non-White writers such as Philip and Özdamar who are doubly marginalised as ethnic minority and non-White women writers. Their reputation as “German”/“Canadian” artists is to a large extent determined by the prevalent binary assumption of “major” European (White) and “minor” non-European (non-White) literature. Considering this asymmetry, chapter two will discuss the strategies “minor” writers – particularly Özdamar and Philip – and post-colonial critics chose in their textual resistance. I will argue that, in the case of Philip and Özdamar, the “ex-centric” position at the margin of mainstream literature becomes the vital space of writerly resistance. Mixing genres and literary traditions of the home culture and the dominant German/Canadian culture in Mutterzunge and She Tries Her Tongue, the two writers create individual texts

of **literary hybridity**, which disrupt the notion of a stable, linear national-historic literature by reconfiguring it as a mutable, multicultural blend. Furthermore, literary hybridisation serves them as a textual-stylistic means to challenge and disrupt the predominant myth of universal art. The “universal” is re-contextualised and thus de-universalised in the process of the Turkish German and Afro-Caribbean Canadian narrators’/characters’ endless search for being and belonging in the predominantly White German and Canadian societies where they are often ignored but of which they are nonetheless constitutive parts.

In the introduction to She Tries Her Tongue, Philip asks two significant, thought-provoking questions that exhibit the important role language plays with regard to White, patriarchal dominance and non-White, female contestation of that dominance: “What happens when you are excluded from the fullness and wholeness of language? What happens when only one aspect of a language is allowed you – as woman? – as Black?” (She Tries Her Tongue 21-22). In a more general context the question could be: What happens when only one (or a very limited number) of the multiple constituents of identification is given emphasis and recognition? Ruth Frankenberg deals with exactly this problem in her book White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness, which depicts White American women from different non-privileged ethnic-cultural backgrounds (such as the Jewish, Italian, Polish or German) in situations of imposed social and political **salience** (206-215). In order to unpack Frankenberg’s understanding of “salience” it is helpful to trace back the term’s meaning(s): “the

quality of leaping or springing up...the fact, quality, or condition of being salient or projecting beyond the general outline or surface...the quality of standing out or being prominent among a number of objects or qualities” (OED). As the quotation implies, “salience” is a dynamic process of “leaping or springing up” that can be either intermittent – a quality or condition leaps up and then recedes again as another quality or condition becomes prominent – or permanent – a quality or condition leaps up and keeps its prominence among a number of qualities or conditions, which however means that it loses its dynamics. When Frankenberg uses the phrase “imposed social and political salience” to describe the production of the specific emphases/prominences through which the women she interviews are identified and thus constrained by in dominant Anglo-American discourse, she does not talk of an intermittent-itinerant but rather of a permanent condition of salience, which she depicts as a process of collectively identifying “Other” cultural groups with the help of certain intensifiers that are promoted or imposed as essential qualities of identification (Frankenberg 215).

In the somewhat different context of non-White and White power relations in Canada and Germany studied in this thesis, Frankenberg’s conception finds useful application and reconsideration insofar as it helps to analyse the production of intermittent and permanent saliences in non-White and White patterns of identification. The subsequent chapters will concentrate on the causes and interrelations of racial salience, racism and racialisation, ethnic salience and the concepts of ethnicity and nationality, and gender/sexual salience, sexism,



gendering, patriarchy and feminism in the socio-cultural environments Özdamar and Philip are working in. Chapter two interrelates the different saliences in the writers' specific historical, socio-political and legal contexts, chapter three in the framework of literary reception, and chapter four in relation to language, body and memory. The contextualised perspectives taken thereby reveal a significant ambivalence in the workings of "saliency." On the one hand, the permanent ethnic-racial and sexual saliences promoted/imposed by dominant, "major" Canadian and German literary discourse categorise non-White women writers such as Philip and Özdamar as "ethnic minority" or "minor" writers. "Saliency" becomes an indicator of racism, sexism/gendering and ghettoisation. Yet, on the other hand, Philip and Özdamar use the idea of saliency for their, and more generally for the non-White immigrant's, own advantage; it becomes an individual and at the same time collective means of self-identification. The production of self-chosen saliences serves both writers as an important vehicle in the process of resistant re-membering through body and mind. Eventually, Philip's and Özdamar's strategic use of voluntary, desirable ethnic-cultural and sexual saliences will maintain the non-White female identity as a self-determined, hybrid configuration that can be no longer limited by the imposed markers of dominant discourse. Yet, at this point of my argumentation a key concern of identity politics takes effect (it will be further discussed in chapter three): the problematic nature of the determination of selfhood, no matter if imposed or self-chosen. In the context of Philip's claim for an autonomous non-White female

identity, the permanent, even essentialist racial salience she insists upon runs – as chapters three and four will discuss in relation to her gender politics – risk of further ghettoising the non-White female “self” and consequently of re-enforcing the existing power structures between coloniser and colonised. Contrasting Özdamar’s strategy with Philip’s, I will argue that the former finds a possible way of solving the dilemma of imposed and self-chosen essentialist identity claims. In her contest of identity stereotypes she performs moments of intermittent salience that satirically imitate and thus discard a totalisation of the “I.”

\* \* \*

In Mutterzunge, Özdamar defies not only the socially and politically conditioned saliences and clichés prominent in the process of integrating the non-native German “Other” into familiar, native German society but also those pervading intellectual-academic integration concepts, which – in their well-meaning and still condescending treatment of the issue – frequently end up reducing the immigrant to a mere object of research. In the Karagöz story, the third story of the Mutterzunge collection, Özdamar discloses intellectual patronising and stereotyping through the satiric depiction of a German intellectual sitting in a bathtub (a direct allusion to Peter Weiss’ challenging mise en scène of the life of the French revolutionary Jean-Paul Marat in the drama Verfolgung und Ermordung Jean-Paul Marats / The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat) in front of the “Door to Germany” (Mutterzunge 90-92; Mothertongue 112-116). Employing the devices of irony and exaggeration, she exposes the

intellectual's unwitting complicity with White racism. The intellectual "Others" the Turkish German Gastarbeiter / guest workers in a "benevolently" racist-totalising manner:

Der Erleuchtete zog seine Hose aus – aus Leidenschaft, ging auf Knien, sprach: 'Versteht ihr, wie wichtig es ist, für *diese Leute* etwas zu tun. Are you feeling that? Was meint ihr, der Kulturschock der Gastarbeiter stellt alles in Frage. Economical – cultural – political. Versteht ihr, wie wichtig das ist?' (Mutterzunge 91-92; my stress)

The intellectual took off his trousers – passionately, dropped to his knees, said: 'Understand how important it is to do something for *these people*. Are you feeling that? Believe me, the culture shock of the Gastarbeiter puts everything into question. Economical – cultural – political. Do you understand how important that is?' (Mothertongue 114; my stress)<sup>8</sup>

Instead of entering into a serious dialogue with the donkey – which represents the perspective of the intellectual immigrant – the German intellectual is much too fixated on his own, one-perspectival vision of the interstitial cultural, economic, and historical space in-between backward-ottomanic<sup>9</sup> Turkey and progressive-western Germany: "Ich glaube...meine Phantasie reitet mich wieder, das ist vielleicht otomanisch" / "I believe...that my imagination gets the better of me again, that is perhaps ottomanic" (Mutterzunge 92; Mothertongue 116). The donkey's ironic-sarcastic reply to this racist, condescending utterance is "manic" / "manisch" (Mothertongue 116; Mutterzunge 93).<sup>10</sup> With the provocative "ottomanic – manic" / "otomanisch – manisch" wordplay, he overtly mocks the intellectual's stereotyping image or invention of the ottomanic-Oriental immigrant. Yet, the evident sarcasm in his remark remains unrecognised by the addressed person, the self-important intellectual.

Being a White woman “intellectual” who approaches the field of ethnic minority and non-White women’s literature in the contexts of Philip’s She Tries Her Tongue and Özdamar’s Mutterzunge, I am fully aware that the donkey’s thought-provoking criticism of western intellectualism includes the field of academic literary study of which I am part. With the help of the donkey-intellectual scene, Özdamar asks me – the White academic reader and critic of her text – to self-reflexively and self-critically re-think my position within dominant western discourse. And I realise that my very position “within” – especially if lacking awareness and self-reflexion – might turn this thesis, against its intentions, into an “accomplice” of dominant literary discourse with its assimilative (racist, heterosexist and classist) undercurrent. Once alert to all these dangers, the question arises whether it is still justifiable or wise of me, the “White critic,” to write on the given issues? My affirmative answer is this thesis. I believe that the critical recognition and questioning of my “complicit” status of the western middle-class woman are constituent to my unlearning of traditional White discursive patterns and privileges.

My tentative approach in this thesis is to unlearn the ethnocentric White perspective offered to me through my status by choosing alternative, multi-ethnic perspectives and relating them by means of comparison. The texts of Philip and Özdamar take on new significance in light of the comparative context that – as Diana Brydon and Helen Tiffin point out in the introduction to their work Decolonising Fictions (15-20) – cuts across the ethnocentric Canadian and

German nexus to focus instead on the polyphony of transethnic encounters. It enables me to view the problematic nature of identity politics within the scope of cultural, ethnic/racial, historical, literary, lingual, and gender divergences and similarities in the politics of writing and identification employed by the two women writers. I chose to focus on Philip's *She Tries Her Tongue* and Özdamar's *Mutterzunge* because, to me, these texts reveal an impressive artistic potency in "decolonising" ethnocentric Canadian and German discourse respectively, particularly that of a superior English and German standard language. The idea of "decolonising fictions" that I apply here is described by Brydon and Tiffin (11) as the writerly activity of writing back against imperial, universalised fictions and of incorporating alternative, re-contextualised ways of seeing and living – and in the particular context of Philip's and Özdamar's writing – of speaking in the world. Both *She Tries Her Tongue* and *Mutterzunge* accentuate that to "decolonise is not simply to rid oneself of the trappings of imperial power [but] also to seek non-repressive alternatives to imperialist discourse" (Brydon and Tiffin 12). The de-universalised alternatives Philip and Özdamar offer are contextualised in the hybrid space in-between African-Caribbean-Canadian and Arabic-Turkish-German cultures, literatures, and languages. As the following discussion will point out in more detail, *Mutterzunge* and *She Tries Her Tongue* seek to enter into a vital dialogue with their non-White *and* White audiences. With their writings, Özdamar and Philip open possibilities of multi-racial, multi-cultural discussion on the issues of racism, (hetero)sexism and gendering. Entering into a comparative

dialogue with the texts in this thesis, I intend to immerse myself as much as possible in the specific contexts they are imbedded in.

Finally, I would like to close my introductory chapter by calling attention to its context-specific and temporal nature. My study is not a universal piece of western academic writing that is firmly set into the supposedly homogeneous, uni-vocal community of critical literary study. Such a community does not exist. On the contrary, western literary criticism is a heterogeneous, multi-vocal discipline that is full of conflicting thought. As Brydon and Tiffin argue, “critical theory is as culturally specific as other forms of writing” (11, 21, 26). With the critical-comparative approach I have chosen here, I avow my own cultural perspective through which I access and compare Philip’s and Özdamar’s cultural perspectives. My reading of She Tries Her Tongue and Mutterzunge is shaped by my own ethnic-cultural, lingual, historical, and sexual/gender involvement. With this thesis I then manifest one out of the many “new” voices that seek to provoke innovative stimulus, in particular with respect to multi-cultural, multi-racial critical-academic co-operation.

<sup>1</sup> “A tongue has no bones: twist it in any direction and it will turn that way...My mother said to me, ‘You know what? You keep on talking, you think you’re saying everything, but suddenly you jump over spoken words, and you just keep talking. And I, I jump with you and breathe easily’” (*Mothertongue* 9). *Mutterzunge* was translated into English and published under the title *Mothertongue* in 1994.

<sup>2</sup> “Then she said: ‘You left half your hair back in Alamania’” (*Mothertongue* 9).

<sup>3</sup> Weighing the positive implications of a possible hyphenation between ethnic, cultural, and lingual markers against the negative ones (an evaluation that was guided by Barbara Godard’s discussion in the essay “Marlene Nourbese Philip’s Hyphenated Tongue or Writing the Caribbean Demotic between Africa and Arctic,” 154-155), I decided against the hyphen. Comprehended as a slash or bar, it bears the danger of being a symbol of ethnic-cultural exclusion and ghettoisation. Being Caribbean-Canadian and Turkish-German, Philip and Özdamar are not perceived as a “real” Canadian or a “real” German respectively but are marginalised by the ethnic/racial addition. The hyphenated prefix turns into an indicator of clashing, incompatible cultural difference. Leaving a space between the different ethnic, cultural, and lingual markers, I intend to signify the possibility of identification between different cultures, languages, and ethnicities. An “originary” Caribbean who has lived in Canada for over three decades now, Philip is neither a Caribbean nor a Canadian but a Caribbean Canadian whose identity is multiplied at the convergence of the Caribbean and the Canadian cultures. The same can be argued for Özdamar who – after spending as much or even more time in Germany than in the homeland Turkey – defines her identity as a Turkish German amalgam in the interstitial “space” of Turkish and German; a “space” that is not predetermined by the hyphen but leaves multiple possibilities of interconnection.

<sup>4</sup> Although the term “West Indian” has historical currency over the term “Caribbean,” I will use the latter in this thesis. As Michael A. Bucknor argues, “West Indian is a problematic term because it is associated with a mis-naming during the Caribbean’s colonial history and is usually aligned with the English-speaking Caribbean...the term ‘Caribbean’...is more inclusive (implicating both the Spanish and French Caribbean)” (Bucknor 46). Still, it bears some connotative problems as well. As a geographical expression the term is rather imprecise and inconsistent; there are, for instance, controversies among analysts as to whether it should include Florida, the Yucatan, Nicaragua, Colombia, and Venezuela (Bucknor 46). Moreover, it can have different meanings “depending on political, social or economic imperatives” (Bucknor 46). However, for my discussion, the term “Caribbean” is more appropriate because of its inclusionary implication. It presents the geographical region – that might well be imprecise in its boundaries – as a culturally and lingually hybrid conglomerate. Paired with the heterogeneity of the Canadian culture, it constitutes the complex cultural-lingual space that Caribbean Canadians such as Philip inhabit.

<sup>5</sup> Capitalising the adjectives White, non-White, and Black, I want to stress that their usage does not merely serve as a marker and distinguisher of colours but rather relates to the wider socio-cultural, historic-political context that is implied in such a distinction. In this relation, the capitalisation especially points to the conflictual, asymmetrical relationship between dominant White and oppressed non-White culture and discourse. In *Telling It: Women and Language Across Cultures*, the White lesbian writer Betsy Warland notes that “we [White people/literary persons/writers] tend to capitalize other racial groups” and thereupon asks herself: “If we don’t capitalize White are we not making a statement that white is the norm and every other racial group is aberrant?” (191).

<sup>6</sup> In her work *The Canadian Postmodern* (from 1988), Hutcheon solely talks of the postmodern writer. While the conceptions of postmodern literature have meanwhile been cast into the shadow of other competing literary theories – such as post-colonialism, for instance – several of

Hutcheon's arguments still fit the contexts of Philip's and Özdamar's writing and more generally the contexts of contemporary ethnic minority writing in Canada and Germany.

<sup>7</sup> In The Empire Writes Back, Ashcroft et al distinguish between the standard code – English, “the language of the erstwhile imperial centre” (8) – and the linguistic code – english, the several distinctive varieties of English throughout the world (8). In the context of my study I will specify the term “english” to mean the Caribbean demotic, the language spoken in the Caribbean (Post-colonial Studies Reader 309-313). A more detailed discussion of this topic will follow in chapter three.

<sup>8</sup> In this passage, I modified Craig's translation for two reasons. Firstly, I wanted to bring the English text's grammatical-stylistic structure closer to that of the German original and secondly, I read Özdamar's text differently at the following instances: In a literal and, in my opinion, figural sense, the phrase “auf die Knie gehen” should be rather translated into “to drop to one's knees” than “to crouch down.” Then, Craig's second sentence confuses the active and passive voice: it is not “these people” who want to do something but the intellectual who makes an appeal to native Germans to do something for “these people” (the guest workers). Finally, the expression “was meint ihr” is not to be understood in the sense of an interrogative pronoun; it is an idiomatic expression meaning “I (can) tell you” or “Believe me.”

<sup>9</sup> The term “ottoman” or “ottomanic” derives from the Arabic Othman and refers to the Moslem state of the Ottoman Empire that after a powerful and long rule (it was founded around 1288 A.D.) was finally overthrown by Atatürk in 1922 (Encyclopedia Britannica). The term thus relates to Turkey's past and not to the immediate present the intellectual is talking about; he completely misuses the meaning of the term “otomanisch” / “ottomanic.”

<sup>10</sup> I deviate from Craig's translation of the word “manisch” into “dreamer” (116), because it does not consider the meaningful and ingenious word play Özdamar is employing in this context. Therefore, I translate the term as “manic,” which is also the translation the Langenscheidt Dictionary gives.



## **Chapter II**

### **Multiculturalism in Germany and Canada: A Comparative Study of the Countries' Historical, Social, Political, and Legal Conceptions of the Nation-State and Immigration**

Özdamar and Philip both belong to the first waves of Turkish and Caribbean immigrants to Germany and Canada respectively, which have become their countries of self-chosen permanent residence. Their works have to be viewed within the framework of immigration, as they deal with the political, social-cultural, and economic conditions they – and more generally immigrants to Canada and Germany – were and are confronted with in the host countries. The question of how Germany and Canada define their notions of the nation-state and especially of its different members living therein is of essential significance to an understanding of Özdamar's and Philip's writings discussed in this comparative study. From the legal-political viewpoint, the two writers seem to be confronted with completely different circumstances. While the Canadian nation-state is defined by the jus soli - the law of citizenship according to soil, which adjudges its immigrants the right of Canadian citizenship (a right Philip chose to assert for herself) - Germany bases its national self-understanding on the jus sanguinis, the law of citizenship according to blood or parentage that delimits the non-German immigrant from most civil and political co-determination (Özdamar is not a

German citizen but a so-called resident alien). Yet, in spite of these notably different conceptions of the nation-state, the implementations of the countries' immigration policies – especially the strategies of handling cultural tensions - show striking similarities that reach as far as to the assumptions underlying these actions. The ensuing chapter will place the works of Özdamar and Philip in their specific social-historical and historic-political contexts and thus attempt to point out the affinities and deviations in the writers' strategies of disrupting and re-inventing Germany's and Canada's paradoxical ideals of the multi-cultural and at the same time homogeneous nation-state.

When Özdamar settled in Germany in the seventies, she became a member of a nation-state that is based on ethnic nationality, which means that German citizenship is defined by origin or blood ties (Brinkler-Gabler and Smith 3). In 1871, the formerly independent German states were unified in the German Reich, a federal empire that invented itself as an ethnic nation-state based on a common Germanic culture, history, language, and ancestry. In 1913, the Reich's citizenship law was settled on the jus sanguinis (the law according to blood or parentage; Neuman 263-264). The fascist legislation finally replaced the priority of the citizenship of the Länder (the federal German states) with wider German citizenship in 1934 (Räthzel 41-42; Horrocks and Kolinsky xiv-xv; O'Brien, "Germany's Newest Aliens" 452).

Today's Ausländergesetz (Foreigners Law) derives from fascist war legislation, which in 1939 relegated the presence of foreigners exclusively to the

interests of the state and thus ensured that non-Germans had no means of exercising any influence over their presence in Germany (O'Brien, "Continuity and Chance..." 115-116; Rätzzel 32-33). Although the law was modified in 1990 – when it began to guarantee greater security to long-time residents or residents born in Germany (Rätzzel 43) – its fascist origin still illuminates much of today's Ausländerpolitik (Foreigners Politics), which is closely linked to the idea of the homogeneous German Kulturation (national culture; Arens 26). In the narrative "Karagöz in Alamania,"<sup>1</sup> which is a satirical-humorous account of the living conditions of guest workers and their families in Germany that revolves around the story of the Turkish Gastarbeiter Karagöz and his Marxist-socialist donkey, Özdamar critically reflects the legal arbitrariness and exclusion immigrants are exposed to. In a passage where Turkish people are waiting in front of "the Door to Germany" to be allowed entrance, a Turk is banished in handcuffs, the sound of a whip can be heard from behind the "Door," and a youth is expelled because he turned eighteen and thus is legally no longer under the protection of his parents (Mothertongue 113-114; Mutterzunge 91). The ethnic salience conditioning German national identity clearly defines who belongs to the national culture and who does not. Living permanently in the unified Germany, originary Germans from the former GDR, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (the latter two are called Aussiedler) automatically receive German citizenship, because they are recognised as ethnic nationals (Rätzzel 32). This privileging of ethnic Germanness is especially frustrating for immigrants who have worked and lived

in Germany for a long time or who were even born there and still remain foreigners who do not really belong to the national culture (O'Brien, "Germany's Newest Aliens" 451-452; Arens 29). The explicit dichotomy of belonging and non-belonging accordingly results in an efficient legal and socio-economic privileging of those included in the Kulturation – the originary Germans (Räthzel 46; Brinkler-Gabler and Smith 7). The subtleties and manifold restrictions accompanying an application for German citizenship,<sup>2</sup> as well as the complication and protraction of the whole procedure itself, are unmistakable signs of the ethnocentric concept of German nationality.

Interestingly, the exclusionary notion of national belonging is reflected in the use of language. Since Germany does not understand itself as a country of immigration – until the first half of this century it has primarily been a country of emigration to the former European colonies such as the States and Canada – immigrants are represented as Ausländer, which means foreigners or aliens (Räthzel 32; Brinkler-Gabler and Smith 6-7).<sup>3</sup> While the immigrant is perceived as "a person who migrates into a country as a [permanent] settler" and subsequently a citizen (OED), the Ausländer or foreigner/alien unmistakably remains "a subject of another country than that in which [she]/he resides" (OED). She/He is a "resident foreign in origin [and] excluded from (the citizenship and privileges) of the nation" (OED), which makes her/him "a stranger, outsider; a person *other* than oneself" (OED; my stress).<sup>4</sup> Through this process of "Othering," the originary German imposes a label of identification that

depersonalises and homogenises the immigrant at the same time that it stresses the distinctness or distinctiveness of the foreign “Other” from the familiar “Self” (Itwaru 12-14; Kristeva 19-20).<sup>5</sup> Referring to Sigmund Freud’s studies on the dynamics of the unconscious and the phenomenon of “uncanny strangeness,” Julia Kristeva emphasises that we project the foreignness in ourselves – “the hidden face of our identity, the unconscious” (1) – on others coming from the outside (182-185). Freud discloses the “uncanny” (das Unheimliche) as nothing strange or foreign but as something familiar and intimate (which means heimlich) that has become alienated through the process of repression (Kristeva 182-183). The strange thus is immanent within the familiar; the outcome is an “uncanny strangeness” (Kristeva 182-183).

In the case of the foreign labour force that was recruited in huge numbers from southern European countries after WWII,<sup>6</sup> the exclusionary quality of the term Ausländer finds expression in the word Gastarbeiter (guest worker), which very well describes the status of the first generation of immigrant workers in Germany. The word “guest” originally derives from the Latin hostis, which means enemy; until the modern era it was exclusively used in the sense of stranger (Der Große Duden: Herkunftswörterbuch). When the first guest workers arrived in Germany in the mid-fifties and sixties, they were only admitted on a temporary, revolving basis that should avoid their permanent settlement (Kastoryano 51; Rätzzel 36; O’Brien, “Continuity and Change...” 119-124). Moreover, their families were not allowed to follow so that they kept their ties and desire to return

to the homeland (Kastoryano 54; Özdamar, Mutterzunge 62, 72 / Mothertongue 76, 90). David Horrocks and Eva Kolinsky describe the relationship between the Gastarbeiter and the German citizen in terms of a host-guest relationship: “the host is obliged to be polite, fair and courteous to a guest, while the guest is expected to follow the rules of conduct that prevail in the host’s home” (Horrocks and Kolinsky xviii). A similar observation is made by Alberto Manguel in the afterword to the Mothertongue collection, where he describes the “‘guest workers’ [as] official aliens who are allowed to contribute to the national economy but who have never become part of the nation itself” (Mothertongue 155).<sup>7</sup> Although the halt to immigration - caused by the economic crisis in the seventies and the need for trained labour - allowed the guest worker to permanently settle in Germany with her/his family, the image of the Gastarbeiter as well as the term itself are still widely used in public discourse (Kastoryano 55; Rätzzel 36). Wolfgang Seifert notes that “the guest-worker system was abandoned; however, the ideology of temporary migration survived” (84).

Whereas German official and public discourses emphasise the foreigner’s allegiance to her/his homeland, the formulation of Canada’s immigration policy encourages the allegiance to the country of immigration. The loyalty towards Canada is, for instance, explicitly pronounced in the immigration ceremony. Unlike the German model of originary, monocultural nationality, Canada constitutes itself as a country of immigration. As Hutcheon points out, immigration and multiculturalism are legal matters of Canadian national self-

definition (“Crypto-Ethnicity” 29). The concept of the nation-state is constructed politically, which means that citizenship conditions the sharing of common political values (Cook 12). Canadians are not defined by the jus sanguinis but by the jus soli (the law according to soil) which bases citizenship on circumstantial factors such as birth on Canadian soil, the sharing of geographical territory, and political allegiance (Kristeva 95-96; R  thzel 42).<sup>8</sup> Ramsay Cook argues that W. L. Morton’s conception of political nationality – which was developed in the sixties – remains essentially valid in the current official and public discourses on national identity, no matter how controversial the different viewpoints are (Cook 5). In response to and approval of John A. Macdonald’s and George-Etienne Cartier’s standpoints in the Confederation debates, Morton conceives national belonging as a matter of loyalty to the Canadian state (Cook 9). According to him, ethnic-cultural diversity and equality only need one condition, which is that of adherence to a set of common political convictions (Cook 12).

Yet, Morton’s vision of a Canadian nation unified on the basis of cultural pluralism and equality is far from becoming reality. Recent discussions on Canada’s national identity and multicultural politics still centre on the complex problem of how to define and act out symmetrical multicultural relations in the nation-state. The point at issue is that Canada, although its conception of political nationality is not based on the exclusive notion of blood ties, shows distinct signs of ethnocentrism, which reach back to its very beginnings in immigration and settlement. Until the turn of this century, the settlers of the Canadian territories

were largely of French and British origin.<sup>9</sup> Clifford Sifton, who was minister of the interior from 1896-1905, initiated the first big wave of non-British and non-French agricultural immigration (Knowles, “The Sifton Years” 61-78). With his aim to settle British-Columbia and especially the prairies, Sifton advertised and promoted the inflow of farmers and farm workers he thought suitable for the harsh conditions of prairie settlement. He thus shifted the hitherto ethnic salience of Canadian immigration policy to a salience of suitable prairie labour, which still favoured the very few British and French agricultural immigrants, but which - in its urgent need for larger numbers of prairie farmers - led to the influx of numerous central and eastern Europeans, the major ethnicities being Ukrainian, Polish, Romanian, Hungarian, and Russian (Knowles 76-77). The second big wave of mass immigration that further diversified Canada’s population structure was started off by prime minister Mackenzie King in the post-war period of the forties. Robert F. Harney, who discusses King’s purposes for the massive inflow of immigrants into Canada (52-55), remarks that the country’s economic, demographic, and national survival depended – and still depends - on immigration (53).<sup>10</sup> Comparable to the German Ausländerpolitik, King’s intention was to expand the Canadian “populace without causing a ‘fundamental alteration in the character’ of the country” (Harney 54). The Immigration Act of 1952 conditioned immigration along the principles of nationality, geographic origin, peculiarity of custom, suitability of climate, and capability to assimilate to the dominant culture (Harney 60). Its prerequisites clearly privileged immigrants from continental



Europe and aimed at preserving western – especially British - dominance in Canada.

In the late sixties and early seventies a change in immigration policy seemed to bring about ethnic equality. With the loosening up of Canada's immigration laws for people of colour<sup>11</sup> and the consequent initiation of the politics of multiculturalism by the Trudeau government,<sup>12</sup> the ideal of equal rights for all Canadian citizens and of overcoming ethnic salience appeared palpable (Harney 72). In 1971, Trudeau officially announced “that cultural pluralism is the very essence of Canadian identity. Every ethnic group has the right to preserve and develop its own culture and values in the Canadian context<sup>13</sup>...A policy of multiculturalism must be a policy for all Canadians” (Harney 72). Legal provisions to protect the nations' multicultural heritage have been articulated not only in Trudeau's policy statement of 1971 but also in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and Bill C-93, the Act for the Preservation and Enhancement of Multiculturalism in Canada, which was passed in 1988 (Hutcheon, “Crypto-Ethnicity 29; Hutcheon and Richmond 12-13). Philip, however, accuses this legislation of “not defin[ing] multiculturalism, let alone mention[ing] race or colour” (Frontiers 182). Her reproach of multicultural policy for the lack of a clear definition is shared by Neil Bissoondath and Harney who both scrutinise the discrepancy between the policy's ambitious ideals and its inability to affect practice (Bissoondath 42-43; Harney 85).<sup>14</sup> Dealing with this issue, Arnold H. Itwaru – who draws on Benedict Anderson's view of nations as “imagined

communities” - comes to the conclusion that “Canada...is located in the landscape of the mind” (20). According to him, the multicultural nation-state is not a fact but a collective invention and idealisation proclaimed by dominant White discourse in order to preserve its superiority (Itwaru 16-18; James 23; Sollors xi-xiv; Siemerling 22).

Philip is very outspoken in her criticism of the policy’s silence about issues of race and colour, a silence that – according the Indian Canadian woman writer Arun P. Mukherjee – fosters “common-sense racism” in Canadian society (Frontiers 181-182; Mukherjee 436-437). She declares that Canada was “shaped and fashioned by a belief system that put white Europeans at the top of society and Native and African people at the bottom” (Frontiers 182). Dawn Thompson confirms Philip’s point in her article “Technologies of Ethnicity,” in which she maintains that the goal of multicultural politics is “the preservation of Canada – of the state and its status quo – with as little change as possible” (55-56); it is a desire that signifies “[t]he anxiety of displacement that troubles national rootedness” (Bhabha, “On the Irremovable Strangeness of Being Different” 34). Under these conditions, the ideal of mosaic-like cultural pluralism turns out to be a mere metaphor for a “*pedagogy* that [leads] to the proliferation of labels, to compartmentalization, and to further entrenchment of ethnic boundaries” (Thompson 56; Hutcheon and Richmond 13-14; Sollors xiv; my stress). It shows strong affinities to the cathedral image of an ideal Canadian nation Wilfrid Laurier proclaimed at the turn of the century: “I want the granite to remain the

granite, the oak to remain the oak, the marble to remain the marble” (Harney 78). Non-White Canadians are “Othered” by the White insistence on cultural-ethnic origins. The Chinese American writer Ien Ang draws a typical conversation between a White and a non-White person that very well signals the prevalent equation of cultural with national identity: “‘Where are you from?’ ‘From [Canada].’ ‘No, where are you *really* from?’” (10). Furthermore, she notices that “this is a problem shared by millions of people throughout the world today, where migration has become an increasingly common phenomenon” (10). Bhabha’s discussion of the invention of national narratives in “DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation,” presents a similar perspective to Thompson’s and Ang’s. He describes the people of the nation-space as “the historical ‘objects’ of a nationalist *pedagogy*, giving the discourse an authority that is based on the pre-given or constituted historical origin or event” (“DissemiNation” 297). Pedagogical discourse teaches the temporally/historically linear story of the nation based on an original event (Bhabha, “DissemiNation” 297).<sup>15</sup> In his discussion of traditional ethnicity, Werner Sollors points out that the myths of originality and authenticity prevent dynamic cultural-ethnic interaction (xiii-xiv). Being inventions themselves, these myths contribute to the invention of a national past; the nation-state is imagined as a unique, eternal, and stable community (Sollors xiii-xi; James 23-24).

