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NARRATING VALUES ACROSS BORDERS: THE MIGRANT FAMILY IN EMINE SEVGI ÖZDAMAR'S DAS LEBEN IST EINE KARAWANSEREI

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Abstract

This paper investigates how ethical and cultural values are narrated across linguistic and geographical borders by exploring the representation of the migrant family in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's Das Leben ist eine Karawanserei, hat zwei Türen, aus einer kam ich rein, aus der anderen ging ich raus. Qualitative research and analysis employing value-based coding, ethical narrative hermeneutics and close textual analysis, of how family, migration and identity interrelate in Özdamar's world of narrative. Analysis is undertaken into seven ethical currents, love, respect, social justice, solidarity, freedom, empathy and division of labor, and it is shown how these values are changed by Diaspora and transculturally. Drawing on the original German text, the paper also investigates Özdamar's hybrid linguistic strategies which consist of embedding Turkish puns and songs and proverbs into German syntax, as a literary mechanism for accruing and saving the collective/memory and at the same time resisting linguistic assimilation. Placing the narrative in the framework of post-migrant literature, this paper shows how Özdamar slowly changes the family narrative into a narrative of ethical and dialogic, gender political memory and belonging. The conclusion is that literature is called

upon by the expressions of tradition and modernity, self and other, the local and global, to mediate the two. The paper concludes with a discussion of literary ethics and intercultural dialogue to show how storytelling is being utilized, both politically and ethically, as resistance and reconciliation within the migrant narrative.

Keywords:

Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Migrant Family, Cultural Values, Ethical Narration, Transcultural Literature