Philip’s and Özdamar’s resistance to White privilege is not only rendered difficult by the workings of ethnic-cultural and racial salience but beyond it by the

exclusion of the issue from the “dominant forms and forums of [public-political] discussion” (Schleier 210). Canadian as well as German dominant discourse constructs its myth of the nation-state along the lines of the unexamined, normative category of Germanness or Canadianness. Germany conceives itself as the homogeneous – which means monocultural, monolingual and monoethnic – Kulturation, and Canada predicates its model of the multicultural nation on Anglo-French biculturalism and bilingualism (Harney 72).<sup>16</sup> In his article “The Unexamined,” Ross Chambers develops the idea of unexamined categories such as “maleness, heterosexuality, middleclassness, [and] whiteness [as] *the* unmarked, and so unexamined...category *par excellence*” (142). He scrutinises the subtle but distinct western assumption of White in(di)visibility as opposed to non-White examinability and (di)visibility, which leads him to the conclusion that in this asymmetrical relationship, Whiteness becomes the centre or norm, which examines the non-White periphery, while it itself eludes examination and (di)visibility (147). Interviewing White American women from different ethnic backgrounds on the issue of culture and belonging in America, Frankenberg comes to a similar understanding. She also notes that Whiteness is simultaneously constructed as normative or generic and as an “empty” and thus unexaminable cultural space that defines non-Whiteness (Frankenberg, “Questions of Culture and Belonging” 192, 197).<sup>17</sup> In another essay, “Growing up White,” she critically recognises that “we are encouraged, as white people, to view ourselves as racially and culturally ‘neutral’ rather than as members of racially and culturally

*privileged or dominant groups*” (51). One of the five White US women she interviews in this context, for instance, discloses Whiteness as a “privilege enjoyed but now acknowledged, a reality lived in but unknown” (51). In Canada and Germany the normative examiners are represented by the WASP Canadian<sup>18</sup> and the originary German.<sup>19</sup>

Chambers points out that the act of examination can find paradoxical expression in a pluralisation and/or a homogenisation of “Otherness.” In each case the outcome is examinability, a process that establishes considerable social, political and economic control over the non-White “Other” (Chambers 149). In Germany, the attitude towards non-Germans definitely has a homogenising quality; foreign residents are widely identified by a single signifier: “Turkish.” This generalising identification of “Otherness” not only reduces Turkish ethnic-cultural difference to stereotyped labels but it also incorporates all immigrants, which means also those of non-Turkish origin, into the clichéd image of the “Turk” (Brinkler-Gabler and Smith 20-21). One major reason for the specific limitation of foreignness to Turkishness consists in the very fact that the Turks constitute the largest ethnic minority in Germany. In the introduction to their essay collection on gender, nation and immigration in contemporary Europe, Gisela Brinkler-Gabler and Sidonie Smith observe that the Turkish culture is particularly suitable for the creation of the examined “Other,” since it can be easily identified and stereotyped as the non-Christian and “non-White” Oriental

culture by the unexamined category of German Whiteness and Christianity (20-21).

Özdamar's drama-prose collection Mutterzunge sets out to subvert homogenising stereotypes of Turkishness, which do not recognise or even deny internal differentiation and social-cultural change within Turkish cultural practice and thinking. In The Location of Culture, Bhabha describes the construction of conventional cultural stereotypes as a process of ethnic-cultural and national identification that attempts to fix national-cultural identities and to simplify, normalise and thereby deny their multitude by promoting an unrelated, hierarchical co-existence of fixed categories in the nation-state (66, 73). Özdamar uses just these very assumptions of the stereotype to subvert stereotyped identifications of the uncivilised guest worker and immigrant:

Ein Handbuch für Gastarbeiter, die in der Fremde arbeiten gehen. Drinnen stand: 'Lieber Bruder Arbeiter! Die Toiletten in Europa sind anders als bei uns: wie ein Stuhl. Ihr sollt nicht darauf stehen, ihr sollt euch unbedingt darauf setzen. Für die Sauberkeit benutzt man nicht Wasser, Blätter, Erde, oder Stein, sondern ganz feines Toilettenpapier.' Der Esel machte sich lustig, sagte: 'Oder einer leckt einem den Arsch.' (Mutterzunge 65-66)

*A Handbook for Gastarbeiter Who are Going to Work Abroad.* It said: 'Dear Brother Worker! Toilets in Europe are different than here at home: they are like a chair. Do not stand on top of them, you must sit down on them. For cleanliness, do not use water, leaves, earth or stones, but very fine toilet paper.' The donkey laughed aloud, saying: 'Or else someone will lick your arse.' (Mothertongue 81)

Constructing exaggerated, typified polarisations of different cultural habits, Özdamar, in this quotation, turns the "stereotype" against itself. It becomes its own means of disruption as she employs it as a strategy of parodying German –

and more generally European/western – misrecognitions and misrepresentations of guest workers and their cultures. She thus playfully unmasks what Bhabha discloses in theory (The Location of Culture 69-70, 74-75): stereotyping is a complex, ambivalent, contradictory way of articulation that does not offer the proclaimed security and fixity of identification.

In the Karagöz story, Özdamar describes the Turkish identity of this century as a hybrid form of multiple cultural influences. She distinguishes between rural (the village the farmer comes from) and urban (Istanbul) areas as well as between religious and secular lifestyles. Istanbul is described as a place that occupies the space in-between western and eastern customs: “In Istanbul kam aus vielen Minaretten der Ezan gleichzeitig, die Autos hupten, die Straßenverkäufer schrien” / “In Istanbul, the enzan came out of many minarets all at the same time, cars honked their horns, street pedlars hawked their wares” (Mutterzunge 59; Mothertongue 73). In another passage, Özdamar mockingly unmasks the prejudiced and arrogant western condemnation of the headscarf as a religious, ethnic, and social-cultural emblem of Islamic fundamentalism: “[W]enn Türkisch Frau Kopftuch trägt, Europa sie nix lieben” / “If Turkish woman wears headshawl, Europe not like her” (Mutterzunge 67; Mothertongue 83).<sup>20</sup> Özdamar disrupts the clichéd western contextualisation of the headgear through the voice of the Turkish woman with the headscarf who asserts it as a garment of personal liking: “Aber ich liebe mein Kopftuch” / “But I love my headshawl” (Mutterzunge 68; Mothertongue 85). In the interview with Annette Wierschke,

Özdamar stresses that the codings of the headscarf vary as considerably as from the symbolisation of Islamic fundamentalism and female suppression as to the feminist fetish or fashionable article (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 268-269).<sup>21</sup> She supports her point by referring to the women she saw wearing a mini-skirt and headscarf at the same in Istanbul (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 269). Depending on the woman who wears the garment, it can have a secular-modernised or traditional-religious meaning.

Yet, the American tourist to Turkey (the epitome of western capitalism in Özdamar's story) ignores the versatility of Turkish culture. He is only interested in the traditional past – ironically represented by an old pitcher - on which he projects his western image of cultural exoticism (Mothertongue 65; Mutterzunge 54).<sup>22</sup> While the pitcher is completely worthless to the Turkish treasure-hunter, it signifies a real treasure to the western tourist who is in search of the desired cultural “Other,” the Orient.<sup>23</sup> Promoting the image of Oriental, exotic Turkish identity, western culture denies the reality of a modernised, highly westernised Turkey. Edward Said's Orientalism examines the processes by which the Orient is constructed as a myth in European thinking (Said 2). He maintains that Orientalism represents not only an academic field of study but also a more general discourse that aims at preserving western cultural hegemony by means of the Occidental-Oriental and modern/civilised-backward/primitive binaries (Said 7; Jankowsky 261). According to Said, the dichotomy of western superiority and eastern inferiority works on the political, sociological, military, ideological,



scientific, imaginary as well as cultural ranges (4, 8). In the story “Grandfather Tongue,” Özdamar plays with the cliché of the Oriental. Ibni Abdullah’s understanding of the Oriental man or woman (die Orientalin / die Orientalisten) is ambivalent insofar as it is simultaneously directed towards the Turkish woman narrator and the German students of Orientalism (Mutterzunge 15, 17, 25; Mothertongue 17, 20, 29).<sup>24</sup> Deliberately confusing these two western categories, Özdamar subtly unravels the Orient as a myth of European cultural thinking and stereotyping, which is once more alluded to in the Karagöz story. There, the Gastarbeiter take the “Orient Express” to return to their homelands (Mothertongue 101; Mothertongue 81).

In the passages mentioned here, Özdamar artfully contests the western prejudice towards Turkey - and more generally the Arabic world - as a traditional and backward Oriental entity. In the interview with Horrocks and Kolinsky, she speaks up against this generalising stereotype, because it ignores the fact that Turkey consists of many heterogeneous cultures that co-exist in a climate of tense and conflicting relations (269).<sup>25</sup> She complicates the question of Turkish and German national identification in the Karagöz story by challenging the notion of national-cultural authenticity in a highly ironic and ingenious way: “Ein echter Berliner ist aus Berlin. Ein echter Türke ist aus Kreuzberg. Ein echter Pariser ist aus Gummi” / “A real Berlin letter is made of Berlin. A real Turkish letter is made of Kreuzberg. A real French letter is made of rubber” (Mutterzunge 86; Mothertongue 107). The fact that Kreuzberg is a district of Berlin with a dense

Turkish population signifies that the Turk residing in Germany – as represented by Berlin – simultaneously is a “real” Turk and a “real” German. Özdamar thus unmasks the western concept of genuine ethnic-national identity as an invention that is unstable and open to change. The German characters she depicts in the four Mothertongue stories display a Germanness that is not the least homogeneous but highly disparate: they reach from the intellectual in the bathtub to the economically driven employer, the customs officer who represents the political-legislative perspective, the Orientalist, the East German, the West German, the fascist who is portrayed by the plastic snakes in the Charwoman story and the “Ausländer.” As Michael Fischer notes, ethnicity – and I add nationalism – are dynamic processes that are “reinvented and reinterpreted with each generation by each individual” (195).

Like Özdamar, Philip challenges and re-invents the ideal of the uniform bicultural and bilingual Canadian nation-state. Her writing strongly opposes multicultural balkanisation and inequality and instead suggests a reality that is far more complex than the promoted smoothly interlocking mosaic that privileges European and especially WASP Whiteness (Philip, Frontiers 181-186). In She Tries Her Tongue, she resists White exclusiveness and dominance by means of re-appropriating the conventional Canadian literary-linguistic, historical and national models. She, for instance, creates her own hybrid language in-between E/english, which re-claims i-mage,<sup>26</sup> word, and body fragmented and silenced by colonial, Eurocentric discourse. Hence, she breaks with the ethnic-racial salience imposed

on Canadian citizens of colour by the unexamined category of Whiteness. The Canadian writer and critic Bissoondath who is of Indian Caribbean origin vehemently criticises the prevalent conditions of multiculturalism for their enhancement of ethnic-racial salience,<sup>27</sup> which he calls “segregationalism” (25, 132-134).<sup>28</sup> He furthermore draws attention to the paradoxical texture of the multicultural policy that, on the one hand, fosters cross-cultural understanding and, on the other hand, underlines the right to cultural retention (42).<sup>29</sup> Itwaru discloses the claim to uphold one’s ethnic identity and at the same time participate to the full in national life to be “spurious in reality” (16), where it turns out to be an unrelated differentiation of White and non-White cultural practice as well as a homogenisation of ethnic-cultural differences among non-White Canadians.

Yet, it must also be recognised that the phenomenon of migration as such contributes to the coalescence of Caribbean and Turkish heterogeneous identities. As a result of migration, the formerly geographical terms Caribbean and Turkish come to assume cultural significance. With reference to George Lamming’s The Pleasures of Exile,<sup>30</sup> Bucknor observes that “cultural affinities within the region often crystallize into a national construct when Caribbean peoples are abroad” (22). Comparable to the Anglo-Celtic diaspora, Caribbean Canadian and Turkish German immigrants only developed a sense of common cultural identity in the new homelands. In his study of Germany’s socio-economic structure, Seifert points out that the majority of resident aliens form “invented cultural communities” in which they organise their lives primarily within their own

ethnic-cultural structures (108). Özdamar explains this deliberate preservation of and nostalgia about the home culture as a counter-pressure to the homogenising and exclusionary efforts of dominant culture that leads to a reversed construction of prejudices and clichés about the “German” – and I add the “Canadian” here (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 261).<sup>31</sup> Bucknor relates to the same problem when discussing the reciprocity of influences between Canadian racism and Caribbean cultural retention, a correlation he sees still largely misrecognised or ignored by literary critics in Canada (he directs his criticism to Frances Henry, Smaro Kamboureli, and Frank Birbalsingh here; 96-97).

Philip persistently tackles the western-racist tendency to homogenise and stereotype the “Black”<sup>32</sup> as the “primitive” and “savage.” In the essay “Museum Could Have Avoided Culture Clash” of the Frontier collection (103-108), she gives the example of the ROM (Royal Ontario Museum) exhibition entitled “Into the Heart of Africa” of 1990, which gave an offensive - since uncritical and racist - presentation of colonist Europeans and missionaries bringing “civilisation” to the heart of barbarian, primitive Africa. The definitions of civilisation given by the OED are further evidences of western-imperialist stereotyping. The process of civilising allegedly uncivilised cultures is described by the acts of “mak[ing] civil, bring[ing] out a state of barbarism, instruct[ing] in the arts of life, enlighten[ing] and refin[ing];” and the term “uncivilised” is defined as “existing in the lowest stage of culture; pertaining to or characteristic of savages” (OED). In the poem “Testimony Stoops to Mother Tongue” (She Tries Her Tongue), Philip invokes

and re-reads the White racist clichés of the Black body as highly constructed in language:

the confusion of centuries that passes  
as the word  
    kinks hair  
    flattens nose  
    thickens lips  
    designs prognathous jaws  
    shrinks the brain  
to unleash the promise  
                                    in ugly  
the absent in image. (78)<sup>33</sup>

In her discussion of the ROM exhibit, she blames the western institution of the museum for being a major site of racial oppression, since it presents the West as unexamined norm and presses the African into a cliché of inferiority, difference, subordination, and examinability (Ashcroft et al, Key Concepts 209).<sup>34</sup> Even the African Canadian protest against the exhibit became subject to this colonising binarism, as it was portrayed by the media “as being irrational, emotional and unable to grasp the irony” that was needed to “really” understand the exposition (Frontiers 103). According to Monica Kaup, this attitude consists of a “neo-colonialist” quality (172-173) that – in its privileging of normative Whiteness – embraces not only the social-political but also the economic-political sphere.<sup>35</sup>

Although the White curator of “Into the Heart of Africa,” Jeanne Cannizzo, claimed that her intention was the promotion of the understanding of the history of racism and the complexities of cross-cultural encounters (Frontiers 106-107), the final outcome was of a rather contrary effect. Philip discerns the failure of Cannizzo’s well-meant endeavour in the ignorance and non-recognition of the

issue of racism in Canadian public and political discourse (Frontiers 12, 107); she characterises dominant Canadian society as a “society which is politely but vehemently racist” (She Tries Her Tongue 25; Frontiers 12, 182).<sup>36</sup> Hutcheon and Richmond who connect the issues of racism and multiculturalism in the introduction to Other Solitudes contend that “ethnocentrism and xenophobia [and racism] cannot be discounted, even in a country that, since 1971, has been officially multicultural (12, 7).<sup>37</sup> Commenting on the exhibition’s fiasco at a conference on postcolonial theory and literature in Vancouver in 1992, she indicates – as listener Daniel Coleman recalls in his thematically related essay “The Babies in the Colonial Washtub” – that the museum “failed to anticipate the multiple audiences’ responses...It aimed a barb at smug English-Canadian artifact collectors, but it didn’t consider how that arrow might strike African Canadians” (Coleman 15). Coleman points out another important aspect: representation. The different stories about colonialism and the issue of cross-cultural displacement he deals with in his article are all stories about and not by Africans. They are “told by a pink narrator or photographer or captionist or museum curator...to paying pink audiences” (29). Philip, who belonged to an African Caribbean group picketing the exhibition, makes clear that an understanding of African history first of all needs the acknowledgement and understanding of the multiple African influences and presences in Canadian society (The Toronto Star, January 1991). According to her, the incorporation of an overt policy of anti-racism into the

conception of multicultural politics is indispensable to achieve this goal (Frontiers 185-186; Hutcheon and Richmond 7).

Harney distinguishes a further ambiguous aspect of multicultural politics, which emerges as a consequence of the simultaneous claims of cultural retention and cultural integration or acculturation of immigrants to the English-French culture and especially language (71-73, 82-83).<sup>38</sup> In the poem “She Tries Her Tongue; Her Silence Softly Breaks,” Philip quotes from “The Practical Guide to Gardening” to give expression to the Afrosporic’s painful experience of being culturally and linguistically “transplanted” by colonial forces into western society (She Tries Her Tongue 85). The poem that accompanies this excerpt resumes the topic of forced acculturation, which is then shown from the individual perspective of the Black woman narrator:

the me and mine of parents  
the we and us of brother and sister  
the tribe of belongings small and separate  
when gone...  
on these exact places of exacted grief  
i placed mint-fresh grief coins  
.....  
with the fate of a slingshot stone  
loosed from the catapult pronged double with history... (84)

As an African Caribbean woman living in Canada, Philip – in this passage – pronounces her own experience of double-diaspora, of the “slingshot stone / loosed from the catapult pronged double with history.” Her ancestors were forcibly transplanted from Africa to the Caribbean and many other parts of the world, and she herself lives in a voluntary exile in Canada, whose multicultural

policy paradoxically claims to promote the immigrant's cultural retention as well as her/his cultural integration into western-Canadian society. Officially and hence theoretically, Canada is a society based on multi-cultural equality. However, the integrative model clearly supports the prevalence of bi-culturalism.<sup>39</sup> In fact, the multi is reduced to the homogeneous "Other" that can be better appropriated and acculturated. Bucknor observes that Canada is "often constructed as a space divided into discrete nations (cultural groups) like First Nations and European Descendants...Anglophone and Multicultural 'Other'" (21-22). In She Tries Her Tongue, Philip challenges these oppressive constraints exerted by the unexamined category of Whiteness as she locates her texts in the hybrid space where the axes of identity, geographical spaces, and linguistic-cultural traditions meet. Thus showing that being and belonging are dynamic, multi-faceted processes that cannot be fossilised, she breaks open the Self/Other binary and re-appropriates the connotation of multi-culturalism.

Özdamar's writing resists a similar force of "Othering." Analogous to the subtle forms of domination and control exerted by Canadian multicultural politics, Germany's official immigration policy – which is termed "integration policy" – promotes the image of the foreign "Other," the Ausländer or Gastarbeiter, who is to be optimised and adjusted to the rules of German society (Horrocks and Kolinsky xviii). Initiated in the seventies as a reaction to the transformation of the guest worker status into one of unlimited residency (O'Brien, "Continuity and Change..." 109), the concept of integration aims at upholding the ideal of the



monocultural and monolingual German Kulturation by acculturating its permanent resident aliens to the monistic norm (O'Brien, "Germany's Newest Aliens" 460). Under the Schmidt<sup>40</sup> administration, the ministry of Foreign Affairs announced in 1978 that "the internalization of liberal democratic norms and values is essential if foreigners are to reside in Germany permanently" (O'Brien, "Germany's Newest Aliens" 463-464). One major component of teaching these norms and values was seen in the pedagogical discourse of school education (O'Brien, "Germany's Newest Aliens" 463-464), which – as Bhabha's concept of the performative shows – promotes the myth of the liberal German nation-state through its national-cultural pedagogy. O'Brien argues that the prejudiced, false stereotype of the "illiberal" foreigner or East German/Aussiedler rationalises and solidifies the unexamined category of the supposedly "liberal," originary German with her/his "liberalising mission" incorporated in the policy of integration (O'Brien, "Germany's Newest Aliens" 467). In the Charwoman story, Özdamar parodies this missionary pretension with the help of the play-within-the-play technique.<sup>41</sup> She interposes the charwoman's account with a play in which several famous western heroes are featured and significantly show strong affinities to the story's characters. The Caesar figure – performing German patriarchy<sup>42</sup> – calls upon Hamlet – representing the Turkish Gastarbeiter who wavers between Turkish and German culture, women, and belonging – to become an accomplice in western, man-made imperialism with its notion of humanist liberalism:

Hamlet, hör auf mit deinen Orgasmen, du bist nicht mal richtig politisch, Hamlet, du gehst ab sofort in die Dritte-Welt-Länder-

Pissoirs und bringst den Leuten bei, was Humanismus ist. (Mutterzunge 118)

Hamlet, stop having your orgasms, you are not even really political, Hamlet, from now on you are going away to the Third-World-Country-Pissoirs to teach the people there what humanism is all about. (Mothertongue 149)<sup>43</sup>

The 1977 conception of Ausländerpolitik submitted by the CDU states that “integration does not mean an assimilation which works toward making foreign workers and their families into Germans” (Bundesfachausschuß Innenpolitik der CDU 3).<sup>44</sup> The OED defines the term “assimilation,” which derives from the Latin assimilare, as the “action of making or becoming like or conformed; the state of being like; [of] resemblance [and] similarity.” The process of “integration” is defined as “the bringing into equal membership of a common society those groups or persons previously discriminated against on racial or cultural grounds” (OED). While this definition gives an adequate summary of the idealised vision or theory that composes the policy of integration, the social and political realities, however, contrast with this ideal. Racial-ethnic discrimination is a distinct element of German society; it sets clear boundaries between the originary German and the non-German or not really German “Other.” Integration policy and legal inequality – especially the restriction of German civil rights and the right of political co-determination for foreigners – keep in place the social exclusions and differences that promote the vision of the culturally and linguistically homogenous nation-state (Räthzel 40; Arens 24-26). It is surely worthwhile asking – as Arens does – if the juridical change towards an adjudication of citizenship for Ausländer would really guarantee equality of all Germans, originary or non-originary (Arens 32).

Arens, however, sees the advantage of a legal adjudication in the possibility of legal recourse for injustice and discrimination (Arens 32). Kristeva makes a similar point; according to her “the denial of the right to vote actually excludes foreigners from *any decision* – political or legal – that might be taken with respect to them, be it favorable or unfavorable” (101).

Legal adjudication would enable ethnic minorities to more effectively tackle the hidden forms of political-legal and public racist discourse. In the Karagöz story, Özdamar ingeniously unveils subtle racism when she presents the German “Türkenliebhaber” / “lover of Turks” (Mutterzunge 80; Mothertongue 100) who seems to show a serious and unprejudiced interest in Turkish culture. Yet his ultimate account of the sexually driven, immoral Turkish nature shows how deeply German discourse is imbued with subtly working racist clichés of the “Turk” as the homogenised, primitive, non-White “Other.” Like Canada, Germany excludes the phenomenon of “racism” from its political and public spheres, a process that is particularly conditioned by the country’s historical legacy of the Third Reich (Krell et al 153).<sup>45</sup> Germany officially claims that there are no traces of fascism left in its society (Räthzel 44-45). Therefore prejudices and aggressions against foreigners officially are not termed “racism” or “neo-fascism” but referred to in the milder forms of Ausländerfeindlichkeit - hostility to foreigners - or Fremdenfeindlichkeit – xenophobia – (Räthzel 44-45). Whereas the assumptions underlying racism are established on the belief in the superiority of a particular race’s human character and abilities, the terms xenophobia<sup>46</sup> and

Ausländerfeindlichkeit<sup>47</sup> do not solely pertain to racial-ethnic issues. They reveal a more general fear within the normative category of Germanness, which is that of losing one's privileges, safety, and "nationality" to strange, uncontrollable influences (Krell et al 166).

Özdamar rejects the conventional use of the term Ausländerfeindlichkeit as empty phrasing. She instead prefers the word Überfremdung, which she – from the standpoint of the non-German German - defines as a process in-between alienation and foreign infiltration that allows the immigrant to resist western acculturation and the loss of the mother tongue attaching thereto (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 262-263). Hence, she completely deviates from the term's conventional meaning that connotes the ethnic German's fear of losing her/his cultural and national identity to foreign infiltration; literally translated, Überfremdung means "too much foreignness." Considering Özdamar's deep rootedness in the tradition of the Brechtian theatre, her understanding of the term reveals clear affinities with Brecht's theory of Verfremdung, "the making strange or de-familiarizing of events, actions, and relationships which we fail to notice in daily life because they have become too habitual; they seem to be a fixed part of the human condition" (Wiles 72). Performing her art through the media of Verfremdungseffekte (the means of effecting the recipient's Verfremdung, Wiles 79), Özdamar, in the Brechtian manner, unmask the supposedly eternal, universal and unchangeable values of western art and culture as socially and historically constructed, temporary inventions that are in process of constant change

(Hutcheon, The Canadian Postmodern 12). In the interview with Wierschke, she compares her vision of a renewed German society to a train station, a place where one encounters many different cultures and hears the hum of numerous languages, all coexisting in their difference and fluidity (Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 263).

Gert Krell's and Terence Craig's discussions of racism and xenophobia in Germany and Canada respectively, agree insofar as they both view economic recession and heavy unemployment as intensifiers of hostile actions against foreigners (Krell et al 166; Craig 12).<sup>48</sup> The immigrant becomes the scapegoat of "disappointment, disaffection and instability" (Brinkler-Gabler and Smith 8), a process that works on the political as well as on the social-economical level. Krell argues that the scapegoat mechanism on the one hand provides ways for the socially-economically disadvantaged Germans to compensate emotionally for their situation and on the other hand enables the privileged strata of the population to rationalise defensive attitudes (Krell et al 164). The German reunification has fuelled scapegoatism and racism in a twofold way. Firstly, ethnic German immigrants project their being discriminated against by West Germans on the "Ausländer," the non-White "Other" of even more inferior ethnic-national, political, and social status (O'Brien, "Germany's Newest Aliens 452-456).<sup>49</sup> And secondly, the juridical and social hierarchies between the "not really German" and "non-German" immigration groups provoke tensions that are based on and intensify ethnic-national (di)visibility. The pluralisation of "foreignness" that

results out of this classification is paradoxical to the simultaneous homogenisation of the non-western “Other” – the eastern German and the non-German immigrant. Still, as Chambers points out, both processes maintain the ideal of the normative, indiscernible category of western Germanness that subtly examines and controls the (di)visible “Other” and thus keeps alive the myth of the monocultural Kulturation.

Constantly re-inventing the originary German and the founding Anglo-French cultures of the two nation-states, the policies of integration and multiculturalism in Germany and Canada respectively mask or even disavow the binaristic categories of White superiority and non-White inferiority. Both models are subtly discriminatory as they operate unidirectionally by privileging the immigrant’s usefulness for the immigration country, a perspective that misrecognises or even denies the needs of the immigrant who is reduced to a mere object serving dominant society (Brinkler-Gabler and Smith 9; Rätzzel 40). Klaus Leggewie points out that in Germany and Europe – I add Canada here – ethnic minorities are politically and socially coerced to adapt to the culturally defined centre of “pure nationality” (xi-xii). In the nineties, the western desire for permanence, for personal as well as national security, and for political and social order has been intensified by the highly asymmetrical movement of global migration towards the well-off industrialised “centre” constituted by western society (Krell et al 162; Siemerling 3). Özdamar alludes to this problematic, disproportionate development in the Karagöz story: asked by the farmer why there is such a busy flow into and

out of the German nation-state, the donkey responds that “if they all go into the same direction, the world will get drunk and tip over” / “wenn alle in die selbe Richtung gehen...die Welt wird besoffen und umkippen” (Mothertongue 78; Mutterzunge 63). The world’s drunkenness and imbalance signals the problematic nature not only of demographic but especially of ethnic-cultural asymmetries that tend towards a global westernisation. In the German context, the threat that the crisis of globalisation signifies to the myths of national unity and homogeneity is complicated by the vision of a United Europe. As the process of shaping a transnational European Union takes more and more concrete forms and allows for an unlimited migration of all citizens of this union, the permeability of the borders of the European community decreases (Räthzel 31). Xenophobia and the fear of national-ethnic Überfremdung that is caused by uncontrollable trans-European population movements is falsely “remedied” by legislating a very strict control and limitation of non-European immigration. In Canada, the idea of the strong and viable nation-state finds reinforcement in the country’s closeness to the superpower U.S.A., which stirs up a constant fear of being absorbed by the “American colossus” (Harney 53). In spite of these strong tendencies towards the preservation of the myth of the homogeneous nation-state, Canada and Germany will definitely have to reconsider their immigration policies, especially with respect to the humanitarian urgencies that strongly intensify as the numbers of global refugees increase and as their circumstances take the highly tragic and intolerable human dimensions Kosovo-Albanians – being the most recent victims

of systematic genocide and forced diaspora - are suffering through (Knowles 203).

In contrast to the globally conditioned intensification of the need of national, geographic, and material belonging, Özdamar and Philip choose not to belong exclusively to any national community or ethnicity (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 266; Philip, Frontiers 22).<sup>50</sup> In the interview with Wierschke, Özdamar declares that for her home and belonging is wherever her friends are (Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 258-260).<sup>51</sup> Giving an account of the circumstances and experiences as stage-director of her play “Karagöz in Alamania,” she subtly brings ethnic-national identification ad absurdum with a seemingly farcical anecdote:

Einmal biß der Esel den türkischen Star in den Nacken...Ein türkischer Star sagte: ‘Ein türkischer Esel würde so etwas niemals tun.’ (Der Esel war ein Frankfurter Esel.) Ein deutscher Star: ‘Ich verstehe mich mit dem Esel gut, er würde mir so etwas nie antun.’ Dann trat ihn der Esel aber auch. (Horrocks and Krause 61-62)

On one occasion the donkey bit the Turkish star in the back of his neck...One of the Turkish stars said: ‘A Turkish donkey would never do a thing like that.’ (The donkey was from Frankfurt.) A German star replied: ‘I get on very well with the donkey. He’d never do anything like that to me.’ But then the donkey kicked him too. (Horrocks and Krause 61-62)

In this scene, the mutually prejudiced, multi-ethnic cast goes so far as to attribute ethnic-national characteristics to the donkey incapable of this kind of discrimination. The persistent myths of ethnic-national identification and belonging are brought ad absurdum and thus demythologised (Horrocks and Krause 67). Özdamar’s assertion that she simultaneously feels related to many



places (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 265) shows affinities to Philip's self-understanding as an exiled subject, for whom "be/longing *anywhere* is problematic" (Frontiers 22):

From one exile to another, island hopping, first to Trinidad "for an education"...next to Jamaica for a continuation at the tertiary level, and then to a more permanent exile in North America. Only to understand, finally, that exile had begun a long time before I left Tobago for Trinidad...(Frontiers, 9-10)

In She Tries Her Tongue, Philip describes her people – the "Africans in the Caribbean and the Americas" (Frontiers 22) - as a diasporic people, which western colonialism has forcedly deprived of its belonging and identification: the African cultural space. On the endless search for belonging and being they have become

wanderers  
in the centuries of curses  
the lost I's  
the lost equation:  
                    you plus I equals we  
                    I and I and I equals I  
                    minus you ("African Majesty" 48)

Historically, the term diaspora refers to "the dispersion of Jews among the Gentile nations" (OED). Recently, it is however applied in much wider contexts, a development in which Donald H. Akenson sees the danger of the term's transformations into a "fuzzy, massive linguistic weed (sic)" (382, 385). The main force for the expanded – and consequently more controversial - use of "diaspora" comes from the field of Black studies on slavery and imperialism as reasons for a forced dispersal of the African peoples (Akenson 397; Gilroy 205-212). Since the

term now comprises a broad range of meanings and pertains to involuntary as well as voluntary dispersal, Akenson suggests we talk of “diasporas” rather than “diaspora” in the singular sense (385). Vijay Mishra extends Akenson’s point insofar as he depicts differences within the Indian diaspora itself; he distinguishes between the old diaspora of exclusivism and the new diaspora of the border (422). In his critical discussion of Africentrism, Gilroy develops the idea of diaspora, of “the flows, exchanges and in-between elements that call the very desire to be centred into question” (The Black Atlantic 190). Philip makes a similar point in Frontiers, when she talks about the “Afrosporic peoples” (17) and their problematic, disrupted sense of home, “another word of apparent fixity yet also subject to a dangerous fluidity” (11). Discussing the experiences of Black dispersal through colonisation and slavery, Gilroy offers a model of Black diaspora, which finds expression in the discontinuous, “impure” processes of “creolisation, métissage, mestizaje, and hybridity” (The Black Atlantic 2). His trope of the “Black Atlantic” signifies place as a continually shifting passage; the metaphor suggests that all places are places of repeated displacement. Similarly, Bhabha argues that “[c]itizenship is less the habitus of the homeland, and more frequently an experience of migration, exile, diaspora, cultural displacement” (Supposing the Subject 202). The diasporic condition thus unsettles the static cartographical markers of the nation-state. In her latest collection of critical essays, A Genealogy of Resistance, Philip perceives the identification of displacements as the precursor to the identification of place (58). She thus

attributes a positive force to the state of being displaced, which also shows in She Tries Her Tongue. Re-appropriating Ovid's Ceres and Proserpine story in the poem sequence "And Over Land and Sea," she makes use of the quest narrative to describe her people's search for the lost place, language, memory and identity. In the interview with Barbara Carey, she pronounces that "'finding out'...is the quest itself, and not its result" (Carey 20).

Belonging and home are provisional, fluid and dynamic processes for Özdamar as well. As the long title of her Karawanseraï novel indicates, life – like a caravanserai - is a place where one stays for a short while and then leaves again: Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei: hat zwei Türen, aus einer kam ich rein, aus der anderen ging ich raus (life is a caravanserai: has two doors, I entered through one of them, I exited through the other; my translation). In the Mothertongue collection, travelling by train is used as a common image to express the fluidity of belonging: "Bahnhof. Die Züge fahren ab, die Züge kommen an" / "Train station. Trains leave, trains arrive" (Mutterzunge 76; Mothertongue 95). In the Karagöz story, the guestworker and especially his wife continually travel back and forth between Turkey and Germany (Mutterzunge 72-74; Mothertongue 90-93),<sup>52</sup> between "where they're from" and "where they're at" (Gilroy, "It Ain't Where You're From"). Remembering the wisdom of her grandmother, the farmer's wife describes her problematic positioning in-between the two cultures: "Meine Großmutter sagte: 'Der Mensch ist ein Vogel. Machst du Augen auf, bist du da. Machst du Augen zu, bist du dort.' Wiedersehen Alamania!" / "My grandmother

used to say: “Humans are like birds. Open eyes and you are here. Close eyes and you are there.” Goodbye, Alamania!” (*Mutterzunge* 75; *Mothertongue* 93).

Similar to Özdamar, Philip defines her sense of “be/longing” as the continual cultural and lingual<sup>53</sup> dialogue in-between “where you’re from” and “where you’re at.” She refers to her ancestors, the early African slaves in the Caribbean,

singing their songs in this land so new and so strange – songs that harked back to their earlier be/longing elsewhere, but in singing those songs they were making their first mark of be/longing to the land, the place – this world so new – the Caribbean and the Americas. (*Frontiers* 22)

At this point, it is important to consider a problematic ambivalence about the politics of diasporas. Whereas Philip and Özdamar use the concept as a voluntary, useful means of disrupting the restrictive notion of national identification, which thus allows them to create their own – and more generally the Turkish-German/Caribbean-Canadian – hybrid identities, the diasporic, exilic condition can also become an oppressive tool of involuntary identification and exclusion from dominant culture (Mishra 424-425). Philip locates such a racist-exclusionary quality in her status as a diasporic immigrant in Canada. In *Frontiers*, she notes that belonging to the nation-state in the legal sense (citizenship) does not guarantee social, economic or even legal equality for Black Canadians (16-18). She sees herself – and more generally people of colour – “Othered” and alienated<sup>54</sup> through racial salience and hyper-visibility imposed by White society:<sup>55</sup>

I carry a Canadian passport: I, therefore, am Canadian. How am I Canadian, though, above and beyond the narrow legalistic

definition...and does the racism of Canadian society present an absolute barrier to those of us who are differently coloured ever belonging?...then there are those – our children, nephews, nieces, grandchildren – born here, who are as Canadian as snow and ice, and yet, merely because of their darker skin, are made to feel “othered.” (Frontiers 16-17)

The political philosopher Charles Taylor analyses the dependencies of the process of identification on (non)-recognition in his article “The Politics of Recognition.” Taylor points out that White Canada’s misrecognition and/or non-recognition of its Black population is a form of subtle oppression (104). Considering equal recognition of genders, cultures, and ethnicities as essential to the notion of democracy (99, 112, 120), he pleads for a “politics of difference,” by which he means a politics that equally recognises the value of all the different cultures shaping Canadian society alike - a difference on equal terms (105-106). A similar idea is articulated by Bhabha in his introduction to Nation and Narration, in which he depicts the nation-state as “janus-faced and transitional...incorporating new ‘people’ in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning” (4). Taylor’s conception acknowledges what Philip demonstrates in her poetry collection - that there are different ways of defining one’s being and belonging in the Canadian nation. Through her writing, Philip reclaims and re-defines her identity as a woman of colour with a Canadian citizenship and African-Caribbean history. Like Özdamar, she continually switches between the self-chosen saliences of sexuality, gender, class, religion, race and ethnicity, which are shown in multiple and fluid relations. The introductory article carries an overt assertion of African Canadian be/longing in

the nation-state: “‘We ent going nowhere. We here and is right here we staying.’ In Canada....To criticise, needle and demand; to work hard for; to give to; to love; to hate – for better or for worse – till death do we part” (20). Whereas Bucknor argues that this provocative use of the marriage vows represents a confrontational position towards White society (104), the deliberate reference to marriage can also be understood as a signal of her readiness for a peaceful non-White/White relationship. The latter reading of the passage is supported by her conciliatory call to find out “what we [all Canadians] can offer to and accept from each other” (25). Moreover, her collection of critical essays Frontiers is dedicated to “Canada, in the effort of becoming a space of true be/longing.”

A consideration of this claim within the context of her notion of the African Canadian diaspora, demonstrates a resemblance to Vijay Mishra’s assertion that the conceptions of the nation-state and the diaspora are not opposed but mutually enforcing (Mishra 424, 442-443). On the one hand, the “imagined community” of the nation-state needs the diasporic stranger or outsider to construct itself and on the other hand, “diasporic discourse...is a kind of return of the repressed for the nation-state itself” (Mishra 424). Bucknor makes a similar statement when he maintains that the modern nation-state is not a “trans-national one – beyond the national and localized units of culture” (242) but an “inter-national one” (243) in-between different co-existing cultural configurations. Mukherjee goes even a step further. Having grown up in an India that was struggling for independence as a nation-state, she outspokenly opposes the disavowal of the concept of nationalism

proclaimed by postmodernists, postcolonialists, and western Marxists, a claim which – according to her – displays “universalist premises” (Mukherjee 421-423). She supports her argument by referring to James Blaut’s assertion that nationalisms can be “secular, progressive, international in outlook and ethnically diverse” (422-423). Proceeding from this assumption, she sets out to de-universalise and re-invent the Canadian conception of nationalism in its specific contexts (423). Like Mishra, Bucknor and Mukherjee, Philip is well aware of the fact that the myth of the nation-state is not eliminated but re-invented and re-contextualised by her – and numerous other non-White Canadian writers’ (such as Dionne Brand, Makeda Silvera, Lillian Allen or Austin Clarke) – literary, linguistic and political resistance. Philip’s marital trope affirms the Afrosporic’s be/longing in the invented community called “Canadian nation,” yet not without pronouncing that the African Canadian takes a vital part in constantly re-inscribing and re-inventing the myth of the nation-state, which consequently has to accommodate itself to the diasporic influence (Mishra 442-443). In the interview with Wierschke, Özdamar voices an understanding of Turkish belonging in German society that is comparable to Philip’s conception of the diasporic African Canadian. She acknowledges that the Turk – like every person living in Germany – is an integrative part of German culture. The decisive point is, however, that the “Ausländer” creates and transforms dominant culture through her/his very presence in and contribution to its social, political, economic and/or literary-artistic spheres (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 254). In the

Mothertongue collection, Özdamar inserts the exiled Turkish Gastarbeiter into the German nation-state through her subtle and thought-provoking play with stereotypes, generalisations, and the myth of homogeneity. The immigrant worker is positioned in the hybrid borderzone in-between the culture of the immigration country and the homeland; it is the position at the border which provides the resources to re-invent homogeneous national identity and culture as a heterogeneous, hybrid space. Accordingly, Özdamar's definition of culture is of a very broad and vital quality; she understands culture as people and their mutual exchange of different and similar experiences (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 262).

In their works, Philip and Özdamar create a new form of Canadian and German nationalism respectively, whose grounding premise is cultural-ethnic heterogeneity. Constantly pointing out the importance of relational differences,<sup>56</sup> the writings *envision* (my stress) a multicultural Canadian and German nation-state respectively, in which diasporas and ethnic minorities move from the marginal position at the border to one of social, ethnic-cultural, political and economic equality with the WASP Canadian and the originary German. According to Jankowsky,

[t]hinking multiculturally means acknowledging that more than one culture sets values and meanings...that acquiring knowledge about the different cultural structures that coexist within a country, as well as globally, will allow for a greater understanding of the mental map out of which people from various backgrounds participate in society. (Jankowsky 262-263)



Multicultural dialogue along these lines is “based on recognition of mutual otherness - that is, on everyone’s ethnicity,” (Hutcheon, “Crypto-Ethnicity” 30).<sup>57</sup> In spite of the limitations and cultural-ethnic asymmetries inherent in the concepts of Canadian and German multiculturalism, the very models acknowledge ethnic-cultural diversity, which is even included in the myth of the Canadian nation-state. In Other Solitudes, Hutcheon and Richmond admit, however not without reservation, that “multiculturalism has the more positive possibility...of being an innovative model for civic tolerance and the acceptance of diversity that is appropriate for our [Canadian] pluralist society” (15). They, for instance, mention “multilingual programmes, ‘historical accounts of Canada’s major multicultural groups,’ and increased academic interest in Canadian diversity” (14-15) as benefits of multicultural politics. Bucknor discerns that “[m]uch of the visibility of Caribbean/Canadian writers has been facilitated by the multicultural policy which offers the best possibility so far for accommodating much recent Canadian writing” (16). Yet, he cautions against a significant paradox inherent in Canadian multiculturalism. Whereas the policy enables ethnic minority writers such as Philip to articulate their criticism of multicultural politics, the very publications are sponsored and thus selected by the government’s Multicultural Directorate (105).

In Germany, the idea of multiculturalism is more problematic since public and political discourse still largely denies the reality of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural immigration to the country and instead sticks to its untenable myth of

ethnic nationality. Yet, with the change of the political climate after the 1998 election, the new chancellor Gerhard Schröder for the first time in German history officially acknowledged that Germany has become a country of immigration. Although the high hopes raised by Schröder's statement have been disappointed so far (as my discussion of Ausländerpolitik and Ausländergesetze shows), his claim signals a small but significant move towards a re-thinking of German monocultural self-understanding. In the nineties, the integration of elements of the jus soli into the jus sanguinis and the legalising of multiple citizenship have been the key issues in the political debates on naturalisation (Münz and Ulrich 102). Though still an exception, multiple citizenship – especially for applicants from home countries that complicate or even refuse to relinquish their previous citizenship – has become more common in recent years (Münz and Ulrich 102-103). Considering the steadily growing migration to Germany and the generational “rooting” of ethnic minority groups,<sup>58</sup> an official recognition of the Ausländer as an immigrant (Einwanderer) will be unstoppable. Ultimately, this change can effect a juridical change towards broader conceptions of naturalisation and multiple citizenship. The multicultural German and Canadian societies on equal ethnic terms are still visions, but they are visions that are widely shared and enforced by a polyphony of ethnic minority writers in both countries.

<sup>1</sup> “Ka:agöz in Alamania” is the third story of the Mothertongue collection.

<sup>2</sup> The preconditions for non-German residents applying for German citizenship are very tight; the naturalisation of immigrants is still the exemption, not the rule (Münz and Ulrich 100-103). Foreign residents over the age of 23 can only apply if a) they have been living permanently in Germany for at least 15 years, b) they are not convicted of felony c) they do not receive social welfare and can prove economic security, and d) if they show a sufficient command of the German language and an orientation towards the dominant German culture (Paragraph 86 of the Ausländergesetz; O’Brien, “Germany’s Newest Aliens” 455). The restrictions for permanent residents under the age of 23 have just recently, in May 1999, been loosened up. With the political change after the election in November 1998, the discussion of citizenship and especially dual citizenship has flared up and has so far led to a compromise concerning dual citizenship. Foreign children born in Germany now receive dual citizenship, but only until they are 23 (Paragraph 85 of the Ausländergesetz). By then, they must have decided for one of the two citizenships (taken from the Tagesschau – federal news broadcast channel – 16 March 1999 and from the homepage of the German Bundestag – Lower House of the German Federal Parliament). This new legislation is only valid if the parents have lived in Germany for at least 10 years or if one parent was born in Germany. Gerald L. Neuman gives a detailed account of the development of the German naturalisation law since 1913 and the hitherto strict avoidance of dual citizenship as a possible condition of naturalisation (264-265, 274-285).

<sup>3</sup> O’Brien (“Germany’s Newest Aliens” 449), Münz and Ulrich (65-119), and Krell (161) give a more detailed analysis of this issue. Mainly relying on data from the Statistisches Bundesamt (federal office of statistical surveys), Rainer Münz and Ralf Ulrich stress that “[i]n the past fifty years, West Germany has been one of the countries receiving the highest number of immigrants in the world” (65). 80 percent of the increase of population from the fifties to 1994 can be explained by net migration gains (65-66). In 1994, the total population of Germany was 81.5million, among them 7.1 million foreigners, which makes 9 percent of the total (105). The major immigration groups nowadays are Turkey, former Yugoslavia, Italy, Greece and Poland (92-95).

<sup>4</sup> In her work Strangers to Ourselves, Kristeva states that the establishment of nation-states has led to “the only modern, acceptable, and clear definition of foreignness: the foreigner is the one who does not belong to the state in which we are, the one who does not have the same nationality” (96).

<sup>5</sup> As a reaction to the more recent opposition from immigrants - especially permanent residents - to the exclusionary label of foreignness, politicians try to circumvent the problem by choosing milder labels of exclusion such as ausländischer Mitbürger -foreign fellow-citizen - or ausländischer Arbeitnehmer - foreign member of the workforce- (Horrocks and Kolinsky xii).

<sup>6</sup> The model of foreign labour recruitment accelerated decisively after the construction of the Berlin Wall (Münz and Ulrich 77-80). Sluggish economic growth and adverse political circumstances in the Turkish nation-state strongly encouraged Turkish labour migration to European countries (Räthzel 36).

<sup>7</sup> Elçin Kürsat-Ahlers gives an informative statistical outline of demographic, social, economic and political aspects concerning the status of Turkish guest workers and residents in German society.

<sup>8</sup> According to the jus soli, children born outside the national territory to Canadian parents also acquire Canadian nationality (Neuman 251).

<sup>9</sup> In the introduction to Other Solitudes Hutcheon however emphasises that “the multicultural history of Canada is not a recent one” (10). She refers to the Loyalist migration that injected plenty of different ethnic cultures into early Canadian society (11). With regard to the arrival of the first Black immigrants, she goes back as far as to at the beginning of the seventeenth century, which she dates as the initial time of Canadian slavery (11).

<sup>10</sup> Like Germany, Canada had and still has to saturate its labour market by importing foreign labour forces; in both countries economic growth is dependent on the very provision of these capacities (Harney 53; Krell 161).

<sup>11</sup> Canada has become a major destination for immigrants from the West Indies, Asia and Central America (Kaup 171-174; Harney 64-65).

<sup>12</sup> Pierre Elliott Trudeau of the Liberal Party was Prime Minister from 1968-1979 and again from 1980-1984 when the Conservative government under Joseph Clark resigned after a short and unsuccessful tenure of office.

<sup>13</sup> The idea of cultural pluralism or multiculturalism is most frequently illustrated by the image of the mosaic, whose structure signifies the co-existence of all the different ethnic-cultural groups within the Canadian nation-state. Harney also mentions the use of the images of “the rainbow, polyphony, and the symphonic orchestra” (78).

<sup>14</sup> Philip also mentions this asymmetry in her essay “Why Multiculturalism Can’t End Racism”: “The mechanism of multiculturalism is, therefore, based on a presumption of equality, a presumption which is not necessarily borne out in reality” (*Frontiers* 181). The more recent German debate on multiculturalism and the idea of the multicultural nation launches a similar critique. Arens and Zafer Şenocak, for instance, display the discussions on multiculturalism as ineffective academic theories that are led at the very periphery of official and public discourse, which they fail to influence (Arens 35; Şenocak 40-41).

<sup>15</sup> I will take up and extend Bhabha’s concept of the production of national discourse in chapter three, which depicts the works of Özdamar and Philip in the context of ethnic minority writing that challenges the ideal of the “pure” and “authentic” canon of national literature.

<sup>16</sup> Depending on the context they are used in, the unexamined categories of Germanness and Canadianness overlap with other normative categories such as Whiteness, maleness or heterosexuality, for instance.

<sup>17</sup> Chambers here uses the term “blankness” to describe the unexamined category of Whiteness as an amorphous and thus indescribable cultural space (142).

<sup>18</sup> Using the term WASP, I refer to White, Anglo-Saxon (and not French) heterosexual discourse/society. The unexamined category of the homogeneous, bicultural nation-state renders itself discernible through the Anglo-French Canadian conflict that intensifies regionalism and the fear of a splitting up of the federal nation. With regard to this ethnic salience, “‘degrees’ or ‘shades’ of whiteness” (Chambers 144) become visible. In the Canadian hierarchy of Whiteness, British Whiteness constitutes the dominant culture, whereas non-Anglo-Saxon Whiteness is rather counted as “‘not really white’ ...or as ‘not really cultural’” (Frankenberg, “Questions of Culture and Belonging” 202). Interestingly, Donald H. Akenson makes normative Canadian Britishness (di)visible by delineating it as “a direct product of the massive British Isles diaspora of the eighteenth and, especially, the nineteenth centuries” (392). Akenson argues that the British Isles or Anglo-Celtic diaspora consisted of Welsh, Scottish, Irish, and English people (392) who only developed a sense of common British identity in the new homeland Canada (396-397).

<sup>19</sup> Similar to the unexamined category of Canadianness that of the German *Kulturnation* distinguishes between the “real” German and the “not really German” German, which means the German of non-western origin (Räthzel 46-47). Whereas eastern Germans – former East Germans and *Aussiedler* – were first welcomed after the unification – politically to destabilise communism, economically to meet the need for labour, and politically-demographically to stabilise the imbalance of the shrinking workforce and at the same time increasing number of pensioners – the regulations regarding their immigration have tightened up in the mid-nineties; the number of ethnic German immigrants has been reduced to 220,000 annually (Seifert 85). In his article “Germany’s Newest Aliens: The East Germans,” Peter O’Brien scrutinises the discriminatory official discourses of West Germans that categorise Germans from the east as second class Germans (454).

<sup>20</sup> The condescending use of a non-grammatical sentence structure is a White copy of the hybrid Turkish German language of the guest worker. The “Handbuch für *Gastarbeiter*” (the handbook

for guest workers), from which the farmer and the donkey read to the guest workers waiting for entrance in front of the “Door to Germany” (*Mutterzunge* 65-69; *Mothertongue* 81-85), is not only thematically but also structurally-linguistically patronising and discriminating as it imitates the *Gastarbeiter-Deutsch* (the German of the guest workers) and thus misrepresents this hybrid language as a very primitive variant of German. Chapter four, which deals with the hybrid, heteroglossic languages Özdamar and Philip invent as a continuum between different cultures and languages, will take up this aspect again.

<sup>21</sup> The headscarf will be further discussed in the feminist context.

<sup>22</sup> Originally used in the sense of foreign or alien, the term exotic – since the nineteenth century – connotes foreign commodities from European colonialist travels that are displayed in the homeland as alien or exotic (Ashcroft et al, *Key Concepts* 94). These exotic commodities include “minerals, artefacts, plants, animals...[and] peoples of other cultures” (Ashcroft et al, *Key Concepts* 94).

<sup>23</sup> In the introduction to his book *Orientalism*, Said notes that the Orient is a result of western “desires, repressions, investments, and projections” (8). For the west, it represents “a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences” (Said 2).

<sup>24</sup> My reading of the original text deviates decisively from the English translation at this point. Whereas Craig Thomas translates the term *Orientalin* and *Orientalisten* as Eastern woman and Middle Eastern studies, I think that the terms Oriental woman and Orientalists are far more expressive of Özdamar’s subtle resistance and subversion of the stereotyped western image of the Oriental Turk.

<sup>25</sup> The western perception of Turkey mainly relies on its past. It thus ignores the fact that the country has strongly secularised and westernised its political, economic and social-cultural structures since the reign of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who founded the Turkish Republic in 1923. Atatürk implemented changes such as the supersession of the Arabic alphabet by the Latin, the re-interpretation of Turkish history, the franchise for women and the loosening up of the strict rules of clothing, especially for women (Arens 261-263). In the interview with Wierschke, Özdamar points out that she was particularly interested in depicting the cultural-ethnic heterogeneity of Turkish culture in her novel *Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei* (Life is a Caravanserai), which was published in 1992 and has not yet been translated into the English language (*Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung* 256-257).

<sup>26</sup> In the introduction to her poetry collection, Philip explains her use of the unconventional spelling of the word “image” as “i-mage” (*She Tries Her Tongue* 12, 14-15, 19). She perceives “the i-mage and the simultaneous naming of it” (*She Tries Her Tongue* 19) as the very heart or essence of language. A more thorough discussion of Philip’s concept of the “i-mage” will be linked to the context of the Afroporic’s – Philip sees herself as an Afroporic, which means a person of the African diaspora (*She Tries Her Tongue* 17) – search for an origin, past and history.

<sup>27</sup> In *Selling Illusions*, Bissoondath states that the politics of multiculturalism promote “racialised communities,” which means ethnic communities that have acquired a racial vision of life, and have learnt to see themselves, their past, present and future through the colour of their skin (103).

<sup>28</sup> Hutcheon characterises Bissoondath as a “self-proclaimed assimilated Canadian” (“Crypto-Ethnicity 29), because for him citizenship and belonging mean “to be as fully part of the country as possible” (Bissoondath 215). Counteracting segregationism and “the hyphenated Canadian” (134), he envisions “a Canada where inherent difference and inherent similarities meld easily and where no one is alienated with hyphenation” (224). At this point, his attitude towards belonging in Canada radically departs from Philip’s which is much more complicated and complex, and completely rejects his integrative, assimilative dispositions. The contrasting standpoints and different backgrounds of Philip and Bissoondath (Bissoondath is of an Indian and Philip of an African background) clearly illustrate the deficiency of the idea of mosaic-like, enclosed, homogeneous ethnic communities. Like any other community, the “Caribbean community” is an invention kept alive by the ideals and discourses of multiculturalism.

<sup>29</sup> Bissoondath quotes from the Multicultural Act (42), whose formulations clearly show the paradox outlined here: (c) “encourage and promote exchanges and cooperation among diverse communities of Canada...” and (e) “encourage the preservation, enhancement, sharing, and evolving expression of the multicultural heritage of Canada.” Harney (71-73) offers a similar discussion of this topic.

<sup>30</sup> Lamming states that “[n]o Barbadian, no Trinidadian, no St. Lucian, no islander from the West Indies sees himself as a West Indian until he encounters another islander in foreign territory” (214).

<sup>31</sup> Whereas Özdamar resists generalising stereotypes of Germanness, Philip is more radical and thus lop-sided in her opposition and criticism of White hegemony in Canada. A further discussion will follow in chapter three.

<sup>32</sup> Racist discourse frequently reduces Caribbean ethnic and cultural heterogeneity and hybridity to a solely “Black” identity (Bucknor 16-20). Bucknor delineates the plurality and “internationalism” of Caribbean writing in the sub-chapter “Caribbean Critical Contexts” (3-11).

<sup>33</sup> The subversion of the western identification of Blackness with the uncivilised/primitive/savage is especially relevant in the context of Philip’s re-claiming of the i-mage of the Black body (chapter three).

<sup>34</sup> Bissoondath perceives the role of the museum in a comparable way. He argues that the principle of cultural retention aims at “turn[ing] ethnic communities into museums of exoticism” (111). In the same context, he also names the stereotyping performance of ‘ethnic festivals’ such as Toronto’s West Indian parade, which displays Caribbean culture as “Culture Disneyfied” (Bissoondath 83); culture thus becomes a commodity, something that is displayed and consequently distorted and limited (Bissoondath 82-84). Hutcheon agrees with Bissoondath insofar as she critiques the politics of multiculturalism for promoting “ethnic heritage festivals,” which only fossilise cultures into unchanging folk memories and reduce them to singing, dancing or exotic food (Hutcheon and Richmond 14).

<sup>35</sup> Philip again relates to the distressing experience of neo-colonialism in the *Frontiers* essay discussed here: “African Canadians know the history of colonialism in a painfully intimate way; they often live its implications and repercussions every day of their lives in this country [Canada]” (*Frontiers* 105). She underlines Kaup’s point in her article “Taming Our Tomorrows” in which she notes that “[w]hat is happening today in Ontario and in Canada, what has already happened in the United States, the United Kingdom and in New Zealand, is as old as humankind itself: lust for power, and the desire to control others that manifested itself in the colonial and imperial exercises and excesses of yesterday and that returned full blown with the explosive growth and metastasizing of capitalism” (273).

<sup>36</sup> Her reproach is shared by many Caribbean writers such as Dionne Brand (*Bread out of Stone* 9-10, 178) and even her “antagonist” Bissoondath whose book *Selling Illusions* predominantly attacks the gentle but insidious form of “cultural apartheid” through which multiculturalism works by stressing the distinctiveness of Canadian ethnic communities.

<sup>37</sup> In another passage, Hutcheon insists that “the single most significant factor in the response to multiculturalism in Canada today appears to be race... Canada does not have an unblemished past with regard to racism, but with increasing numbers of immigrants who... are ‘visibly different’ (my stress), have different religions, different attitudes toward women’ and different political histories, racism is once again a concern that cannot be ignored” (Hutcheon and Richmond 7).

<sup>38</sup> Harney claims that bilingualism has to be superseded by “multilingualism” in a multicultural society based on equal ethnic terms (83). My discussion below of Philip’s and Özdamar’s heteroglossic, hybrid languages will specify some of the complex consequences that follow such a claim as Harney’s.

<sup>39</sup> The royal commission report that – in the late sixties – tried to work out a viable concept that would do justice to the multiple ethnic-cultural groups constituting Canadian society, stated that (1) it should be “noted immediately that while the terms of reference deal with questions of those of ethnic origin other than British or French, they do so in relation to the basic problem of

bilingualism and biculturalism from which they are inseparable;" (2) "acculturation is inevitable in a multi-ethnic country like Canada" (The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism 4-5).

<sup>40</sup> Helmut Schmidt from the SPD (Social Democratic Party) was chancellor of West Germany from 1974-1982.

<sup>41</sup> This stylistic device will be closer analysed in the context of Özdamar's strategic disruption of classical western art (third chapter).

<sup>42</sup> The term "patriarchy" or "patriarchate" is problematic, since it relates to a highly complex and controversial social issue. Kandiyoti gives a – in my opinion – useful and comprehensive definition: "It is the sum total of institutional and cultural thinking and practice that leads to the suppression of women" (my translation of Kandiyoti 315). Her definition is broad, but not vague; it acknowledges the multitude of assumptions and spheres (the social, political, economic, historical, academic, and literary spheres, for instance) that construct and re-construct "patriarchy," which is not universal but varies in its different contexts. Thus, the plural "patriarchies" might be more suitable than the singular "patriarchy" (Smith and Watson xv).

<sup>43</sup> I modified the *Mothertongue* translation in this passage to bring it closer to Özdamar's original word choices and structural-grammatical emphases, which are essential for my understanding of the passage and more generally of the whole text.

<sup>44</sup> In 1983/1984, the CDU government offered financial incentives to induce labour migrants to return to their home countries, a program that was not successful (Schuck et al xvii).

<sup>45</sup> Krell notes that "hostility and violence against foreigners is a phenomenon seen in many countries, but the German case, even if not a special one, will always be regarded with concern, because of the historical legacy confronting Germany" (Krell et al 156).

<sup>46</sup> The "fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners or anything that is strange or foreign" (*Webster's Dictionary*).

<sup>47</sup> The term was not listed in any of the numerous German dictionaries I consulted for a closer definition.

<sup>48</sup> Krell and Craig observe that in times of economic depression (such as the thirties, seventies or nineties) xenophobia and hostility to foreigners are always stronger than in booming periods; immigration politics are in line with these developments.

<sup>49</sup> East Germans talk of "invasion" and "colonisation" when referring to the German reunification (O'Brien, "Germany's Newest Aliens 456). The tragic events in Moelln and Solingen, where innocent Turkish women and children were killed by neo-fascist attacks, are highly concerning evidences of these nationalist-racist mechanisms.

<sup>50</sup> Gözl supports Sollor's redefinition of ethnicity, because it "makes room for the possibility of choosing not to belong" (Gözl 48), an option she considers indispensable to define her belonging. Sollors redefines ethnicity as "not so much a deep-seated force surviving from the historical past...It marks an acquired modern sense of belonging that replaces visible, concrete communities...It is not a thing but a process – and it requires constant detective work" (xiv-xv). Discussing the phenomenon of globalisation, Kristeva imagines the possibility of a society without foreigners (1-2).

<sup>51</sup> In the interview with Horrocks and Krause, she offers a Marxist-socialist viewpoint as an alternative to the myth of ethnic-national belonging by quoting the Turkish guest worker who inspired the Karagöz play: "A worker has no home. Wherever there is work, that's his home" (47).

<sup>52</sup> The train station image re-appears in other passages and stories. The charwoman, for instance, travels to Germany by train because she wants to get used to Europe slowly (*Mutterzunge* 107; *Mothertongue* 135). In the story "Mutter Zunge" / "Mother Tongue," the female narrator who travels in an Intercity Train plays with the possibility that she lost her mother tongue in the Intercity Train Restaurant when travelling back and forth (*Mutterzunge* 12; *Mothertongue* 13). And the very ending of the Karagöz story (*Mutterzunge* 93; *Mothertongue* 129) implies that the farmer/guest worker and his family are on an endless journey of (non)-belonging.

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<sup>53</sup> A discussion of Philip's idea of the relatedness of language and place (linguistic hybridity) will follow.

<sup>54</sup> The OED explicates the verb "to alienate" by the process of "mak[ing] other or different...to estrange, or turn away the feelings or affections of any one." This quote well explains Philip's call for Canada to "m/other all her peoples" (*Frontiers* 23-24), a claim that shows affinities to Kristeva's conception of "meeting" (11) and her image of the foreigner as orphan (21-23).

<sup>55</sup> Describing the relationship between White and non-White Canadians, George Elliot Clarke remarks that the physically visible minorities of Canada have always been largely invisible in public life – "out of sight and out of mind for most white Canadians" ("Contesting a Model of Blackness" 10).

<sup>56</sup> As a counter-example of unrelated difference that supports inequality to the benefit of western dominance, Jankowsky mentions the western "enrichment" argument that restricts multi-cultural coexistence in the nation-state to a mere enrichment of the dominant culture (Jankowsky 270).

<sup>57</sup> Philip makes the challenging claim that all Canadians must find out what they can offer to and accept from each other in order to transform Canada "from a stranger place to one of true be/longing" (*Frontiers* 25).

<sup>58</sup> "By the end of 1994 half of all the foreigners had been in Germany for over ten years, and one in four had been here for more than twenty...Of the 7.1 million foreigners [then] living in Germany, 1.2 were born in this country" (Münz and Ulrich 92).



### **Chapter III**

#### **Ethnic Minority and Non-White Women's Literature in Canada and Germany: A Contextualised View of Philip's and Özdamar's Public and Critical Reception**

One of the benefits of being a writer displaced from your country is that you can construct a literary tradition for yourself...you can build your own family, which obviously does draw partly on your own cultural roots. But you can also take them from wherever you want. (Salman Rushdie)

The eighties and nineties – the time when both Philip and Özdamar came to prominence as minority women writers in Canada and Germany – have called for essential changes in the public and academic notions of what constitutes Canadian and German literature. With the displacement of the binary of “major” European and “minor” non-European literature, funding, publishing, and serious-critical reception of ethnic minority writers in both countries have improved considerably. Yet, critics from various academic Arts disciplines discern an “exclusion by inclusion” strategy underlying this change for the better. Bucknor explains the paradox accordingly: on the one hand, ethnic minority writers are given much public and academic support and visibility, while, on the other hand, the very same institutions tend to reduce non-mainstream writing to “ethnic ghettos” by racially and ethnically marking it (13). Minority writers are expected to function as cultural advocates for their people, an assumption that neglects the

individual dimension of their voices. As woman writers, Philip and Özdamar experience the “exclusion by inclusion” paradox not only as ethnically labelled writers but also as women writers and feminists who operate from the margins of both heterosexist patriarchal and mainstream feminist discourse. Hence, their resistance against the marginalisation and categorisation of their writing and womanhood is a complex, multi-faceted undertaking. They resist the myths of universal art and feminism by contextualising their writings and femininity. They subvert the invented category of “high” literature by breaking genre boundaries, aesthetic norms, and by creating an amalgam of “major” and “minor” literatures. They create their own spaces of multi-racial interaction. And they re-perform national narratives, which they perceive as prescribed, man-made stories of historical origins and events. Mutterzunge and She Tries Her Tongue well illustrate Bhabha’s conceptions of “double narrative” and “double-time,” which results from the “split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the pedagogical, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative” in the narration of nations (Bhabha, “DissemiNation” 297). The following chapter will study the two writers within their various contexts as “ethnic” writers, women writers, “ethnic” women writers, and feminist writers and thus explore the interconnections between nationality, ethnicity, culture, literature, art, gender, class, and religion. The discussion will focus on Philip and Özdamar as women writers who are “excluded by inclusion” in a threefold sense: as ethnic minority writers, as opponents of patriarchal society, and as non-White feminists claiming

to be heard in the Canadian and German feminist scenes. While the first part of the chapter will deal with the three issues in a more general context, the second part will then turn to Philip's and Özdamar's writing itself.

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In 1994, the English translation of Özdamar's prose-drama collection Mutterzunge - Mothertongue - was enthusiastically reviewed in the New York Times Book Review as one of the best works of fiction published in that year (Horrocks and Kolinsky 419). It is only recently that academic and public interest in ethnic minority writing – even on an international range – has increased discernibly. In the course of multicultural politics initiated in Canada and Germany in the late sixties and the subsequent protest of ethnic minority writers against being ignored by dominant literary discourse, non-White writers in the two countries have progressively received more serious public and critical attention (Khalil 115; Bucknor 13). In 1991, Özdamar's novel Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei was the first “non-native” German text to win the prestigious Ingeborg-Bachmann Prize Competition, which is annually organised by the German-speaking countries Austria, Switzerland, and Germany in order to give authors and critics who work in the German language the chance to discuss publicly literary texts and “consider what constitutes good literature” (Jankowsky 261). Philip has received several literary prizes as well (Bucknor 139). She was the first Anglophone woman and the second Canadian to win the illustrious Casa de las Americas prize for the manuscript version of She Tries Her Tongue in 1988

(back cover of the poetry collection). Bucknor acknowledges that “the pluralist conception of Canadian literature through the multicultural policy has given publication support and much visibility to Caribbean/Canadian writers” (13). The considerable success of writers such as Philip, Brand, Silvera, Harris, and Austin Clarke in the nineties would not have been possible without the funding of the Canada Council, the Multiculturalism Directorate of the Secretary of State, or the Ontario Arts Council. Likewise, Özdamar’s artistic prestige in Germany has - among other factors - depended on and profited from political-literary financial support given, for instance, through the Deutschen Literaturfonds e.V. (The German Literary Fund) or Arbeitsstipendien der Länder (specific scholarships funded by the German federal states).

However, the improved reception of ethnic minority writing within the German and Canadian fields of literary studies and public-political spheres cannot be acknowledged without reservation. Its development and current practice has a paradoxical nature, which – in my opinion – is hard to evaluate since it remains rather vague whether its workings result from a purposive, subtle strategy or, instead, from engrained taken-for-granted assumptions. Heidrun Suhr and Iman O. Khalil observe that, in spite of the increased interest by German literary scholars since the eighties, the circulation of reviews on “ethnic” literature is still relatively limited and exclusionary, this especially with respect to women writers (Suhr 75; Khalil 115, 120-121). Relating to this asymmetry, Wierschke characterises Özdamar’s writerly success in Germany as the rather exceptional

destiny of a Turkish German intellectual woman artist (Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 162-163, 207-208). In the Canadian context, Bucknor also observes that the gesture of literary and political consideration “often reduces Caribbean/Canadian writers to an ‘ethnic ghetto’” (11); many of them are marginalised because they do not fit the conventions of the established literary institutions (Pivato 55).<sup>1</sup> Although multicultural politics has given “publication support and much visibility to Caribbean/Canadian writers” (Bucknor 13), many writers of colour, who – like Philip - have lived and worked in Canada for a long time, still feel excluded from Canadian society and its literary community. In her essay “Canadian Ethnic Anthologies: Representations of Ethnicity,” Smaro Kamboureli argues that –apart from exceptions such as Brand, Philip or Austin Clarke – the majority of Caribbean Canadian minority writing has been treated like a “minor literature” that need not really be taken seriously and largely goes unrecognised (12).<sup>2</sup> Correspondingly, Suhr and Jankowsky denounce German literary scholars for reducing ethnic minority writing to an interesting but minor addition or enrichment of the normative German canon (Suhr 74; Jankowsky 262). As Philip and the critic Azade Seyhan point out, this misrecognition and non-recognition of German and Canadian minority writings has a double bind for women authors who are firstly marginalised as foreigners and secondly as women (Seyhan, “Scheherazade’s Daughters” 231; Philip, A Genealogy of Resistance 59).

Since the eighties, problems with official funding and mainstream publishing of Turkish German writers have been effectively countered by self-organised editing and especially by the bi-cultural efforts of the Turkish German publishing houses Ararat and Dağyeli, whose objective is to improve communication and understanding between Turks and Germans (Kalpaka and Rätzzel 37; Arens 70-71). Ever since their foundation, Ararat and Dağyeli have been issuing texts by Turkish writers within and outside of Germany, translating the most common Turkish classics into German (Nazim Hikmet, for instance), and publicising bilingual as well as German texts of Turkish German authors such as Yüksel Pazarkaya, Aras Ören, Aysel Özakin, Fakir Baykurt, Güney Dal, Şinasi Dikmen, to name the most popular ones (Suhr 85; Arens 70-76). In Canada, writers of colour have also established alternative publishing spaces in order to avoid the ethnic-cultural and sexual asymmetries in the mainstream publishing houses. In the eighties, non-White women writers and feminists (who felt marginalised in both White and non-White publishing communities of mixed gender) initiated their own artistic circles (Silvera 68-69; Stasiulis 51-52). Since then, feminist groups have been editing journals and magazines – such as the Toronto-based magazines Fuse, Tiger Lily and Diva - and helping women writers to self-publish their books (Stasiulis 52). The Canadian publishing houses Mercury Press and Sister Vision, which have been founded and run by women of colour, take a strong influence in disrupting racism in mainstream publishing (Stasiulis 52).

In spite of the improvements effected by the self-organisation of non-White women writers, the trap of self-ghettoisation that underlies these achievements should be given careful consideration. Lillian Allen describes the dilemma non-White women writers like her are confronted with in Canada: “[W]e have to create alternative forums to be heard; we have to make ourselves visible and are then labelled and ghettoized” (Allen 64-65). Arens makes a similar observation in the German context when mentioning a mixed-gender project by ethnic minority writers entitled “Gegen die Verortung ins Reservat” (which can be translated as “Against Ghettoisation”; Arens 87-88). Speaking out against the marginalising forces in the German literary community, the project’s members paradoxically end up locating themselves and thus the voices of ethnic minority writers at the margin of the German canon, a position they initially set out to counter (Arens 87-88).

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Criticising contemporary Canadian and German literary studies and media for their misrepresentations of English and German writings by ethnic minority writers, Bucknor and Suhr respectively notice a tendency to stereotype minority literature as “minor” or “inferior” literature. Likewise, Pivato infers in the conclusion of his book Echo: Essays on Other Literatures that the imputation of “race or sex to the creative act has long been a means by which the literary establishment cheapens and discredits the achievements of non-mainstream writers” (241). This reduction consequently enforces the prevalent binary of

Self/high literary-artistic quality of mainstream writing as opposed to Other/low literary-artistic quality of “ethnic” writing (Bucknor 11-12; Suhr 72-73). Ever since its earliest English use – which pertained to culturally different “heathen” or “pagan” nations (OED) – the term “ethnic” has carried a sense of marginalisation or marginality. In contemporary usage, it suggests cultural groups that are not traditionally identified with the dominant national mythology of a country or other social grouping (Ashcroft et al 82). Interestingly, the OED connects the terms “ethnic” and “minority,” which are defined as “a group of people differentiated from the rest of the community by racial origins or cultural background.” With such terms, the construction of hierarchies of social-cultural and literary privilege, of Self/Other and major/minor binaries is only a matter-of-course. Furthermore, the “ethnic” marker serves the unexamined category of White, canonical literature to justify the denial of non-White writers’ potential to constitute Canadianness and Germanness respectively. The marginalisation or even exclusion of the non-White, which means “ethnic,” writer as a stranger not only fosters the preservation of the myth of a normative Canadian and German literature but also that of the ethnically and culturally homogeneous nation-state (Bucknor 12-13; Suhr 72-73).

In his article “Ethnicity and Race: Canadian Minority Writing at a Crossroads,” Enoch Padolsky observes that the “increasing racialization [racial awareness] of the Canadian social and literary discourse...is a fairly recent event,” whose starting point coincides with the admittance of large numbers of



non-White – especially Caribbean and Asian - immigrants in the sixties (19).<sup>3</sup> More recent critical, public, and fictional discourse that emphasises the issue of race and racial difference shows the sprouting of terms such as “White,” “non-White,” “Black,” “colour,” “ethnicity,” and “race” itself (Padolsky 20). Studying the development and present situation of Caribbean Canadian literary reception, Bucknor draws attention to the fact that the racialised view of Caribbean Canadian writers works in a double way. They are not only identified as non-White but furthermore as African or Indian -- the two major ethnic groups in the Caribbean (Bucknor 16). In spite of the fact that Canadians of Caribbean origin indeed constitute the second largest group of Afro-Canadians (Bucknor 17), their prominence in mainstream publications on Black minority writing is limiting as it disavows Creolisation, which means the heterogeneity and hybridity of Caribbean culture, language and writing. “[I]solating Afro-Caribbean writers ignores the fact that Blackness is only part of that [the Caribbean Canadian] identity” (Bucknor 17). Giving the warning example of American society, Padolsky speaks out against the ongoing racialisation of Canadian social and literary discourse, which – according to him – will lead to a “scenario” in which “race” functions as the determining factor of identification and social interaction/order (20-21). As critical-academic and public attention towards the problem of racialisation (the increase in racial awareness) grows, the closely related and largely ignored issue of racism (the belief in the superiority of a particular race leading to prejudice and

antagonism towards people of other races) also receives more overt public notice (Padolsky 20-21).

Kaup's analysis of Caribbean Canadian writing in Winfrid Siemerling's Writing Ethnicity: Cross-Cultural Consciousness in Canadian and Québécois Literature reveals a further misunderstanding about Afro-Canadian literature. Tracing back the beginnings of Afro-Caribbean Canadian literature, Kaup declares that upon their arrival in Canada, Afro-Caribbean writers of the first generation – to which Philip belongs – were confronted with the absence of a specifically Black literary tradition (172). Her assertion is confirmed by Philip who - in the interview with Janice Williamson - remembers that “it was very painful to survive here [in Canada] – where there was nothing that you could either resist or go along with as a tradition” (231). Yet, critics such as Padolsky (24), Hutcheon and Richmond (11), Lillian Allen (65-66) and George Elliot Clarke (“A Primer of African-Canadian Literature”) present a more multi-perspectival reality. They point up the long history of Black writing in Canada that reaches back as far as the eighteenth century when the first Black Loyalists, the Africadians, settled in the Maritimes, chiefly in Nova Scotia. G. E. Clarke's discussion of the marginalised and often ignored tradition of Africadian writing extends Bucknor's observation that the Caribbean Canadian identity is largely reduced to a Black identity in dominant Canadian discourse. In his compendium of Afro-Canadian literary history titled “A Primer of African-Canadian Literature,” Clarke declares that “[u]ninformed commentaries reduce African-

Canadian literature to a matter of ‘West Indian writers’” (7) and thus suppress the long Black Canadian writing tradition. While the recent Afro-Caribbean writing of the sixties, as a specific part of Afro-Canadian literature, in fact misses a distinct Afro-Caribbean Canadian literary history, this actuality cannot be translated to Black Canadian writing in general (Padolsky 24). Padolsky and Clarke both conclude that Afro-Canadian literature has had a long history, but also a “more recent efflorescence” (G. E. Clarke, “A Primer of African-Canadian Literature” 9), which to a large extent is conditioned by the relatively recent immigration from the Caribbean.

Turkish German writers experience similar misrepresentations in public and literary German discourse. One major reason why it took them so long to be recognised and taken seriously is the persistent usage of the term Gastarbeiterliteratur (literature of guest workers) for all kinds of non-originary German writing. With this categorisation, German literary scholars definitely ignore the fact that more and more contemporary “non-native” writers have never been guest workers (Khalil 115, 120; Suhr 74, 78-83; Müller 133-134). The phenomenon of Gastarbeiterliteratur developed in the sixties as a corollary of the foreign labour recruitment to the Federal Republic of Germany; it basically is the literature of the first generation of labour immigrants from southern and southeastern Europe. Guest workers, who tried to cope with the harsh realities in the new German environment by writing down their painful experiences of marginalisation and exploitation, largely presented nostalgic memories of the

homeland; this in both languages, the mother tongue and the new language German (Suhr 78). The early immigrant writers Franco Biondi and Rafik Schami – “proponents of a political literature aimed at fostering unity and solidarity among [guest] workers” (Teraoka, “Gastarbeiterliteratur” 85) – replaced the term Gastarbeiterliteratur with Literatur der Betroffenheit (literature of the affected). Unlike the Gastarbeiterliteratur, the Literatur der Betroffenheit was not only meant to document the problems and yearnings of the guest workers but, moreover, to create tolerance and mutual understanding among ethnic groups living in Germany, which was imagined as a multinational cultural community (Biondi and Schami; Suhr 79-80).

As Khalil notes, the Gastarbeiterliteratur or Literatur der Betroffenheit was categorised as problem literature with a very low literary quality more concerned with a social-political account than with “real” literature (120). Belittling and homogenising ethnic minority writing helped and still helps dominant literary discourse to solidify the ethnic-national binary between originary and non-originary German writers (Khalil 115). Yet, more recent terms such as Ausländerliteratur (literature of foreigners, introduced in the eighties), Migrantenliteratur (migration literature), Minoritätenliteratur (termed ethnic minority literature, minority literature or ethnic literature in current literary debates in Canada) or Schreiben in der Diaspora (diasporic writing) are no less problematic (Monika Fischer 63; Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 203-204). As Regula Müller points out, these conceptual categorisations are

established from a dominant Eurocentric viewpoint that rejects the culturally unfamiliar or unknown, which is labelled as strange and thus distrusted (133-134). Asked if she considers her writing as ethnic minority literature, foreigner literature, German literature or feminist literature, Özdamar replies that she has never thought about this question when writing, which to her is a way of searching and describing her own fluid, hybrid identity (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 260; Horrocks and Kolinsky 50). She resists a limiting and oversimplifying categorisation of her identity and literary work.

Ethnic-cultural labelling is not only a prevailing feature of the German but also of the Canadian field of literary studies (Padolsky 19-22, 26). In the introduction to Other Solitudes, Hutcheon argues that already the label “ethnic” or “ethnic minority” for non-Anglophone and non-Francophone Canadian writings is exclusionary and thus enhances the clear-cut ethnic-racial boundary underlying the binary of normative, indiscernible White literature and peripheral, examinable non-White literature. As Audre Lorde observes, non-White writers are “Othered” by White writer’s ignorance of their privilege of Whiteness; the concept of the “writer” is solely defined from this position of unexamined Whiteness (Sister Outsider 117). According to Bucknor, the political promotion of the ideal of multicultural difference in the unified Canadian nation-state decisively contributes to the ghettoisation and misrecognition of ethnic minorities in the field of literary studies, especially in literary theory and criticism (14-15). Said already voiced scepticism about this trap of difference in his 1989 article “Representing the

Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors," in which he cautions against an "ominous trend" involving the "fetishization and relentless celebration of 'difference' and 'otherness'" (213). Although the pluralist conception of multicultural politics has improved the situation of ethnic minority writers considerably, its paradoxical and asymmetrical composition is disapproved of by many critics and writers as "a strategy of exclusion by inclusion"<sup>4</sup> (Bucknor 13) that keeps alive the myth of a genuine Anglo/French literary canon.

In the introduction to She Tries Her Tongue, Philip – probably unconsciously - describes her problematic positioning of "exclusion by inclusion":

As a female and a black presently living in a society that is, in many respects, still colonial...and a society which is politely but vehemently racist, while I may have gained some control of my word and its i-mage-making capacities, control of information and production is still problematic. (25)

My suspicion of Philip's full awareness of the ambiguous matter in question comes from some of her more radical statements. When talking to Williamson about her active participation in the multi-disciplinary and multi-ethnic group of artists called Vision 21, for instance, she launches a problematic, ambivalent condemnation of the workings of multiculturalism. She explains to Williamson that her job as an ethnic minority writer is to fight against the racist, sexist, and classist exclusions underlying Ontario's multicultural policy and practice (242). With this overtly provocative statement, Philip emphasises the exclusionary factors of multiculturalism solely, while she ignores the advantages the policy of inclusion provides for "ethnic" artists like her. Moreover, she contradicts herself

insofar as she - in the preface to almost all her works - “gratefully acknowledges” the very funding she denounces in the interview with Williamson. Her paradoxical attitude towards multiculturalism gives a good instance of the policy’s complex, problematic nature and its manifold tensions, not only between the marginalised “ethnic” writer and dominant literary discourse but even among and within different ethnic minority voices. Introducing the writers and interviewers of the essay collection Other Solitudes, Hutcheon notes that “[w]hile many of [them] speak to the failures, the limitations, the inadequacies of multiculturalism, they often end up acknowledging at least the potential it holds to allow room for the aspirations of those who do not happen to be of British or French heritage” (15).

Özdamar also experiences the mechanisms of “exclusion by inclusion” in the German literary community. Yet, unlike Philip, her statement of opinion is not straightforward or given to a one-dimensional perspective. Rather, her comments are polyvalent and obliquely thought provoking. In the prefaces to her novels Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei and Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn (which could be translated as “The Bridge at Golden Horn”), her acknowledgement of the German funding of her writing and publication is expressed in the mode of an impersonal statement of facts: “Die Arbeit der Autorin an dem vorliegenden Text wurde durch den Deutschen Literaturfond e.V. gefördert” / “The author’s work at this text has been supported by the German Literary Fund” (preface to Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei; my translation). This plain recognition – deliberately or not

– eludes complicity with the “exclusion by inclusion” paradox. Özdamar acknowledges the financial support of her work through public institutions, yet she keeps her distance, thus rejecting the dominant notion of inclusion and acceptance. Alluding to the ambiguous nature underlying her winning the Ingeborg-Bachmann Prize Competition, she ironically remarks that “I was accepted, but merely as a ‘guest writer’” (Manguel in the afterword to the Mothertongue collection). The Austrian, Swiss and German critics evaluating Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei did not address her as a German but as a foreign writer who had chosen the German language to express herself. Even though the critical discussion of her work reckoned the multicultural diversity of writers in German, the very acknowledgement re-enforced the division of migrant and originary German literature by ethnically marking Özdamar and her work (Jankowsky 262-263, 267).<sup>5</sup>

In her review of the Ingeborg-Bachmann issue, Jankowsky further argues that the public reception of Özdamar as a Turkish writer using the German language ignores the individual dimension of her writing, which is that of a woman of Turkish origin who emigrated to Germany, where she has to cope with the polyvalent overlapping of Turkish, Arabic, West and East German cultural thinking and practice (263, 269). Correspondingly, Wierschke and Khalil observe that the exiled or immigrated writer is only too frequently expected to be a cultural advocate of her/his people who mediates between her/his exotic and the foreign culture (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 17; Khalil 120-122).



Contributing to Sneja Gunew's and Anna Yeatman's multi-cultural essay collection Feminism and the Politics of Difference, Daiva Stasiulis accuses the Canadian literary scene of confining minority writers to the role of cultural-ethnic representative, while White writers are given the freedom to write about so-called "universal" issues.<sup>6</sup> She denounces multicultural politics – specifically the Canada Council – for arbitrarily appointing ethnic minority writers to the position of legitimate cultural guardians (Stasiulis 55). Said's Orientalism asks the challenging question "whether indeed there can be a true representation of anything, or whether any and all representations, because they *are* representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience" of the individual representer (Said 272; Hunter 262). Rejecting the assumption of authentic cultural representation, Wierschke perceives Özdamar as a distinctive individual who presents her specific experiences, which overtly and/or subtly interrogate conventional cultural thinking and practice, cultural conflicts, and cultural-ethnic identifications within a multicultural context (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 21-22). Hutcheon takes a similar viewpoint in her discussion of Canadian minority literature; she pronounces that "[e]ach writer has a special agenda; each is working out his or her relations with a particular group and with the nation in individual ways" (Hutcheon and Richmond 4).

Arlene A. Teraoka, who – in her essay "Is Culture to Us What Text is to Anthropology?" – analyses the relations between the academic fields of literature

and anthropology, emphasises that literature is much more than just a socio-cultural and historical product of its time. Even though she suggests we read texts as culture, which means as cultural products or artifacts that are created within certain social and historical contexts,<sup>7</sup> she comprehends these factors as inseparably interrelated with individual experiences and aesthetic-artistic techniques (189-190). For her, texts are active parts of intercultural communication that should be read “in different ways and with different ends in mind” (190), and not just within the scope of one’s own cultural assumptions and conditions. Teraoka’s claim asks for an alternative understanding and hence a re-conceptualisation of the traditional concepts of literature, which implies a re-definition of the relationship between the so-called “minor” and “major” literatures. According to Jankowsky, such a re-definition involves an acknowledgement of the intersections minority writers draw between the different cultural and aesthetic influences they experience (270). Her argument closes with the appeal to consider the multi-vocal, multi-cultural writings by “non-native” German writers no longer as inferior sub-categories or appendages but as independent and equal constituents of German literature (272). Similarly, Hutcheon and Richmond suggest recognising writers of very diverse cultural backgrounds as component parts of the Canadian literary mainstream (15).

Özdamar and Philip attempt to work towards the ideal of literary inclusivity by opposing cultural absorption and special treatment as foreign writers. As Suhr puts it, they “resist being handled with kid gloves or with an iron fist, and demand

instead a critical discussion of their works” (99). Özdamar and Philip both recognise that they cannot write outside of the traditional conventions of German and Canadian literature; yet, what they can do and actually do in their writings is enter into a critical, challenging dialogue with the mainstream (Hutcheon, The Canadian Postmodern 2-3; Godard 159). They problematise and re-envision the notions of a “pure” literary canon with and in their narratives, which – on a structural-generic and semantic level – signal that the supposedly homogeneous German and Canadian literatures in reality are heterogeneous blends of different cultural influences.

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The term minority literature was first introduced in its resistant, insurgent context by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari who, in the seventies, developed the concept of a “littérature mineure” (a “minor literature”) in their book Kafka: Pour une Littérature Mineure. They offered a radically new way of reading and reconceptualising Franz Kafka’s understanding of literature. In Kafka: Pour une Littérature Mineure, Deleuze and Guattari define “minor literature” as the literature of ethnic minority groups that are situated at the margins of dominant culture and use dominant language as means of articulation (16). They claim that the term “minor” is not meant to designate specific literatures, which would establish new hierarchies, but to express the revolutionary conditions of every literature that opposes “what is called great (or established) literature” (Deleuze and Guattari 18). The characteristics they ascribe to this minority discourse can be

related to Philip's and Özdamar's writings.<sup>8</sup> Its major feature, the deterritorialisation of language (Deleuze and Guattari 16-17), is applicable to both writers' language use, which is the site of disjunctions and dislocations whenever originary and new language meet or clash.<sup>9</sup> Just as Kafka deterritorialises German by writing in Prague German – because it is impossible for him not to write, impossible to write in German, and at the same time impossible to write otherwise than in German (Deleuze and Guattari 16) - Philip transforms standard English into a deterritorialised and displaced language by creating a heteroglossia in-between English and english in She Tries Her Tongue. Özdamar also writes in the dominant language, German, which she uses in a subversive and creative way in order to express the immigrants' feelings of alienation in the new social-cultural environment. In Mutterzunge, she displaces the expectations of the conventional German reader and critic as she plays with the linguistic and stylistic rules of the German language by interspersing it with Turkish/Arabic lingual elements.<sup>10</sup>

Abdul JanMohamed and David Lloyd, who expanded the theory of minority discourse in the eighties, perceive the disruption of the unexamined category of western literature as an outstanding element unifying ethnic minority voices:

This is not to reassert the exclusive claim of the dominant culture that the objective grounds for marginalization can be read in the inadequacy or underdevelopment of "minority" work. On the contrary, it is to assert that even the very differences which have always been read as symptoms of inadequacy are capable of being re-read transformatively as indications and figurations of values radically opposed to those of the dominant culture. And a *theory* of minority discourse is essential precisely for the purposes of such reinterpretation. (JanMohamed and Lloyd, "Toward a Theory of Minority Discourse" 10)

In their work The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse, they define minority discourse as “a theoretical articulation of the political and cultural structures that connect different minority cultures in their subjugation and opposition to the dominant culture” (ix). They argue that this collective force is the necessary precondition to be heard and to gain presence on the literary market. In spite of stressing the shared nature of problems, they do not forget to acknowledge the cultural differences within ethnic minority structures: they speak of “the solidarities in the form of similarities between modes of repression and modes of struggle which all minorities separately experience, and experience precisely as *minorities*” (“Toward a Theory of Minority Discourse” 11). They also distinguish the danger of the “exclusion by inclusion” strategy that safely embeds pluralism in the body of dominant ideology (“Toward a Theory of Minority Discourse” 9-11).

Even though the current conceptions of “ethnic minority writing” are – as shown – problematic and controversial, critics such as Monika Fischer, Pivato or Padolsky still suggest the term’s usefulness in the field of literary studies. Monika Fischer considers it most appropriate of all the terms in circulation because most “non-native” German writers either grew up in or moved to Germany as part of an ethnic minority (85). Moreover, she points to the common experiences of ethnic minority writers (though not without acknowledging the heterogeneity of the writers and their works as such): “the writers share what they are not, namely being non-German, non-privileged, non-dominant, and non-included in the

German literary community (sic)” (85). Similarly, Özdamar asserts in the interview with Wierschke that there are considerable differences in the writings of immigrants – especially between the first, second and third generations – but that these different voices are all connected in their resistance to the role of the “servant” in dominant German society and culture (“[D]a gibt es aber auch einen Punkt, der alle verbindet, und das ist, daß die Generationen nicht Diener bleiben wollen” 253). Discussing the notion of ethnic minority writing in the Canadian literary context, Pivato uses the term to define “writing that is concerned with the meeting of two (or more) cultures in which one is Anglophone or Francophone” (Pivato 62). It is important to note that his contemporary definition includes both, writings in one of the two official and in non-official languages (a possibility Kirkconnell, for instance, precludes by limiting early minority literature in Canada to one of the heritage languages; Pivato 59-63). Supporting Padolsky’s usage of the term ethnic minority literature, Pivato states that the focus on the ethnicity and the minority status of the writer calls critical attention to questions of cultural relations, belonging and identity (Pivato 70). In the introduction to his work The Invention of Ethnicity, Sollors points to the hybrid quality of “ethnic” writing that simultaneously works “inside” and “outside” dominant discourse (xv-xvi). With his reference to the short story “Story in Harlem Slang” by the Afro-American woman writer Zora Neale Hurston, he maintains lingual hybridity as the “ethnic text’s ability to generate the sense of difference out of a shared

cultural context of coffeemakers and Coca Cola bottles” (xvi), which is the context of American majority language and culture.

Notwithstanding the positive potential of the term, its categorising implications as a concept of dominant literary theory and criticism are not to be underrated. Being well aware of the danger of categorisation, Philip declares that, on the one hand, her writings definitely allow a reading in postmodern, postcolonial or feminist terms, while, on the other hand, they are much too complex to be fully fitted into any of those literary compartments (Williamson 230). Neither can Özdamar’s; she escapes easy categorisation by experimenting with and thus disrupting especially modernist, postmodern and magic realist notions of ethnic minority writing (Jankowsky 270). Like Philip, she simultaneously acts within several discourses: feminist, German, Turkish-Arabic, German and Turkish-Arabic, that of migration, of exile/diaspora, and of ethnic minorities. Moreover, the polyvalence of Özdamar’s and Philip’s art is decisively influenced by their individual experiences and developments as writers whose hybrid generic narratives are dynamic expressions of their social-cultural open-mindedness, flexibility, and hybridity.<sup>11</sup> With the help of this imaginative mobility, they both display the cracks and gaps in cultural discourse, which Bhabha defines as the translucent, permeable spaces in-between cultures (The Location of Culture 212-214). According to Bhabha, the ethnic minority writer takes an influential position in foregrounding the “borderland conditions of cultures” (The Location of Culture 214), since (s)he writes from within dominant

power structures and thus becomes a double agent that represents both sides, the dominant and the “minor.” William Boelhower expresses a similar thought in his discussion of the decentring ethnic semiosis at work in Italo-Canadian poetry. Referring to the ambivalent and tense nature of ethnic minority writing, he talks about “the strong degree of reversibility that simultaneously permits both acts of conjunction and disjunction” (173). Philip describes this space as “lonely interstices along / an inner path” in the poem “Unnamed” from her early collection Thorns (17).

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Negotiating the space in-between cultural-literary models, Philip and Özdamar find themselves in the ambivalent situation of being feminists and, at the same time, of being marginalised as non-White feminists in White, mainstream feminism with its claim of a globally unified “sisterhood” of women fighting against patriarchal oppression. Hence, their writings set out to disrupt the “sisterhood” myth by focusing on non-mainstream women whose axes of gender, race, sexuality, and class have completely different intersections than those of the mainstream. In response to Micheline Wandor’s essay collection On Gender and Writing, Philip exemplifies the workings of racist exclusion in feminist literary discourse in Canada (Frontiers 47-48). She points to the fact that Wandor’s “informative and thought-provoking” (47) work covers the whole range of feminist writers and literary trends with one single exemption: women writers of colour (47). In both countries, the women’s movement – though being founded (in



the sixties and seventies) on the ideal of “sisterly” joining between all women in their fight against patriarchy - centres around issues of White, Anglo-Saxon/originary German, and Christian middle-class women. White feminists tend to marginalise or even deny the voices and concerns of non-White women (Schultz “Racism”; de Lauretis, “Eccentric Subjects”).<sup>12</sup> On the one hand, they have helped non-privileged women writers to achieve a place in the established literary-artistic circles and thus to create an awareness of the ethnic-cultural polyvalence of these spheres. Still, on the other hand, the largely disavowed racist, heterosexist and classist assumptions underlying mainstream feminist discourse reduce non-White women to a secondary position at the feminist periphery (Monika Fischer 65-67; Allen 65-66; Silvera 70-71). Evaluating the evolution and future of Anglo-American feminism, Teresa de Lauretis explains that, based on ideas of “liberal pluralism, socialist humanism, and aesthetic modernism” (“Eccentric Subjects” 132), mainstream feminism in 1990 still largely remained complicit with racist and heterosexist discourse by limiting its agenda to the single axis of gender, thus ignoring the axes of racism, heterosexism and class privilege (de Lauretis, “Eccentric Subjects 131-132; hooks 119-196).<sup>13</sup> Schultz and Arens make a similar observation about German feminists, who also presume to fight for the supposedly universal aim of all women -- that is, equal power between men/oppressors and women/oppressed. Both critics maintain that, by means of this gender binary, White German feminists – (un)consciously<sup>14</sup> - mask their skin privilege and power over non-White German women (Schultz,

“Racism” 161, 242-243, 246; Arens 101-104). The leftist-radical critic Ilona Bubeck, who scrutinises the workings of classism and racism in the German Frauenbewegung (women’s movement), denounces White middle-class feminists who, satisfied by career, success, financial security, and a feeling of definite value and belonging in German patriarchal society, occupy the classist-racist position of the unexamined category of German feminism (35, 41).

Demanding a re-contextualisation and an acknowledgement of the heterogeneity of women’s experiences, Helma Lutz discards the singular “feminism” and replaces it by the plural “feminisms” (154). The person who most substantially contributed to the disruption of the myth of a universal “sisterhood” movement is the Caribbean American lesbian writer Audre Lorde. The initiation and international connection of non-White feminist debates on racism, sexism and classism in the eighties are largely due to her (de Lauretis, “Eccentric Subjects” 132; Lorde, Sister Outsider 42-44). At the same time, she also endeavoured to establish effective, viable dialogues between non-White and White women; her efforts reached as far as Canada, South Africa, the Caribbean, Germany, and Britain (Arens 94-98). In her essay on racism and White German feminism, Schultz accentuates that Lorde’s annual visits to Germany have been very enlightening for many unconsciously racist and sexist German middle-class feminists, herself included (“Racism” 241-244). Inspired by Lorde’s first visit to the Free University of Berlin in 1984, Schultz edited Macht und Sinnlichkeit (which can be translated as “Power and Sensuality”), a volume of prose and

poetry by Lorde and Adrienne Rich. In 1986, a group of Afro-German women writers – with Lorde’s support - published their first account of living in a White-dominated German society. The collection Farbe bekennen: Afro-deutsche Frauen auf den Spuren ihrer Geschichte was translated into English (Showing Our Colours: Afro-German Women Speak Out) in 1992; its preface was composed by Lorde. In “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” a short essay in Sister Outsider (110-113), Lorde – as the title already implies – calls for new patterns of relating across differences between White and non-White women. She declares that no “joint power” will be possible unless academic feminists firstly become cognisant of their rootedness in patriarchal discourse and thus of their own oppression of non-White women, and secondly comprehend the multiracial dialogue of differences as a crucial creative strength.<sup>15</sup> In spite of her emphatic challenge of the notion of a universal feminist movement, Lorde is well aware that the position of women of colour cannot be located outside mainstream feminism but rather within and at the same time against it (Sister Outsider 42; de Lauretis, “Eccentric Subjects” 132-133). Lorde’s rousing article is also an influential constituent of This Bridge Called My Back, a collection of writings by radical, self-acclaimed “Third World feminists” first edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa in 1981. Barbara Smith introduces the chapter on racism in the women’s movement: “As Third World women we clearly have a different relationship to racism than White women, but all of us are born into an

environment where racism exists. Racism effects all our lives, but it is only white women who can ‘afford’ to remain oblivious to these effects” (62).

Feminist critics such as de Lauretis, Arens, Seyhan, Smith and Watson claim that each woman has to be viewed in her personal social-cultural context, since each context reveals different priorities and saliences (de Lauretis, “Eccentric Subjects” 133-134; Arens 107-115; Seyhan, “Scheherazade’s Daughters” 232; Smith and Watson xiv-xv). In her introduction to the collection of essays, Feminist Studies/Critical Studies, de Lauretis characterises female subjectivity as a site of multiple identities that are mutually dependent and determining:

[T]he female subject is a site of differences; differences that are not only sexual or only racial, economic, or (sub)cultural, but all of these together, and often enough at odds with one another...it is a shift from the earlier view of woman defined by sexual difference (i.e., in relation to man) to a more complex notion... (9)

Comparable to Hutcheon’s understanding of the paradoxical “ex-centric” standpoint of the postmodern writer (The Canadian Postmodern 6-7) and Morrell’s concept of the non-White writer’s “essentialist subject position,” de Lauretis employs the term “eccentric subject” to describe the contradictory position of non-White feminists using and simultaneously abusing mainstream feminist discourse from the important position of resistance and agency at its margin (“Eccentric Subjects” 139, 145). All three critics value the position at the margin as an important space of effective resistance against dominant discourse. In contrast to them, Bucknor problematises the idea of an “eccentric/ex-centric subject position” by adding the duality of exclusion and inclusion. As the

discussion above shows, he accuses dominant discourse of maintaining its power with the help of the subtly containing strategy of “exclusion by inclusion,” which places the ethnic minority writer at the literary and social margin. Unlike Hutcheon, de Lauretis, and Morrell, he evaluates the position at the margin as the ghettoising position of racial-ethnic and cultural exclusion and instead makes a claim for “inclusivity,” which maintains the ethnic minority writer as an integral - and not integrated - part of national literature (Bucknor 12-13). Still, in spite of the strategic difference outlined here (a difference that for sure is conditioned by generational and temporal aspects to a large extent), his argument eventually coincides with that of “eccentricity/ex-centricity” in its aim to decentre and subvert cultural-ethnic, lingual, sexual, and feminist centre-margin binaries -- an aim Philip and Özdamar follow in their writings.

In their resistance against categorisation and exclusion from Canadian and German mainstream literature and feminism, Philip and Özdamar take “eccentric/ex-centric” subject positions. Carol Morrell and Lynette Hunter both distinguish a radical assertiveness in Philip’s literary presence in Canada, which is more often in conflict with mainstream literature and feminism than in harmony with it (Morrell 14-15; Hunter 273). The interview with Williamson confirms this point: it ends with Philip’s confrontational assertion that “my job as a *writer* is to disturb the status quo” (244). This task is twofold insofar as Philip not only attacks the subtle persistence of racism in multicultural politics but also in Canadian feminism, which she understands as a movement focusing on

Anglophone and Francophone middle-class women (Frontiers 48). Accusing White feminism of ignoring the racist quality underlying its own discursive structures, she announces that “more and more Black women...are aware of this conspiracy of silence and are beginning to make their own noises” (Frontiers 49). As Hunter points out, Philip is “an institutional fighter” (273) who – through her writing - sets out to change the Canadian institutions of power from within.

Özdamar refrains from making any explicit judgements in her interrogation of German stereotypes and images of the “Ausländer” and her/his “Ausländerliteratur.” Asked by Krause if her writing intends to break down German prejudices against foreigners - and especially foreign women - she evades taking sides and replies: “I want primarily to waken feelings, to open up valves. That is my dream” (Horrocks and Krause 51). Her criticism avoids accusation and judgement. Talking about an incident of discrimination concerning the premiere of her play “Karagöz in Alamania” in the German newspaper Die Zeit, she remains as impartial as possible by giving an ironically detached account of the occurrence:

Vor der Premiere ließ das Theater, ohne mich vorher zu fragen, aus Liebe zu diesem Stück an die Zuschauer ein Flugblatt verteilen, in dem das Theater versuchte, das Stück zu erklären: ‘Manchmal werden Sie sich fragen: Wo ist nun wo? Sind wir in der Türkei, sind wir in Alamania?...Vielleicht haben Sie einige Mühe, sich die Szenen zu gliedern, sie sind nicht logisch geordnet wie in den uns vertrauten Theaterstücken...’ (Horrocks and Krause 63)

Before the première the theatre, out of love for the play and without asking my permission in advance, had leaflets distributed amongst the audience, in which it attempted to explain the work: ‘In the course of the play you will occasionally wonder: Where are

we now? Are we in Turkey, or are we in Germany?...It may well be that you will have problems ordering the scenes. They are not logically structured as in the plays we are familiar with...' (translated by Horrocks and Krause 63)

Her criticism of White feminist complicity with patriarchal racist discourse is also presented in an indirect and highly satirical fashion. In the Charwoman episode, she performs a grotesque and seemingly nonsensical play within the story, a play that incongruously features famous figures in western-classical drama whose behaviours yet show striking affinities with those of the stereotyped characters of her contemporary stories (Mutterzunge 113-120; Mothertongue 143-151). Caesar, for instance, seems to typify German immigration politics, Ophelia and Hamlet Turkish guest workers, Brutus the German patriarch, and Medea the German feminist in her paradoxical position of simultaneous opposition to and complicity with patriarchal discourse: "Medea kämpft dafür, daß die Frauen auch ins Männerpissoir reinkommen dürfen und streichelt dabei die Eier von Brutus" / "Medea is fighting so that women may also be allowed to use the men's pissor. She strokes Brutus' balls at the same time" (Mutterzunge 114; Mothertongue 143-144).

Performing a caricatured or parodied version of the "typical" German feminist (Medea does not *represent* an individual character but presents a typified character), Özdamar evades a generalising condemnation of western-German feminism. Through the strategies of irony, parody, caricature and satire – which she frequently uses in her art and public appearances – she at the same time asserts and undercuts the stereotypes she contests. Her satiric exposure of

Medea's complicity with the patriarch Brutus is imbedded within the larger context of classical, patriarchal drama that oppresses and stereotypes any woman, no matter if it is Ophelia, the non-White woman, or Medea, the German feminist. The stage, the theatrical stage and the stage of real life, is satirically portrayed as a "men's pissoir" / "Männerpissoir" (Mothertongue 143; Mutterzunge 114). It is displayed as a patriarchal institution featuring the heroic lives of great White men - such as Hamlet, Richard III, Danton, Van Gogh or Caesar - whose life stories leave no space for heroines. Medea becomes invisible after her short, ineffective encounter with Brutus and Ophelia ironically ends up as the personification of the German cliché of the Turkish charwoman.<sup>16</sup> Her "career story" (indicated in the title) turns out to be a tragic-comic, thought-provoking parody of ethnic-sexist misrecognition and stereotyping imposed on foreign women by German (artistic) society:

‘Ich bin so eine schöne Frau, ich kann auch Schauspielerin sein an diesem Theater,’ habe ich gesagt. ‘Hier ist die Bohnermaschine, die Bühne wird täglich gebohnt,’ haben sie gesagt...Das war es. (Mutterzunge 120)

‘I’m such a beautiful woman, I can be an actress in this theatre,’ I said. ‘Here is the floor-polisher, the stage is polished daily,’ they said...And that was that. (Mothertongue 151-152)

Özdamar's aesthetic play with cultural, gender, and cultural-gender differences, differences she herself experiences as a Turkish German woman, allows her to take a distance from the literary-cultural and feminist conventions she is placed in as a woman writer. Parodying the cultural encounters between immigrants and Germans, immigrants themselves, and guest workers with their



homelands in the Mothertongue collection, she exposes mutual projections and misrepresentations from her distanced, but not uninvolved writerly perspective. Like several other Turkish German women writers – such as Aysel Özakin and Alev Tekinay – Özdamar re-performs and thus subverts the representations and statuses of Turkish women both in the German and Turkish patriarchal cultural traditions (Brinkler-Gabler and Smith 21; Seyhan, “Scheherazade’s Daughters” 231-232). The farmer’s wife, for instance, is not only disadvantaged in the German but also in the Turkish system of legitimation. Thrown out of “the Door of Germany” by her husband, she gets protection neither from the German nor from the Turkish law, though for different reasons (Mutterzunge 94-95; Mothertongue 117-118). With the help of such complex and thought-provoking scenes, Özdamar constantly challenges both her German and non-German (not only Turkish) readers to self-critically re-think their stereotyped ideas of “Otherness” of ethnicity, gender, class, religion, language, and/or art.

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In their attempts to reach beyond cultural-ethnic and sexual confinement, Philip and Özdamar engage in processes in which poetry and fiction respectively merge into “meta-poetry” and “meta-fiction,” which means into self-reflexive or allegorical fiction on signification and the production of meaning. Their writings can be furthermore characterised as “historiographic metafiction,” a term introduced by Hutcheon to describe “fiction that is intensely, self-reflexively art, but is also grounded in historical, social, and political realities” (The Canadian

Postmodern 13). Philip most skilfully demonstrates the historiographic and metadiscursive double function of her prose-poems in “Discourse on the Logic of Language” (She Tries Her Tongue 56-59) in which she sets out to subvert traditional western poetry. In the interview with Williamson, she explains her particular interest in breaking with the prevalent poetic conventions: “it [western poetry] came to us in the Caribbean as another form of colonization and oppression” (227). Right at the beginning of the introduction to She Tries Her Tongue she talks about her European educational background in the Caribbean, which she outspokenly unmasks as an educational indoctrination (in European literature, culture and the English language; 10-11).<sup>17</sup>

In “Discourse on the Logic of Language,” Philip breaks with the imposed poetic structural-formal norms by decentring the poem on the page and surrounding it with a mythical short story, historical edicts, and a physiological-scientific description of how speech takes place that is underlined by multiple choice questions. With the conjunction of these different texts she disrupts the modernist poetic convention of humanism, which she refers to as “Eliot’s objective correlative” in the interview with Williamson (228), that dehistoricises and depersonalises poetry by averring its autonomous and universal nature (Hutcheon, The Canadian Postmodern 1-2, 10; Hunter 257). Interspersing the elements of mythic vision, colonial history, and scientific, racist, sexist masculine discourse, Philip deliberately “put[s] the poem, that particular poem, back in its historical context, which is what poetry is not supposed to do” (Williamson 228;

Bucknor 103). She thus alludes to a subtle process Mukherjee overtly denounces in her essay “Canadian Nationalism, Canadian Literature and Racial Minority Women” when she points out that “what seems universalist and apolitical on the surface often turns out to be a Euro-Canadian conceptualization” (429). Unveiling the seemingly universal Canadian values as culture-specific, Eurocentric constructs, Philip attributes a significant role to the mythical short story, which is not only thematically distinguished from the other textual parts of the poem but also through its particular positioning. It is the only text for which the reader needs to turn the page in order to read it. By this accentuation of the ancestral African story, Philip seems to interrogate the relevance of the western texts juxtaposed with it. Furthermore, she might indicate to her readers how important the aspects of perspective and context are in the production of meaning(s).

The objective of Philip’s historiographic and metafictional tactics clearly is to challenge and not to destroy the traditional humanist beliefs about the workings and relations of art and culture. “And Over Every Land and Sea,” for instance, quotes directly from the Ceres and Proserpine story of Ovid’s Metamorphoses, yet not to deconstruct the text’s humanist assumptions but to re-invent the narrative in the Caribbean Canadian context. In the sequence of poems accompanying the fragments from Ovid, Philip tells the story of the spiritual and physical bond between a Caribbean mother and her daughter who – parted by the daughter’s emigration – start an endless search for each other (Godard 164-166; Morrell 19). As Godard’s detailed analysis of this aspect shows, Philip’s version of the quest

structurally departs from the original text as it disobeys its narrative order (Godard 165). As a consequence, its ending does not follow Ovid's optimistic solution of the restored mother-daughter bond but reaches a rather paradoxical, vague conclusion. The mother finds and still loses her daughter: "For behold, the daughter I have sought so long has now at last been found – if you can call it 'finding' to be more certain that I have lost her, or if knowing where she is is finding her" (Ovid's Metamorphoses, qtd. in She Tries Her Tongue 36).

Philip's challenging play with the western beliefs about the function of poetry not only shows in her re-thinking of genre boundaries and traditional texts but also in her subversion of the individual lyric voice, which becomes "less universal and, therefore, more particular" (Philip, A Genealogy of Resistance 116). In the essay "The Habit of: Poetry, Rats and Cats," Philip recounts an incident from one of her poetry readings which made her recognise that her poems are unreadable in the conventional western way (A Genealogy of Resistance 116). She remembers that the request of a student to recite "Discourse on the Logic of Language" made her realise that the poem is polyvocal and thus unreadable for one person alone. It can "start anywhere and go backward and forward" (A Genealogy of Resistance 118, 127); its circularity – as opposed to the conventional poetic linearity – allows for a multiplicity of interpretations. In another essay ("Notes on the Completion of Potentiality") of the same collection, Philip characterises her poems as "mini-performance[s]" (126), because their completion only comes with their polyvocal performance, which means with the dynamic relation of body and

word inherent in African oral speech with its musical rhythm and tone (Bucknor 43):

It has more to do with one of the strongest markers of the Caribbean aesthetic: that of performance – performance in all its aspects, from the ordinary conversations on the street to the more intensely public performances of carnival and marse...It is a poetics of movin' and kinetics...of kinopoesis. (127, 131)

Re-locating traditional western poetry in the African and African Caribbean contexts, she also makes use of the African practice of call and response, which she illustrates with the help of the jazz aesthetic. In her discussion of “Discourse on the Logic of Language,” she explains that in the poem “different themes are working with and against each other...the [poem’s] main riff is the centre refrain which picks up the resonances from the surrounding bits of information” (A Genealogy of Resistance 127). In his analysis of the performative quality in Caribbean writing, Bucknor mentions several speech patterns that pervade Philip’s hybrid poetry – such as verbosity and repetition, dialogue based on biblical language and classical references, or the oral speech structures of tracing and testimony (Bucknor 43).

Challenging the traditional western notion of the universality and the generic categorisation of art, Özdamar who herself is an actress, director of plays and writer creates the narrative space in-between theatre and prose. Her Mothertongue stories can be characterised as prose drama or – depending on the perspective - dramatic prose. In the conversation with Wierschke (Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 252), Özdamar claims that the theatre, her first active encounter

with art, has always been part of her writing (“Das Theater ist immer drin in meinem Schreiben”). The Karagöz story, for instance, was first written as a play before she transformed it into a prose text that still expresses her experiences of staging it (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 252). In both play and prose text, Özdamar reviews her artistic relationship with the Turkish and western European theatre. Doing so, she blends the tradition of the Turkish Karagöz shadow-play with that of Brecht’s epic theatre and Heiner Müller’s avant-garde theatre (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 194-196). What her prose-drama shares with all three pretexts is an actor-recipient relationship that is not based on the western classical aesthetics of realistic representation and sympathetic identification but on a critical understanding of social processes, of how we act our roles in society. Her art is – in Brechtian jargon – “episiert”/“epicised,” which means defamiliarised and deuniversalised (Wiles 72). Özdamar’s actors – like those of Brecht and Müller - no longer *represent* characters but *present* or *perform* them (Wiles 70, 76; Innes 199-201). This “show the showing technique” (a phrase coined by Wiles, 76) affects the conventional reader of Mothertongue insofar as (s)he, while in the process of reading, is confronted and made aware of the inadequacy of feeling for and identifying with the protagonists; s(he) experiences a Verfremdung of the habitual actor-recipient relationship. Combined with the strategy of re-contextualisation, Özdamar’s textual Verfremdungseffekte call upon the reader to take a socially, politically, and

artistically critical position. They offer a recipient-position that is in opposition to prevailing aesthetic conclusions and definitions of the function of art.

Özdamar's conjunction of the Brechtian drama and the Turkish shadow-play in the Karagöz story is not coincidental. A precursor of the absurd and epic theatre (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 198), the Karagöz play can be described as a socially critical comedy or caricature of society and its morals (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 198; van Heyst 115-116).<sup>18</sup> Like the shadow-play, Özdamar's story is named after the main character Karagöz ("Schwarzauge" in German and "Black Eye" in English) who – in both the original and re-contextualised version – is performed as a rough, uneducated Turk or Arab. Together with his intellectual friend Hacivad (represented by the donkey in Özdamar's text), he gets into numerous tragic-comic situations and arguments, which reveal and challenge social, political, and economic inequality (Kühn 5-6; Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 198). The prologue to the original Karagöz shadow-play clearly anticipates what Özdamar only insinuates in her version: the performance is not meant to be a piece of universal fiction but rather a critical mirror, a parody or caricature of real life (Kühn 5). As exemplified in the Karagöz tradition, Özdamar complicates her stock characters (the guest worker, the financially dependent and constantly pregnant wife, the simple-minded villagers, the Marxist intellectual, the fascist, the bourgeois German and numerous other character types) and thus demonstrates the inconsistency and senselessness of stereotypes (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 205). In

Mutterzunge, the construction of identity is performed as a multi-dimensional, dynamic process. It is ambivalent and indeterminable insofar as it rejects both an assimilation into German culture and a return to Turkish cultural practice.

Using elements of the social satire (Arens 276-79), especially the strategy of a grotesque alteration of exaggeration and understatement, Özdamar discloses the incompatibility and incongruity of everyday life and its idealised interpretations that are based on clichéd images. The Karagöz story, for instance, gives a tragic-comic portrayal of the naïve aspirations many Turkish guest workers had about emigrating to western countries like Germany whose capitalist values they assimilated only too readily (Interview with Horrocks and Kolinsky 52): “‘Weißt du, was Alamania ist, Herr Ahmed?...Eine Mark macht 25 Lira. Ein Sohn macht 25 Söhne. Ein Sohn macht 25 Felder’” / “‘Do you know what Alamania is, Mr. Ahmed?...One mark makes 25 Turkish lira. One son makes 25 sons. One son makes 25 fields’” (Mutterzunge 51; Mothertongue 62). The farmer-guest worker is not only exploited by German society and economy but also by his own false self-image of the prosperous self-made man who glamorously returns to Turkey. Replacing human values by capitalist-materialist ones, the farmer – who as a guest worker is worth 125 farmers (Mutterzunge 100; Mothertongue 125-126) - trades the donkey for the status symbol “Opel Record” and his family for material riches such as “the attaché case, the pocket calculator, the cassette-recorder, a small mini-television, his sunglasses...[and] his apple trees” (Mothertongue 127; Mutterzunge 102). The scene mentioned here is representative of Özdamar’s



writing: it consists of multiple allusions and meanings. For one thing, it satirically undermines the outstanding German stereotype of the shabby Opel Record as *the* guest worker car (my stress); then, it reveals Özdamar's leftist orientation; and it, furthermore, emphasises the economic crisis Turkey slid into as a result of its migrating labour force.

In "A Charwoman's Career," Özdamar employs the play-within-the-play technique in order to write a satirical parody of German society and the workings of its Ausländerpolitik. She tells the story of a Turkish woman who – in a manner reminiscent of Hamlet's Ophelia – is abandoned by her high-class husband because of the complex and powerful interplay of cultural, social, and religious conventions setting up clear class and gender boundaries; disappointed by this experience, Özdamar's Ophelia decides to go to Germany, where she becomes a charwoman Gastarbeiterin (Mutterzunge 104-105; Mothertongue 131-132). Shakespeare's original text is de-universalised and re-contextualised in the woman's experiences as a wife in Turkey and as a charwoman and unappreciated actress in Germany. Interweaving the literary classic with her own version, Özdamar makes use of the theatrical techniques of the German avant-gardist Heiner Müller who, in 1977, staged his re-dramatised version of Shakespeare's Hamlet, entitled Hamlet Machine (Innes 200). Like Müller, Özdamar rejects the conventional dramatic basis of plot, character, dialogue, and instead creates a collage or pastiche of contrasting styles and fragmentary images, by means of which she disperses the common belief in coherent experience, logical continuity,

and static, unified identity (Innes 200; Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 195-196). Derived from the Italian word pasticcio, the term pastiche well describes the hybrid quality of Özdamar's Mothertongue stories as "a medley of various ingredients, a hotchpotch, farrago, jumble, a pot-pourri" (OED). Pieced together, these fragments amount to a new hybrid configuration that is internally dynamic and thus challenges the still common ideals of artistic coherence and conformity.

Özdamar's hybrid prose-dramas oppose thematic, linguistic, and stylistic norms as they inseparably combine the oral with the written, the traditional with the modern, European-German culture with the Turkish-Arabic. If compared to the literary norm, her narrative style is bumpy and unsmooth; it abounds with abrupt changes of narrative perspective. Özdamar lines up grotesque, ambivalent, and fractured scenes that do not seem to make much sense when one first reads them. The structural and thematic inconsistencies that result from this fragmentation subtly disrupt the western norm of textual linearity and order (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 164). Another means of confusing her Eurocentric readership is that of constantly interspersing conventional themes and structures with unfamiliar Turkish-Arabic elements. The Mothertongue stories abound with Turkish and Arabic words, phrases, proverbs (worldly wisdoms), folklore, songs, and fragments of Islamic religious texts. With the help of these insertions, Özdamar creates her own polyvalent space of textual and cultural hybridity. As Wierschke points out, it is just this textual-cultural

confusion that makes it impossible to locate the “Fremde” (which means the alienness) between the invented categories of the “foreigner” and the “native German” (Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 165, 208). Blurring the strange or foreign with the common, Özdamar’s writing calls upon her German and non-German readers to re-think their one-dimensional and tenacious national-cultural expectations of each other.

Asked by Wierschke who she intends to reach with her texts, Özdamar responds that she writes for herself and for whoever feels addressed (Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 264). She mentions encounters with a versatile readership consisting of Turkish cleaning women as well as German feminists, women as well as men, the younger as well as the older generations (264). Discussing Philip’s engagement with different ethnic-cultural communities, Hunter and Carr observe a “‘simultaneity of discourse’” (Carr 78) that, on the one side, testifies to a commonality among women of colour and, on the other side, enters into a critical dialogue with the White reader (Carr 78; Hunter 257-258). Considering that Philip’s and Özdamar’s texts are located within a complex framework of social-political, historical and literary contexts, their intention to address a broad audience turns out to be questionable. As Hunter points out, Philip – and I add Özdamar here – write for an audience “for whom conventional representation is, complicatedly, both profoundly habitual, universalizing, and essentialist, as well as the recognized strategy for making ‘reality claims,’ particularly about history” (257). The two women’s writings hence seem to speak rather to an intellectual

readership that has the expertise to recognise the very representations they set out to challenge and subvert. My observation does not imply that their narratives can only be understood by an educated, academic audience but that they communicate in very different ways with those not aware or informed of the contextual allusions they make. Walcott draws a connection between the polyvalent reception of a piece of literature and the politics of performance. As he illustrates in his study of Black Canadian writing, ethnic minority writers frequently use performative processes in order to re-enact existing stereotypes in the fluidity of multiple meanings (98-102). The literary engagement of Philip and Özdamar definitely consists of this performative power of continuity and change.<sup>19</sup>

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In his discussion of the relation between ethnic minority writing and national narrative, the Turkish German writer and critic Zafer Şenocak argues that the prevalent misrecognition of immigrant writers in the German media and literary scene clearly shows the extent to which the German cultural-artistic scene is a projection of the political-national sphere (Şenocak 65). Şenocak's point finds parallels in the concepts of postcolonial critics in Canada, America and Australia. In his article "Literature – Nationalism's Other: The Case for Revision," which is published in Bhabha's critical collection Nation and Narration, Simon During maintains that "[i]t is becoming a commonplace that the institution of literature works to nationalist ends" (138). Similarly, Allen and Lloyd characterise "major" writing, the literary canon of a nation, as an accomplice in the monopolisation of

the aesthetic culture of the very nation (Lloyd 172; Allen 63-64). It serves national self-definition insofar as it selectively emphasises those aspects other nation-states are meant to associate with the nation and its culture (Lloyd 172). Agreeing with Lloyd, Sneja Gunew concludes that the ignorance of certain themes and the marginalisation of the ethnic “Other” are not only symptomatic but rather constituent of the construction of national narrative; “it involves oiling the machinery of legitimisation” (Gunew 518-519). In his essay “DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation,” Bhabha adds another significant dimension to the issue of national narrative: that of “double narrative” and “double-time” (297).<sup>20</sup> With the term “double narrative” Bhabha intimates a split in the literary production of the nation, “a split between the continuist, accumulative temporality of the *pedagogical*, and the repetitious, recursive strategy of the *performative*” (297; my stress). His idea of “double-time” further elaborates the pedagogical-performative distinction as it manifests the need to continually re-perform origins:

The people [of the nation-space] are the historical ‘objects’ of a nationalist pedagogy, giving the discourse an authority that is based on the pre-given or constituted historical origin or event; the people are also the ‘subjects’ of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people...by which the national life is redeemed and signified as a repeating and reproductive process. (Bhabha, “DissemiNation” 297)

Özdamar and Philip re-perform German and Canadian national narratives in Mutterzunge and She Tries Her Tongue. Their performative, “ex-centric” (term coined by Hutcheon; introduction to this thesis) positions at the margins of

Canadian and German culture and literature draw attention to the problem of finding the space in-between cultures. Ien Ang demands a politics of diaspora that neither privileges the (real or imaginary) host country nor the (real or imaginary) homeland, but instead keeps a “creative tension” between the two (Ang 16). However, as the discussions of critics and writers show, Ang’s appeal is a very complex – and sometimes even impossible – undertaking. According to Mishra, diasporic writers often construct racist fictions of the homeland in order to compensate for the traumatic loss of their home culture and mother tongue (Mishra 423-424, 441-442). Although Philip rejects the myth of the lost and idealised homeland, her writing shows a racist quality insofar as it tends to homogenise White Canadians by reducing them to the image of racists and sexists: “*The tall, blond, blue-eyed, white-skinned man is shooting...a Black / a woman (my stress)*” (She Tries Her Tongue 67). Her response to racism and sexism is anger: commenting on Wandor’s exclusion of Canadian feminists of colour in On Gender and Writing (this chapter 96-97), she “cheupses. Pissed off and/or disgusted – with life, with circumstances, with someone, with anything – one cheupses, in the Caribbean, that is...cheupsing is peculiar to us – it is all woman” (Frontiers 47). Philip’s overt and insurgent opposition to ethnic-cultural and sexual inequality in Canada is reminiscent of Pratt’s transcultural contact zones in which disparate cultures in asymmetrical power relations meet, clash and grapple with each other (Pratt 7).

In “The Uses of Anger: Women Reponding to Racism,” an essay from the Sister Outsider collection (124-133),<sup>21</sup> Lorde also values the venting of anger as an effective means of resistance against the exclusion and stereotyping of non-White women in academic feminist circles. However, unlike Philip, she clearly sees the necessity to use anger with deliberation and precision (127). It is due to the lack of this well-directed and carefully considered stance and the consequent privileging of her African heritage that Philip runs the risk of reversing the racism and homogenisation inflicted upon Caribbean and African Canadians. Constructing generalised stereotypes of the White “Other” - of White men, White women, and White Canadian society as a whole – she eventually contributes to a deepening of racial salience and differentiation, processes she actually sets out to subvert (Bucknor 103-104). Bucknor goes even so far as to argue that Philip “falls into a kind of biological and cultural determinism” (104) that supports the racial binary of Black - or rather non-White - and White (Bucknor 104, 141). In this binary oppositional stance, Bucknor discerns Philip’s tendency to decontextualise “the specific contexts of racist ideology,” a phenomenon she repeatedly attacks in western discourse (Bucknor 105). In She Tries Her Tongue, the dichotomy between Whiteness and non-Whiteness takes a further, sexual dimension. Throughout the collection, Philip identifies non-Whiteness with femininity – women, daughters, the mother tongue, African goddesses – and Whiteness with masculinity – men, the father tongue, patriarchy, Christianity, colonisation. “Cyclamen Girl,” for instance, is a poem cycle about a Black girl’s resistance

against her displacement into the institution of Christianity. Whereas the first four poems (38-41) show the girl's problematic stand in-between African and western religion, "Transfiguration" (42-43) signals a significant move towards the African heritage that is effected by the onset of the girl's puberty. Finally, with the reaching of womanhood, "The cyclamen girl returns / To her own" (45), which means to her African ancestry, religion, and femininity.

Unlike Philip, Özdamar treats racist and feminist issues in a satirical and multi-perspectival manner that allows her to evade a racialisation of her writing. Still, this does not imply that she denies the problematic existence of race and gender categories. She rather challenges them by parodying them and constantly crossing their borderlines. Moreover, she modifies generalised images of racism and sexism through a complex interplay with the issues of class, ethnicity/nationality, language, religion, and sexuality. The Mothertongue stories intimate a clear reluctance to reduce and stereotype racist and fascist attitudes as "typical" German behaviours. Not falling into the trap of such an easy and generalising condemnation, her writing exhibits racism and fascism as phenomena that cannot be limited to the German (historical) context.<sup>22</sup> In the Karagöz story, the farmer – who gets politicised by the donkey and Turkish leftists – is beaten up by fascist Turks (Mutterzunge 81; Mothertongue 101) and in addition falls a victim to fascism in Istanbul when he looks for the socialist with the wooden leg:

Da kam ein Mann und stach den Bauern mit dem Messer nieder und sagte: 'Du Kommunist du, warum du suchst Holzbein?'...Der Bauer umarmte das blutige Bein aus Holz und



verstand, daß der Sozialist Holzbein von Faschisten getötet worden war. (Mutterzunge 93)

Then a man came and stabbed the farmer with a knife and said: ‘ You, communist, why you look for wooden leg?’...The farmer embraced the bloody leg made out of wood and understood that the socialist with the wooden leg had been killed by fascists. (Mothertongue 117)

Just like the issue of racism, those of sexism and patriarchal oppression are depicted as complex, multi-faceted, and multi-racial mechanisms in the Mothertongue stories. Parodying German and Turkish patriarchal attitudes, Özdamar points to the fact that “patriarchy” is not uniform but rather heterogeneous. In the Karagöz story, the different Turkish and German gender concepts and understandings of female sexuality and corporeality (Kandiyoti 326) are repeatedly clashing and displaced. The woman without the headscarf, who has been abandoned by her husband for a German woman, tries to compensate for her pain by imposing a stereotype on her “antagonist”:

‘Sie [deutsche Frauen] bügeln und bügeln ihre Haare. Sie nähen ihren Busen jeden Tag hoch oder flopp lassen ihn runterhängen. Allah hat jedem einen Arsch gegeben, aber sie klingeln nur damit, zirr – zirr – zirr.’ (Mutterzunge 63)

‘They [German women] iron and iron their hair. They sew up their bosoms every day or flop, let them hang down. Allah gave each of us an arse, but they only jiggle with it, zirr – zirr – zirr.’ (Mothertongue 77-78)<sup>23</sup>

However, the response of the woman with the headscarf - “‘Allah soll deinen Mann verfluchen” / “‘Allah should curse your husband”” (Mutterzunge 63; Mothertongue 78) – holds the patriarchal Turkish husband just as responsible as the German woman. The collection performs several other scenes in which Turkish men are shown to take from German women what they forbid their own

wives through religion.<sup>24</sup> Still, each of these passages stresses that, ultimately, the attitude of patriarchal men is as sexist-misogynist towards German women (Mutterzunge 85; Mothertongue 106-107) as it is towards Turkish women (Mutterzunge 65, 94-95; Mothertongue 80-81, 118-119).

Özdamar further complicates the controversies on patriarchy and sexism by placing them in a wide cultural and economic context. Both the farmer and his wife realise that the replacement of traditional by material-capitalist values - which leads to an asymmetry in the positioning between German and Turkish-Arabic culture - decisively contributed to the inescapable dilemma they are in (Mutterzunge 87-89; Mothertongue 109-111). In the novel Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei, Özdamar draws the readers' attention to another gender-specific predicament that can emerge in the space in-between cultures. She presents a Turkish woman narrator who depicts her evolution from patriarchal oppression into economic self-sufficiency. In spite of the fact that she thus successfully counters the prevalent notion that Islamic women are quintessentially victims of an Islamic patriarchy, the woman's liberation from Islamic-patriarchal strictures has a bitter aftertaste (Fröhlich 6). It doubly marginalises the protagonist who – not fitting anymore into the accepted categories of Turkish-Islamic femininity - immigrates to Germany where she does not find access to German gender roles either (Fröhlich 6). The farmer's wife goes through a similar experience of living in-between the German and Turkish cultural spaces. Though her frequent travels to Germany and the farmer's long absences conduce to her resistance of his

patriarchal behaviours and his attempt to demonise her because of the orchard incident, these liberating forces also lead to the ruin of her marriage and family (Mutterzunge 87-89; Mothertongue 104-109).

The striking differences in Özdamar's and Philip's attitudes towards their countries of origin and immigration argued here, do not only show in their literary activities. Writers such as Philip, Brand, Silvera, and Allen, who with other artists of colour form a politically committed community of ethnic minority artists in Toronto, are much more liable to racialised perspectives than Özdamar, who though being a critical observer of German society, politics, economy, and feminism refuses to judge, condemn and thus to construct ethnic-racial stereotypes. Exposing *mutual* prejudices and misrecognitions that have led to the deep tensions between Germans and Turks, she comes closer to Ang's claim for a lively, non-privileging tension between homeland and host country than Philip. The latter's racialised view of the two spaces – a view that is located within the hybrid space in-between those spaces – is definitely in favour of the African and African Caribbean heritage, which she claims as a means of self-identification. While Özdamar, too, asserts her ethnic background as part of her identity, she does not determine her “self,” neither through race, as Philip does, nor through any other category; her identity – and the multiple identities of her characters in Mutterzunge – are created as indeterminable and fluid processes.

Approaching the complex and controversial field of identity politics within the context of gender identities in her essay “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” Judith Butler cautions against the determination of selfhood:

I’m permanently troubled by identity categories, consider them to be invariable stumbling-blocks, and understand them, even promote them, as sites of necessary trouble...identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes, whether as the normalizing categories of oppressive structures or as the rallying points for a liberatory contestation of that very oppression. (308).

The quotation directly relates to the dilemma that Philip and many in the community of radical non-White women writers she belongs to face as a consequence of their decisive claim of a non-White identity. They run risk of being “recolonized” by the racial sign under which they write (Butler 308) and of totalising the “I” in their selective, race-specific determination (309). As Butler indicates, identity categories – no matter if imposed or self-chosen – tend to ghettoise the “self” rather than to liberate it. Contemplating the question if the act of speaking up or “coming out” in the name of an identity always has to have this negative consequence, Butler reaches the conclusion that the answer lies in the “performance and production of a ‘self’” (310) that reiterates and at the same time opposes dominant discourse. She thus promotes the strategy of performative imitation and simultaneous revision or transfiguration that Özdamar employs in her contest of identity stereotypes. Still, Butler’s acknowledgement of the important role a person’s historical and socio-cultural context plays in the process of identification, reveals ambivalence in her argumentation insofar as she unconsciously contradicts her “universal” claim to be suspicious of and avoid the

self-determination of selfhood. Likewise, her alternative strategy of a deliberate “performance and production of a ‘self’” displays a context-specific choice of identification that cannot be given general, all-inclusive value. Thus, it should be taken into account that Philip’s vehement attack of the issue of racism as well as her claim of an “essentialist subject-position” (Morrell 10) engages with very different historical, cultural, social, and ethnic-racial experiences than Özdamar’s satirical performance of identity as an indeterminable process.

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One possible way of avoiding the dangers inherent in the claim of a racial identity lies in multiracial communication and interaction. The idea of multiracial coalition work is shared and translated into action/literature by many women writers and feminist groups in Germany and Canada; it should not be disregarded that this coalition is advocated by non-White and by White women alike. In her essay “Growing up White,” the White feminist Frankenberg appreciates that her coalition work with women of colour, lesbians and White working-class women has made her cognisant of the embeddedness of racist discourse in the social, political, and economic environment of mainstream WASP feminism (76). Similar experiences by Canadian (Marlatt, “Introduction: Meeting on Fractured Margins” 16; Warland 193-196, 201-202; Stasiulis 35, 53) and German (Schultz, “Racism” 249-250; Weigel 263-264) feminists provide evidence that multiracial collaboration – which means “learning from each other, teaching each other, and thinking together about race privilege and its effects on feminism” (Frankenberg,

“Growing up White” 77)<sup>25</sup> – has already effected important changes in White feminist discourse and mainstream publishing. Stasiulis notes that anti-racist attitudes among women writers and feminists even led to a split of Women’s Press, Canada’s best-known feminist publishing house, in 1988; similar processes have been in the offing in the Writers’ Union (TWUC), PEN, and the League of Canadian Poets (Stasiulis 35). Yet, as Hunter and Frankenberg maintain, the access to non-White women’s writing still needs to be improved considerably (Hunter 259; Frankenberg, “Growing up White” 77). According to Hunter, the common grounds (such as the common positions as women, lovers, wives and so on) that writings of non-White women offer have to be recognised by White women as a chance for serious dialogue and common action (259). It is a common space that remains within the given constraints set up by race, class, culture, and religion and from there opens up possibilities to disrupt the traditional man-made literary canon and the false assumption that national literature is primarily produced by men (Arens 120).

A crucial objective underlying the conception of This Bridge Called My Back is that of encouraging feminists to personally and conceptually dis-place or dis-identify their one-dimensional concepts of feminist theory and social reality. The authors of the collection suggest a “theory in the flesh,” a remapping or “bridging” of boundaries between the different, often contradictory experiences of women (Moraga and Anzaldúa 23). De Lauretis strongly supports the claim for a re-formed feminist theory; she maintains that

a feminist critical theory as such begins when the feminist critique of sociocultural formations...becomes conscious of itself and turns inward...to question its own relation to or possible complicity with those ideologies, its own heterogeneous body of writing and interpretations, their basic assumptions and terms, and the practices which they enable and from which they emerge. (138)

In her discussion of the matter in question, Frankenberg affirms that White feminists cannot completely escape complicity with racism, which is a firmly rooted part of the social discourse in western societies (76). Yet, what they can do, is take an anti-racist standpoint that uses and abuses racist discourse and thus challenges the in(di)visibility of the unexamined categories of Whiteness and White feminism (Frankenberg, "Growing up White" 78; Schultz, "Racism" 249-250). Realising the limitation of the vision of a sisterhood of Third World feminism acclaimed in the first edition of This Bridge Called My Back in 1981, the co-editor Anzaldúa – in the foreword of the second edition -acknowledges the connectedness and interdependence of "white black straight queer female male." To all these, Moraga directs the appeal to "acknowledge that to change the world, we have to change our selves – even sometimes our most cherished block-hard convictions" (foreword).

Özdamar's and Philip's artistic activities display possibilities of multi-cultural interaction. Relying on her experiences as stage-director of the Karagöz play, Özdamar promotes the experience of multi-ethnic teamwork as a potential way of venting and in a further step overcoming ethnic-cultural prejudices and stereotypes (Horrocks and Krause 55-63). Horrocks and Kolinsky, too, consider the process of venting prejudices a "necessary, even healthy step towards

establishing a viable working relationship” (xxiii). Of course, neither of them understands “venting” in a physically aggressive sense. In the article Özdamar wrote for the newspaper Die Zeit, she points out that the mutual insults of the multinational cast during the rehearsals were the first steps towards a viable cultural interaction and consequently towards the realisation and rejection of ethnic-cultural prejudices and stereotypes (Horrocks and Krause 60-63, 68). Significantly, the article ends with the cautiously optimistic comparison to a relationship between lovers: “Sie verfolgen sich wie die Liebenden.” / “They [the multi-ethnic actors of her cast] pursue each other like lovers” (Horrocks and Krause 63). Though not as positive as Özdamar, Philip also maintains the necessity of multiracial coalition work, which she herself participates in through her active membership in the multi-disciplinary, multi-ethnic group of artists named Vision 21 (Williamson 242). Talking to Williamson about the achievements the group has effected, she acknowledges that her participation in it has been very important and valuable for her development as a non-White Canadian woman writer (242-243).



<sup>1</sup> In the second chapter of his work Echo: Essays on Other Literatures, the Italian Canadian scholar Joseph Pivato points out that the history of Canadian minority writing and publishing reaches much further back than the late sixties and early seventies (53-75). Tracing back its beginnings, he refers to Watson Kirkconnell who, in 1935, published a collection of poems written by minority writers from Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Hungary, Italy, Greece and the Ukraine around the turn of the century (Pivato 56). In the preface to his collection, Kirkconnell maintains that “in Western Canada, at any rate, this...poetry has surpassed that of Anglo-Canadians both in quantity and in quality” (qtd. in Pivato 1: 56).

<sup>2</sup> Although Philip belongs to those Caribbean Canadian writers who have achieved serious literary and critical attention, she complains about being excluded and misrecognised in her collection of critical essays Frontiers. She sees herself subject to a subtle racism exerted by reviewers, critics and publishers, which label her as “not marketable” (110). Whereas there is much truth to her statement with respect to the eighties, her accusation seems questionable if applied to her more recent reception as a Caribbean Canadian writer.

<sup>3</sup> In another passage, he supports his observation by pronouncing that “the competing ‘bi-national’ English-French duality of Canadian ‘white’ dominance...has functioned to retard the formation of a narrative based solely on race...[which] has meant that non-British immigrants (and even to some extent non-European immigrants) have found in English and French linguistic and cultural competition an alternative discourse” (22). Yet, it should not be neglected that – as Pivato says – to establish a distinctively Canadian literary canon (which means writing that is separate from colonial British and French as well as American influences) “only two poles of reference were used: the Anglophone and the Francophone” (69).

<sup>4</sup> Bucknor also draws attention to the Caribbean critical context, which – in his view – follows a strategy of “inclusion by exclusion” (21). He denounces that the “centrality of the [Caribbean] literature’s inter-national dimension has been elided” (3) by Caribbean critics. Caribbean Canadian writers are primarily recognised as Caribbean writers by Caribbean critics, which excludes their Canadianness and constructs a policy of “inclusion by exclusion.”

<sup>5</sup> Arens mentions other “non-native” German women writers who have similar experiences to Özdamar’s. Zehra Cirak and Alev Tekinay won the Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Prize in 1989 and 1990 respectively and Libuše Moníková the Alfred-Döblin-Prize in 1987 (Arens 86). Referring to Gayatri C. Spivak, Arens argues that the acceptance of “not really German” authors (Aussiedler) from eastern European countries as full members of the German canon is a subtle means of excluding the non-originary German writer and at the same time reassuring the dominance of originary German literature (Arens 90-91). Arens quotes a passage from Spivak’s In Other Worlds: Essays on Cultural Politics to give evidence to her claim that the dominant center uses certain marginalised subjects as alibis for the exclusion of yet others: “The putative center welcomes selective inhabitants of the margin in order to exclude the margin. And it is the center that offers the official explanation; or, the center is defined and reproduced by the explanation that it can express” (Spivak 107).

<sup>6</sup> The majority of the authors of the In the Feminine collection on the conference “Women and Words / Les Femmes et les Mots” express the same criticism; some subtle and others – such as the Caribbean Canadian woman writer Makeda Silvera – rather outspoken and provocative: “Do you understand the pressure that you put on us to speak as authorities on every facet of Black women’s lives?...it is not something you would ask of yourselves. Which of you speak for all white women, for all the issues that affect your lives?” (Silvera, In the Feminine 71).

<sup>7</sup> As a literary scholar, Teraoka responds to the “culture is text” argument of the anthropologist Clifford Geertz with a reversed “text is culture” claim (189). Her analysis of the “imbeddedness of texts...in the lived, social, and contested realities from which they draw their force and meaning” leads her to the observation that it is essential to learn “how to read our texts in creative ways to uncover or recover insight into the practical and political dialogues and struggles in which they, as cultural products, participate” (189).

<sup>8</sup> Since the concept was introduced in the seventies and the dynamic, fluid processes of ethnic minority writing considerably changed since then, its applicability to contemporary writers such as Philip and Özdamar is only possible to a certain extent. Besides, Arens notes that literary conceptions are always interactive and thus influence each other; an exclusive application of one specific model thus makes no sense (145).

<sup>9</sup> Walcott relates to this characteristic in his study of the diasporic writing of Philip and Brand (95-97). He perceives the performance of "exodus," the central element of Black diasporic writing, as one way of interpreting the "shifts, disjunctures, displacements and interruptions" (96) inherent in this literature.

<sup>10</sup> The second and third markers of Deleuze's and Guattari's "littérature mineure" – its political content/context and collective value (17) – relate to the position Philip and Özdamar take as ethnic minority writers in dominant Canadian and German society and literature. The issue has been discussed above.

<sup>11</sup> Hunter gives a more detailed account of Philip's and Jankowsky of Özdamar's literary mobility (Hunter 276-277; Jankowsky 268).

<sup>12</sup> The feminist writer Deniz Kandiyoti deals with this issue in the specific context of the Turkish feminist movement. She discloses western feminism to be stuck in clichés of the hopelessly suppressed Islamic woman - in need of the western "sister-saviour" - that prevent an acknowledgment of the improvements in the position of Turkish women; improvements that were effected by Turkish feminist initiative to a large extent. The White, Christian feminists Schultz and Lutz agree with Kandiyoti. Schultz argues that the majority of White Christian feminists staunchly ignore the present-day situation of women in Islamic societies (243-244). Stereotyping Turkish women of Islamic origin as backward and submissive to patriarchal-Islamic oppression, they not only deny the heterogeneity of gender roles in Turkish society but also their own rootedness in patriarchal-Christian ideology (Schultz 243-244; Lutz 148-149). Lutz notices that the western saviour-image confirms the false assumption that colonialism only brought advantages for Islamic women (150). Moreover, it helps western women to re-invent the self-image of the progressive, emancipated, and independent woman (Lutz 149).

<sup>13</sup> The radical African American feminist bell hooks – Gloria Watkins - sharply attacks the deliberate (an assertion other critics such as de Lauretis, Frankenberg or Lorde do not make) complicity of White women with White patriarchy in her discussion of racism and feminism (chapters four and five) in *Ain't I A Woman*. Tracing back the racist foundation of the women's movement in America, she declares that "white racial imperialism granted all white women, however victimized by sexist oppression they might be, the right to assume the role of oppressor in relationship to black women and black men" (123). Although her one-dimensional condemnation of White feminism and patriarchy is contestable, the fact that she draws attention to White feminist's inability to connect the issue of racism to the contexts of sexism and socio-politics is very valuable for any discussion of White western feminism.

<sup>14</sup> It is a controversial matter among feminist critics, whether this complicity with White patriarchal discourse is intended or not. Whereas critics and writers such as Schultz ("Racism" 241-242), Lutz (140), de Lauretis (132) and Frankenberg (76) talk of unintended, un-self-conscious complicity, the more radical voices of Bubeck, Philip (*Frontiers* 48), Silvera (70), and Brand (*Bread Out Of Stone* 11) blame White feminists as conscious or even deliberate accomplices.

<sup>15</sup> Lorde's argument is still viable and topical today. It finds support from numerous contemporary feminist critics such as de Lauretis, Frankenberg, Schultz, and Hutcheon. The radical feminist of colour Barbara Smith announces in *This Bridge Called My Back*: "We [feminist writers of colour, especially those who contributed to *This Bridge Called My Back*] are challenging white feminists to be accountable for their racism because at the base we still *want* to believe that they really *want* freedom for *all* of us...It is an act of love...to expect the most of a woman who calls herself a feminist – to challenge her as you yourself wish to be challenged" (62).

<sup>16</sup> As Wierschke points out, the stereotype of the cleaning woman is *the* outstanding German stereotype of the Turkish (German) woman (Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 195-197).

<sup>17</sup> Claire Harris, who also is a Trinidadian Canadian woman writer, mentions similar experiences when talking about her studies in Trinidad. In her essay "Poets in Limbo," she suggests that "we [the writers from English-speaking Caribbean countries] remain poets whose sense of art is essentially rooted in the English tradition" (118).

<sup>18</sup> The origins of the Turkish shadow-play reach as far as the fourteenth century and it reached its chief popularity in the fashionable coffee-houses of the Ottoman Empire of the sixteenth century (Kühn 5; van Heyst 1125). While the shadow-theatre was still a well-known media of entertainment at the beginning of this century, it has been more and more ousted by western media-technologies. As van Heyst ironically remarks, today most Turkish children only know Karagöz and Hacivat from TV spots (118). Writing her survey of the shadow-play for teaching purposes, van Heyst intersperses her historical survey with information about the making and usage of the shadow-figures and the little stage.

<sup>19</sup> Readers of this chapter should be aware that my discussion of Philip's and Özdamar's critical reception is framed and limited by the specific literary-academic context. It, for instance, does not concentrate on the reception of the public press or the journals and magazines edited by non-White (women) writers in Canada and Germany.

<sup>20</sup> Bhabha obviously tries to avoid the problematic and still seemingly unavoidable, common discourse of spaciality in "DissemiNation" where he mainly – and convincingly – argues with the help of the concept of temporality.

<sup>21</sup> Schultz translated this essay in her work Macht und Sinnlichkeit; it's entitled "Vom Nutzen unseres Ärgers" (97-108).

<sup>22</sup> In the interview with Horrocks and Kolinsky, Özdamar declares: "Every country has its fascists. Turkey, the country of my birth, has more than Germany" (52). This statement has to be contextualised in order to be fully understood. Özdamar left Turkey in the late seventies for political reasons. Being a leftist actress, she performed in plays such as Peter Weiss's Marat or Brecht's Mann ist Mann and took active part in political actions against the Turkish regime, for which she was briefly arrested and detained (Horrocks and Kolinsky 45). Her career at a standstill due to her leftist orientation, she went to East Berlin in order to work with the Brecht pupil Benno Benson at the Berlin Volksbühne (Horrocks and Kolinsky 45-46). In Germany, Özdamar has never been politically active in a radical, open way.

<sup>23</sup> In this quotation, I changed Craig's translation from "Allah gave each of *them* an arse" to "Allah gave each of *us* an arse" (my stress), because Craig's interpretation of the original – in my opinion – fails to recognise the clash of Turkish and German gender models intended by Özdamar in this phrase.

<sup>24</sup> According to Islamic religion, the honour and prestige of a man strongly depends on the "correct" behaviour of his wife and other women in the closer family circle (Kandiyoti 326). An essential rule for Islamic women is that they don't send deliberate signals of their sexuality (a rule the farmer sees violated by the orchard incident). Re-interpreting the incident that made Mohammed decide that women must wear a headscarf from the female perspective of the woman with the headscarf, Özdamar unmasks the rule to be made by man for men; it is supposed to help them control their sexual desires (Mutterzunge 67-68; Mothertongue 84). Moreover, she displays the rule's inconsistency with the help of a highly ironic exaggeration: "Moslem-Frau soll laufen, aber soll mit ihrem Fuß nicht so kräftig auf die Erde treten. Schmuck wackelt, gibt dem Mann Wollust" / "A Moslem woman should walk, but her foot should not strike the earth so hard that her beauty jiggles, making men feel lustful" (Mutterzunge 68; Mothertongue 84).

<sup>25</sup> In this passage, Frankenberg specifically calls upon White American feminists to take initiatives (77), because – as Kalpaka and Räthzel (37) and Silvera (70) notice in the German and Canadian contexts – the majority of White mainstream feminists tend to perceive non-White women as their "vehicle[s] of cognizance" (Kalpaka and Räthzel 37).



## Chapter IV

### Language, Memory and Body as Means of Resistance: Lingual

#### Hybridity, Embodied Language and Body-Memory<sup>1</sup>

and English is  
my mother tongue  
is  
my father tongue  
is a foreign lan lan lang  
language  
l/anguish  
anguish

(She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks 58)

Es ist eine Gemeinsamkeit, mit einer Orientalin in Deutsch zu reden, aber momentan haben wir ja nur diese Sprache. (Mutterzunge 15)

It is rude to speak to an Oriental woman in German but for the moment we, of course, only have that language. (Mothertongue 17)

As the quotations above indicate, Philip and Özdamar perceive language – the encoder of social, cultural and political circumstances – as a major site of resistance in their contest of White hegemonic discourse. Especially in the works analysed here, they explore the tensions that exist between the mother tongue and the language of their country of immigration. In She Tries Her Tongue, Philip scrutinises and redefines the relationship between the imperial, imposed “father tongue” – standard English – and the colonised, silenced mother tongue – the Caribbean demotic with its manifold African traces.<sup>2</sup> And Özdamar’s

Mothertongue stories playfully revise the binary notion of a monoglossic German standard code as opposed to the deficient, bad German of the Gastarbeiter. Both writers adapt language on multi-functional levels: it serves as a means of performance, as a theme (metalinguistics), and as an expression of alienness – which Wierschke terms Fremde and Özdamar Überfremdung – and at the same time identification. On each level, the binary eventually gives way to complex, interdependent, and interactive connections between mother and father tongue.<sup>3</sup>

One field that particularly concentrates on the importance and impact of language on the processes of identification and social-cultural conceptualisation is the field of feminism. In The Canadian Postmodern, Hutcheon notes that subverting the authority of patriarchal language that silences the female voice is a major issue of the feminist's search for an independent female identity (7). Daphne Marlatt and Audre Lorde, too, call upon feminists to reveal the gendered, oppressive bias encoded in the "father" tongue (Marlatt, In the Feminine 11-12; Lorde 8). Marlatt envisions the ideal of a specific "'women's language,' a new language use that articulates our values, visions, and actual experiences as women" (12). In Sister Outsider, Lorde declares that an important source of power within herself – and within every (Black) woman – is her tongue or voice (40-44). In her call to speak up and thus reconnect the fragmented, muted "self," she asserts that "it is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence" (44). Referring to the title of the collection in which her essay appears, Marlatt encourages women writers to break this silence by "writ[ing] 'In the

Feminine’...[by] build[ing] our culture in the feminine” (13). This is also an aim of Philip and Özdamar in their writings, which play with possibilities of re-articulation, not only through language but also through the body and the memory. Moreover, their opposition to sexist/genderised and racist patriarchal discourse is not limited to White men; being directed as well at Caribbean/Turkish patriarchy and White feminists, it shows the complex, problematic nature of their undertaking.

One such complex paradox is that Özdamar and Philip both operate within the (imposed) father tongue they actually set out to tackle for alienating or separating them from their cultural-lingual roots. Discussing the connections between cultural and lingual identity, Deleuze and Guattari interrogate the immigrant’s positioning in dominant discourse: “How many people today live in a language that is not their own? Or no longer, or not yet, even know their own and know poorly the major language that they are forced to serve? This is the problem of immigrants, and especially of their children, the problem of minorities...” (19). Touched upon the issue in the talk with Horrocks and Kolinsky, Özdamar explains that “[m]y own language is of course Turkish, but it is no longer the language of my day-to-day experiences. In that sense, German is much more alive for me – whether it be a train conductor or a baker talking” (47). Philip’s situation is more drastic or paradoxical insofar as standard “English is the only language I have – that’s what I grew up speaking...we spoke it at home” (Carey 18). Likewise, Özdamar’s Turkish German woman narrator of “Mother Tongue” and

“Grandfather Tongue” speaks in the father tongue, German, because she lost her mother tongue, Turkish. Whenever she tries to remember sentences or words, she can only recall them as if they were said in German (Mothertongue 11; Mutterzunge 11). To Philip, working in English “is like coming to terms with an abusive parent” (Carey 19). On the one hand, she is fascinated by and makes use of the rich potential English offers as a poetic language of resistance, yet, on the other hand, it is the abusive language of the coloniser who enslaved her African ancestors and prohibited the use of the African mother tongue. Özdamar’s Mothertongue stories reveal a similar paradox. German at the same time silences the immigrant’s cultural and lingual identities and serves as a medium “in which the manifestation of revolutionary and evolutionary thought and vision takes place” (Fischer 71-72; Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 163). By using the father tongue the Turkish narrator of the first two stories is able to initiate the search for her lost mother and grandfather tongues<sup>4</sup> Turkish and Arabic. Ironically, she can only take lessons in Arabic from the Arabic scholar Ibni Abdullah, because they – as the initial quotation of this chapter shows – have German as a common medium of communication. The narrator goes through a process of learning that a communist friend once told her about: in order to find her identity in-between languages and cultures she must “*Kaza gecirmek*,” which means she must experience “Lebensunfälle” / “accidents of life” (Mutterzunge 12; Mothertongue 12). “*Kaza gecirmek*” expresses itself in her alienated relation towards the mother and grandfather tongue.



In his analysis of the language uses of immigrants, Itwaru maintains that linguistic bifurcation or dichotomy is simultaneously a bifurcation/dichotomy of identity, imagination, and consciousness (Itwaru 14; She Tries Her Tongue 15-16). For the immigrant or diasporic person, learning the official language of the country of immigration means learning new ways of cultural thinking and practice; it signals a modification of the whole personality that can be a voluntary or – as is the case with the Afrosporic people (She Tries Her Tongue 15-16) – a compelled process (Godard 151, 159). Introducing her poetry collection, Philip argues that “for the African in the New World learning the English language was simultaneous with learning of her non-being, her lack of wholeness” (She Tries Her Tongue 20). The Italian German writer and critic Franco Biondi, too, asserts that “die Sprache ist der persönliche, individuelle Wohnort des Menschen” / “language is the most private, individual residence of a person” (qtd. in Wierschke 1: 187; my translation). Özdamar’s woman narrator, too, expresses the loss of this “most private, individual residence” - the grandfather tongue Arabic - as a very painful experience. In 1927, Atatürk’s war of liberation – in a move towards westernisation - prohibited the Arabic alphabet and thus deprived her of the grandfather tongue:

Ich habe zu Atatürk-Todestagen schreiend Gedichte gelesen und geweint, aber er hätte die arabische Schrift nicht verbieten müssen. Dieses Verbot ist so, wie wenn die Hälfte von meinem Kopf abgeschnitten ist. (Mutterzunge 29)

I screamed out poems on the anniversaries of Atatürk’s death and wept, but he should not have forbidden the Arabic writing. This ban, it’s as though half of my head had been cut off. (Mothertongue 33-34)

The introduction of the Latin alphabet brought about a drastic break not only with Turkey's history and cultural tradition but also with familial traditions. The narrator realises that if she and her grandfather were mute they could not communicate, because she knows only the Latin and he the Arabic alphabet (Mutterzunge 14; Mothertongue 15).

In Philip's case, the prohibition of the mother tongue shows even more radical consequences: it is impossible for her (as it is for many Afrosporics) to trace back her exact cultural and lingual African ancestry (Carey 19). With her quotation of the Pentecost story from the Bible in "She Tries Her Tongue" (91), Philip exhibits God's fundamental promise of a world of linguistic heterogeneity. In the same poem, she contrasts White patriarchal religion with the Pentecost Bible passage (91, 94-95) and thus attacks the colonising forces in western religion that forbade and silenced the Afrosporic's mother tongue and culture. In the interview with Carey, she wonders where to position herself as an Afrosporic woman writer (19). The answer she gives does not manifest a kind of geographic-national positioning but one that is "in the residue of languages that have left their impress tonally and kinetically on English" (19). Hence, Philip establishes her belonging or "home" in language, in the heteroglossia in-between english and English. In the introduction to She Tries Her Tongue, she tells her readers that "[t]he excitement for me as a writer comes in the confrontation between the formal and the demotic within the text itself" (18). Using the phrase "*continuum of expression* from standard to Caribbean English" (18), she refers to the concept

of the Creole continuum, which has its origins in the critical works of Caribbean writers such as E.K. Brathwaite – who developed the idea of Creolisation as a “cross-cultural time-space dynamic” (147) – and Wilson Harris with his syncretic vision (149-154).<sup>5</sup> Philip is definitely aware of and influenced by these concepts in the creation of her “new” language in-between English and english. Evidently, her works also include elements of what Bhabha has termed cultural hybridity, which is closely related to Brathwaite’s and Harris’ studies of Caribbean culture and language.<sup>6</sup>

Özdamar also connects the immigrant’s process of identification to the translingual space in-between mother and father tongue (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 227, 266). In the interview with Horrocks and Kolinsky she declares that she simultaneously lives and writes in the Turkish and in the German language; to her, writing always means a search for identity in-between languages and cultures (50). Though she writes in German in the Mothertongue collection, she does not follow the linguistic and stylistic conventions and rules of the language, which she intersperses with Turkish-Arabic words, grammatical structures, syntax, rhythm, and literal translations. Her texts are German and still not “really” or “purely” German; they intimate the feeling of alienness – or as Özdamar would say Überfremdung – in a double sense. Firstly, they alienate the conventional German reader by breaking with her/his linguistic expectations, and secondly, they express the Turkish German characters’ and Özdamar’s own

marginalisation within, and thus alienness from, the German standard, the lingual encoder of dominant German society and culture:

Die anderen hörten ihm zu, wollten ihn trösten. Eigentlich hatte jeder einen Kummer. Und sie fingen an, aus der Traurigkeit mit irgendwelchen Gegenständen und Musikinstrumenten zu musizieren, und dabei tauschten sie ihre Hüte, dichteten über Alamania mit sehr falsch gesprochenem Deutsch, und so überlebten sie ihre Traurigkeit. (Mutterzunge 79).

The others listened to him, wanted to console him. Actually each had his own worries. And they began, out of sadness, with anything at hand, to make music. And they exchanged their hats, and started to compose poems about Alamania in very incorrect German. And in this way, they overcame their sadness. (Mothertongue 98-99)

As the quotation shows, it is the “very incorrect German” – the guest workers’ own hybrid language at the intersections of Turkish, Arabic and German – which joins them in solidarity and helps them overcome their feelings of sadness and Überfremdung/ alienness. In both the interview with Horrocks and Kolinsky and in the Die Zeit article, Özdamar tells about a similar occurrence when she travelled to Turkey by train, which got her together with guest workers from many different countries and made her realise that German – however not standard German – was the only common language of the group of multi-ethnic, multi-lingual Gastarbeiter (Horrocks and Kolinsky 47; Horrocks and Krause 58). She recalls that this experience considerably changed her notion of the guest worker’s or immigrant’s language and identity:

They made mistakes, of course, but the German they spoke was devoid of clichés, and came out almost like poetry as they struggled to express the images of their mother tongues in this new language...If I wanted to write a play about their experience, and I did [Karagöz], I knew it would have to be written in this new

language...and the mistakes we made in the German language were us. All we had were our mistakes. (Horrocks and Kolinsky 47; Horrocks and Krause 58)

In this passage, she consciously re-values the connotation of the term “mistake,” which she no longer uses in its negative sense but as a creative variation of or deviation from compulsory conventions. In the interview with Wierschke, she characterises the guest workers’ linguistic “mistakes” as “unsere Identität” / “our identity” (Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 227; my translation). The speakers of this heteroglossia transform standard German according to their own needs; they mix Turkish with German in order to give expression to their experiences in the host country:

Ein gestandener Gastarbeiter sprach: ‘Sonra Dolmetscher geldi. Meisterle konustu. Bu Lohn steuer kaybetmis dedi. Finanzamt cok fena dedi. Lohnsteuer Yok. Aufenthalt da yok, Fremdpolizei vermiyor. Wohnungsamt da yok diyor. Arbeitsamt da Erlaubnis vermedi...’ (Mutterzunge 77)

An upright guest worker said: ‘Sonra interpreter geldi. Formanle konustu. Bu income tax kaybetmis dedi. Tax office cok fena dedi. Income tax Yok. Residence da yok. Immigration police vermiyor. Housing office da yok diyor. Employment office da permit vermedi...’ (Mothertongue 96)<sup>7</sup>

German words are interspersed in the mother tongue in order to name concepts and institutions that are specifically German and thus cannot be named in the Turkish language. The heteroglossia that emerges from this blend poses a problem for both originary speakers of German and of Turkish. It is created by and tailored to the context of those living in-between languages and cultures, those who “sew their Turkish clothes out of German materials” / “aus deutschen Stoffen ihre türkischen Kleider nähen” Mothertongue 115; Mutterzunge 92).

Like Özdamar, Philip is constrained by and still overcomes the boundaries of the imposed father tongue, English. In “Testimony Stoops to Mother Tongue” (81-82), she describes her writing position of forced complicity from which she not only uses but also abuses or appropriates the words and images of the father tongue:

I shall  
 lie  
     with them  
     bed them with silence  
 these snakes  
             wisdomed  
 with the evil  
             of words  
 to breed the again and  
 again  
     in breed  
 - an new breed  
 - a race  
 - a warrior race  
             of words  
 - a nest-egg  
             that waits  
 to hatch the ever  
             in wait  
 .....  
     in my mother's mouth  
     shall I  
         use  
 the father's tongue  
 cohabit in strange  
 mother  
     incestuous words  
     to revenge the self  
                     broken  
 upon  
 the word

In her approach of a possible space in-between English and english, Philip demands from the Caribbean writer that “much more must now be attempted” (She Tries Her Tongue 19) than nation language, the language of the Caribbean people, does. She calls for a “deeper patterning...of my language, the Caribbean demotic” and sees the big challenge for the writer in “find[ing] the literary form of the demotic language” (23), which she shapes in the form of a hybrid language continuum. Her call is radical insofar as she relies on the necessity of dislocating or even destroying familiar language (19). Her notion of a translinguistic process recalls Pratt’s idea of transculturation as “a phenomenon of the contact zone” (Pratt in Key Concepts 233). In Philip’s translinguistic contact zones, languages and voices collide in equally conflictual ways as cultures do in Pratt’s; Philip uses the provocative, sexual imagery of “linguistic rape and subsequent forced marriage between African and English tongues” (She Tries Her Tongue 23). In her poem “The Question of Language is the Answer to Power” (70-75), she refers to Lewis Carroll’s novel Alice in Wonderland – a text that also plays with the idea of creating or inventing one’s own language – in order to demonstrate the insurgent, subversive power of such an inventive process:

‘Banish the word  
Off with its head -  
The word is dead  
The word is risen  
Long live the word!’ (75)





In “Discourse on the Logic of Language,” Philip subtly and playfully slips into her continuum by code switching between a kind of unruly babble and correct uses of English. Stuttering syllables into words and words into unusual part-rhymes, she performs the poem’s meaning, which is to unname, uninvent or even destroy the standard English word in order to “release the disguised experience, the colonial pain hidden beneath” (Kaup 182):

tongue mother  
 tongue me  
 mothertongue me  
 mother me  
 touch me  
 with the tongue of your  
 lan lan lan  
 language  
 l/anguish  
 anguish  
 english  
 is a foreign anguish (She Tries Her Tongue 58)

The word “English” itself is grammatically declined as a mother tongue and a father tongue, “a foreign anguish” (56), and thus unnamed right at the beginning of the poem. As argued in the second chapter of this thesis, it is an adventure for the speaker of conventional English – I would even say an intended challenge – to read this “English” poem out loud, since the standard code is thoroughly stirred with unfamiliar African Caribbean rhythm, sound and babble, sonority and timbre. One not only stumbles over words rendered alien and pliable but also gets muddled and confused by the unconventional rhythm of pausing and juncture. Capturing the oral-vocal quality of the mother tongue, Philip manifests in “Lessons for the Voice: Facts to Remember” (a prose element of the poem “The

Question of Language is the Answer to Power”) that “the sound is there to back the word” and that “[i]ntention, sound and word together produce clarity” (She Tries Her Tongue 72). In her analysis on the “métissage of styles” in Philip’s She Tries Her Tongue, Carr calls attention to the fact that the oral-vocal and the written are not binaristic but reciprocal in the poems (Carr 87). Philip re-values the spoken and musical quality of the mother tongue within the written context (Carr 87). The customary and regular patterns of English speech are fractured as they are interspersed with the flexibility and tonality of the African Caribbean oral speech.

That her new hybrid tongue is not static and regimented – like English – but flexible and fluid – like english – is brilliantly demonstrated in “Discourse on the Logic of Language.” In this poem, the narrator stumbles over the inflexible, harsh English words, repeats and inverts them, and finally transforms them in a witty process of “declension” and re-inventing. She creates an inseparable blur, a gibberish between mother and father tongues that is “soft / plastic / pliable” (71, 22). As Godard argues, Philip decentres and appropriates standard English through a “polydialectal jamming of its codes” (152), which makes for her “syncretic inventiveness” (174). Özdamar, too, disrupts the alleged homogeneity of the father tongue by imbuing and diversifying it with her “defective,” hybrid German voice, which – as she points out to Wierschke – has changed a lot since she first immigrated (Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 267). She continually code-switches between German, Turkish and Arabic until they become inseparable and

indistinguishable. Wierschke notices that it is impossible to concretise the Fremde, which means the alienness in Özdamar's language (Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 164-165). Seen in the context of Kristeva's observations on the hidden strangeness in ourselves that we tend to project on the "Other" (first chapter 28-29), Wierschke's statement reveals that it is not only das Fremde / the strange or alien in Özdamar's heteroglossia but that in our own "selves" and in our own culturally and socially conditioned perception of "Otherness" that produces an unconscious, intricate alienness in Özdamar's usage of hybrid German.

In her discussion of the Mothertongue stories, Seyhan characterises Özdamar as a "modern Turkish Scheherazade" who – as the title of the The Thousand and One Nights tales implies - creates a heteroglossia that demonstrates "the boundless mobility and resilience of languages in dialogue" ("Scheherazade's Daughters" 247). With the very first sentences of "Mutter Zunge" / "Mother Tongue" – the first story of the Mothertongue collection – Özdamar underlines the "latitude given to language; its acrobatic skill of expression, and its infinite possibilities of articulation and transaction" (Seyhan, "Scheherazade's Daughters" 244; Wierschke, "Auf den Schnittstellen kultureller Grenzen tanzend" 188, 190): "In meiner Sprache heißt Zunge: Sprache. Zunge hat keine Knochen, wohin man sie dreht, dreht sie sich dorthin" / "In my language, 'tongue' means 'language.' A tongue has no bones: twist it in any direction and it will turn that way" (Mutterzunge 9; Mothertongue 9). As Seyhan imparts in "Scheherazade's

Daughters,” the quotation above actually is the literal translation of the Turkish idiom “dili dönmek” meaning that someone is capable to pronounce or articulate something (244). Significantly, Özdamar’s woman narrator in this initial passage sits in a Berlin café “with [her] twisted tongue” / “mit [ihrer] gedrehten Zunge” (Mothertongue 9; Mutterzunge 9). Depicting her attempt to find access to the mother tongue by way of the grandfather tongue, the narrator, in the fashion of a Scheherazade storyteller, constantly cross-weaves the oral and the written with her “twisted tongue” (for instance: Mutterzunge 20-21, 33-35, 37-39; Mothertongue 23-24, 39-40, 43-45):

Ich erinnere mich jetzt an Muttersätze, die sie in ihrer Mutterzunge gesagt hat, nur dann, wenn ich ihre Stimme mir vorstelle, die Sätze selbst kamen in meine Ohren wie eine von mir gut gelernte Fremdsprache. (Mutterzunge 9)

I can remember sentences now, sentences she said in her mother tongue, except that when I imagine her voice, the sentences themselves sound in my ears like a foreign language I know well. (Mothertongue 9-10)

In several passages, Özdamar lists the words that the woman narrator remembers in the grandfather tongue (Mutterzunge 29, 39, 41, 46; Mothertongue 34, 45-46, 48, 54-55). Put together these words make multiple stories; it is the reader’s turn to fill the gaps in-between the single words, to be a storyteller in-between languages, cultures, places and histories.

By literally translating Turkish and Arabic proverbs and wisdoms – which are highly metaphorical expressions – Özdamar plays with the languages (Turkish, Arabic and German) that shape her being and belonging. According to Seyhan, this “playing field of language games...constitute[s] the structure where

interaction, contestation, combat, reconciliation, [and] healing” between lingual-cultural differences takes place (“Scheherazade’s Daughters” 245). Özdamar wittily tests cultural boundaries through language; the “foreign” and the “common” playfully blur in the course of trans-lingual and trans-metaphorical processes. The following Arabic and Turkish images translated by Ibni Abdullah and the narrator in “Grandfather Tongue” bear quintessential, transcultural messages:

Ibni Abdullah sagte: ‘Der Tod ist ein schwarzes Kamel, es setzt sich vor jeder Tür nieder.’ Ich sagte: ‘Ist der Tod an einem weiten Ort, der Tod ist zwischen Augen und Augenbrauen.’ (Mutterzunge 16)

Ibni Abdullah said: ‘Death is a black camel, it sits down in front of every door.’ I said: ‘Is death in a far-off place, death is between the eyes and eye-brows.’ (Mothertongue 19)<sup>8</sup>

Like Philip’s heteroglossic prose-poems, Özdamar’s prose-dramas often deny translatability in words: the literal and the figural are no longer distinguishable. Both writers alienate or, in Özdamar’s terms, überfremden lingual conventions and instead suggest a translation at the levels of history, culture, ethnicity, religion, and politics. To them, learning or translating culturally involves what the donkey of the Karagöz story ironically preaches in a moment of complete drunkenness: “daß wir sie [Menschen anderer Muttersprachen] nicht nur hören, sondern auch verstehen, was sie sagen” / “that we don’t just hear them [people speaking another language], but that we all understand what they are saying” (Mutterzunge 71; Mothertongue 88-89). As Seyhan and Godard observe respectively, Özdamar and Philip envision other possible systems of signification

than the conventional ones of a German and English standard, which have displaced and thus fragmented and silenced their mother tongues (Seyhan, “Scheherazade’s Daughters” 246; Godard 151-52, 174-175). In their resistance against the colonising forces of the father tongue, they both attempt to create their own languages in which signifiers/words and traditional images of the mother culture<sup>9</sup> have not lost the ability of signification but are full of meaning(s).

Philip’s strategy of language resistance in She Tries Her Tongue is outspoken and insurgent. She seeks to “attack” standard English at the very heart or essence of language, which she describes as “the i-mage and the simultaneous naming of it” (She Tries Her Tongue 19).<sup>10</sup> In “Testimony Stoops to Mother Tongue” she reclaims i-mage and word, suppressed by dominant discourse, in order to re-make the Black woman’s/man’s body. By invoking words that make the Black body ugly, she disrupts the images behind the father tongue and thus rescues them from their contaminated, racist infiltration:

the confusion of centuries that passes  
as the word  
    kinks hair  
    flattens nose  
    thickens lips  
    designs prognathous jaws  
    shrinks the brain  
to unleash the promise  
                                in ugly  
the absent in image. (She Tries Her Tongue 78)<sup>11</sup>

She re-connects the interrupted relation of signifier/word and referent/i-mage and thus re-gains signification and consequently the voice or mother tongue that had been displaced and muted by dominant discourse. Simultaneously repeating and

displacing western images of the Black woman, Philip succeeds in breaking open the unexamined category of racist, sexist discourse, a strategy Chambers perceives capable of making the unexamined norm discernible and thus subject to criticism and transformation.

Özdamar also reclaims the guest worker's/immigrant's culturally grounded "i-mage and word." Though she does not use the unconventional spelling "i-mage" that Philip does, the way the latter explains the "i-mage" (footnote ten of this chapter) well describes the important role Özdamar attributes to the guest worker's or immigrant's images and imagination. By means of the Karagöz-farmer's fate, she cautions against the dilemma that can result from the loss of one's personal connection between i-mage and mother tongue. As a result of his all too ready acculturation to western – especially capitalist – thought, the farmer loses touch with his cultural-lingual roots. At the end of the story, the donkey's metaphorical Turkish-Arabic wisdoms have become insignificant and incomprehensible to him; he blames the animal for braying beyond his understanding (Mutterzunge 101; Mothertongue 126-127). Like Philip, Özdamar offers and promotes the hybrid space in-between languages as the one that reconciles the asymmetries between dominant images and the immigrant's individual i-images that are formed of a mix of Turkish, Arabic and German elements. Her objective of lingual-imaginative reconciliation becomes particularly evident in the anecdote of the train journey (this chapter 139-141) in which guest workers of diverse ethnic-cultural backgrounds communicate in their only

common tongue, German. Yet, each guest worker simultaneously talks in German and in the i-mages of her/his own language. The result is a translingual and consequently transcultural encounter.

\* \* \*

each word creates a centre  
circumscribed by memory...and history  
waits at rest always  
still at the centre (She Tries Her Tongue 96)

Recovering and wording their imaginative sources, Philip's and Özdamar's narrators go through the essential process of remembering and recontextualisation. Therewith, they form a counter-weight to the colonialist fragmentation and re-interpretation of the memory of the colonised (Le Goff 68). "To make themselves the master of memory and forgetfulness," writes the French critic Jacques Le Goff, "is one of the great preoccupations of classes, groups, and individuals who have dominated and continue to dominate historical societies" (54). Philip and Özdamar present the loss of one's memory/past and the muteness of one's voice as inseparably interdependent processes conditioned by cultural-lingual oppression. Philip describes this connectedness in She Tries Her Tongue:

seek search and uproot  
the forget and remember of root words  
uncharged  
                  pathways electric with the exposed lie  
circuits of dead  
                  currents of still  
                                  words  
synapses of unuse and gone  
                                  words... (86)



Remembering and tracing back their histories and mother tongues, both writers resist the dominant western culture with its strategy of substituted memory. In “She Tries Her Tongue,” Philip points out that it is memory which makes us human, which is essential to human survival (87). It is this human quality that is lost through the colonial experience and must be re-claimed in the dynamics of remembering, i-magination and word. Both She Tries Her Tongue and Mutterzunge depict processes of “rememory” – a term Toni Morrison coined to describe the “active revisioning of history and mythology to parallel and counter the myths of [non-White] inferiority” (Guttman 53) – which are first initiated by dream sequences of the mother and mother tongue before they become deliberate actions. (She Tries Her Tongue 32-34; Mutterzunge 12-13).

Uprooted from any sense of originary territory, Philip’s and Özdamar’s search for an origin, a past, a history inevitably leads them to the creation of a language continuum that can bridge the split between the silenced language of the “self” – the lost ancestry, the mother tongue – and the language of the “Other within” – dominant culture, the father tongue – which though vocal can only describe Eurocentric images but not their own hybrid i-mages. In the introduction to her poetry collection, Philip declares that the challenge is “to use the language in such a way that the historical realities are not erased or obliterated, so that English is revealed as the tainted tongue it truly is” (19).<sup>12</sup> She closes her introductory essay appealing to Black female writers to “recreate our histories and our myths, as well as integrate that most painful of our experiences – loss of our

history and our word” (25). Özdamar also connects language, memory, and images in her works. Asked by Wierschke about her means of self-identification in Germany she replies that “In-die-Vergangenheit-gehen” (which can be translated as “returning to or remembering one’s past”) is essential for her search of selfhood (Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 254). She compares the process of searching to a private archaeological dig in one’s history and memory. Her woman narrator on the quest for the mother and grandfather tongues, for words with a history or “childhood,” realises: “Ich habe mich in meinen Großvater verliebt. Die Wörter, die ich die Liebe zu fassen gesucht habe, hatten alle ihre Kindheit” / “I had fallen in love with my grandfather. The words, whose love I tried to grasp, all had their childhood” (Mutterzunge 46; Mothertongue 54). For the narrator, the Arabic influences in the Turkish language are inseparably related to her love for the grandfather, which finds expression in her fascination with the Arabic language. Seyhan reads “Grandfather Tongue” as a threefold love story (that of the grandfather and the grandchild, of the Turkish-German woman narrator and Ibni Abdullah, and of the muted narrator and languages) in which the old and the new, the religious and the secular-carnal, the Arabic and the Turkish, the Arabic-Turkish and German, the feminist and the patriarchal clash and compose new hybrid forms (“Scheherazade’s Daughters” 245).

In A Genealogy of Resistance, Philip explains the important role language plays in the process of rememory by emphasising its political dimension; she asserts that “an engagement with language is always concerned with power...and

thus with the political” (130). “Universal Grammar” exposes the grammatical method of parsing – “the exercise of telling the part of speech of each word in a sentence (Latin, *pars*, a part)” (*She Tries Her Tongue* 62) – as a colonial strategy of mutilating and thus erasing the Afrosporic’s self-determining and insurgent potential inherent in active memory. In the course of the prose-poem, the grammatical definition is de-universalised and re-located within the colonial context in which it is re-defined as “the exercise of dis-membering language into fragmentary cells that forget to re-member” (*She Tries Her Tongue* 66). The poem sequence that accompanies and enforces the subversive re-contextualisation of “parsing” makes extensive use of the colonial strategy it sets out to disrupt. Carr observes that Philip’s strategy of turning western discourse against itself resonates with “sass,” a sharp-tongued, explosive back talk, and “inversion,” which are both common practices of Afrosporic expressive culture (Carr 80, 83). The sentence “The tall, blond, blue-eyed, white-skinned man is shooting...” (67) is fragmented or parsed until “the smallest cell remembers” (67) the colonial and neo-colonial experience. The phrase “the smallest cell remembers,” too, is parsed (62) in order to open it for recombination and rememory in the text in which “[r]e-membered fragments become whole” (64):

fragments  
                   brief  
                   as Sappho’s  
 tremble of tongue on the brink of  
 ex/  
                   (*when the passage of sound is completely  
                   blocked a consonant is called*)  
 plosive

tongue on the brink of  
 ex/  
     *(prefix – occurring only before vowels)*  
 odus  
 orcize  
 on the brink of  
 ex/  
     *(to strip or peel off (the skin) 1547)*  
 coriate  
*The tall, blond, blue-eyed, white-skinned man is shooting*  
 tongue trembles  
 on the again and again  
 of forget  
 .....  
 when the smallest cell remembers – (She Tries Her Tongue  
 65, 67)

For Philip and Özdamar the language continuum simultaneously works as a method of renewal and a link to a historical past. Philip's narrator begins to shape and utter her new words/language "floundering in the old" (She Tries Her Tongue 71), and the narrator in Özdamar's first two stories views Ibni Abdullah as a mediator between her past – her grandfather (tongue) - and her present situation, which is that of a German Turkish woman in search of the lost mother tongue. Bhabha values the position in-between cultures (a position Philip's and Özdamar's characters take) as the potential space of simultaneously renewing the past – "refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space" – and innovating the performance of the present (The Location of Culture 7). In the writings discussed here, Özdamar and Philip re-tell a history and depict a present that is more appropriate to their memories and i-mages than the one on offer from dominant discourse. Monika Fischer points to the fact that for minorities living in a dominant society history "starts in the present and takes two paths back: one to

the past of the minority's mother-country, the other to the past of the dominant society s/he lives in" (48). Reminiscent of Scheherazade's The Thousand and One Nights, the ethnic minority writers Özdamar and Philip are on the endless search for their history in the hybrid, multicultural and multilingual space (Seyhan, "Scheherazade's Daughters" 231). In the interview with Wierschke, Özdamar compares her search to the fairytale story of Hänsel and Gretel: like them, she will never find the pieces of bread that could show her the way home because they have been eaten by the birds (Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 269-270). With the help of this metaphorical comparison she tells us that there is no such thing as a return to the "authentic" homeland. For the emigrant, it is rather a matter of – as she says – "Sich-auf-den-Weg-machen" (270), of setting out to find. That is exactly what she does in Mutterzunge. The act of writing in the heteroglossic continuum provides a sense of "home" or belonging for Philip as a diasporic subject, too. In the introduction to She Tries Her Tongue, she asks herself if she will recognise this tongue when she finds it or if it is "rather a matter of developing it rather than finding it" (24). She thus signals that the process of shaping a language, a self, a place, and a memory is always incomplete and provisional.

Philip and Özdamar both reject the nostalgic notion that the immigrant's rememory leads her/him to the lost and idealised homeland (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 254; Bucknor 17). In She Tries Her Tongue and Mutterzunge, they respectively supplant the assumption of a nostalgic memory by

that of a subversive memory, which gives impetus “to build on what individual cultures have passed on, in the possibility of creating something new” (Philip, Frontiers 116-117). In “Discourse on the Logic of Language,” the passing on of a pure mother tongue from mother to daughter is not meant as an evocation of an authentic, ancestral language – which has been forever erased by colonial history – but as a remembering and recontextualisation of i-mages that are essential for the creation of a new tongue or voice. The birth and tonguing of the girl can be read as an allegory of the breaking of silence and re-connecting of signifier and signified through memory and body. Özdamar also chooses the alternative third space of heteroglossic writing and willed, subversive memory. In the Mothertongue stories, she resists the temptation for nostalgia by means of a parodic re-interpretation of i-image, word and history. As Khalil argues, she fulfills the expectation of her western audience insofar as she remembers and retells fragments from her home culture and language (Khalil 123). Yet, her rememory does not reproduce an authentic account of the Orient (which would reduce her writing and memory to the cliché of the Oriental storyteller) but creates the hybrid space in which she constructs her own fluid, diasporic identity and more generally that of the immigrant in Germany (Khalil 123). In his discussion of the politics of language performativity, Walcott refers to Edward K. Brathwaite’s image of the diasporic writer’s “fluid/tidal” language (Walcott 113), which challenges and displaces an understanding of languages that is based on origins and foundations. Influenced by Brathwaite, Walcott constructs diasporic

languages as fluid/tidal, hybrid performances (102). For Philip, who perceives herself as a multiply displaced, diasporic writer (A Genealogy of Resistance 59), the quest for place and belonging is a quest for the lost mother tongue: “place for the poet from the Caribbean must include language, and how the poet attempts to solve the dilemma of language” (62). Emphasising the rootedness of place in language in her recent essay collection A Genealogy of Resistance (62, 65, 70), Philip – probably unwittingly – opens a potential alternative to cope with the problematic nature underlying spatial discourse (Introduction of this thesis), an alternative that is worth further critical acknowledgment and consideration.

Connecting language, place and memory, Özdamar recalls a statement made by Jean-Luc Godard:

In order to be creative, he said, you needed to leave your native country, indeed to betray it, and then you could be in two places simultaneously...On the one hand you have the experience of your everyday existence in the new land...on the other hand you have sudden memories of the land you came from. But the whole thing runs like a simultaneous film in which images and yearnings merge... (Horrocks and Kolinsky 53-54)

That this process of hybridisation is not always smooth but rather tough and painful becomes evident in the narrator’s search in “Mother Tongue” and “Grandfather Tongue.” Initiating her search for the beloved grandfather tongue in Ibni Abdullah’s study, the narrator feels like

ein neugeborener nasser Vogel, der sehr große Geduld haben mußte...Geflogen aus meinem Land, ich war auf den Autobahnen am Rande der XY-ungelöst-Städte. (Mutterzunge 27)

a newborn wet bird that must show a great deal of patience...Flown from my mother country, I was on the highways on the edge of the XY-unsolved-cities. (Mothertongue 31)<sup>13</sup>

The study turns into a prison; her love for the grandfather (tongue) and Ibni Abdullah imprisons her and leaves her speechless: “ich habe kein Wörterbuch gefunden für die Sprache meiner Liebe” / “I have found no dictionary for the language of my love” (Mutterzunge 32; Mothertongue 37). With this story sequence, Özdamar evidently cautions against the dangers that come with the search for and the rememory of one’s past/history and the mother or grandfather tongue.<sup>14</sup>

\* \* \*

I experienced [the German] language as it were bodily, either by speaking lines myself or hearing them from the bodies of fellow actors. You could almost say that words themselves have bodies. (Özdamar in interview with Horrocks and Kolinsky 47)

[B]ody, text, history, and memory – the body with its remembered and forgotten texts is of supreme importance in both the larger History and the little histories of the Caribbean. I believe this to be one of the reasons why the body erupted so forcibly and with such violence in the text of She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks. (Philip, “Managing the Unmanageable” 298-299).

One of the major anti-colonial liberationists, Frantz Fanon, perceives the body is an essential constituent in the fight against colonial oppression. He observes that the non-White colonised subject has a heightened level of bodily self-consciousness, since it is through the body – and skin – that s/he can be most directly “Othered.” The body becomes the inescapable, visible sign of her/his oppression and denigration (qtd. in Ashcroft et al, The Post-colonial Studies Reader 321). Fanon thus explores a paradox in the body-power relation between coloniser and colonised: On the one hand, the non-White, colonised body is



abused as an object of colonial power and, on the other hand, it becomes a central instrument of anti-colonial resistance against “the Eurocentric and logocentric emphasis” (qtd. in Ashcroft et al, The Post-colonial Studies Reader 321). In her analysis of the materiality of language in Philip’s She Tries Her Tongue, Carr extends Fanon’s notion of body-resistance by adding the components of memory, history, materiality, and feminism (she calls the latter a particularly body-relevant theory). Carr argues that Philip’s embodied memory acts as a resistance strategy against man-made, textualised hegemony; through it the body’s history is activated and the Afrosporic woman’s past becomes accountable (Carr 75-76, 84; Ashcroft et al, The Empire Writes Back 176). In her critical essay “Managing the Unmanageable,” Philip herself theorises the female African body in the diaspora as a memory-store, a space of resistance:

When the African came to the New World she brought with her nothing but her body and all the memory and history which her body could contain. The text of her history and memory was inscribed upon and within the body which would become the repository of all the tools necessary for spiritual and cultural survival. (298)

The Afrosporic woman resists her complete domination by western colonial discourse with the help of the resistant body, which stores memory, remembers image and word (signification), and thus evades being fully subjugated (Philip, “Managing the Unmanageable” 298). Taking up Carr’s and Philip’s arguments (which finds support in the discussions of Hunter and Godard) Bucknor develops the concept of “body-memory, [which] -- as a complex process of negotiations between cultures and texts -- provides a way of maintaining a relationship

between the material and the mental, subjectivity and discourse, bodies and texts” (Bucknor 38, 111). “Body-memory” challenges the Cartesian split between body and mind (Bucknor 38), a split Carr relates to as the “disembodied and anti-body formations that dominate Western culture from Platonic idealism to Enlightenment rationalism to post-structuralist textism” (Carr 88, 74; Godard 162).

Philip’s “body-memory” performs the resistant female body as corporeal memory and language. In “Facts to Live By and Die,” Philip gives proof of the interdependence of body and mind by ironically using western physiological-medical knowledge against its own claim of separation. Performing and thus re-writing western scientific discourse, she states that: “The cerebral cortex is the storehouse of our memory – it makes us human” (She Tries Her Tongue 87). The poem “Universal Grammar” – which performs the female body in both its refusal to remember dominant western history and language, and its ability to re-member the personal history and mother tongue – exhibits *re-membering* as a necessary strategy to *dis-member* dominant discourse, a process Bucknor calls the “interplay of recall and re-formation” (44). Linguistic-colonial parsing or dis-membering of the mother tongue, memory, and past is disrupted through “body-memory”:

the smallest cell  
    remembers  
                          a sound ...  
                          a secret order  
                          among syllables  
    Leg/ba  
    O/shun  
    Shan/go

heart races  
blood pounds  
remembers

speech (She Tries Her Tongue 63)

In the introduction to She Tries Her Tongue and the collection of critical essays A Genealogy of Resistance, Philip points out that for her – as a female writer – the place of poetry is most profoundly in the body: “the making of poetry, the making of words...as I happen to believe, ‘begins in the body and ends in the body’” (She Tries Her Tongue 24; A Genealogy of Resistance 71).<sup>15</sup> She stresses that “this eruption of the body into the text” (She Tries Her Tongue 24) has its roots in the oral performative tradition in Caribbean aesthetic culture. Her poetics is a poetics of “movin’ and kinetics,” of “kinopoesis,” in which the new language in-between E/english is created in and performed as a dynamic process of “body-memory” that moves in-between the written and the oral-performative (A Genealogy of Resistance 131, 203; She Tries Her Tongue 23). The cyclamen girl remembers her African heritage through the transformative power of the body reacting to the African “Rhythm! Song! Drum!” (42). Memory finds expression in the female speaker’s return to the lost mother tongue, the “tongue” thereby mediating the corporeality of language. Excised, the tongue comes to signify the Afrosporic’s painful experience of language loss and muteness in the historical Edict II of “Discourse on the Logic of Language” (58). Yet, the mythical mother-daughter story that, on the same page, frames the opposite side of the poem sequence depicts the highly sensuous process of overcoming muteness or barrenness by a re-integration of body and voice. Immediately after giving birth to

her daughter, the mother tongues the child all over until it is cleaned of “the creamy *white* substance covering its body” (56; my stress). Within the context of colonisation the “*white*” albumen or placenta becomes an allegory of the White colonial power the girl is cleansed of by the mother in order to make her “viable,” to make it possible for her to live her new life. Then “touch[ing] her tongue to the child’s tongue” (58), the mother passes on the female language of her ancestors. Both the disruption of “*white*” colonial influence and the handing on of the mother tongue and culture are profound bodily processes. The multiple-choice questions (that actually are none since the choices they offer are no choices but complex, interrelated elements) accompanying the page with the mythical story and Edict II, display the embodied, material quality of both the mother and the father tongue in an ironic play of inversion. The first “multiple-choice” set describes both the tongue and the penis as a “tapering, blunt-tipped, muscular, soft and fleshy organ” (59). In this penis-tongue equation, the tongue stands for the father tongue, “(c) the principal organ of oppression and exploitation” (59). Yet, at the same time, it also incorporates the resistant mother tongue, “(b) the principle organ of articulate speech” that metamorphoses “from sound to intelligible word [which] requires (a) the lip, tongue and jaw all working together” (59).

A discussion of Philip’s strategies of “body-memory” within the nexus of race-gender reveals that, throughout *She Tries Her Tongue*, it is the mother or the female speaker who endeavours to re-embody and preserve the African past, history, memory, and language. Significantly, the collection is dedicated to “all the

mothers.” Asked by Carey about the distorted positioning of the mythical mother-daughter story in “Discourse on the Logic of Language,” Philip argues that it symbolises the way “Black women, and all women, have been positioned in society: there is a gap between the main text and the woman’s story, and to read the woman’s story you have to make an effort – a physical effort” (20). In addition, she explains that, with the physical spaciousness of her poems in She Tries Her Tongue, she for the first time fulfilled her desire to take up the physical space on the page refused to the woman writer (Carey 21; Williamson 239). As she points out to Carey and Williamson, the final objective of this effort is the disruption of the traditional, man-made spatial order which allows women to take up space physically only when they are pregnant (Carey 21; Williamson 239). Philip thus re-affirms the relevance of the Black female body in the process of rememory and writerly resistance against dominant western discourse. Yet, the way her “body-memory” works on the intersecting levels of race and gender in She Tries Her Tongue again bears the danger of racialisation and biological-cultural essentialism that has already been discussed within the context of her artistic presence as an ethnic minority writer in Canada (second chapter 118-120). By racialising and, moreover, genderising the female speaker’s “body-memory,” Philip promotes a binary of non-White, female corporeality and White, male discursivity. Carr’s analysis of the material-bodily quality of language and form in She Tries Her Tongue also draws attention to this binary and the risk it holds. According to Carr, Philip’s “fetishizing [of] the black woman as a sign of ‘re-embodiment’” tends to

reduce the non-White woman's personality to "the material, the body, and animality" (77), a positioning Philip resolutely sets out to subvert in her critical essays. The asymmetric disposition noticeable in Philip's theorising and performance of "body-memory" clearly shows the problematic nature of creating the body as an "interval at the juncture of materiality and discursivity, neither totalizable under one or the other of these mutually determining, but not homologous, categories" (Carr 77).

The satirical-burlesque approach Özdamar chooses in her performance of an embodied memory or "body-memory" in *Mutterzunge* does not consist of the racial and sexual salience that underlies Philip's conception. Özdamar's objective coincides with Philip's insofar as her writing sets out to re-constitute the vital interrelation of the material-bodily effects of language and the process of rememory, by means of which she endeavours to re-construct the culturally and lingually hybrid identity of the guest worker or immigrant living in Germany. However, as mentioned above, her tactics of achieving this aim are very different from those Philip employs: Özdamar explores the interdependencies of body, mind and language as highly complex and multi-faceted interrelations that reach across race and gender boundaries. In the "Mother Tongue" and "Grandfather Tongue" sequences, the corporeality of language and memory is not only manifested in the non-White woman narrator but also in the contextualisation and characterisation of Ibni Abdullah, the father, and the grandfather. From the perspective of the narrator – as grand-daughter, student-lover, and daughter – the

grandfather incorporates the Arabic script and language, the grandfather tongue, while the father is the keeper of the officially banned memory of the Arabic language:

‘Mein Vater stand in der Nacht auf, suchte im Radio Arabisches Radio, das Zimmer war dunkel...suchte eine arabische Stimme, wenn er sie gefunden hatte, konnte er seine Augen vom Radio nicht wegtun, vielleicht wäre die Stimme abgehauen, wenn er seine Augen nicht da festhielt...’ (Mutterzunge 28-29)

‘My father used to get up during the night, looking for Arabic programmes on the radio, the room was dark...when he found one [an Arabic voice], he could not take his eyes away from the set, perhaps the voice would have run away if he had not stared at it so intensely...’ (Mothertongue 33)<sup>16</sup>

Ibni Abdullah’s embodiment of the Arabic language evokes paradoxical feelings in the female narrator. On the one hand, he personifies the religious-Islamic, misogynist infiltration of the Arabic language, while, on the other hand, he incorporates the beloved grandfather tongue. His function as keeper of Islamic-misogynist culture and language is caricatured by means of embodied language, through which Özdamar highlights and thus challenges the separation of body and mind imposed by Islamic religion. In two passages, for instance, Özdamar ironically uses Ibni Abdullah’s body to portray the corporeality, the visual quality of the Arabic:

Ibni Abdullahs Gesicht sah wie ein zorniger Buchstabe aus, der seine eine Augenbraue hochgezogen hatte....Ibni Abdullahs Gesicht hat etwas von einem bettelnden Buchstaben, der auf Knien läuft. (Mutterzunge 19, 23)

Ibni Abdullah’s face looked like an angry letter with one raised eyebrow....Ibni Abdullah’s face looks a little like one of those letters of the alphabet that seems to be begging on its knees. (Mothertongue 22, 27)

The narrator's love for the grandfather tongue finds expression in her physical fascination with its pictographic alphabet, which she experiences and recites as highly visual and performative poetry (Mutterzunge 18; Mothertongue 20). She even attributes a bodily-human quality to the Arabic letters and words she encounters and interacts with in Ibni Abdullah's study. Letters and words are filled with life, messages, memories, i-mages and bodily substance:

Ich trat ins Schriftzimmer ein. Über den Tüchern warten die Buchstaben auf mich. Heute manche haben würdevolle Gesichter, sie hören das Rauschen ihres Herzens....die Schriften lagen auf dem Teppich, ich legte mich neben sie, die Schriften sprachen miteinander ohne Pause mit verschiedenen Stimmen, weckten die eingeschlafenen Tiere in meinem Körper....Ich saß da, schaue in die Augen von Schriften, die Schriften schauen in meine Augen. Sie nickten, als ich sage, die Liebe ist ein leichter Vogel, er setzt sich leicht irgendwo hin, aber steht schwer auf. (Mutterzunge 18, 26, 40)

I enter the study. Spread over the rugs, the letters are waiting for me. Today, some have worthy faces, listening to the murmur of their hearts...I would pull the curtain to one side, sit in this mosque with the texts laid out on the carpet, I'd lay myself down beside them, while the texts spoke to each other without pause in their different voices, woke the sleeping animals in my body...I sat there, looking into the eyes of the texts, and the texts looked back into my eyes. They nodded when I said love is a light bird, it alights gently anywhere, but takes flight heavily again. (Mothertongue 21, 30, 47)

In the interviews with Wierschke and Horrocks/Kolinsky, Özdamar mentions her own experience of learning the German language by giving the words a bodily actuality. She emphasises that her first encounter with the German father tongue was via the theatre: "I experienced language as it were bodily, either by speaking lines myself or hearing them from the bodies of fellow actors. You could almost say that words themselves have bodies" (Horrocks and Kolinsky 47; Wierschke,



Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 250-251). In the conversation with Wierschke, she recounts that the words she learned at the theatre have kept their bodily shape until today (251). She describes her experience of word-enactment as a very positive language learning practice, since it gave her the courage to speak carelessly in the new language, which was a much more difficult and painful task in “real” life (250).

As discussed in this chapter, Özdamar and her female characters of Mutterzunge experience the loss and recovery of body, voice, and memory/history as closely connected processes consisting of complex intersections and interdependencies. Embodied memory and language turn out to be the key elements of Özdamar’s satirical and playful re-appropriation of the female body and voice in dominant patriarchal discourse. The love story of the female narrator and Ibni Abdullah can be read as the story of the narrator’s bodily and lingual imprisonment and liberation. Body, voice, and love condition each other in their muteness and vocality. Ibni Abdullah’s claim for “holy love, pure love” / “heilige Liebe, reine Liebe” (Mothertongue 49; Mutterzunge 42), which means love deprived of its corporeality, not only mutes the narrator’s love but also her body and voice:

Als diese Herzstimme schwieg, fing Ibni Abdullah an zu zittern, ich konnte ihn nicht fassen, meine Hände lagen wie Buchstaben ohne Zunge auf meinen Knien....Verwahrlost, Haar gelöst, fortwimmern will ich, mit einem Blick hast du meine Zunge an deine Haare gebunden. Ich bin die Sklavin deinen Antlitzes. (Mutterzunge 24, 31-32)

When the voice of the heart fell silent, Ibni Abdullah began to tremble. I couldn’t hold him, my hands lay like tongueless letters

in my lap....Neglected, with my hair down, I want to moan, cry, but with a glance you have tied my tongue to your hair. I'm the slave of your eyes. (Mothertongue 28, 36-37)<sup>17</sup>

Challenging the patriarchal Islamic ideal of celibate love that splits body and mind, Özdamar repeatedly plays with the imagery of sickness, muteness, imprisonment, and forgetting. The narrator's reaction to Ibni Abdullah's desire for "holy" love is critical and resistant, first passively through questions and finally actively by making decisions and carrying them out:

'Wenn die Körper sich vergessen, vergessen die Seelen sich nicht?...Wie soll ich it einem schweigenden Körper laufen?...Ich geh raus aus dem Zimmer....Ich werde alle Schriftstücke zerreißen' (Mutterzunge 41, 43)

'When the body forgets, doesn't the soul forget also?...How can I walk with a silent body?...I'll leave the room....I will tear up all the pieces of writing' (Mothertongue 49, 51).

Ibni Abdullah's intention to imprison her in the study for forty days (a significant number or time span in the scriptures) in order to "purify" her body and soul ironically leads to her "purification" and liberation from Islamic patriarchal domination personified by the Arabic scholar. Ironically, the corporeal words of the latter's religious texts, "[h]is guards" / "[s]eine Wächter," (Mothertongue 51; Mutterzunge 44) help the narrator to re-member and thus re-gain her voice and body:

In der Schrift: Ein Pfeil ging aus einem Bogen raus. Da steht ein Herz, der Pfeil ging, blieb stehen im Herz...ein Vogel fliegt und verliert seine Federn über dem Weg, wo der Pfeil gegangen ist. Ich konnte nicht lernen, Ich warf jemandem den Schriftzimmerschlüssel in den Hof, er machte die Tür auf... (Mutterzunge 44)

In the scriptures: an arrow shot from a bow. There is a heart; the arrow left, stopped in the heart...a bird is flying and losing its

feathers over the path of the arrow. I couldn't study. I threw someone in the courtyard the key to the study and he opened the door.... (Mothertongue 52)<sup>18</sup>

Abdullah's warning prophecy that the scriptures will not forgive her disobedience (Mothertongue 37; Mutterzunge 32) is proven false. With her subtle distinction between the scriptures and its patriarchal interpreters (such as Ibni Abdullah), Özdamar takes a standpoint towards religious representation similar to Philip who also subtly contrasts the Bible passage of Pentecost and the Kyrie eleison of "The Book of unCommon Prayer" in the poem "She Tries Her Tongue" (this chapter 138). In addition to this affinity, it is worth noting the significant difference between the two approaches: Philip challenges the White patriarchal religion of the coloniser, while Özdamar interrogates the misogynist features in the Islamic religion of her home culture.<sup>19</sup> The difference argued here demonstrates that the object of resistance considerably depends on the resistant's historical-cultural context. While the colonised Afro-Caribbean woman's body, memory and identity have been silenced by the Christian religion of the coloniser, the Turkish-Arabic woman experiences this oppression through the home culture with its predominance of Islamic, misogynist regimentation.

In "She Tries Her Tongue," Philip's concern for the reintegration of the disembodied, muted "self" offers a way of re-membering and resistance Özdamar does not consider in her Mutterzunge stories: in Philip's poetry, the narrator's body speaks when the word is silenced. As Godard points out, "[i]t is the tongue



“tongueless wonder / blackened stump of a tongue” (She Tries Her Tongue 92) – finds expression in her poetry. Writing down her concerns and visions, she uses and at the same time abuses western textualised discourse. In the quotation above, she, for instance, refers to Ovid’s tale of Philomela, yet only to re-write it in the contemporary context of the Afrosporic woman. According to Godard, this strategy emphasises “the play and slippage...the mobility of the signifier” and consequently signification (173).

With the final tale of the tribal custom of returning to the sacred earth whatever one takes from it, Philip recalls a story from her African tradition that metaphorically signifies the holistic sense of being. In the tale “Of Women, Wisdom, Fishes and Men,” body, language, and memory/history are connected in an inseparable bond: “The oldest woman of the tribe, accompanied by the youngest girl-child, then goes down to the waters and returns the skeleton whole to its watery home. This is the way the tribe ensures future gift of winter food” (99). Özdamar also uses the strategy of returning to her Arabic history/memory in order to demonstrate holism in being. Searching Arabic words that are still part of the Turkish language, the woman narrator of “Mother Tongue” and “Grandfather Tongue” remembers:

*Leb* – Mund/mouth  
*Ducar* – Befallen/befall  
*Mazi* – Vergangenheit/past  
*Medyun* – verbunden/bound  
*Meytap* – Feuerwerkskörper/bodies of fireworks  
*Yetim* – Waise/orphan (Mutterzunge 29; Mothertongue 34)<sup>20</sup>

She is a “*yetim* – Waise/orphan” who finally finds belonging in the embodied re-memory – “*mazi, medyun, meytap*” – of the lost grandfather and mother tongues.

<sup>1</sup> The term “body-memory” is taken from Bucknor. It will be explained and then applied to the context of Philip’s and Özdamar’s writing in the following chapter.

<sup>2</sup> The Caribbean demotic or nation language, as Brathwaite terms it (Post-colonial Studies Reader 309-313), is a form of English spoken in the West Indies. In its different versions, nation language shows numerous remnants of African and European languages: “We had Europe ‘nationalizing’ itself into Spanish, French, English and Dutch so that people had to start speaking (and thinking) four metropolitan languages rather than possibly a single native language....Nation language is the language which is influenced very strongly by the African model, the African aspect of our New World/Caribbean heritage” (309, 311). Brathwaite explains that “in its contours, its rhythm and timbre, its sound explosions, it is not English, even though the words, as you hear them, might be English to a greater or lesser degree” (311). Furthermore, he clearly distances himself from the terms ‘vernacular’ or ‘dialect’ with their notions of bastardisation or degeneration of English. He stresses that nation language is a distinct language that resists the pejorative labels of ‘impurity’ and ‘inferiority.’ As an “underground language...that the slaves had brought” (310), it not only preserved its ancestral African influences but also transformed the official European languages English, French, Dutch, and Spanish (310). Philip also rejects an equation of the Caribbean demotic with “Bad English. Broken English. Patois. Dialect” (She Tries Her Tongue 17, 20). She claims that it “now bears the living linguistic legacy of a people trying and succeeding in giving voice to their experience in the best and sometimes the only way possible” (17-18). Explaining that demotic means “for the people,” she describes the Caribbean demotic as the language of, for and by the people (18). Brathwaite’s conception of nation language also is a lived, dynamic and changing phenomenon strongly influenced by its constitutive environment. Just so is his understanding of the “nation,” the Caribbean and its people and cultures, which he describes as polyvalent and fluid (Post-colonial Studies Reader 309). In The Empire Writes Back, Ashcroft et al distinguish between the standard code – English, “the language of the erstwhile imperial centre”(8) – and the linguistic code – english, the several distinctive varieties of English throughout the world (8). I will use this distinction limiting english to the Caribbean demotic relevant here.

<sup>3</sup> Although Özdamar does not use the term “father tongue” when she refers to the German standard, I will employ the term in this function, since the German standard code is to Özdamar what the English standard code – the father tongue – is to Philip: it is not their mother tongue but their vehicle of communication, their language of use. By this equation, I do not mean to attribute the gender quality to Özdamar’s usage of standard German that Philip attributes to the English standard.

<sup>4</sup> In order to find her mother tongue – Turkish – the woman narrator must first go all the way back to her grandfather tongue – Arabic. She did not only lose her mother tongue when she immigrated to Germany but, even before that, her grandfather tongue as a result of Atatürk’s war of liberation and westernisation of Turkey that forbade the Arabic alphabet in 1927. While Philip also experiences the double loss of the english and the African language, she does not make a differentiation in naming the two tongues. Her use of the term mother tongue is at times vague since it seems to refer as well to the Caribbean demotic as to the African language of the ancestors. This indistinctness might be intended to demonstrate that both languages are inseparably interrelated and thus cannot be searched for or analysed separately. For this reason, I define Philip’s mother tongue as “the Caribbean demotic with its manifold African traces” (this chapter 133 and footnote 2).

<sup>5</sup> In their works on postcolonial theories, Ashcroft et al praise the Creole continuum as “an outstanding example of a post-colonial approach to linguistics” (The Empire Writes Back 45), because its “strategies of code-switching and vernacular transcription achieve the dual result of

abrogating the Standard English and appropriating an english as a culturally significant discourse” (46).

<sup>6</sup> In Key Concepts pidgin and creole are mentioned as linguistic examples of the concept of hybridity (118). The same authors argue in another of their conjoint works, The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, that hybrid or syncretic forms emerge most strongly “where no simple possibility for asserting a pre-colonial past is available, notably in the radically dislocated culture of the West Indies” (183-184).

<sup>7</sup> I changed the original translation where I thought it to be inappropriate: A “gestandener Gastarbeiter” is not a “Gastarbeiter standing there” but an “upright Gastarbeiter.” Then I changed the order of the quoted passage so that it coincides with the German version.

<sup>8</sup> I adapted the English translation closer to the syntactical structure of the original in this quotation.

<sup>9</sup> In the interview with Williamson, Philip explains that she has never written a poem about winter because of her lack of imaginative resources to do so. She emphasises that “my imaginative life doesn’t take place here” (230); it has been formed in the Caribbean.

<sup>10</sup> Philip uses the unconventional spelling “i-mage” in order to “represent the ...deconstruction of certain words” and to draw on the “Rastafarian practice of privileging the ‘I’ in many words. ‘I-mage’ rather than ‘image’...” (12).

<sup>11</sup> Philip also employs this strategy of re-claiming the i-mage of the Black body in “Meditations on the Declension of Beauty by the Girl with the Flying Cheek-bones,” where she poses a rhetorical question that recasts and subverts the racist tropes of the Black body (53).

<sup>12</sup> In “She Tries Her Tongue,” for instance, Philip depicts the language theft done to the African diasporic people as “monstrosity / obscenity / tongueless wonder / blackened stump of a tongue / torn / out / withered / petrified / burnt / on the pyres of silence / a mother’s child foreign / made / by a tongue that cursed / the absence / in loss / tears laughtergrief / in the word” (92).

<sup>13</sup> With the phrase “XY-unsolved-cities” Özdamar playfully alludes to the in Germany, Switzerland and Austria popular TV series “Aktenzeichen XY ungelöst” (which could be translated as “Reference Number XY unsolved”) that tries to unravel unsolved crimes with the help of the population.

<sup>14</sup> The allegory of the “love prison” will be dealt with in more detail later in the chapter.

<sup>15</sup> In the interview with Williamson, Philip is very precise about how the process of writing affects her body: “When I finished that manuscript [of She Tries Her Tongue], I could identify the area of my body – the right side of my abdomen – where the poems had come from. It was actually a physical sensation which lasted for quite a while” (239).

<sup>16</sup> The Langenscheidt Dictionary translates the German verb “abhauen” – which is used in the form of the past participle “abgehauen” in the given quote – as follows: “to buzz or push off, to turn tail, to bolt, to break away.” With respect to the physical content of the dictionary’s translation and my own, similar association with the term, I substitute Craig’s rather passive verb choice “to disappear” by the physically more dynamic verbal phrase “to run away.”

<sup>17</sup> In this quotation, I changed Craig’s translation of “Sklavin,” which he renders as “slave girl,” to the term “slave” that – depending on the context – functions as referent to the female and/or male slave and thus comes closer to the meaning of the word “Sklavin,” which translates as female slave and, in my understanding, should not be reduced and thus limited to the specific female slave, the “slave girl.”

<sup>18</sup> I disagree with Craig’s translation in three important aspects: First of all, the arrow did not stop *at* the heart but *in* (in German im) the heart. Second, it did not stop in *a* (which could be any) heart but in the very heart that is “there” and metaphorically relates to that of the female narrator. And third, the Schrift does not merely translate as “the text” but rather as a specific text, namely the Islamic scriptures.

<sup>19</sup> As argued within the context of the Karagöz and Charwoman stories in chapter two of this thesis, Özdamar recognises and parodies the complex and paradoxical nature of patriarchal systems, exemplified by Islamic patriarchy. Her satirical re-vision also finds expression in the love



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relation of the female narrator and Ibni Abdullah. Yet, like the Karagöz character (the farmer-guest worker), Ibni Abdullah does not only misrecognise and categorise Arabic but also German women; his patriarchal-misogynist prejudices supersede ethnic-cultural differences: “Er sagte: ‘Ja, wie die Deutschen, nicht, kein Sex, tschüß...Die türkischen Frauen wollen viel Sex...Weil sie hungrig sind, ich meine alle Orientalinnen, sie könnten nicht wie Europäerinnen frei Sex machen...könnten wir uns nicht heilig lieben?’” / “He said: ‘Yes, just like Germans, right, no sex, then goodbye...Turkish women want a lot of sex...Because they are hungry, I mean all Oriental women, they couldn’t have free sex like European women...Can’t we make love in a sacred way?’” (*Mutterzunge* 42-43; *Mothertongue* 49, 50, 51).

<sup>20</sup> In this quotation, I am not following Craig’s official translation of “Feuerwerkskörper” – which is “fireworks” – but the literal translation “bodies of fireworks,” because I presume it significant that the word “Körper/body or bodies” emerges in this list of Arabic words in the Turkish language.



## Chapter V – Conclusion

### Critical Nexus: Philip's and Özdamar's Politics of Writing in the Context of Hybridity

In the words of my only mother tongue, the Caribbean demotic: 'We ent going nowhere. We here and is right here we staying.' In Canada. In this world so new. To criticize, needle and demand; to work hard for; to give to; to love; to hate – for better or for worse – till death do we part. And even after – in the African tradition of our ancestral role after death of advising and guiding our offspring – our descendants. African Canadians – Canadians. (Philip, Frontiers 20-21)

**Wierschke:** Was ist denn dann Kultur für Sie als jemand, der nicht in diesen Kategorien denkt?

**Özdamar:** Ja, die Menschen zu sehen, ohne sie zu beurteilen, das Tragische und das Komische in ihren Momenten finden wollen, daß man immer davon ausgeht, daß jeder Mensch ein Roman ist und das Leben eines jeden Menschen ein Roman ist. Und daß man die Neugier auf diesen Roman nicht verliert. Und daß man alle großen Gefühle in dem Leben dieses Menschen auch suchen und finden möchte. (Wierschke, Schreiben als Selbstbehauptung 266)

**Wierschke:** Considering that you reject pre-given categories, what does the term "culture" mean to you, then?

**Özdamar:** It means to see people without judging them, to set out to find the tragic and the comic in their lives, to proceed on the assumption that every person is a novel and that the life of every person is a novel. And that one never loses the interest in this novel. And that one sets out to search for all the great feelings in the life of this person. (my translation)

As the discussions of the preceding chapters show, the social, cultural and political commitment of Özdamar's and Philip's writing thoroughly confuses and re-configures the dominant notions of "Germanness" and "Canadianness" respectively, of "Whiteness" and "non-Whiteness," of inferior-backward and

superior-forward culture, of “minor” and “major” literature, and of high-standard and bad-incorrect German and English respectively. Both women dedicate their art to the disruption of ethnic-cultural prejudices and categorisations that stereotype identity and belonging by means of permanent racial, social, sexual/genderised saliences. Resisting both a ghettoisation and an assimilation of their work in dominant White discourse, their narratives highlight individual and collective immigrant experiences in a complex historical context. Selfhood is constructed at the interlinkage and the co-existency of language, body, memory and ethnic-cultural space. And “true” belonging in the German/Canadian nation-state is envisioned through the re-performance (This is a reference to Bhabha’s manifestation of national narrative as a process of constant re-performance; chapter two 39-40) of the German/Canadian national community as a heterogeneous, multicultural amalgamation. Özdamar and Philip display the strange or alien/foreign, die Fremde or das Unheimliche as a repressed (since feared) but essential part of our “selves” that is projected on the unfamiliar “Other.” In the thought-provoking title to his study on the interrelations of Fremde, identification, and belonging, the Turkish German writer Aras Ören announces: Die Fremde ist auch ein Haus (“The strange or alien is a house, too”; my translation). For Özdamar and Philip, it is the space of alienness – the space of personal and national-cultural instability and “in-betweenness” – that opens possibilities of mutual ethnic-cultural interaction and change. In Mutterzunge and She Tries Her Tongue, the two writers – each one in her individual artistic way –

proclaim themselves and their characters as integral, constitutive parts of German and Canadian literature, language, culture, and nationality respectively. The tactics they set out with are contradictory insofar as Philip launches into an insurgent-radical campaign of re-forming White Canadian society, while Özdamar - influenced by the philosophy of liberalism – insists on a gradual reformation of German and Turkish-Islamic social-cultural thinking and practice. In the concluding paragraphs that follow, I will compare and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of these two women's opposite politics of writing.

The outstanding quality of Özdamar's politics of "liberalism" is that it offers an amazingly broad view of things. Supportive of Emanuel Kant's concept of individual autonomy, of the "ability of each person to determine for himself or herself a view of the good life" (Taylor 116), her own liberal standpoint deviates fundamentally from western models of liberalism, which often do not guarantee individual autonomy when it comes to ethnic-cultural difference or divergence in the nation-state. As argued in chapter two, German legislation, politics, and society are by no means culturally neutral/equal but rather prejudiced/unequal in their treatment of the nation-state's members (Taylor 116-126). In *Mutterzunge*, Özdamar gives a multi-perspectival account of the complex, problematic nature of Turkish German relations resulting from these inequalities. Significantly, her textual criticism of existing predicaments treats each factor involved – no matter if German, Turkish or Turkish German – equally; it is liberal insofar as it plays with, challenges, and frees itself from "restraint, conventions, stereotypes, [and]

prejudice” (OED). The same liberal quality can be attributed to her intermittent, equal use of ethnic-cultural, sexual-genderised, and socio-political saliences in the depiction of her characters’ continuous processes of identification. And still, Özdamar’s writing position is, as the epigraph above demonstrates, not that of the distanced, ironic observer but that of the involved Turkish German woman who shows a strong fascination with the individual lives of all kinds of persons she encounters and re-invents in her texts. Considering her equal criticism of mutual prejudices between Turks, Turkish Germans, and Germans, her appeal for mutual dialogue and co-operation (for “venting” and thus overcoming stereotypes; chapter two 42, 51) is only matter-of-course. In contrast, Philip’s radical politics tends to attack White, (neo-)colonial oppression exclusively and thus runs the risk of being an impediment to viable interaction between White and non-White Canadians. Being a concerned non-White Canadian woman writer, Philip takes an – as Morrell says – “essentialist subject position,” a position that inscribes radical differences in the essential character of White and non-White, female and male identity. As argued in chapters three and four, her radical-essentialist reclamation of the non-White female identity – of the Black woman’s body, memory, language/voice, and African cultural heritage – falls into the trap of re-enforcing the inequalities and homogenisations of dominant discourse she actually sets out to subvert. With the production of permanent racial and sexual saliences in She Tries Her Tongue, she racialises and genderises the oppressed, colonised subject as the non-White woman and the colonising oppressor as the White man, a

dangerous tactic that is prone to self-ghettoisation, self-stereotyping as well as to reversed racism and sexism.

Notwithstanding the problematic nature of Philip's politics of radicalisation and essentialism, She Tries Her Tongue gives an ingenious account of the complex, paradoxical nature of Canadian "multiculturalism" and its asymmetrical power structures. Like Özdamar's "liberal" undertaking, her "radical" approach of the issue has no simple solutions on offer. Yet, unlike Özdamar, Philip leaves no doubt about her own critical position, which is unmistakably in favour of the African homeland. Where Özdamar is subtle, vague, and evasive, Philip is outspoken, clear, and confrontational. She is willing to openly declare her radical position and to take her responsibilities. Özdamar's reluctance to overtly take sides, be it in her texts or in interviews, is more liable to misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and misuse than Philip's straight-forward politics. The complex dimension of her oblique, multi-perspectival and intellectual critique certainly remains unrecognised for many a reader, especially for the non-specialist reader. Moreover, its equal distribution between the Turkish, German and Turkish German positions bears the risk of distorting or levelling out things that are not to be equated, such as Turkish and German fascism, for instance (reference in chapter two 42-43). The example of racism/fascism is significant because of its sharp ambivalence: On the one side, Özdamar disrupts the prevalent stereotype of the "fascist" German, which tends to reduce and thus misrepresent racism or fascism as solely German qualities. Still, on the other side, her two-directional,

equalising viewpoint is liable to be misused by and made an accomplice of German racist discourse.

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We are always bound from viewing another culture by our culture; we can never step outside of our culture even if we physically do by geographical change...We can live in and accept another culture...but our understanding of it is connected with our cultural understanding. (Monika Fischer 176)

Seen within the socio-cultural context of Özdamar's life and experiences as a Turkish German woman, immigrant, actress, stage-director, and writer, the problematic aspects of her politics of liberalism reveal important new perspectives. Growing up in a Turkish nation-state that, as a result of Atatürk's war of liberalisation, was in a highly conflictual, polemic phase of political, cultural, and economical westernisation, Özdamar had to learn that her radical public actions as a leftist would be put down forcibly and ultimately even silence her voice and career. It is very likely that this negative experience turned her into the subtle, evasive, and indirect artist who refuses to take sides and to indulge in overt, radical criticism. This information about her political and socio-economical oppression through Turkish capitalist and racist/fascist political rule thus throws completely new light on her tactics of equal criticism of German and Turkish (neo-) fascism and her strong scepticism of the effectiveness of an open condemnation or attack of German (and Turkish) racism or neo-fascism. The same can be said about the numerous mutual stereotypes she satirically interrogates in the four Mutterzunge stories.



Unlike Özdamar, Philip lives into a nation-state that officially defines itself as a country of immigration, as a multicultural mosaic of equally distributed power relations. Since this claim finds international confirmation, it is very hard for non-White writers like Philip to make their exposure of the failures of the multicultural ideal heard. The fact that the issues of racism and White hegemony tend to be whitewashed by the Canadian discourse of multiculturalism speaks for the radicalism and racialisation constituting Philip's politics of writing. In order to be heard in a society that enjoys a non-racist image she has to speak out loudly and clearly about the actuality of racism she herself experiences as an Afro-Caribbean Canadian. In addition to this cultural-political need for a radical and racialised voice, She Tries Her Tongue points to the far-reaching historical dimension of slavery and colonisation in the New World. Philip's memories of the African homeland are irrevocably pervaded with the memory of White colonial oppression, exploitation, and the de-humanisation of African people. She grew up in a Caribbean society that is full of remnants of colonialism and now lives in a Canadian, neo-colonial environment of considerable racial salience. For her, the oppressive forces of the European coloniser have always outweighed those of the home culture; thus her inclination to characterise Canadian society through racial or even racist emphases.

In conclusion, I want to draw attention to a significant parallel in Philip's and Özdamar's developments as woman artists. For both, the migration to Canada and Germany respectively made the aspiration of a free artistic career possible; being

(politically committed) women, such a career was out of reach in the homeland. Ever since their immigration, Philip and Özdamar have contributed to the opening and broadening of the Canadian and German literary canons. They have become integral, constitutive parts of the countries' literature, culture, history, and society; it is high time they are seriously acknowledged and accepted as such. As Monika Fischer's statement indicates, their belonging in Canadian and German society is closely connected with their own cultural understanding, which is composed of an African-Caribbean-Canadian and Arabic-Turkish-German cultural mix respectively. They have stepped out of their homeland and its culture geographically, but their bodily and mental connections are lasting. Body and mind constitute the fluid, hybrid space of identification and belonging "in-between" the cultures, languages, literatures, and histories they correlate. Undoubtedly, their work toward mutual cultural understanding and multi-racial co-operation in the space of hybridity has had and will continue to have a notable impact on the cultures and societies – particularly on the artistic and intellectual communities – of which they are integral components.

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